

Counterterrorism Narratives and Global Opinion Building: India's Moral Diplomacy in the Post- 9/11 Order

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Abstract

Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, counterterrorism has become a central organizing principle of international security discourse. While major powers have relied primarily on military and intelligence capabilities, India has simultaneously pursued a strategy of narrative construction and moral diplomacy in global forums. This article argues that India's counterterrorism diplomacy in the post-9/11 order represents a deliberate effort to shape international opinion through normative framing rather than coercive leverage alone. Drawing on constructivist international relations theory and the concept of strategic narratives, the study examines how India has framed terrorism as a universal moral threat in multilateral platforms such as the United Nations, the Financial Action Task Force, BRICS, and the G20. Using qualitative discourse analysis of official speeches, diplomatic statements, and multilateral resolutions between 2001 and 2023, the article demonstrates that India has sought to transition from a state-centric security claimant to a norm entrepreneur advocating a universal definition of terrorism. This moral framing serves multiple strategic purposes: delegitimizing state-sponsored terrorism, consolidating India's reputation as a responsible global actor, and strengthening its claim to major power status. However, the effectiveness of this strategy remains constrained by geopolitical contestation and competing narratives within global institutions. The article contributes to the literature by conceptualizing counterterrorism diplomacy as a form of soft power embedded in normative persuasion and global opinion building.

Keywords: counterterrorism diplomacy, strategic narratives, state centric claimant, norm entrepreneur, soft power

1. Introduction

The post- 9/11 international order witnessed the securitization of terrorism as a global threat transcending territorial boundaries. For many western powers, the "War on Terror" emphasized preemptive military action, intelligence expansion, and unilateral interventions. India, however, occupied a distinctive position within this evolving architecture. Having experienced decades of cross-border terrorism prior to 2001, India viewed the global recognition of terrorism as both an opportunity, security and a diplomatic challenge.

Unlike the United States, whose counterterrorism strategy relied heavily on kinetic and intelligence operations, India lacked comparable expeditionary capabilities due to various factors. As a result, New Delhi adopted a complementary strategy centered on multilateral engagement, multipolar diplomacy,

normative advocacy, and moral framing. This strategy intensified following the 2008 Mumbai attacks, which transformed India's diplomatic posture from reactive protest to proactive global campaigning.

The central claim of this article is that India's post-9/11 counterterrorism diplomacy reflects a form of moral statecraft—a strategy that uses normative discourse, legal advocacy, and international institutional engagement to shape global opinion and indirectly secure national interests. Rather than relying solely on material balancing, India has invested in narrative construction and pro active engagement, particularly through its long-standing proposal for the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) at the United Nations.

This narrative strategy gained renewed momentum under the leadership of Narendra Modi, whose diplomatic speeches frequently frame terrorism not merely as a bilateral dispute but as a civilizational, humanitarian and global threat. Through such framing, India attempts to universalize its security concerns and transform them into globally shared normative commitments.

Research Question

Why has India emphasized moral and normative framing in its counterterrorism diplomacy despite limited success in institutionalizing a universal definition of terrorism?

Does this approach reflect:

- A genuine norm entrepreneurship strategy?
- A soft power mechanism to build international legitimacy?
- Or a reputational instrument embedded within realist interest maximization?

This article argues that India's counterterrorism diplomacy constitutes a hybrid strategy combining constructivist norm entrepreneurship with realist interest protection inspired from Kautilya's Mandala Theory. By framing terrorism as an unequivocal moral evil—detached from ideological justification—India seeks to build international consensus, isolate adversarial states through reputational and financial costs, and enhance its global standing as a responsible power. This strategy illustrates how narrative power functions as an instrument of national interest in a evolving multipolar world.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative interpretive research design grounded in constructivist epistemology. The objective is not to measure counterterrorism outcomes quantitatively but to analyze how meaning is constructed, communicated, and institutionalized in global diplomatic discourse.

The research employs a process-tracing and discourse-analytical methodology to examine how India's counterterrorism narrative evolved between 2001 and 2023.

