



Research Article

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India - Myanmar Relations (1948 - 1992): From “Idealism” to “Realism” in India’s Foreign Policy towards Myanmar

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Abstract

India and Myanmar are two neighboring countries that share the border of nearly 1.500km and have the relationship on history, politics, culture, ethnic... from over 2.000 years to present. India officially established diplomatic relations with Myanmar, just after this Southeast Asian country gained independence (1948). From 1948 to 1992, the bilateral relationship was influenced by India’s foreign policy towards Myanmar, especially the impact of “idealism” and “realism” in India’s policy. “Idealism” succeeded in India’s foreign policy towards Myanmar from 1948 to 1962; however, it was not effective in the period 1962 - 1988, which made India’s position severely decrease, contrary to the rise of China’s position in Myanmar. For this reason, India must innovate the foreign thought, moving from “idealism” to “realism”, which have more pragmatic quality to Myanmar in the years 1988 - 1992 when the international and regional contexts have many changes. On the basis of the reference sources, this research’s aim focuses on analyzing the foreign policy adjustment of India, especially this study will focus on the issue of India - Myanmar relationship (1948 - 1992) was dominated by the “idealism” and “realism” in the planning of foreign policy of India towards Myanmar. The scope of this research is the relationship between India and Myanmar from 1948 to 1992 under the influence of “idealism” and “realism” in India’s foreign policy. From the early 90s of the 20th century, India’s foreign policy towards Myanmar has been more realistic than in the previous period, especially since 1992, when India implemented its new foreign policy, the Look East Policy.

Keywords: Idealism, realism, foreign, India, Myanmar

1. Introduction

India and Myanmar are under a traditional, long-standing and close relationship. Both countries were colonies of the British Empire in early modern times and Myanmar was also annexed, being a part of

British India in the years 1886 - 1937. Through the historical periods, the traditional relation between India and Myanmar about politics, commerce, culture, society... always created a connection the two countries from the struggle for independence and the country's development of each nation to present. From the official establishment of diplomatic relations (1948) to before 1992, India - Myanmar relations have undergone many ups and downs, from friendship, friendliness and cooperation to cold, tense and almost "frozen" time. This is a turbulent period in the bilateral relationship between the two countries. The ups and downs in India - Myanmar relations (1948 - 1992) were deeply affected by the adjustment of Indian foreign policy along with the changes in political institutions of the Myanmar government. In particular, elements of "idealism" and "realism" in Indian foreign policy strongly influenced the progression of India - Myanmar relations from 1948 to 1992. These are major movement in modern international relations theory. In India, "idealism" and "realism" arose from the reign of Ashoka the Great (304 - 232 BCE) and strongly influenced India's foreign policy towards neighboring countries during the modern period, which includes Myanmar. India's policy towards Myanmar during this period also reflected an adjustment in the general foreign policy of India and the great impact on the bilateral relationship.

Since India and Myanmar gained their independence and established official diplomatic relations (1948), relations between the two countries have gone well and are friendly. After the Treaty of Friendship was signed (1951), senior leaders of India and Myanmar regularly visited each other to create closer cohesion in the bilateral relationship. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru attached great importance to the friendship between India and Myanmar. For him, Myanmar is a neighboring country with close relationships and intimacy (Ayob, 2015, p.49). However, the coup headed by General Ne Win ushered in the military coming to power in Myanmar (March 1962), which contributed to the cold and tense relationship between the two countries for many decades later. It can be stated that "idealism" in India's foreign policy towards Myanmar deeply dominated bilateral relations in the years 1948 - 1962 and 1962 - 1988. Since the late 1980s, peace, dialogue and cooperation have become a major global and regional trend and have had a major impact on India's foreign policy in general and India's Myanmar policy in general. The decline in relations with Myanmar in the years 1962 - 1988 showed that India needed in order to adjust its foreign policy with this eastern neighbor. India needs to become more realistic in its foreign policy and relations with other countries, including Myanmar. It is the transition from "idealism" to "realism" in Indian foreign policy in general and for Myanmar in particular, especially from the moment when India started to implement the Look East Policy (1992).

