

Re-Constructing Identity and Exceptionalism in India's Foreign Policy:  
The Advantages and Challenges to India's Rise

Ph.D. in Politics

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## **Confirmation of Original Authorship**

I, Pounami Basu declare that this is an original piece of work submitted towards the award of doctoral thesis in Politics and International Relations, at University of Reading and all the materials drawn from other sources have been cited with correct references.

18 March 2020

Dedicated to my Grand Parents,  
Late Bijnanananda Ray and Late Ira Ray

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## ABSTRACT

The research project looks at the discursive reproduction of Indian identity by the Indian 'security elites' in a rising India's foreign policy discourse and aims to understand the idea of Indian difference or exceptionalism as both shaping India's foreign policies and being reproduced through the same. It looks at India's approach with three specific in depth case studies- nuclear energy and disarmament; the 'neighbourhood first' policy and relations with Pakistan; and India's Ocean policy in the context of expanding Chinese presence in the Indo-Pacific region. Drawing on critical and radical constructivism literature, foreign policy is seen as a site for identity (re-)construction through Self/Other lenses. It explores the representational and performative practices through which multiple spatial-political/temporal and internal/external Others are (re-)constructed against which the Indian Self is continuously (re-)defined, re-produced and secured.

The study identifies that Indian elites have always operated with a strong sense of exceptionalism or *Indian-ness* and continue to discursively reproduce the Indian difference. The study intends to explore the content of 'Indian exceptionalism' or difference as discursively reproduced in the first half of the thesis. It identifies certain themes of *Indian-ness* and employs them in the three policy areas which are examined in the latter half of the thesis. This helps to understand India's interactions with the nuclear order that brought India from the periphery to the mainstream. The study explores the various Self-representational practices in relation to the temporal and spatial-political Others to reproduce India's difference as 'a responsible nuclear power' despite being outside the non-proliferation regimes and to facilitate India's domestic transformation. In the South Asian neighbourhood, India is re-produced as a force of stability and prosperity in the region and New Delhi has re-interpreted its policy of 'strategic restraint' with the use of surgical strikes to deal with Pakistan-terrorism nexus. India identifies the China Other as both a long term and short term challenge and this has effected in significant shifts in India's Ocean diplomacy. Indian elites aim to reposition India as a normative actor in the Indo-Pacific region and express India's willingness to shoulder greater responsibilities to emerge as a 'security provider' based on the *Panchamrit* doctrine under Narendra Modi's leadership.

There are both continuities and changes in India's representational practices and the dissertation aims to explore and analyse these and establish the links between India's foreign policy discourse and practices. It is an interpretative and qualitative study based on extensive documentary analysis and elite interviews which aims to understand India's commitment to traditional principles, its re-interpretations and modifications to assist India's rise on the global stage. The study concludes that identity matters in order to understand these continuities and changes in India's foreign policy practices and ideas of 'civilizational exceptionalism' remain integral to India's identity (re-)production.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABM	:	Anti Ballistic Missile
ADMM	:	ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting
AEC	:	Atomic Energy Commission
AEP	:	Act East Policy
AIIB	:	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
ASEAN	:	Association of Southeast Asian Nation
BASIC	:	Brazil, South Africa, India and China
BARC	:	Bhaba Atomic Research Centre
BCIM	:	Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar
BIMSTEC	:	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multisectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
BJP	:	Bharatiya Janata Party
BJS	:	Bharatiya Jana Sangh
BRI	:	Belt Road Initiative
BRICS	:	Brazil Russia India China and South Africa
CAA	:	Citizenship (Amendment) Act
CBM	:	Confidence Building Measures
CII	:	Confederation of Indian Industry
CPC	:	Communist Party of China
CPEC	:	China Pakistan Economic Corridor
CPI	:	Communist Party of India
CPI(M)	:	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
CTBT	:	Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty
DAE	:	Department of Atomic Energy
DRDO	:	Defence Research and Development Organisation
EAM	:	External Affairs Minister
EAS	:	East Asia Summit
ENR	:	Enrichment and Reprocessing
EU	:	European Union
FMCT	:	Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty
FOIP	:	Free and Open Indo-Pacific
FTA	:	Free Trade Agreement
GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
GNEP	:	Global Nuclear Energy Partnership

HTCG	:	High Technology Cooperation Group
IAEA	:	International Atomic Energy Agency
IAEE	:	International Association of Exhibition and Events
IBSA	:	India, Brazil, South Africa
ICBM	:	Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile
IDSA	:	Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses
IFS	:	Indian Foreign Service
IISS	:	International Institute for Strategic Studies
IMF	:	International Monetary Fund
INA	:	Indian National Army
INC	:	Indian National Congress
IOR	:	Indian Ocean Region
IORA	:	Indian Ocean Regional Association
IPP	:	Indo-Pacific Partnership
ISAS	:	Institute of South Asian Studies
ISRO	:	Indian Space Research Organisation
ITEC	:	Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation
JEM	:	Jaish-e-Mohammed
LoC	:	Line of Control
LeT	:	Lashkar-e-Taiba
LEP	:	Look East Policy
LTTE	:	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MEA	:	Ministry of External Affairs
MoD	:	Ministry of Defence
MoS	:	Minister of State
MP	:	Member of Parliament
MTCR	:	Missile Technology Control Regime
NAM	:	Non-Aligned Movement
NDA	:	National Democratic Alliance
NDB	:	New Development Bank
NDS	:	National Defense Strategy
NIEO	:	New International Economic Order
NNPT	:	Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty
NPT	:	Non-Proliferation Treaty
NRI	:	Non-Resident Indians

NSA	:	National Security Advisor
NSAB	:	National Security Advisory Board
NSC	:	National Security Council
NSG	:	Nuclear Suppliers Group
NSS	:	National Security Strategy
NSSP	:	Neat Steps in Strategic Partnership
OBOR	:	One Belt One Road
OCI	:	Overseas Citizens of India
OIC	:	Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
ORF	:	Observer Research Foundation
PDT	:	Post-structuralist Discourse Theory
PHWR	:	Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors
PLA	:	People's Liberation Army
PM	:	Prime Minister
PMO	:	Prime Minister's Office
PNE	:	Peaceful Nuclear Explosion
POK	:	Pakistan Occupied Kashmir
PPP	:	Purchasing Power Parity
PSI	:	Proliferation Security Initiative
RIC	:	Russia-India-China
RSS	:	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
SAARC	:	South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation
SASEC	:	South Asian Sub-regional Economic Cooperation
SCO	:	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SIMI	:	Students Islamic Movement of India
SP	:	Samajwadi Party
UK	:	United Kingdom
UN	:	United Nations
UPA	:	United Progressive Alliance
US/USA	:	United States of America
VHP	:	Viswa Hindu Parishad
WMD	:	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO	:	World Trade Organisation



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## Introduction

*It is a policy inherent in the circumstances in India, inherent in the past thinking of India, inherent in the whole mental outlook of India, inherent in the conditioning of the Indian mind during our struggle for freedom and inherent in the circumstances of the world today.*

-Jawaharlal Nehru<sup>1</sup>

Besides the focus on great power politics there has been an increasing attention on the state behaviour of the ‘emerging powers’<sup>2</sup> like China, India, Japan and Brazil as a result of their increased economic weight, military heft and enhanced influence in the international order in the last two decades. After the end of the Cold war that was characterised by bipolar distribution of power, the United States of America (USA) emerged as the sole major power and the neo-liberal outlook shaped the structures of global governance.<sup>3</sup> However, the Asian countries were also registering high rates of economic growth and beginning to play a greater role in regional and global politics. Post the first decade of the US hegemony scholars have focussed on understanding the challenges to the predominance of the United States or unipolarity and the future of the

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<sup>1</sup> J. Nehru, ‘Nehru’s reply to the debate on foreign affairs in the Lokh Sabha’, *Lok Sabha Debates*, series 2, 9 December 1958, cols.3959-61.