The time frame is divided into four analytical phases:

- 2001–2008: Post-9/11 global alignment phase
- 2008–2014: Post-Mumbai internationalization phase
- 2014–2019: Normative expansion and strategic signaling phase
- 2019–2023: Global South leadership and multilateral activism phase

2.2 Data Sources

The study relies on primary and secondary data:

Primary Sources:

- Official speeches delivered at the United Nations General Assembly
- Statements from India's Ministry of External Affairs
- FATF plenary documents
- Joint declarations from BRICS and G20 summits
- Parliamentary debates on counterterrorism

Secondary Sources:

- Academic journal articles on counterterrorism norms
- Strategic studies literature
- Books on Indian foreign policy
- Policy reports from think tanks

2.3 Analytical Method**(A) Discourse Analysis**

The study conducts thematic coding of key speeches to identify:

- Moral framing (“terrorism as evil,” “threat to humanity”)
- Universalist language (“no good or bad terrorists”)
- Legal-institutional emphasis (CCIT references)
- Linkage strategies (terrorism-development nexus)

Discourse analysis helps reveal how India constructs legitimacy claims and moral authority in global politics.

(B) Process Tracing

Process tracing is employed to connect narrative interventions with observable diplomatic outcomes, such as:

- FATF grey-listing decisions
- Security Council resolutions

Inclusion of counterterrorism language in G20 communiqués

This allows evaluation of whether narrative efforts correlate with institutional shifts.

2.4 Theoretical Anchoring

The methodology draws on:

- Constructivist IR theory (norm construction and identity formation)
- Strategic narrative theory
- Soft power theory (particularly the work of Joseph Nye)

Constructivism is particularly suitable because counterterrorism diplomacy revolves around defining legitimacy, norms, and moral standards rather than solely material capabilities.

2.5 Limitations

- Attribution Challenge: It is difficult to isolate narrative influence from geopolitical bargaining.
- Institutional Constraints: UN veto politics may obscure normative impact.
- Competing Narratives: Other states contest India's framing, particularly regarding regional disputes.
- Data Bias: Reliance on official speeches may privilege state-produced narratives.

Despite these limitations, qualitative discourse analysis remains appropriate for examining normative diplomacy.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The study uses publicly available documents and does not involve human subjects or confidential data. Interpretation seeks analytical neutrality while acknowledging geopolitical sensitivities.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Counterterrorism and the Construction of Global Norms

The study of counterterrorism in international relations has evolved significantly since 9/11. Early scholarship focused predominantly on securitization, military doctrine, and intelligence cooperation. Realist analyses emphasized state survival and coercive capacity, interpreting counterterrorism as an extension of traditional security competition (Walt, 2001). In contrast, liberal institutionalists examined the growth of multilateral coordination mechanisms, particularly within the United Nations framework, highlighting legal harmonization and global governance responses.

However, constructivist scholars redirected attention toward the normative dimension of terrorism. They argued that terrorism is not merely a tactical phenomenon but a socially constructed category shaped by political discourse and legitimacy claims. The absence of a universally accepted definition of terrorism reflects deep normative contestation within international society. Attempts to codify terrorism, including India's long-standing proposal for a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT), have encountered resistance precisely because definitions implicate questions of self-determination, state violence, and resistance movements.

This scholarship underscores a key insight: counterterrorism is fundamentally about narrative authority—the power to define legitimate and illegitimate violence. Thus, diplomatic efforts to universalize certain definitions represent struggles over moral legitimacy rather than purely legal codification.

3.2 Soft Power and Moral Diplomacy

The concept of soft power, most prominently articulated by Joseph Nye (2004), provides a crucial theoretical lens for this article. Soft power refers to the ability to shape the preferences of others through attraction rather than coercion or payment. While traditionally applied to cultural diplomacy and public diplomacy, soft power theory has increasingly been extended to normative statecraft and agenda-setting in multilateral institutions.

Subsequent scholarship refined the concept by distinguishing between:

Passive soft power (attraction through culture and values)

Active soft power (strategic narrative construction and persuasion)

In this sense, counterterrorism diplomacy can function as active soft power when states frame security threats in universal moral language to build coalitions and shape global opinion.

Moral diplomacy, as an extension of soft power, involves the deliberate invocation of ethical principles to legitimize foreign policy objectives. States often deploy moral rhetoric not merely for reputational gains but to structure institutional outcomes. India's repeated emphasis that "there is no good or bad terrorism" reflects precisely such an attempt to fix moral boundaries within international discourse.