2. Literature Review

From establishing official diplomatic relations to the last decade of the 20th century, India and Myanmar have experienced many ups and downs in bilateral relations. India's foreign policy towards Myanmar, coupled with the dominance of "idealism" and "realism", has been regarded by researchers as a factor affecting the bilateral relationship in the years 1948 - 1992. This topic has become the concern of Vietnamese and foreign historians.

India - Myanmar relations is a new research issue in Vietnam and is only mentioned generally in the literature on the relationship between India and Southeast Asian countries or in other books wrote exclusively on Indian history (Cao, 1997); (Vu, 1995). Besides that, India's foreign policy from its independence until 1992 was only mentioned in a number of general works on foreign policy of some typical countries (the United States, China, Japan...) or in Indian history and still quite sketchy (Nguyen, 2006); (Vu, 1995). With regard to India's foreign policy, "idealism" and "realism" are also initially mentioned in general (Ton, 2001). It is worth noting that India - Myanmar relations from the two countries established diplomatic relations (1948) to before 1992 and India's foreign policy towards neighboring Myanmar in the aforementioned period has not been Vietnamese historians mentioned in specific studies.

If the research situation in Vietnam on India - Myanmar relations in general and the relationship between the two countries in the period 1948 - 1992 in particular and India's Myanmar policy is still

quite limited, in foreign countries, this is a topic that many scientists are interested in researching. This issue is reflected in a number of studies on Indian foreign policy or a historical period of Myanmar (Nehru, 1961); (Myoe, 2007). Some other works focus on presenting an overview of India - Myanmar relations on the main areas of cooperation (politics, economics, energy security, military ...), in which the emphasis on human Chinese factors influence the development of this relationship (Gottschlich, 2015); (Pradhan, 1981); (Zaw, 2001). With its geostrategic position, neighboring Myanmar is a key factor in Indian foreign policy making (Hughes, 2013); (Singh, 2007). Therefore, the progression of this bilateral relationship from the time which the two countries established official diplomatic relations (1948) to the early 1990s of the 20th century were influenced by India's Myanmar policy, which cannot help but emphasize the effects of "idealism" and "realism" in India's foreign policy in general and on neighboring Myanmar in particular (Ayob, 2015); (Routray, 2011). In addition, India - Myanmar relations with India's foreign policy towards Myanmar in the period 1948 - 1992 are also listed in the range of raw data through reports or agreements (Ministry of External Affairs, 1951). However, the issues related to the topic of this article mentioned in the above-mentioned research works are still general and not comprehensive.

With the above approach, overseas researchers mainly refer to the development of India - Myanmar relations in general or bilateral relations in some specific stages, focusing on the important role of neighboring Myanmar in India's foreign policy and the implementation of the policy in terms of diplomacy, the Chinese factor in the bilateral relationship. In each work, India - Myanmar relations from 1948 to 1992 under the influence of "idealism" and "realism" in India's foreign policy towards Myanmar are mentioned to a certain extent and not systematic. However, it is important to rely on the works of Vietnamese and foreign scholars, giving us a basis to deal with the research content of this paper.

3. Method

The paper aims to study India - Myanmar relations from 1948 to 1992. To accomplish this objective, the paper uses research methods in international relations to analyze problems of research paper. In addition to reviewing the studies and evaluations of previous scholars, the authors use a comparative approach to evaluate the practical interaction between theory and data. The authors believe that the data is an important basis for accurately assessing the situation and the change in India's foreign policy toward Myanmar in the years 1948 - 1992.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 "Idealism" in India - Myanmar relations (1948 - 1962)

