

(কোনো ধরনের হেল্প ছাড়াই আমাদের নিয়মের সাথে মিল রেখে প্যাসেজটি অনুবাদের চেষ্টা করবে। এরপর আমরা ক্লাসে একজন অন্যজনের সাথে সমন্বয় করবো)

The Brilliant Coherence between Bangabandhu's Foreign Policy and Diplomacy

1. Foreign policies of a state are designed to determine its interaction with other states and to adjust itself with the complex international milieu. The success of foreign policies of a country is mainly dependent on prudent diplomacy of its leadership whether it might have material capacities, geopolitical advantages, international institutional backing, sound socio-political structure, appealing political ideology and so on.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman widely known with the honorary title “Bangabandhu”, the architect and founding father of Bangladesh, got an impoverished war-torn state that experienced a nine-month long liberation war against Pakistan in 1971. However, with his pragmatic leadership and true patriotic zeal, he did not fear to shoulder the burden of the devastated country.

2. From the inception of his leadership for the independent Bangladesh, Bangabandhu showed his diplomatic sagacity with a particularly cautious observation on the intense Cold War. When Bangladesh obtained its independence from Pakistan, he was still in a Pakistani prison. He arrived back his country from the jail via London and New Delhi on 10 January, 1972, by a Royal British jet instead of an Indian aircraft. The use of the English jet was his strategic signal to the world for

two apparent reasons. First, the statesman wanted to show it is undesirable that Bangladesh would be dominated by its friendly foreign powers, particularly India. Second, he hinted that the new state would aim to maintain a neutral gesture to world powers.

3. Further, he proclaimed, “I would like it (Bangladesh) to become the Switzerland of the East.” The underlying objectives of the statement are that like Switzerland, Bangladesh desires to maintain peace, to augment economic development, to promote tourism, and to preserve a neutral gesture to globally polarized political blocks.

4. While drafting the constitution, Bangabandhu set up the bedrock of Bangladesh’s foreign policy framework with his remarkable dictum “Friends with all, malice towards none” reflecting the second inaugural address of the late US president Abraham Lincoln. This maxim is still an inseparable part of the present Bangladesh for its engagement with nation states. Bangabandhu’s primary foreign policy goals were to multiply friendly countries of, attain recognition and aids from foreign states for, and ensure membership of international organizations for the country.

5. Bangabandhu as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh paid numerous diplomatic visits abroad to brighten its image in international stage and to fulfill his foreign policy goals. On 6 February, 1972, he visited India. He demonstrated sincere gratitude in his address to

Indian people and government for their assistance and cooperation during the liberation war of Bangladesh. With his Indian counterpart Premier Indira Gandhi, he discussed multiple aspects of bilateral issues and urged Gandhi to withdraw Indian troops. It was then decided that India would pull back its soldiers from Bangladesh by March and the withdrawal was accordingly accomplished on the first half of the proposed month. With the implementation of the decision, Bangabandhu actually further attempted to show the world Bangladesh was not under the dominance of its nearest major ally. It was his notable success to facilitate diplomatic relations with several sovereign states such as Saudi Arab, China, and Pakistan etc. who were against the liberation quest of Bengalis of the present Bangladesh.

6. Upon Bangabandhu's invitation, Mrs. Gandhi came to Bangladesh on 17 March, 1972. They signed a 25-year Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Peace on 19 March, the strategic significance of which was immensely vital for Bangladesh with its biggest neighbor in terms of strong bilateral relations on defense, trade, agriculture, Pakistani war prisoners, and riverine issues.

7. In late February 1972, Bangabandhu made a five-day goodwill visit in Moscow. He was received with warm welcome by the Soviet government and he heartfully thanked its people and government to have supported Bangladesh's liberation war. With the Soviet Premier Aleksei N. Kosygin, Bangabandhu

discussed future relations between the two countries and he asked for emergency food aid, technical assistance, and higher study opportunity on the behalf of people of Bangladesh. The visit brought about massive benefits for the post-liberation-war Bangladesh.