3.3 Strategic Narratives in Global Politics

Strategic narrative theory offers another critical analytical tool. Scholars argue that states construct narratives to shape international order by:

- Defining threats
- Framing identities
- Establishing causal interpretations
- Projecting preferred futures

Narratives operate at three levels:

- System narratives (about global order)
- Identity narratives (about who “we” are)
- Issue narratives (about specific policy domains)

India’s counterterrorism diplomacy can be understood as operating across all three levels.

- At the system level, it advocates a rules-based global order intolerant of terrorism.
- At the identity level, India presents itself as a responsible democracy victimized by extremism.
- At the issue level, it calls for universal definitions and financial accountability mechanisms.

Strategic narrative scholarship suggests that success depends on resonance, institutional embedding, and repetition over time. India’s long-term advocacy for CCIT illustrates persistence in narrative projection, even in the absence of immediate institutional success.

3.4 India’s Foreign Policy and Norm Entrepreneurship

Traditional analyses of Indian foreign policy emphasize strategic autonomy, non-alignment, and postcolonial identity. More recent scholarship has examined India’s aspiration for major power status and its activism in multilateral institutions such as BRICS and the G20.

However, literature specifically examining India as a norm entrepreneur in counterterrorism remains underdeveloped. Existing studies tend to focus on bilateral relations or regional security dynamics rather than global opinion building. The shift in India’s diplomatic posture after the 2008 Mumbai attacks marked a transition from reactive diplomacy to proactive global advocacy.

Under Narendra Modi, counterterrorism narratives became more expansive, linking terrorism to development, climate vulnerability, and digital radicalization. This broadened framing indicates a strategic attempt to universalize India’s security concerns within global governance frameworks.

3.5 Gaps in the Literature

Despite extensive work on terrorism, soft power, and Indian foreign policy, three major gaps persist:

- Insufficient integration of soft power theory with counterterrorism diplomacy.
- Limited exploration of how narrative construction shapes institutional outcomes such as FATF decisions.
- Lack of systematic longitudinal analysis of India’s post-9/11 discourse evolution.
- This article addresses these gaps by conceptualizing counterterrorism diplomacy as moral diplomacy embedded in narrative power.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1 Constructivist Epistemology

This study is grounded in constructivist international relations theory, which posits that international politics is socially constructed through shared norms, identities, and meanings. Security threats do not exist independently of discourse; they acquire significance through interpretive frameworks.

From a constructivist perspective:

- Terrorism is a contested category.
- Legitimacy derives from normative consensus.
- Reputation shapes power hierarchies.

Thus, India's diplomatic efforts are analyzed not merely as instrumental bargaining but as attempts to shape the normative architecture of global counterterrorism.

4.2 Norm Entrepreneurship

Norm entrepreneurs are actors who seek to change international standards of appropriate behavior by framing issues in morally compelling ways. They rely on:

- Persuasive communication
- Coalition building
- Institutional engagement

India's advocacy for a universal definition of terrorism exemplifies norm entrepreneurship. By insisting that political motivations cannot justify violence against civilians, India attempts to narrow interpretive ambiguity in global law.

Norm entrepreneurship proceeds in stages:

- Norm emergence
- Norm cascade
- Norm internalization

India's counterterrorism diplomacy arguably remains in the first two stages, with partial institutional embedding in financial monitoring regimes such as the Financial Action Task Force.

4.3 Moral Diplomacy as Strategic Instrument

While constructivism highlights normative motivations, realist insights remind us that moral rhetoric often serves strategic interests. This study therefore conceptualizes India's approach as hybrid moral-realism.

Moral framing helps India:

- Increase reputational capital
- Raise diplomatic costs for adversaries
- Enhance its credentials as a responsible power

Support its long-standing aspiration for greater institutional representation

Thus, moral diplomacy is not detached from national interest; it is a mechanism for securing it indirectly.

4.4 Counterterrorism as Soft Power

Extending Nye's framework, this article proposes that counterterrorism narratives can function as soft power when:

- They resonate internationally
- They shape institutional agendas
- They produce reputational benefits

Unlike traditional soft power rooted in culture, this form is normative soft power, grounded in moral persuasion and global opinion building.

4.5 Analytical Model

The article advances a three-step analytical model:

Step 1: Narrative Construction

India frames terrorism as universal moral evil.