India is one of the countries with the oldest civilizations in the world. These factors have created India a powerful reputation for surrounding neighbors and India has always been regarded as the dominant power in the region. Being the largest country in South Asia, India has the ambition to play a leadership role in the region and become a superpower in the world. After gaining independence from British in 1947, India's highest strategic goals were peace, independence, strong country building, territorial integrity protection, rising up to affirm the position of power in the region and around the world. Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had declared: "Peace for us is not only a fervent hope but also in urgent need" (Cao, 1997, p.294). To accomplish this goal, Prime Minister J. Nerhu proposed a foreign policy of "peaceful coexistence, self-reliance and cooperation, non-interference in internal affairs, non-aligned¹, non-colonization support, disarmament, building the fair international economic order and

¹ The term "non-aligned" was first used by Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in his speech at the Colombo Conference (Sri Lanka) in 1954 when he described five principles for China -India relations. The concept of "non-

global struggle against racism" (Nguyen, 2006, p.142-143). During the Cold War, the foreign thinking of India was peace, independence, unaffiliated, advocating the principles of coexistence among peoples, fighting disarmament and banning nuclear weapons, anti-nationalism, keeping the national independence, refused to join the bloc and did not allow foreign military bases on the land of India (Vu, 1995, p.164). All these are collectively referred to as the "idealism" in India's foreign policy from after independence to the end of the Cold War.

"Idealism" in India's foreign policy is derived from Ashoka the Great of the Mauryan Empire (322 - 185 BCE). One of the most prominent emperors in India's history, King Ashoka won a series of conquests and ruled much of South Asia, from present-day Afghanistan to Bengal. After the unification of most of the Indian lands, his obsession with killing his fellow human beings and the witnessing too many deaths in previous conquests brought King Ashoka to Buddhism. With the mindset of not insulting, not hurting, or killing the previous Buddhist principles, he has developed into a peaceful ideology, abandoning the war of aggression in his political lines. Instead of sending expeditions of armies, he sent missions to surround countries, starting from there on the peaceful tradition of India. Since then, the thought of "non-violence" or "peaceful co-existence" has been practiced by Ashoka in both domestic and foreign policy. Therefore, the idea of "peaceful co-existence" has been developed by the modern Indian leaders from these religious and traditional ideas of King Ashoka. Its basic idea is to maintain peace, "non-violence" in domestic policy and foreign affairs. The humane profound thought was Mahatma Gandhi² used successfully in the movement for national liberation to India in the early 20th century and the government of Jawaharlal Nehru (1947 - 1964) inherited after India independence (1947). Since that time, the new government of India officially proclaimed policy of "peaceful coexistence" with five basic principles: *sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference, equality and peaceful co-existence* (Ton, 2001, p.48). This is the basic line of thought, featured, universal in the longstanding rich ideas system of India. Therefore, "idealism" in Indian foreign policy has affected international relations of this country, including India - Myanmar relations in the years 1948 - 1962.

In Myanmar's Independence Day (January 4th, 1948), India established formal diplomatic relations with this young nation, opening up a new era in bilateral relations (Pradhan, 1981, p.77). India congratulated, shared and expressed attachment to neighboring Myanmar. *"In the past and in the future, Indian will stand side by side with the people of Burmese, and whether luck or misfortune, we will always share together. This is a great and solemn day not only for Myanmar but also for India and the whole Asia"* (Zaw, 2001, p.89).

After independence, Myanmar faced many difficulties, most notably ethnic issues deeply conflicted. It was the rise of the Karen³ and other rebel forces. Myanmar and Prime Minister U Nu needed the aid from India, the Commonwealth countries and the United States. In that context, India has supported, timely helped to restore stability to the neighboring country. In the Prime Minister's Conference of Commonwealth countries held in Sri Lanka (January 1950), India and members of the bloc have agreed to lend Burma £6 million, of which India contributed 1 million pounds (Ministry of External Affairs, 1951b, p.4). Besides, the Indian government also through \$46 million loan for U Nu government in 1958 (Gottschlich, 2015, p.142). These actions represent the views about foreign

aligned" is used to describe foreign policy of the countries that refuse to be affiliated with or against any political mass during the Cold War period and to pursue an independent way in international politics. Non-aligned can also be defined as not participating in military alliances with any country during the Cold War period. The non-aligned policy therefore is said to help countries not entangled in the conflict between the Soviet Union - the United States bloc during the Cold War.