<sup>2</sup> There is a vast literature that deals with the debate on the connotative and denotative meanings of the term ‘emerging’ or ‘rising’ powers. For a discussion on the debate on the conceptual alternatives of emerging powers see A. Hurrell et al, ‘Some Reflections on the Role of Intermediate Powers in International Institutions’, in A. Hurrell et al. (eds.), *Paths to Power: Foreign Policy Strategies of Intermediate States*, Washington, Woodrow Wilson Centre for Scholars, 2000, pp.1-11; E. Jordaan, ‘The Concept of a Middle power in International Relations: Distinguishing between Emerging and Traditional Middle powers’, in *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies*, vol.30, no.2, 2003, pp.165–181; A. Cooper, A. Antikiewicz and T. Shaw, ‘Economic Size Trumps All Else? Lessons from BRICSAM’, *International Studies Review*, vol.9, 2007, pp.673–689; H. Schwengel, ‘Emerging powers as fact and metaphor: some European ideas’, *Futures*, vol.40, no.8, 2008, pp.767–776; D. Nolte, ‘How to compare regional powers: analytical concepts and research topics’, *Review of International Studies*, vol.36, no.4, 2010, pp. 881–901; A. Hurrell, ‘Narratives of emergence: Rising powers and the end of the Third World?’, *Brazilian Journal of Political Economy*, vol.33, no.2, 2013, pp.203-221; A.Narlika, *New Powers: How to become one and how to manage them*, London and New York, Hurst Publications, Oxford University Press, 2010; A. Cooper and D. Flesmes, ‘Foreign Policy Strategies of Emerging Powers in a Multipolar World: an introductory review’, *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 34, no.6, 2013, pp.943–962.; C. Brüttsch and M. Papa, ‘Deconstructing the BRICS: Bargaining Coalition, Imagined Community, or Geopolitical Fad?’, *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, vol. 6, 2013, pp.299 – 327; R. Schweller, ‘Emerging Powers in an Age of Disorder’, *Global Governance*, vol.17, 2011, pp.285–297.

<sup>3</sup> M. Blyth, ‘One Ring to Bind Them All: American Power and Neoliberal Capitalism’, in S. Kopstein and J.Steinmo (ed.), *Growing Apart?: America and Europe in the Twenty-first Century*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 109-135.

liberal world order with the rise of China and the election of Trump.<sup>4</sup> The financial crisis of 2008 opened the Western led international financial institutions to criticism and started an anti-globalization trend as evident from the decline in the capital flow that stood at \$1.2 trillion accounting for only 2% share of the global economy in 2014 (from \$9 trillion with a 25 % share in 2007) and the global trade growing at a pace slower than the global economy.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the political developments in the Europea Union (EU) and the Brexit vote that reflects an inward outlook and embrace of nationalism coupled with slow growth rates, rising unemployment levels and economic stagnation in Europe have further lent support to the popular assumption about the gradual rupture in process of the liberal capitalist and liberal democratic status quo that has steered the global order in the last few decades. On the other hand, increasing participation of the peripheral spaces particularly those belonging to the ‘Global South’ in the world production and economic flows and their eagerness to participate in the global economic and governance processes have dawned upon and paved the way for a ‘multipolar world order’ in which these countries have become mainstream participants.<sup>6</sup>

These ‘emerging powers’ foremost are expected to sustain continuous economic growth and have significant long-term economic relevance that would concomitantly reinforce their greater influence in the international order.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the ‘emerging

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<sup>4</sup> See, C. Layne, ‘The Waning of U.S. Hegemony: Myth or Reality’, *International Security*, vol.34, no.1, 2009, pp.147–172; C. Layne, ‘This Time it’s Real: the end of unipolarity and the pax Americana’, *International Studies Quarterly*, vol.6, 2012, pp.203–213; G.J. Ikenberry, M. Mastanduno and W.C. Wohlforth (eds.), *International Relations Theory and the Consequences of Unipolarity*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011; B. Buzan, ‘A World Without Superpowers: Decentered Globalism’, *International Relations*, vol.25, no.1, 2011, pp. 1–23; G.J. Ikenberry, ‘The Rise of China and Future of the West’, *Foreign Affairs*, vol.87, no.1, 2008, pp. 23–37; G.J. Ikenberry, ‘The Future of Liberal World Order’, *Foreign Affairs*, vol.90, no.3, 2011, pp.56–62; P. Khanna, *O Segundo Mundo*, Rio de Janeiro, Intrínseca, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> ‘India disappoints optimists, and pessimists: economic analyst Ruchir Sharma’, IANS Interview, *Business Standard*, 3 July 2016.

<sup>6</sup> M. Kahler, ‘Rising powers and global governance: negotiating change in a resilient status quo’, *International Affairs*, vol. 89, no.3, 2013, pp.711-729.

<sup>7</sup> See, S. Andreasson, ‘Africa’s prospects and South Africa’s leadership potential in the emerging markets century’, *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 32, no.6, 2001, pp. 1165–1181; A. Cooper and A. Farooq, ‘Testing the club culture of the BRICS: the evolution of a New Development Bank’, *Contexto Internacional*, vol. 37, no.1, 2015, pp.13–56; Cooper, Antikiewicz and Shaw, ‘Economic Size Trumps All Else?’; N. MacFarlane, ‘The “R” in BRICS: is Russia an emerging power?’, *International Affairs*, vol.82, no.1, 2006, pp. 41–57; R. Sharma, ‘Broken BRICS: Why the Rest Stopped Rising’, *Foreign Affairs*, vol.91, no.6, 2012, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/brazil/2012-10-22/broken-brics>, (accessed on 20 January 2020); M. Stephen, ‘Rising powers, global capitalism and liberal global governance: A historical materialist account of the BRICs challenge’, *European Journal of International Relations*, vol.21, 2014,

powers' claim their space in global governance processes and institutions in order to become a rule or norm maker instead of remaining a rule follower and their strategies are therefore reformist or revisionist in nature.<sup>8</sup> These states that have been traditionally marginalised in the hegemonic order are now seeking recognition for their enhanced stature and influence by showing their willingness to play an enhanced role in both regional and global governance structures. This is seen as a result of 'the historical identity of not belonging to the *status quo* order' that they have because of their strong ties to the Third World movement and to the idea of Global South.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, it has been suggested that the large emerging economies are less likely to become radical reformists but would remain moderates because similar to many other powers in the past they wish 'to extract as many benefits as possible from their engagement with the

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pp. 1–27; G. Chin, 'The BRICS-led Development Bank: Purpose and Politics beyond the G20', *Global Policy*, vol.5, no.3, 2014, pp. 363–376.