Step 2: Institutional Embedding

Narratives are introduced in UN resolutions, BRICS declarations, and G20 communiqués.

Step 3: Strategic Outcome

Reputational gains, financial scrutiny mechanisms, and diplomatic isolation of adversarial actors.

This model will guide the empirical sections that follow.

5. Evolution of India's Counterterrorism Narrative (2001–2023)

India's counterterrorism diplomacy in the post-9/11 era did not emerge in a vacuum. It evolved through distinct phases shaped by global events, domestic security crises, and shifting leadership styles. This section traces that evolution across four analytical phases identified in the methodology.

5.1 Phase I (2001–2008): Alignment Without Ownership

The attacks of September 11, 2001, restructured global security discourse. For India, which had long argued that terrorism transcended national boundaries, 9/11 appeared to validate its claims. However, the early post-9/11 period was dominated by the United States' unilateral military interventions and security-led counterterrorism paradigm.

India aligned rhetorically with global counterterrorism efforts but did not yet occupy a leadership position in shaping the narrative. Its interventions at the United Nations emphasized:

- The need for a universal definition of terrorism
- The urgency of adopting the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT)
- The rejection of political justifications for violence

However, this phase was characterized by diplomatic marginalization in global agenda-setting. The “War on Terror” was largely framed in Western strategic language rather than normative universalism. India's narrative existed but lacked institutional traction.

5.2 Phase II (2008–2014): Internationalization after the Mumbai Attacks

The 2008 Mumbai attacks marked a decisive turning point. The attacks were widely covered internationally, transforming India's counterterrorism discourse from regional grievance to global moral claim.

Following the attacks, India pursued a three-fold diplomatic strategy:

- Internationalization of the Threat – Framing the attack as an assault on global values rather than a bilateral dispute.
- Legal Advocacy – Renewed push for CCIT adoption at the United Nations.
- Financial Accountability – Increased engagement with the Financial Action Task Force to highlight terror financing networks.

The moral framing intensified during this phase. India emphasized that terrorism was an attack on pluralism, democracy, and humanity itself. This discursive shift aligned with the theoretical logic of norm entrepreneurship: by universalizing the threat, India sought broader coalition support.

However, institutional outcomes remained limited. CCIT negotiations stalled due to definitional disagreements—particularly regarding “freedom struggles” and state use of force. This resistance illustrates the limits of normative persuasion in contested geopolitical contexts.

5.3 Phase III (2014–2019): Norm Expansion and Strategic Signaling

The election of Narendra Modi marked a rhetorical and stylistic transformation in India's diplomatic lan-

guage. Counterterrorism was embedded within broader civilizational and developmental narratives.

Key features of this phase include:

- Repeated articulation of the principle: “No good terrorist, no bad terrorist.”
- Linkage between terrorism and global poverty.
- Framing terrorism as an obstacle to sustainable development.
- Integration of counterterrorism language into South–South cooperation platforms.

At multilateral forums such as BRICS, India successfully incorporated stronger counterterrorism language into joint declarations. This marked a partial institutional embedding of its narrative within emerging power coalitions. Simultaneously, India intensified efforts within the FATF framework to push for financial scrutiny mechanisms. This illustrates how narrative diplomacy can intersect with regulatory institutions to produce indirect strategic effects. In theoretical terms, this phase represents a transition from norm emergence to partial norm cascade, though not full internalization.

5.4 Phase IV (2019–2023): Global South Leadership and Institutional Embedding

The most recent phase reflects an expansion of India’s narrative strategy into broader global governance contexts. During its presidency of the G20, India incorporated counterterrorism discussions into financial and developmental agendas.

Notably, India framed terrorism as:

- A threat to digital ecosystems
- A destabilizer of financial systems
- A barrier to inclusive development

This expanded framing indicates strategic sophistication. Rather than limiting counterterrorism to security forums, India embedded the issue in economic and technological governance institutions. Additionally, India continued to press for accountability within the United Nations Security Council sanctions regime, linking narrative legitimacy with institutional enforcement.

6. Institutional Case Studies

6.1 The United Nations:

Normative Advocacy and Institutional Constraints:

India’s engagement at the United Nations represents the most sustained effort at normative codification. Since the late 1990s, India has advocated the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT), which seeks to define terrorism without exception for political motivation.

