

## Concept Note

### *India's Foreign Policy: The Power Matrix*

Power indeed is the key factor in States' balancing behaviour. The traditional concept of power ('hard power') in international politics, especially for the Realist school has been the ability to obtain the outcomes one wants and is often associated with the possession of certain resources. The primary argument for the realists is that security of the State is attained and preserved through the maximization of power and the elements of national power include: geographical boundaries, large territorial size, the capacity for self-sufficiency in natural and industrial resources and a strong technological base, all of which contribute to a strong military capability. The desire to dominate other States increases as a State's power capabilities grow.

Often linked to the rise of globalization and neoliberal theory a new form of power—'soft power'— has become increasingly discussed in the post-Cold War era. Soft power in international politics arises from factors such as the dominant values, internal practices and policies, and the manner of conducting international relations of a State. Soft power is the ability to obtain what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises due to the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies, that is, through elements which are 'real but intangible'. The success of soft power heavily depends on the State's reputation within the international community, as well as the flow of information between States.

The proposed Symposium would focus on a debate around India's emergence as a major actor in the international arena and whether India's rise should be analysed through the prism of material indicators as economic growth and military expansion or it needs to be supplemented by an analysis of her 'soft power' credentials. Can a reliance on one or the other exclusively help in achieving foreign policy objectives? Soft power cannot be used in all situations just as hard power cannot be used under all circumstances. But if used effectively in conjugation with hard power can it yield better results? This use of a judicious combination of soft and hard power has been often termed as 'smart power' by some scholars. Can India's "smart power" potential help the Indian state to achieve its global ambitions and foreign policy objectives?