<sup>8</sup> See A. Hurrell, 'Hegemony, liberalism and global order: what space for would-be great powers?' *International Affairs*, vol.82, no.1, 2006, pp. 1–19; R. Tammen, 'The Impact of Asia on World Politics: China and India Options for the United States', *International Studies Review*, vol.8, no.1, 2006, pp.563–580; Cooper, Antikiewicz and Shaw, 'Economic Size Trumps All Else?'; Ikenberry, 'The Rise of China and Future of the West'; Ikenberry, 'The Future of Liberal World Order'; M. Beeson and S. Bell, 'The G-20 and International Economic Governance: Hegemony, Collectivism, or Both', *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations*, vol.15, no.1, 2009, pp.67–86; A. Mattoo, and A. Subramanian, 'From Doha to the Next Bretton Woods: A New Multilateral Trade Agenda', *Foreign Affairs*, vol.88, no.1, 2009, pp.15–26; S. Patrick, 'Irresponsible Stakeholders? The Difficulty of Integrating Rising Powers', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 89, no.6, 2010, pp.44–53; A.F. Barros-Platiau, 'When emerging countries reform global governance of climate change', *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, vol.53, 2010, pp.73–90; S. Schirm, 'Leaders in need of followers: emerging powers in global governance', *European Journal of International Relations*, vol.16, 2010, pp.197–221; R. Desai and J. Vreeland, 'Global Governance in a Multipolar World: The Case for Regional Monetary Funds', *International Studies Review*, vol.13, 2011, pp.109–121; K. Gray and C. Murphy, 'Introduction: rising powers and the future of global governance', *Third World Quarterly*, vol.34, no.2, 2013, pp.183–193; P. Golub, 'From the New International Economic Order to the G20: how the 'global South' is restructuring world capitalism from within', *Third World Quarterly*, vol.34, no.6, 2013, pp 1000–1015; A. Vanaik, 'Capitalist Globalisation and the Problem of Stability: Enter the new quintet and other emerging powers', *Third World Quarterly*, vol.34, no.2, 2014, pp.194–213; S. Weinlich, 'Emerging powers at the UN: ducking for cover?', *Third World Quarterly*, vol.35, no.1, 2014, pp.1829–1844; D. Flemes, 'Network Powers: strategies of change in the multipolar system', *Third World Quarterly*, vol.34, no.6, 2013, pp.1016–1036; Stephen, 'Rising powers, global capitalism and liberal global governance'; Cooper and Farooq, 'Testing the club culture of the BRICS'.

<sup>9</sup> See Beeson and Bell, 'The G-20 and International Economic Governance'; R. Palat, 'A new Bandung? Economic growth vs. distributive justice among emerging powers', *Futures*, vol. 40, no.8, 2008, pp.721–734; W. Callahan, 'Chinese Visions of World Order: Post-hegemonic or a New Hegemony?' *International Studies Review*, vol.10, 2008, pp. 749–761; D.C. Kang, *China Rising: peace, power and order in East Asia*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2007; P. Nel, 'Redistribution and recognition: what emerging regional powers want', *Review of International Studies*, vol.36, 2010, pp. 951–974; T. Santos, 'Globalization, Emerging Powers, and the Future of Capitalism', *Latin American Perspectives*, vol.38, 2011, pp.45–57; A. Hurrell and S. Sengupta, 'Emerging powers, North–South relations and global climate politics', *International Affairs*, vol.88, no.3, 2012, pp.463–484; A. Narlikar, 'Negotiating the rise of new powers', *International Affairs*, vol.89, no.3, 2013, pp. 561–576; Hurrell, 'Narratives of emergence'.

international order while giving up as little decision-making autonomy as possible.<sup>10</sup> These emerging powers in relation to global economic governance or international security regimes particularly on non-proliferation, peacekeeping and on climate change call for equal share of responsibilities and obligations as similar to the incumbent powers and reject any constraint on national decision-making autonomy that has not been explicitly negotiated and agreed upon.<sup>11</sup> They remain mostly concerned over participating in the process of rule making and institutional evolution rather than reforming the content of the rules. Finally, these rising powers tend to have a regional scope and their rise is often determined by the regional dynamics either enhancing or undermining it.<sup>12</sup>

The concept of the ‘emerging power’ has thereby been widely understood in both academic literature and political practice in reference to this specific international relations phenomenon of the enhanced influence of the formerly Third world and the ‘Global South’ that could be summarised as ‘the empowerment of states that generally symbolise rupture with the status quo.’<sup>13</sup> The idea of power is central to the term ‘*emerging*’ used in relation to economies or states and has been associated with ‘the phenomena of influence, material capacities, political activism, hegemony, and dominance, all of which relate to manifold dimensions of might.’<sup>14</sup> Additionally the idea of a desire for change and to rise above from the status quo is another characteristic feature inherent in the term ‘emerging’ that is still an ongoing process until the desired transformation is achieved.

Several studies have traced the evolution of foreign policies of these ‘rising’ or ‘emerging’ powers state with regards to inter-state relations, role in regional politics and multilateral organisations. The power transition theory<sup>15</sup> in particular has looked at

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<sup>10</sup> Kahler, ‘Rising powers and global governance’, pp.712.

<sup>11</sup> Kahler, ‘Rising powers and global governance’; Nel, ‘Redistribution and recognition: what emerging regional powers want?’

<sup>12</sup> Hurrell, ‘Hegemony, liberalism and global order’; D.Flemes (ed.), *Regional Leadership in the Global System: Ideas, Interests and Strategies of Regional powers*, London, Ashgate, 2010; B. Buzan and O.Waever, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003; Buzan, ‘A World Without Superpowers.’

<sup>13</sup> L.O. Paes, A.M. Cunha and P.C.D. Fonseca, ‘Narratives of Change and Theorisations on Continuity: the Duality of the Concept of Emerging Power in International Relations’, *Contexto Internacional*, vol. 39, no.1, Jan/Apr 2017, p.76.

<sup>14</sup> Paes, Cunha and Fonseca, ‘Narratives of Change and Theorisations on Continuity’, p.82.

<sup>15</sup> This is more likely to happen when the gap between the capabilities of the most powerful country and the rising major power (or a set of countries) is smaller. This was primarily restricted to the major powers

the power dispute when a dissatisfied state rises in power to directly challenge the dominant state which has been further expanded to include the role of 'rising' regional powers. In the international relations literature these states have been often referred to as the 'intermediate states'. The literature on the 'intermediate states' have centred around three conceptual categories- the 'semi-periphery',<sup>16</sup> 'middle powers'<sup>17</sup> and 'regional powers'.<sup>18</sup> These intermediate states undergoing significant economic and political transformation are opposed to both continuity and stasis as they are trying to rise from their present position and status in order to become a major power though most are yet distant from exercising hegemony.<sup>19</sup>

In this particular research work my focus is on India's foreign policy and therefore it is important to answer the question that why the study of Indian foreign policy deserves and needs such concentrated attention. With the end of the Cold war, the world faced a new situation and so did India which compelled Indian security elites

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but there have been studies that expanded power transition theories to include the role of the regional powers by examining regional hierarchies and conflict among states at regional level that are competing for 'regional superiority.' See, A.F.K.Organski, *World Politics*, 2nd edn., New York, Knopf, 1968; A.F.K.Organski and J. Kugler, *The War Ledger*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1980; J. Kugler and D. Lemke, (eds.), *Parity and War: Evaluations and Extensions of the War Ledger*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1996; R.L. Tammen, J. Kugler, and D. Lemke, et al., *Power Transitions: Strategies for the 21st Century*, New York, Seven Bridges Press, LLC/ Chatham House, 2000.

<sup>16</sup> See G. Arrighi, 'The Developmentalist Illusion: A Reconceptualization of the Semiperiphery', in W.G. Martin (ed.), *Semiperipheral States in the World-Economy*, New York, Greenwood, 1990, pp.11–41; G. Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power and the Origins of Our Times*, London, Verso, 1994; I.Wallerstein, *Semi-Peripheral Countries and the Contemporary World Crisis*, New York, Academic Press, 1976.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, R.Keohane, 'Lilliputian's Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics', *International Organization*, vol. 23, no.2, p.295; M.R.S. Lima, 'A Economia Política da Política Externa Brasileira: Uma Pro- posta de Análise', *Contexto Internacional*, vol.12, 1990, pp.7–28; J. Holmes, 'Most Safely in the Middle', *International Journal*, vol.39, no.2, 1984, pp.367–388; R. Cox, 'Middlepowermanship, Japan, and Future World Order', *International Journal*, vol.44, 1989, pp.823–862; Hurrell, 'Some Reflections on the Role of Intermediate Powers in International Institutions.'