8. Nonetheless, it was a politically watershed moment when Bangabandhu made an equilibrium foreign policy to reach parallelly to the two superpower blocs on the consideration that reliance on India and the then Soviet Union could not fulfill the enormous needs of Bangladesh. **During** his visit to the UN headquarter in New York in 1974 to attend the UN General Assembly for its recognition to Bangladesh, he personally had a meeting with the US president Gerald R. Ford. In the meeting, Bangabandhu wanted aids from America and Ford assured his Bangladeshi counterpart about sending aids. Resultantly, massive US aids poured into Bangladesh. To implement this US leaning policy, he refused the unwise standpoint of Bangladesh's first Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmed "not to take aid from any country which opposed our liberation struggle". Bangabandhu's another move took a striking turn when he took Bangladesh into the Non-aligned Movement in 1973 that recommends a middle route for developing states between the western and eastern blocs.

9. Bangabandhu was adroit on how to bargain with a state to secure his country's national interest. Pakistan, the eastern wing of which was Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) till 1971, did not aim to recognize the

independent Bangladesh and even vehemently opposed the entry of the new state into the Commonwealth in 1972. In February, 1974, when the Organization of the Islamic Conference was going to arrange its summit in Pakistan, Bangabandhu sensed the awaited opportunity. He refused to participate in the summit if Pakistan did not acknowledge Bangladesh. That bargaining flawlessly worked and Pakistan recognized his country.

Bangladesh attained membership to the prominent international organizations such as UN, IMF, ADB, ILO, NAM, Commonwealth, OIC etc. through the wise leadership of Bangabandhu. He was also successful to attain the recognition for the new state from nearly all countries except China, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Oman (the first two being diplomatically crucial for Bangladesh).

China was against the independence struggle of Bangladesh, sided with Pakistan, and kept the same policy for a reasonable period of time to block the entry of Bangladesh in the United Nations through veto power owing to its pro-Pakistani stance and the Cold War politics. Understanding the importance of reconciliation of Bangladesh with China, Bangabandhu dispatched a veteran ambassador K. M. Kaiser, who previously had served as a Pakistani ambassador to China and personally developed a strong rapport with the destination state, to Beijing. The quite diplomacy persuaded China to give the green signal for the membership of Bangladesh in the UN, and was maintained in Bangabandhu's time.

10. Bangabandhu did not compromise with his secular policy. The policy was to hold the position that Bangladesh is an inclusive nation for its all citizens of different religious backgrounds, and to strengthen its ties with the wider West. He was successful to persuade almost all Muslim nations (except Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Oman) who were against his secular state view to recognize Bangladesh.

11. In a special meeting between Bangabandhu and Saudi Monarch Faisal during the 1973 Non-Aligned Nations Conference, the former asked for recognition for Bangladesh to his Saudi counterpart. King Faisal ragingly stated that to obtain Saudi recognition the official name of Bangladesh — People’s Republic of Bangladesh — would have to be altered into the Islamic Republic of Bangladesh. Nonetheless, Bangabandhu directly uttered it was not possible to remove his country’s secular shell. He further replied “Saudi Arabia is not named the Islamic Republic of Saudi Arabia and we did not express any objection to this. So, why is this prerequisite for Bangladesh?”

12. Bangabandhu always stood for the oppressed. In the 25th article of Bangladesh’s constitution, he codified that the country will support oppressed people around the world fighting against imperialism, colonialism and racialism. In the same tone, he said at the conference of the Non-aligned Movement, “The world is divided into two parts – the oppressors and the oppressed. I am with the oppressed.”

13. Understanding the obstacles for the small state on the basis of huge population, small sea frontage, and shattered economy, Bangabandhu formulated strategic foreign policies to provide Bangladesh the admirable position on economic, political, and strategic fronts. And, the outcomes of his successful foreign policy mechanism appeared in the yard of Bangladesh during his leadership time if economic, social, cultural, and political divides of the citizens of Bangladesh are compared from the Pakistani ruling system to his administration. It is fair to say that Bangabandhu's diplomatic approach was soft and had a cogent attachment with vision and astuteness to accomplish his foreign policy objectives. He had the leadership of the independent Bangladesh for less than four years before he was assassinated by some distorted military officials of the Bangladesh army. However, within the short span of time, he laid a pragmatic framework of foreign policy for the nascent country. For over four decades, Bangabandhu's visions and ideas have been shaping foreign policy of Bangladesh not from his title or statesmanship but through the faculty of his visionary ideas and strength of his keen intellect.

Sharif Hossain Ahmad Chowdhury (01728-395949)