The UN platform provides:

- Symbolic legitimacy
- Legal standard-setting potential
- Global visibility

India’s discourse at the General Assembly consistently emphasizes universal moral condemnation, framing terrorism as incompatible with international humanitarian norms.

However, institutional constraints remain formidable. Veto politics, definitional disputes, and geopolitical alignments limit consensus formation. Despite rhetorical support from many states, CCIT has not been adopted. This illustrates the structural limits of narrative power when confronted by divergent strategic interests. Nevertheless, India’s persistent advocacy reinforces its identity as a norm entrepreneur and responsible stakeholder.

6.2 The Financial Action Task Force:

Regulatory Embedding of Narrative Claims

Unlike the UN, the FATF provides a technical-regulatory framework for countering terror financing. India's strategy here has been less rhetorical and more procedural.

By aligning narrative claims about state-sponsored terrorism with financial compliance mechanisms, India sought to:

- Translate moral claims into regulatory consequences
- Increase reputational costs for non-compliant states
- Shift the discourse from political accusation to technical evaluation

FATF grey-listing and compliance monitoring illustrate how narrative diplomacy can intersect with global regulatory governance to produce tangible strategic outcomes.

6.3 BRICS: Negotiating Narrative Space Among Emerging Powers

Within BRICS, India faces the challenge of aligning counterterrorism discourse with partners who may prioritize sovereignty and non-interference. Yet successive BRICS declarations have included progressively stronger language condemning terrorism. This demonstrates incremental narrative acceptance within alternative power blocs. However, divergences persist, particularly concerning definitional specificity and references to particular groups. This underscores the negotiated nature of narrative embedding.

6.4 G20: Mainstreaming Counterterrorism into Global Governance

India's presidency of the G20 marked a significant moment in narrative mainstreaming.

Rather than isolating counterterrorism within security committees, India integrated it into:

- Financial inclusion discussions
- Digital governance debates
- Developmental cooperation agendas

This represents strategic reframing: terrorism is no longer solely a security issue but a systemic governance challenge.

Such reframing broadens coalition potential and aligns counterterrorism with universal public goods discourse.

7. Strategic Outcomes and Reputational Gains

While CCIT remains unadopted, narrative persistence has yielded indirect gains:

- Increased global acknowledgment of cross-border terrorism concerns.
- Stronger financial monitoring mechanisms through FATF.
- Enhanced reputation as a responsible democracy confronting extremism.
- Expanded diplomatic leverage in multilateral negotiations.
- India's counterterrorism diplomacy has thus contributed to reputation building—an essential component of major power aspiration.

8. Limitations and Contradictions

Despite these gains, challenges remain:

- Competing narratives linking terrorism with unresolved territorial disputes.

- Skepticism among some Global South states regarding selective application of counterterrorism norms.
- Institutional deadlock within the UN system. Geopolitical polarization limiting universal norm acceptance.
- These limitations highlight the boundaries of moral diplomacy in an increasingly fragmented global order.

Analytical Summary

The empirical analysis confirms the article's central claim: India's post-9/11 counterterrorism diplomacy represents a hybrid strategy combining moral framing with strategic interest maximization. Through sustained narrative construction, institutional embedding, and regulatory engagement, India has sought to transform security grievance into normative capital.

9. Evaluating the Effectiveness of India's Moral Diplomacy Strategy

Assessing the effectiveness of India's counterterrorism narrative strategy requires distinguishing between institutional success, normative diffusion, and reputational outcomes.

9.1 Institutional Outcomes: Partial but Significant

On the most visible metric—adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) at the United Nations—India has not achieved formal codification. Definitional disagreements, especially regarding liberation movements and state violence, have prevented consensus.

However, evaluating success solely through CCIT adoption would underestimate narrative impact. India's persistent advocacy has contributed to:

Repeated reaffirmation in UN resolutions that terrorism is unjustifiable regardless of motivation.

Increased attention to terror financing mechanisms.

Stronger compliance regimes through the Financial Action Task Force.

Thus, while codification remains incomplete, discursive normalization has advanced.

9.2 Normative Diffusion: From Emergence to Partial Cascade

Applying norm entrepreneurship theory, India's efforts appear to have moved from norm emergence to partial norm cascade, though not full internalization.

Evidence of diffusion includes:

Incorporation of counterterrorism commitments in BRICS summit declarations.