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Nolte, 'How to compare regional powers'; Buzan and Waever, *Regions and Powers*; D. Flemes, 'Conceptualising Regional power in International Relations: Lessons from the South African Case', *GIGA Working Papers*, no.53, Hamburg, German Institute of Global and Area Studies, June 2007, [https://www.giga-hamburg.de/en/system/files/publications/wp53\\_flemes.pdf](https://www.giga-hamburg.de/en/system/files/publications/wp53_flemes.pdf), (accessed 10 October 2019); Flemes (ed.), *Regional Leadership in the Global System*; S. Destradi, 'Regional powers and their strategies: empire, hegemony and leadership', *Review of International Studies*, vol. 36, no.4, 2010, pp.903–930; D. Frazier and R. Stewart-Ingersoll, *Regional powers and Security Orders: A Theoretical Framework*, New York, Routledge, 2013; W. Mattli, *The Logic of Regional Integration: Europe and Beyond*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999; Schirm, 'Leaders in need of followers'; L. Wehner, 'Role expectation as foreign policy: South American secondary powers' expectation of Brazil as a regional power', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, vol.0, 2014, pp. 1–21; T. Pedersen, 'Cooperative hegemony: power, ideas and institutions in regional integration', *Review of International Studies*, vol.28, no.4, 2002, pp.677–696.

<sup>19</sup> R. Koselleck, *Future Past: On Semantics of Historical Time*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2004, pp.155–191.



to rethink and readjust its foreign policy anew and afresh. Studies on Indian foreign policy have often classified it into three distinct phases, identifying ‘a transition from idealism under Nehru through a period of “hard realism” (or *realpolitik*) lasting roughly from the mid 1960s to the mid-1980s...to economically driven pragmatism today.’<sup>20</sup> The predominant assumption made is that Indian foreign policy post the 1991 economic reforms is undergoing major transformation with less emphasis on use of *moralpolitik* and pursuing *realpolitik* that is ‘freed’ from any ideological burden or normative influences to emerge as a major power in the context of the rapidly changing international environment<sup>21</sup> (discussed in details in following Chapter 1 literature review).

Subrahmanyam, an Indian strategic expert and former civil servant remarked that it was indeed necessary, ‘to advance India’s national security and interest by adapting Nehru’s strategy for a bipolar world to one most appropriate for a polycentric world.’<sup>22</sup> Other notable strategic analysts favouring such a ‘realist’ foreign policy shift like Mattoo argues that ‘Indian exceptionalism’ based on a less than realist foreign policy posture, rooted in Nehru’s worldview seem to be breathing its last’<sup>23</sup> whereas Kapur argues that since 1998, ‘Indian statecraft was pursued on the basis of practical geopolitical considerations rather than the idealism of Nehru’s peace policy’<sup>24</sup>. Ganguly similarly argued that India’s post-cold war foreign policy is ‘growing up’ by shedding ‘its ideological burden’ of ‘non-alignment’ and ‘Third Worldism’ by adopting ‘more pragmatic policies at home and abroad.’<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> D.M. Malone, *Does the Elephant Dance? Contemporary Indian Foreign Policy*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2011, p.47.

<sup>21</sup> S.P. Cohen, *India: Emerging Power*, Washington D.C., Brookings, Institution Press, 2002; C.R Mohan, *Crossing the Rubicon*, New Delhi, Viking, 2003; A. Kapur, *India – From Regional to World Power*, London, Routledge, 2006; S.Ganguly, ‘India’s Foreign Policy Grows Up’, *World Policy Journal*, vol.20, no.4, 2003/04, pp.41-47; S. Ganguly and M.S. Pardesi, ‘Explaining Sixty Years of India’s Foreign Policy’, *India Review*, vol.8, no.1, 2009, pp.4-19; S. Ganguly, ‘The Genesis of Non-Alignment’, in S. Ganguly (ed.), *India's Foreign Policy: Retrospect and Prospect*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2010, pp.1-10; C. Ogden, ‘International ‘Aspirations’ of a Rising Power’, in D.Scott (ed.), *Handbook of India’s International Relations*, London, Routledge, 2011, pp.3-13; A. Mattoo, ‘India’s Strategic and Foreign Policy Perceptions’, in K.V. Kesavan (ed.), *Building a Global Partnership: Fifty Years of Indo-Japanese Relations*, New Delhi, Lancers Book, 2002, pp.33-37; Malone, *Does the Elephant Dance?*.

<sup>22</sup> K.Subrahmanyam, ‘Introduction’, in J.Singh, *Defending India*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1999, pp.viii-xxvi.

<sup>23</sup> Mattoo, ‘India’s strategic And Foreign Policy Perceptions.’

<sup>24</sup> Kapur, *India -From Regional to World Power*, p.5.

<sup>25</sup> Ganguly, ‘India’s Foreign Policy Grows Up.’

It was not until late 1990s that the need for India to become more ‘normal’ (a demand still in place) in its foreign policy practice to realise its ‘great power’ aspirations by placing supreme importance to advance her ‘national interests’ gained strong support. The political leadership attempted re-defining a vision for a ‘rising’ India with the initiation of economic reforms in 1991 to globalize the Indian economy and the ‘Look East Policy’(LEP) for boosting India’s economic profile through trade and investments with the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). As Malone, a senior Canadian diplomat writes, ‘Post-1990 India was no longer as convinced of its moral uniqueness and began to think of itself as a nation like several others in the quest of greater power.’<sup>26</sup>

This necessitated normalising the traditionally antagonistic relationships with the neighbours (with the only exception being India’s bilateral relations with Pakistan that continues to be troubled); a greater commitment to international institutions that would leverage India’s emerging power status and put her on the ‘global high table’<sup>27</sup>; strategically engaging with all the major powers, especially establishing deeper ties with the USA; and prioritising national defence including the development of the nuclear bomb in 1998, both of which happened under the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader, Atal Behari Vajpayee’s National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government from 1998-2004. Under the United Progressive Alliance (UPA)- I and II administrations from 2004-2014 led by Dr. Manmohan Singh of the Indian National Congress (INC), New Delhi pushed for furthering India’s economic growth through strategic partnerships with major powers and other countries, negotiated the Indo-US nuclear deal which was signed in 2005 and brought India into the mainstream enabling her to engage in nuclear commerce with other countries like Japan, Russia, Australia, Canada, France, Kazakhstan and many others (14 countries in total).

However, this apparent increasing emphasis on ‘realism’ or ‘pragmatism’ as cornerstones to India’s renewed approach to international relations in the post-cold war foreign policy did not constitute a total abandonment of its ‘ideological’ or ‘normative’ concerns such as long held beliefs in ‘non-violence’, ‘non-interference in internal affairs’, ‘non-discrimination’ and traditional commitment to ‘non-alignment’ but rather

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<sup>26</sup> Malone, *Does the Elephant Dance?*, p.52.