² Mahatma Gandhi (1869 - 1948), former full name is Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, is a national hero in India, leader of the movement for national liberation of Indian in the early 20th century with the "non-violence" and succeeded. He opposed all forms of terrorist violence and instead, only applied the highest ethical standards.

³ Karen (also known as Kayin) is the third most populous nation, accounting for about 8% of the population of Myanmar. Sgaw and Pwo are two main groups of Karen, live mainly in the highlands of Shan, Karen State and the Irrawaddy Delta.

perspective of peace, friendly and mutual assistance between India and Burma without any conditions. In speeches at parliament on the day March 17th, 1950, Indian Prime Minister J. Nehru announced that India's support for Burma is not interfering in the internal affairs of the neighboring country and that *"it is not the purpose of us and we did not take all measures to intervene in other countries, but whenever possible, we will be willing to help them without any conditions attached to any interference"* (Nehru, 1961, p.292-293).

India not only to participate in solving the crisis in the finance and security, but also aims to build a solid basis for long-term relationship between the two countries. The two sides regularly consult each other and work out ways of collaborating and sharing issues related to world peace and international relations. Friendly and warmth relations, between India and Myanmar had contributed to the Non-Aligned Movement strongly developed struggle for peace, national independence, against the invasion and subjugation of the imperialists, colonialists. These two countries are active members of the Bandung Conference (Indonesia) in 1955 and the Non-Aligned Movement.

Only three years after establishing diplomatic relations, on July 7th, 1951, India and Myanmar signed a friendship treaty in Yangon (Myanmar) (Pradhan, 1981, p.81). This event is an important history milestone of friendly relations, mounts between the two countries. Article II of the Treaty stipulates that: *"Peace and friendship between the two countries will be eternal, never changing. The two countries will forever strive to strengthen and further develop sincere relationships exists between the two peoples"* (Ministry of External Affairs, 1951a). After the agreement of friendship was signed, the diplomatic missions of the two countries regularly visit each other and promptly solve problems in bilateral relations, as well as sharing the multilateral issues in the regional and international relations. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru once said: *"We are in regular contact with the Burmese government on many issues. We're not just friends in the usual sense, but I can say that this was more than friendship"* (Pradhan, 1981, p.84).

Moreover, India also helps Myanmar in the military field when the Myanmar authorities have to deal with the insurgency and fighting separatist on ethnic and religious groups (not the Burmese) in everywhere. Under these circumstances, India has put the army to support the Myanmar authorities in 1949 and 1958 to fight the insurgency. It could be said, the assistance and support of India in terms of politics, economics, military has an important contribution to peace, political and social stability of Myanmar after independence.

The good political - diplomatic relations between the two countries have created favorable conditions for the Indian community's development in Myanmar. They are entrepreneurs investing in various economic sectors in Myanmar; besides that, also have an important Indian labor force in the country. In international relations, India and Myanmar typically mutual support in United Nations forums, as well as other international conferences. These are vivid expression to the good relations between the two countries in the 50-60 decades of the 20th century.

So, India has been successful in applying "idealism" in the foreign policy to Myanmar from 1948 to 1962. It is a continuation of peace, friendship, equality, civil all inherent in long-standing cultural tradition of India and it was a vivid demonstration of the country Myanmar has just gained independence. Derived from "idealism" should both India and Myanmar not only for bilateral relations development, but there are important similarities in the international and regional problems, and the two countries have close important contribution to the Non-Aligned Movement of the world at that time, provide a foundation for the development of the two countries since independence.