Mainstreaming of terror financing concerns in the G20 agenda.

Growing rhetorical convergence among states that "terrorism cannot be justified."

However, diffusion remains selective and politically mediated. Strategic alignments often determine whether narrative endorsement translates into policy action.

9.3 Reputational Gains and Status Signaling

Perhaps the most significant outcome lies in reputational politics. By consistently advocating a universal moral stance, India projects itself as:

A responsible democratic actor.

A rule-based internationalist power.

A credible claimant to expanded institutional representation.

In status theory terms, counterterrorism diplomacy functions as status-seeking behavior. It signals normative maturity and leadership capacity within the international system.

Under Narendra Modi, this signaling intensified through civilizational framing and repeated emphasis on global responsibility. Such rhetorical positioning supports India's broader aspiration for recognition as a leading power of the Global South.

10. Theoretical Contributions

This article contributes to international relations scholarship in four principal ways.

10.1 Reconceptualizing Counterterrorism as Soft Power

Traditional analyses treat counterterrorism as a hard security domain. This study extends soft power theory—initially articulated by Joseph Nye—by conceptualizing counterterrorism narratives as a form of normative soft power.

Unlike cultural attraction, normative soft power operates through:

- Moral persuasion
- Agenda-setting
- Institutional embedding

This reframing broadens the analytical utility of soft power in security studies.

10.2 Bridging Realism and Constructivism

The findings support a hybrid theoretical model. Constructivism explains narrative construction and norm entrepreneurship, while realism accounts for interest maximization and strategic calculation.

India's moral diplomacy is neither purely idealistic nor purely instrumental. It reflects strategic norm construction—the deliberate shaping of moral discourse to secure material and reputational interests.

10.3 Expanding Strategic Narrative Theory

Strategic narrative theory often focuses on major Western powers. This article demonstrates how a rising power from the Global South deploys long-term narrative persistence to shape institutional discourse.

India's case illustrates that:

Narrative repetition can compensate for material asymmetry.

Institutional embedding amplifies discursive influence.

Normative claims can serve as indirect balancing mechanisms.

10.4 Reframing Major Power Aspiration

Finally, the study situates counterterrorism diplomacy within broader status politics. By championing universal norms, India seeks recognition as a norm-shaping power rather than merely a rule-taker.

This underscores how moral leadership claims function as instruments of systemic positioning in a multipolar order.

11. Policy Implications

The analysis suggests several policy implications:

Narrative Consistency Matters: Sustained rhetorical coherence strengthens credibility.

Institutional Diversification Increases Impact: Embedding issues across platforms (UN, FATF, BRICS, G20) broadens normative reach.

Technical-Regulatory Channels Can Amplify Moral Claims: Financial monitoring regimes provide enforcement pathways for normative positions.

Coalition Building in the Global South Is Essential: Norm cascade requires broad-based endorsement beyond traditional Western partners.

12. Limitations and Areas for Future Research

While this study demonstrates narrative evolution and institutional embedding, several limitations warrant further inquiry:

Quantitative measurement of global opinion shifts remains underdeveloped.

Comparative analysis with other states (e.g., United States or European Union approaches) could clarify relative effectiveness.

Future research could employ elite interviews to assess internal diplomatic strategy formation.

Moreover, digital diplomacy and social media narratives represent emerging arenas for counterterrorism discourse that merit systematic study.

13. Conclusion

In the post-9/11 international order, counterterrorism has become both a security imperative and a domain of normative contestation. India's diplomatic strategy illustrates how a rising power can leverage moral framing to shape global opinion and secure national interests.

Rather than relying solely on coercive capacity, India has pursued a long-term strategy of narrative construction, institutional embedding, and reputational signaling. Its advocacy for universal condemnation of terrorism, engagement with financial monitoring regimes, and integration of counterterrorism into broader global governance forums collectively reflect a deliberate moral diplomacy strategy.

Although institutional codification remains incomplete, India's sustained narrative persistence has contributed to normative diffusion and enhanced its status as a responsible stakeholder in international society. Counterterrorism diplomacy thus emerges not merely as security policy but as a form of strategic soft power embedded in moral persuasion.

In an increasingly fragmented multipolar world, where legitimacy and narrative authority shape power hierarchies, India's experience demonstrates that moral diplomacy can serve as a meaningful instrument of national interest preservation.

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