<sup>27</sup> See T.C. Schaffer and H.B. Schaffer, *India at the Global High Table: The Quest for Regional Primacy and Strategic Autonomy*, New Delhi, Harper Collins Publishers, 2016.

entailed a tweaking, adjusting or revamping of the policies. The post-cold war Indian foreign policy discourse instead sought to harmonize such Nehruvian articulations and reinterpreted their meaning to suit the needs of the contemporary realities and to respond to emerging challenges in a ‘un-aligned’ globalised world, to balance the benefits and risks in face of an increasing assertive China and realise her own great power aspirations.<sup>28</sup>

Under the Prime Ministerialship of Manmohan Singh of the INC led UPA governments (2004-2014), a group of independent analysts and strategic experts (former diplomats, military personnel and academic experts) brought out a quasi-official blueprint for a grand strategy, named *Nonalignment 2.0* in 2012 that analysed the internal and external constraints on India’s plans and policies and outlined the key principles and priorities that should guide the strategic and foreign policy for India in the twenty first century. It reinforced the belief in India’s greatness as to be determined by ‘the power of its example’, by its setting of ‘new standards in moral and ideological leadership’ and finally by its aspiration ‘to create a new and alternative universality’.<sup>29</sup> Under the Congress led UPA I and II governments India remained strongly attached to her cherished principle of ‘retaining maximum strategic autonomy’, placed a strong emphasis on India’s civilizational impact, pluralism, secularism and democratic values, sought international recognition for its show of restraint and responsible behaviour in the face of constant provocation from the neighbours and showed its willingness to reject the balance of power dynamics between USA and China by refusing to side with any one. These were also the recommendations that had been prescribed in the report

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<sup>28</sup> See Wojczewski, ‘India and the Quest for World Order: Hegemony and Identity in India’s Post-Cold War Foreign Policy Discourse’, Phd Thesis, University of Kiel, Kiel, March 2016, pp.97-103, [https://macau.uni-kiel.de/servlets/MCRFileNodeServlet/dissertation\\_derivate\\_00006699/Endversion\\_thesis\\_Thorsten\\_Wojczewski.pdf](https://macau.uni-kiel.de/servlets/MCRFileNodeServlet/dissertation_derivate_00006699/Endversion_thesis_Thorsten_Wojczewski.pdf), (accessed 17 December 2016); H.V. Pant and J.M.Super, ‘Non-Alignment and Beyond’, in H.V. Pant (ed.), *New Directions in India’s Foreign Policy: Theory and Praxis*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019, pp.127-146; M.C. Miller, *Constructivism and Indian Foreign Policy*, in H.V. Pant (ed.), *New Directions in India’s Foreign Policy: Theory and Praxis*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019, pp.56-59; C. Ogden, *Hindu Nationalism and the Evolution of Contemporary Indian Security: Portents of Power*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2014.

<sup>29</sup> S. Khilnani et al, *Non-alignment 2.0, A foreign and strategic policy for India in the twenty first century*, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi, 2012, p.1, p.63, <http://NonAlignment-2.0-A-foreign-and-strategic-policy-for-India-in-the-twenty-first-century.pdf>, (accessed on 20 February 2016).

as to determine India's role and engagement with the global order in the twentyfirst century.<sup>30</sup>

When the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) returned to power with a massive electoral majority in 2014, the expectation was that this new NDA-II government did not carry the ideological baggage of the past or is willing to shed it in the pursuit of its great power status. Under a strong leadership of Narendra Modi who had a proven experience in administration as a Chief Minister of Gujarat and had brought positive economic transformation of the state through industrialisation and pulling in foreign investments, the BJP government would define India's vital national interests and enhance India-or Bharat's international stature. For rebuilding a 'New India' his government made concerted efforts to displace the inherited understandings of what India's place was in the world and the role it should play or is expected to play by trying to put in place alternative ways of thinking that were in large parts drawn from Hindu nationalist traditions and deeply 'shaped by [India's] civilizational ethos'.<sup>31</sup> The BJP resolutions specified the foreign policy priorities for India, foremost being economic development which requires 'access to capital, technology, resources, energy and skills' and maintenance of global confidence in the country. The government pursued foreign policy based on 'intellectual and economic engagement' with the world for 'accelerating economic growth, boosting investment, creating jobs and transforming the quality of life of our people'.<sup>32</sup> This further required establishing a 'secure environment, a peaceful neighbourhood and an open and stable global trading system' with South Asia being the priority focus under the 'Neighbourhood first' policy. The *Panchamrit* doctrine as BJP leadership adopted became the foundation for India's 'transformed foreign policy' and 'a major instrument to realize our [India's] national ambition of Bharat's rise as a strong and respected world power'.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, drawing from its

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<sup>30</sup> Khilnani et.al, *Non-alignment 2.0*; Also see B. Karnad, *Why India is not a Great Power?(Yet)*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2015, p.60.

<sup>31</sup> N. Modi, 'Inaugural Address by Prime Minister at Second Raisina Dialogue, New Delhi', 17 January 2017, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, [https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/27948/Inaugural\\_Address\\_by\\_Prime\\_Minister\\_at\\_Second\\_Raisina\\_Dialogue\\_New\\_Delhi\\_January\\_17\\_2017](https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/27948/Inaugural_Address_by_Prime_Minister_at_Second_Raisina_Dialogue_New_Delhi_January_17_2017), (accessed 26 February 2020).

<sup>32</sup> Press Trust of India, 'India moving with speed to rebuild global partnerships: Swaraj', *Business Standard*, New Delhi, 3 December 2014, [https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/india-moving-with-speed-to-rebuild-global-partnerships-swaraj-114120300578\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/india-moving-with-speed-to-rebuild-global-partnerships-swaraj-114120300578_1.html), (accessed 21 February 2020).

<sup>33</sup> BJP, 'Resolution on Foreign Policy passed in BJP National Executive Meeting at Bengaluru (Karnataka)', Bangalore, 3 April 2015, <https://www.bjp.org/en/pressreleasesdetail/295596/Resolution->

cultural, religious and civilizational inheritance and as a result of the long standing historical interconnections, economic and cultural linkages across Indo-Pacific, ‘soft power’ came to be seen as an essential instrument to serve India’s interests, expand its reach and influence in the region and ‘extended neighbourhood’.<sup>34</sup> This BJP government primarily sought to build a new ‘Brand India’ and a broader transformation of the Indian society and global relations through what has been referred to as the ‘*Modi*-fication’ of foreign policy.<sup>35</sup> Modi government’s less emphatic insistence on non-alignment and strategic autonomy has been perceived by many as a concerted shift from old ideological understandings towards mere pragmatism which would be inaccurate. This ‘transformational’ foreign policy is not grounded in ‘pragmatism’ or ‘realism’ but ‘underpinned by an ideologically inspired “vision”’<sup>36</sup> rooted in Hindu nationalism and shaped by India’s civilizational consciousness. This research draws upon this argument and adds to the literature by adopting constructivist approach for exploring and understanding the representational practices under the three successive governments of Vajpayee, Singh and Modi through in-depth case studies across three key policy areas that have received priority focus under their respective administrations. It seeks to understand how the idea of ‘Indian exceptionalism’ or ‘Indian-ness’ has been re-defined and re-produced in foreign policy discourse and practices under each of the aforementioned governments under the differing and competing political and ideological visions of the two predominant national political parties- the Indian National Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party and the visions of their respective leadership towards making India a ‘great power’. The study therefore looks at the evolution of the idea of ‘Indian exceptionalism’ and how it stays relevant or not in India’s quest for great power status.

Modi tried to re-invent ideological foundations with the belief that this would produce more effective policies to secure and advance India’s national interests. Additionally it was believed that public perceptions of foreign policy success would

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on-Foreign-Policy-passed-in-BJP-National-Executive-Meeting-at-Bengaluru-Karnataka, (accessed 8 July 2019).