4.2 "Idealism" in India - Myanmar relations (1962 - 1988)

The military coup led by General Ne Win (March 1962) overthrew the civilian government of U Nu, which opened the military period to power in Myanmar as the event marking the India - Myanmar relationship to another direction. The coup had made many leaders of Myanmar civilian government previously, including the former Prime Minister U Nu to evacuate to India. Indian Prime Minister J. Nehru warmly received U Nu and allowed his family to reside in India without disturbing any response

from the government of Myanmar's military administration. Along with many other countries around the world, India has voiced opposition to the establishment of the Myanmar military government.

Under the leadership of General Ne Win, the military government of Myanmar carried out domestic policy and unfavorable foreign policy, even reducing the position of India not only for Myanmar but also on the international context. On April 30th, 1962, the Revolutionary Council announced its *path to the socialism of Burma, which regarded the state socialism as the only way to bring the independent economy to the country*. Ne Win's government ordered the expulsion of the alien community (including the Indian and the Chinese) out of Myanmar to quickly remove the role and position of the Indian and Chinese capitalism business class. In the 60-70s of the 20th century, there were hundreds thousand of Indian who had to leave Myanmar, of which in 1964 had about 100,000 people (Routray, 2011, p.301). This further increased the inherent tension between the civilian/democratic Indian government with the military/dictatorship Myanmar government.

In its foreign policy from 1962 to 1972, Ne Win's government just found a balance in international relations between Myanmar with three major countries the United States, the Soviet Union and China but not to pay attention to India. Although it is a neighboring country with its position on the international context but India is not an important factor in Myanmar's foreign policy. Besides, Myanmar also perform *negative policy of neutrality*, which means minimizing Myanmar's relationship with other countries, including Myanmar withdrawal from the Non-Aligned Movement in 1979. In addition, Myanmar's military government has signed border agreements with the Chinese (1960), creating favorable conditions for China caused border wars with India in 1962. When war broke out, Myanmar represents neutrality. But the perspective of the authorities in India, it means that the attitude of Myanmar expressed "*pro-Chinese*" (Singh, 2007, p.1). All the historical facts which made the India government to protest, condemning the ruling military regime in Myanmar. With three powerful countries (the United States, the Soviet Union and China), the Myanmar had the best relationship with China. Therefore, the military government of Myanmar is increasingly affected and have to rely heavily on the pragmatic foreign policy of China.

During the period of Ne Win (1962 - 1988), the formal high-level exchanges of the two countries continued but only in the form of foreign diplomacy. At that time, Indian leaders often asked the government of Myanmar to make commitments about "democratic value" that had little interest in practical problems, including the issue of border security between the two countries. Meanwhile, the military government could hardly make commitments to "democratic value" because of Myanmar's specific historical circumstances at which time often occurred racial and religious conflicts.

Although the "idealism" in the foreign way of India with Burma was successful in the years 1948 - 1962, it became a sense of idealism, which was subjective with the impose nature of India's foreign perspective to Myanmar. Because during this period, the military government had held power in Myanmar and they made unfavorable ways for India. This is the expression of bureaucracy, lack of sensitivity, the reality shortage of India for Myanmar and of course the influence, rights and power of India severely reduced in this country. This is a valuable experience lesson for a general country foreign route plan. In contrast, China with the practical diplomatic route has "replaced" the position of India in Myanmar in the period 1962-1988. In other words, China has won the competition in strategy with India in the "buffer country" (Myanmar).

4.3 The transformation from "idealism" to "realism" in India - Myanmar relations (1988 - 1992)

From the mid-80s of the 20th century onwards, peace, dialogue have become a popular trend in international relations as well as in the Asian region, Southeast Asia at that time. In 1987, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited Myanmar after a long period of "freezing". This is a breakthrough in the general foreign thinking of India which manifests specific for Myanmar. However, the historical transformation in Myanmar a year later forced India to return to the traditional values of democracy in "idealism". On August 8th, 1988, thousands of students and people in Rangoon capital and major cities took down the street to protest against the corrupt government, strangle democracy, enforce in

economic management and country development (Myanmar's history called this event "8888"). However, the protests were bloody suppressed by the military government. This caused thousands of Burmese innocent students and people to be killed. The event was also the "spilled water droplet" resulting in the advent of the *National League for Democracy* (NLD) on August 27th, 1988, led by Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi, and the military coup of the Senior General - Secretary of Defense Saw Maung to overthrow the government General Ne Win on September 18th, 1988.