<sup>34</sup> D. Scott, ‘India’s “Extended Neighbourhood” Concept: Power Projection for a Rising Power’, *India Review*, vol.8, no.2, 2009, pp.107-143.

<sup>35</sup> S. Chaulia, *Modi Doctrine: The Foreign Policy of India’s Prime Minister*, New Delhi, Bloomsbury, 2016, p.1.

<sup>36</sup> See, I. Hall, *Modi and the Re-invention of Indian Foreign Policy*, Bristol, Bristol University Press, 2019, p.10; P.K Chhiber and R. Verma, *Ideology and Identity: The Changing Party Systems of India*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2018, p.135.

also increase domestic popular support for Modi as a ‘visionary leader’ helming the country to a great power status and the nationalist fervour of the ‘Modi doctrine’ would concomitantly produce electoral success in the domestic context. Some describe him as a ‘transformational’ leader whereas others refer to him as an ‘aspirational’ one. Noting the shifts scholars like Barsur however have pointed out the ‘unchanging’ nature of foreign policy under Modi whereas Hall concluded that ‘the core elements of India’s strategy established in the early 2000s remain largely the same as they did under his predecessors.’<sup>37</sup> This study builds on these works, as will be shown through in depth case studies that there remains significant continuities in Modi’s policies which have been initiated under the previous governments and are being actively pursued by him particularly on regionalism and soft power diplomacy. In addition it looks at the continuities and changes in India’s representational practises to reproduce ideas of ‘Indian exceptionalism’ through detailed comparative studies of Vajpayee, Singh and Modi government’s policies at the domestic and international level.

There are significant continuities in India’s foreign policy discourse despite modifications and transformation of the Nehruvian principles in order to adapt itself to the polycentric world order. As will be discussed in depth the resilience of certain normative ideas or values even under the Hindu right wing Bharatiya Janata Party government and the leadership of Modi that wants to re-position India as a global power willing to shoulder responsibilities which are compatible with its growing stature cannot be ignored and denied. The realist explanations that simply conclude a ‘pragmatic’ shift without understanding the roots and meaning of ‘idealism’, ‘realism’ and ‘pragmatism’ in the Indian context are thereby insufficient and simplistic. The ‘pragmatic’ approach to foreign policymaking that places supreme importance on pursuit of national interest henceforth calls for greater attention and understanding of how India defines its ‘national interests’ based on how the security elites see and define India’s role and place in the world and in what ways they deem fit to realise such aspirations.

There remains considerable disagreement on what kind of power India is or is likely to become. The question that remains relevant is therefore how India is using its enhanced capabilities and its rising influence to its advantage to support its ‘great

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<sup>37</sup> Hall, *Modi and the Reinvention of Indian Foreign Policy*, p.17.

power' aspirations.<sup>38</sup> How will such exercise of power [re] shape India's identity as a 'different' power in the region and beyond? This has led to wide ranging discussions and debates over the nature and direction of India's national security and foreign policies. It is quite evident that India has begun to value the merits of material power to secure its vital interests and is responding to the changing geopolitical context. But 'normalising' India's strategic behaviour does not suggest a complete abandonment of these normative principles and instead suggests that the political elites are rethinking, re-interpreting and re-vamping those principles and their meaning to redefine an 'idea of India' in the process of realising its foreign policy objectives. Appreciation of hard power capabilities does not imply the emergence of India as a rational 'power-maximizer' and that it would behave just like any other state. Instead it calls for understanding India's evolving self-understandings as a civilizational state, as a mature democracy with enhanced capabilities in a changing scenario and growing aspirations and self confidence to achieve a major power status both in domestic and international context. Therefore how does and will India choose to acquire and use its growing capabilities? This needs further investigation which cannot be adequately understood or explained with realist theories on international relations as it fails to explain the continuities, ruptures, complexities and changes in India's foreign policy discourse and practices.

In this research work, foreign policy is viewed as a discursive site for continued identity reproduction and shifting self-perceptions and self-representations through

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<sup>38</sup> See for example, S. Gordon, *India's Rise as an Asian Power: Nation, Neighborhood, and Region*, Washington D.C, Georgetown University Press, 2014; C. Ogden, *Indian Foreign Policy: Ambition and Transition*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2014; G.J. Gilroy, *Chinese and Indian Strategic Behavior: Growing Power and Alarm*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012; H.V. Pant, *Contemporary Debates in Indian Foreign and Security Policy: India Negotiates its Rise in the International System*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008; S.P. Cohen, *India: Emerging Power*; R. Sagar, 'State of Mind: What Kind of Power Will India Become?', *International Affairs*, vol. 85, issue. 4, 2009, pp.801–816; C.R. Mohan, 'India's Relations with the Great Powers: Need for Reorientation', in J. Singh (ed.), *Asian Security in the 21st Century*, New Delhi, Knowledge World, 1999, pp.78-95; Mohan, *Crossing the Rubicon*; J.D. Ciorciari, 'India's Approach to a Great Power Status', *The Fletcher Forum on World Affairs*, vol.35, no.1, Winter 2011, pp. 61-89; D. Ollapally, 'India: The Ambivalent Power in Asia', *International Studies*, vol. 48, no.3 and 4, 2011, pp.201-222; K.Venkatshamy and P. George (ed.), *Grand Strategy for India 2020 and beyond*, New Delhi, Institute for Defence Studies for Analyses, Pentagon Security International, 2012; M. Chatterjee Miller, 'The Un-Argumentative Indian?: Ideas About the Rise of India and Their Interaction With Domestic Structures', *India Review*, vol.13, no.1, 2014, pp.1-14; M.S. Pardesi, 'Is India a Great Power? Understanding Great Power Status in Contemporary International Relations', *Asian Security*, vol.11, issue.1, 2015, pp.1-30; S. Mitra, 'Nuclear, Engaged, and Non-Aligned: Contradiction and Coherence in India's Foreign Policy', *India Quarterly*, vol.65, no.1, 2009, pp.15-35.

which the world is made sense of. It is therefore necessary to understand that how Indian security elites define the Indian Self which in turn determines what India's 'national interests' are, what role it espouses to play and how. The doctoral thesis explores the content of this idea of *Indian-ness* and what it means to Indian policy makers; how it is reproduced by these elites in India's foreign policy discourses and its relation to the policy choices; and finally how do such policies [that reinforce such Self/Other representations] assist or resist India's rise as a major power and in what ways. Lastly it will be interesting to see whether Indian elites continue to hold on to such ideas of *Indian-ness* or claims of 'Indian exceptionalism' or is it becoming increasingly problematic to do so with growing material capabilities and enhanced responsibilities.

## **I. Research Questions**

This study therefore looks at three primary research questions. These are:

1. How do security elites in India (discursively) reproduce India's national identity or Indian-ness in its foreign policy discourse and related practices?
2. How do such ideas of Indian-ness and related policies support or resist India's great power aspirations? Is it an advantage or a challenge to India's rise?
3. Do Indian elites continue to hold on to such claims of exceptionalism and an 'Indian way' of doing things or is it becoming increasingly difficult to do so?

These research questions are looked into through three in-depth empirical case studies in India's foreign policy; India's nuclear policy and disarmament until the Indo-US nuclear deal in 2005, India's neighbourhood policy with focus on India-Pakistan relations and India's Ocean diplomacy with the rise of China in Indo-Pacific region. These cases have been chosen as these have been held as the key national priorities under A.B.Vajpayee, Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi's leadership in their foreign policy agenda under their Prime Ministerialship terms.