This event "8888" has been affected by United Nations, the United States, Western countries... and India condemning strong. India declared to support the democratic movement in Burma and praised the "*tenacious would of the Burmese people in the struggle to reclaim democracy*" (Hughes, 2013, p.254). Democratic activists, political dissent, and political refugees from Burma have been allowed by India to reside in the country and free speech to fight the Saw Maung's government. At the end of 1988, the Government of India allowed the establishment of refugee camps in Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam to assist students and those struggling to reclaim Burma's democracy (Ayob, 2015, p.50). In addition, in the years 1989 - 1990, India initiated the "*All India Radio*" campaign to support Myanmar's democratic struggle forces. All radio stations in India have been used by this government to broadcast many programs supporting the democratic movement in Myanmar (Hughes, 2013, p.254). This creates a new "*compartment pit*" between India and Myanmar.

Two years later, in 1990, in Myanmar the parliamentary elections were taken place again and as a result, the *National League for Democracy* (NLD) was victorious with 72.5% of the vote and 392 delegates elected for a total of 485 (accounted for 80.8%) chairs in the Senate (Myoe, 2007, p.13). However, the military government of Myanmar does not acknowledge this election result because they do not want to give power to the Alliance. This event as "pouring oil on the flames", Myanmar was increasingly opposed by United Nations, the United States, Western countries and India more fiercely the dictatorship of the military government of Myanmar. The consequence of this sanctions policy makes Myanmar unable to access important funds from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), and other international financial institutions. In that context, China was not only opposed but also supported, funded by the Burmese military authorities. In return, the government of Myanmar allows China business and operation in many different areas of economics, finance, trade... In terms of strategic interests, the backlash of India combined with the isolation of the United States and the Western countries against Myanmar after the event "8888" "accidentally" pushed Myanmar's military authorities closer to China. After this event, China quickly became the only country with close ties with Myanmar's military government. The relationship increasingly tightening between Myanmar and China's was the "expensive experience" for India on the strategic and national interests. This has forced India to rethink its foreign policy toward neighboring Myanmar.

In the early 90s of the 20th century, the Cold War ended, the socialist regime in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe collapsed, has opened a new era in international relations. Era of dialogue and cooperation on a global scale alternative to confrontation, tensions during the Cold War. The trend of peace, friendship and development become the dominant mainstream in international relations. New international context has forced countries to adjust foreign policy to adapt and often take national and ethnic minorities interests to the basic factors that govern the political activities, foreign economic relations of each country. After 1991, India adjusted gradually foreign policy according to the "realism", taking national interest as the basis for development of relations with countries around the world. "Realism" is derived from ideological or empirical reality (positivistic) of Kautilya Chanakya. He served as prime minister under the Maurya dynasty in the 4th century BCE, is the author of the book "*The Science of Victory*". In this book, Chanakya Kautilya says that "*the only way for a king to survive in the world is the law matsya nyaya (big fish eat small fish) is to become a vijigisu (country always aspire to conquer)*" (Ton, 2001, p.46).

The movement in the foreign policy of India to Myanmar starting from the 1987, 1988, but by 1992, this adjustment brings new landmark. It is time to deploy India's Look East policy. That is a shift from "unrealistic policy" to a "realistic policy" than (also called "neo-pragmatic engagement"). This policy was launched in 1992 by Prime Minister India P.V. Narasimha Rao and is considered to be a

fundamental shift in the foreign policy of India. That is a shift from “policies unrealistic” to a “realistic policy” than (also called “neo-pragmatic engagement”). The change in the foreign policy of India to Myanmar was driven by three key factors. *Firstly*, India worries not only about the increasing influence and power of China in Myanmar, it also can create three pro-Chinese regimes in the neighbourhood (Pakistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar). *Secondly*, India needs to improve relations with Myanmar to cope with the emerging non-traditional security threats in the region of northeastern India. *Thirdly*, ASEAN and Southeast Asia are considered to be central to the Look East Policy. Myanmar is the only ASEAN member to have a border with the Northeast of India. Thus, in the way of the view of Indian policy makers, Myanmar is seen as a “gateway” for India advancing toward Southeast Asia.