The thesis is therefore divided into two sections, the first half explores the ideas of *Indian-ness*, its sources and content and how it has been discursively re-interpreted and re-produced in India's national identity discourses by the security elites and reflects



upon their preferred policy choices. The second half looks at the reproduction of these ideas of *Indian-ness* and exceptionalism in the above mentioned three policy areas to explain the continuities and changes in India's Self-representation vis-à-vis the Other(s) and its link with the policies at domestic, regional and international levels through which such identity constructions are re-produced and re-inforced.

### **Chapter Outline**

Chapter 1 discusses the existing literature on Indian foreign policy, the world view writings and focusses on the constructivist research works that have explored identity constructions in the foreign policy discourse. In addition the chapter aims at defining certain concepts relevant for this research work. Chapter 2 is devoted to the theoretical approach and methods applied to the study.

Chapter 3 looks at the content of the 'Indian exceptionalism', identifies the themes and practices in India's strategic culture and its relevance for India's cultural diplomacy that is central to reproducing 'Indianness' in its foreign policy. Chapter 4 looks at the transformation of the Nehruvian paradigm in the post-cold war foreign policy and distinguishes two national identity discourses- the Post-Nehruvian discourse and the hyperrealist-cultural nationalist discourse for reproducing the 'idea of India'. It compares the Singh Doctrine and the Modi Doctrine outlining the key elements and themes informing India's foreign policy practices.

With primary documentary analysis on India's foreign and nuclear policy, chapter 5 elaborates on the discursive constructions of India's Self vis-à-vis multiple Others (through both *temporal* and *spatial* Othering) that are reproduced as dangers to the Indian Self in the nuclear discourse that led to the Pokhran tests in 1998. It further looks at the debates on India's nuclear doctrine and the re-production of 'Indian exceptionalism' during the Indo-US nuclear deal negotiations and in its aftermath. It further adds to the literature by examining the identity constructions and othering practices in the oppositional discourses of the Jana Sangh, Swatantra and Praja Socialist parties commonly referred to as the 'bomb advocates' through studying party documents from 1960's and 70's that provide better understanding of the continuities under the BJP led NDA-I government of Vajpayee (1998, 1999-2004) and NDA-II government under Modi (2014-2019).

Chapter 6 turns the attention to India's neighbourhood policy with a focus on India's role in development diplomacy, regionalism and increasing connectivity and its projection as a positive asset in the region. Then it looks at the spatial political Othering of Pakistan under the Vajpayee, Singh and Modi government and analysing its implication in both domestic and international politics. It ends with a brief analysis of India's evolving military response in the context of 'surgical strikes' under the Modi doctrine and what it implies for India's posture of 'strategic restraint' which has been reproduced as a core tenet of 'Indian exceptionalism'.

Chapter 7 explores India's renewed engagement in the Indian Ocean and Indo-Pacific region, the role of China as a spatial-political Other in the Indian discourse and India's shifting policy responses with special focus on India's defence diplomacy in the region and involvement in regional security architecture building. It aims to explain how under Singh and Modi the government seeks to reposition India as a 'normative' actor in the region by reproducing, based on its re-interpretation, the 'exceptionalist' narratives.

Lastly, in the Conclusion, I argue that identity matters in India's foreign policy to understand the role it seeks to play in the global order and re-interpret and reproduce an 'idea of India' as a 'different great power' that is aware of its responsibilities and its enhanced capabilities to fulfill them.

## **II. The 'Asian Century': A Regional Focus**

This section briefly discusses the emergence of multipolar world order and how it presents a unique opportunity for the rising Asian powers like India and China to play a significant role alongside the challenges that these emerging powers are confronted with and gives a regional focus to the research project.

The emerging multipolarity is seen as a result of the tectonic shift of global power from the West to the East<sup>39</sup> and in particular to the rising Asian economies, their growth model being predicated upon export-led growth through manufacturing and

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<sup>39</sup> B.R. Posen, 'Emerging Multipolarity: Why should we care?', *Current History*, vol.108, no.721, 2009, pp.347-352.

high levels of savings and investment inflows.<sup>40</sup> International Monetary Fund (IMF) Deputy Director Zhang said, ‘For the past several years, India and China have been important engines of regional and global growth’ collectively accounting for almost half of global growth in 2017.<sup>41</sup> The region accounts for more than 4.5 billion people (with 3 billion people between the geographical arc from India to Japan) and Asia and Pacific accounts for 46.81 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) based on Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) share of the world with much of the wealth being concentrated in China, India, South-east and East Asia.<sup>42</sup> With their increasing economic prowess, these regional ‘emerging powers’ have also strengthened their military capabilities, increased their influence through regional groupings like the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) or IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa), are extending their footprints beyond the region and trying to expand their ‘sphere of influence’,<sup>43</sup> forming ‘middle power coalitions’ with ‘like minded states’ such as the ‘Quad’ for promoting regional resilience in the Indo-Pacific,<sup>44</sup> and taking greater responsibilities in management of the global commons. The presence of these ‘emerging powers’ in multilateral forums or their participation in regional security architecture building are being recognised as equally significant and consequential to finding cooperative solutions to tackle security challenges. Whether it is restructuring of global economy, democratisation of global institutions, trade negotiations such as on

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<sup>40</sup> J. Perraton, ‘Globalisation in the Asian century’, in H.V.Pant & R. Passi (ed.), *Raisina Files 2017: Debating the World in the Asian Century*, New Delhi, Observer Resaercher Foundation, January 2017, p.19, <https://www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/RaisinaFiles2017.pdf>, (accessed 2 January 2020).

<sup>41</sup> L.K. Jha, ‘India, China key engines of global economic growth: IMF’s Tao Zhang’, *Livemint*, 11 March 2018, <https://www.livemint.com/Politics/GvMGLftbYV0aTWdEpKz1DM/India-China-important-engines-of-regional-and-global-econom.html>, (accessed 8 February 2020).

<sup>42</sup> International Monetary Fund, ‘World Economic Outlook (October 2019)-GDP based on PPP’, <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/PPPSH@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOWORLD/EAQ/AP>, (accessed on 20 January 2020)

<sup>43</sup> The most recent academic definition is given by Paul Keal who defined it as a ‘definite region within which a single external power exerts a predominant influence, which limits the independence or freedom of action of states within it.’ See, P. Keal, ‘Contemporary Understanding about Spheres of Influence’, *Review of International Studies*, vol.9, no.3, July 1983, p.156.

<sup>44</sup> See C.R. Mohan and R. Medcalf, ‘Delhi, Tokyo, Canberra; They could build the first of multiple middle power coalitions for regional resilience in Trump’s world’, *Indian Express*, 10 February 2017, <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/tpp-donald-trumpmalcolm-turnbullphone-call-leak-islamic-state-canberra-delhi-tokyo-4516471/>, (accessed 11 December 2017); C.Sarkar, ‘Asia-Pacific: Is Middle Power Multilateralism Possible?’, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, 13 April 2017, [http://www.ipcs.org/comm\\_select.php?articleNo=5269](http://www.ipcs.org/comm_select.php?articleNo=5269), (accessed 18 January 2020); K. Singh, ‘Examining the idea of an India-led middle power coalition’, *Livemint*, 12 June 2017, <https://www.livemint.com/Opinion/NKbhvIEoycJttSuqtPRiWJ/Examining-the-idea-of-an-Indialed-middle-power-coalition.html>, (accessed 15 January 2020).

implications of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), global governance, non-proliferation, regionalism, climate change or maritime security these rising powers play a key role in terms of not just participating but shaping the discourse. The countries in the Indo-Pacific are thereby expected to not only remain relevant for a long term but dominate global economics, politics and security as these rising powers are seen as both part of it and solution to the problems.<sup>45</sup> As Auslin noted, ‘when compared with the strife-torn Middle East, aging Europe or crisis- beset Africa, the Asia-Pacific region looks like the one major area of the world where opportunity, economic growth and political development are still possible. In short, the global future looks increasingly Asian.’<sup>46</sup>