In short, with the rapid transformation of the world and the area from the post-Cold War (1991), it is from a head-to-face predisposition to dialogue, from the armed race to the competition and economic cooperation, India must also rapidly transform diplomatic thinking. This including Look East Policy was outlined and implemented (1992) which Myanmar is an important factor in this India's policy. This is also a real thought in foreign policy that has long been inherent in the India's history.

5. Conclusion

Throughout the history of more than 2000 years, the relationship between India and Myanmar has evolved with many ups and downs, but there had not been any wars between the two countries. It can be said that this relationship originated from the “peace missions” of King Ashoka to Southeast Asian countries, including Myanmar in the 3rd century BCE. After the two countries gained their independence in the mid-twentieth century, India and Myanmar had established a friendly, cooperative, equal, neutral, and goal-sharing relationship in the Non-Aligned Movement. India had shown its will to peace, helping neighboring country, Myanmar, that shared the same colonial status under British rule. This spirit lasted until 1962 and it was also a period of good relations between the two countries. At that time, Myanmar was leaning towards India, which was also the triumph of “idealism” in India's foreign policy towards Myanmar and it contributed to regional peace and stability in the world, especially in the Non-Aligned Movement. Derived from subjective and objective reasons, the military coup broke out and won in Myanmar (1962), putting the army to power. This was not accepted by the Indian government because the views on democracy and humanity of the era had not been implemented by the Myanmar military government. This has severely impaired India's status and interests because China had taken a pragmatic foreign policy towards Myanmar's military government. Nonetheless, it also reflected the lack of acumen, impracticality, and inflexibility of Indian foreign policy to the changing historical reality in comparison to China's pragmatic foreign policy to neighboring country, Myanmar.

From studying the ups and downs in India - Myanmar relations from establishing diplomatic relations (1948) to before the time when India implemented the Look East Policy (1992), this article points out that, the strong domination of “idealism” and “realism” in India's foreign policy in general and for Myanmar in particular. If “idealism” created a good foundation for the development of the friendly and intimate relationship between India and Myanmar in the years 1948 - 1962, on the contrary, the impact of “idealism” made the relationship become worse, even at times “cold” or “tense” in the years 1962 - 1988, the period when Myanmar transitioned from a civilian state to a dictatorial military regime with the head is General Ne Win. As the largest democracy in the world, India has opposed the existence of the Myanmar military regime under Ne Win and its policies of repressing democrats, violating the human rights of the military government. All that stemmed from the “ideal” foreign thinking, peace and democracy of the rulers in India, which made India and Myanmar increasingly distant from each other in foreign relations.

From the late 80's to the early 90's of the 20th century, the trend of dialogue, peace and development replaced the confrontational trend in the world and the region. Faced with tension and decline in relations with Myanmar in the years 1962 - 1988, India had moved from “idealism” to “realism” in policy with this neighboring country. India's foreign policy toward Myanmar in the final

years of the Cold War also reflected the shift in general Indian views from the late 20th century to the present, the period in which India started. The Look East Policy (1992 - 2014) and the “Act East” strategy (from 2014 to present). “Idealism” as well as “realism” was applied not only by India but also by many countries around the world. However, the problem was that which foreign policy would be suitable to the specific historical circumstances of each country in certain periods and these views were sometimes separated, sometimes combined. Therefore, it was necessary to implement in a smooth and flexible manner, otherwise it would fall into voluntarism and subjectivity.

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