The prospect of an ‘Asian century’<sup>47</sup> is increasingly envisaged but the reality of realizing and sustaining this over a long period has not gone unquestioned. The skeptics have raised concerns over Asia’s capacity to continue generating growth or to deliver a single ‘Asian’ voice after managing its contradictions and different conceptions of national interests. These Asian states do not share a common normative framework and have different cultures, history, values and often conflicting national interests thereby lacking a sense of ‘Asian-ness’ to collectively provide leadership. There is wariness about the robustness of the rules, norms and effectiveness of the institutions of Asia’s existing regional architecture, or the willingness to engage in a sustained dialogue to institutionalize certain common understandings for joint action. There are also growing concerns over the general economic health of Asia with economies being interlinked as most of the Asian states are but struggling to maintain high rates of growth, balance

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<sup>45</sup> See, for example, S. Kliengibiel, ‘Global Problem-Solving Approaches: The Crucial Rise of China and the Group of Rising Powers’, *Rising Powers Quarterly*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2016, pp. 33-41; K. Mahbubani, *The New Asian Hemisphere: The Irresistible Shift of Global Power to the East*, New York, Public affairs, 2009; M.Jacques, *When China Rules the World: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order*, 2nd edn., New York, Penguin, 2012.

<sup>46</sup> M. Auslin, ‘Is The ‘Asian century’ over before it has begun?’, in H.V. Pant and R. Passi (ed.), *Raisina Files 2017: Debating the World in the Asian Century*, New Delhi, Observer Research Foundation, January 2017, p.9, <https://www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/RaisinaFiles2017.pdf>, (accessed 2 January 2020).

<sup>47</sup> See, for example, B.Mishra, ‘Statement by B. Mishra at the Munich Security Conference on Rising World Powers in Asia: Implications for Regional and Global Security’, in M.Gaur (ed.), *Foreign Policy Annual, 2001-2009: Documents, Volume II*, New Delhi, Kalpaz, 2005[2000], p.17; G. Kanwal, ‘China's long March to World Power Status: Strategic Challenge for India’, *Strategic Analysis*, vol.22, no.11, 1999, p.1713; L.K. Advani, ‘The NDA Regime and National Security – A Performance Appraisal’, in BJP (ed.), *BJP Achievements & Looking Ahead: Party Document*, vol. 9, New Delhi, 2006, p.1, p.15; J. Singh, *A Call to Honour: In Service of Emergent India*, New Delhi, Rupa, 2006, p.274; G. Parthasarathy, ‘Emerging Power Equations: Is Multipolarity Achievable?’, 2007, <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2007/20071129/edit.htm#4>, (accessed 16 August 2017); S. Chandra, ‘Indian Foreign Policy’, 2011, p.184, <http://www.vifindia.org/article/2011/may/19/Indian-Foreign-Policy>, (accessed 16 August 2017).

their economies and resist slowdowns whereas few others have failed to even make a start. China's growth has dramatically slowed if not stagnated, similarly Indian economy is also struggling to sustain high rates of economic growth and is currently experiencing stagflation. The Indian economic slowdown is due to 'a huge decline in investment and in private consumption' but it is expected to improve its growth rate in the coming year because of the measures taken. India still remains one of the highest performers globally with only China having a higher growth rate than India among the world's large economies with a 6 per cent forecast for the current calendar year.<sup>48</sup>

The Asian region with a multitude of civilizations has further become an arena of great power and regional rivalry as manifested in arms race, increasing inter-state conflicts and sub-regional divides particularly over disputed claims on territories. Further the region is witnessing the strengthening of military capabilities through military modernisation of the key regional players that are driving the regional dynamics— China, India and Japan each vying for a leadership role to steer the 'Asian century'. Although India has always opposed the unilateral exercise of power by any single country India is not a 'revisionist' power that seeks to completely redefine the contemporary international order. Rather it simply refuses to be 'co-opted into the existing international order that is controlled by the West'<sup>49</sup> and become a rule-maker in its own right. These Asian states also have contending views over multipolarity. On one hand these rising Asian states have voiced their discontent largely against the US led world order and seek to democratise the global institutions and the regimes in place but on the other hand most of the Asian states also detest the possibility of a Sino-centric world order and show greater preference for the US predominance and liberal order in Asia-Pacific.

The alternative China model proposed by President Xi at the 19<sup>th</sup> Communist Party of China (CPC) inaugural address that called for 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a new era'<sup>50</sup> and is characterised by 'an effective blend of political

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<sup>48</sup> 'India's growth rate at 5.7% for 2019-20: UN report', *India Today*, 17 January 2020, <https://www.indiatoday.in/business/story/india-economy-to-grow-world-bank-2019-20-un-report-1637625-2020-01-17>, (accessed 20 January 2020).

<sup>49</sup> S. Tharoor and S. Saran, *The New World Disorder and the Indian Imperative*, New Delhi, Aleph Book Company, 2020, p.226.

<sup>50</sup> 'Full text of Xi Jinping's report at 19th CPC National Congress', *China Daily*, Xinhua, 4 November 2017, [https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/19thcpcnationalcongress/2017-11/04/content\\_34115212.htm](https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/19thcpcnationalcongress/2017-11/04/content_34115212.htm), (accessed 27 February 2020).

authoritarianism and state capitalism’ signals a more assertive China. Xi puts an emphatic focus on ensuring primacy of the Communist party, the need for indigenous technological progress, and a strong military to become ‘...a global leader in terms of composite national strength and international influence by middle of the twentyfirst century.’<sup>51</sup> China’s call to democratise global governance institutions have further resulted in Chinese initiatives to create economic and institutional statecraft for establishing a ‘community of common destiny’.<sup>52</sup> India has welcomed the role of new Chinese led initiatives like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and BRICS projects like the New Development Bank (NDB) in promoting regional connectivity. Foreign Secretary Gokhale noted, ‘As a founding member of these new institutions, India is playing a role to ensure that the best practices learnt from existing multilateral development banks and financial institutions are practised by these new bodies.’<sup>53</sup>

China has also not been a unifying or stabilising force in the region as its increasing aggressive behaviour, militarization of the East and South China Seas and expansion of maritime activities in the Indian Ocean region (IOR) not only seek to diminish the US’s maritime presence in Asia but raise serious concerns and wariness amongst the other regional contenders about Chinese regional coercion. In the IOR China is seen as changing the geopolitical reality by building two ‘amphibian ports’: Gwadar in Baluchistan (Pakistan) and Ramee Island in Burma (Myanmar) to overcome its potential vulnerability arising out of China’s geographical location by providing an alternative supply route to the Malacca Straits for its oil imports and connecting it to the Indian Ocean and Central Asia. Sloan notes that, ‘They are not just deep water ports. They are a confluence of sea, pipeline and land and air transport facilities’ which are giving shape to China’s ‘continental-ocean nexus’.<sup>54</sup> This has implication for China’s exercise of sea control and sea denial in the Indian Ocean which India considers as its ‘sphere of influence’.

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<sup>51</sup> S. Saran and A. Deo, *Pax Sinica: Implications for the Indian Dawn*, New Delhi, Rupa Publications, 2019, p.ix.

<sup>52</sup> Saran and Deo, *Pax Sinica*, p.50.

<sup>53</sup> V.K. Gokhale, ‘Address by Foreign Secretary at the Regional Connectivity Conference: South Asia in the Indo-Pacific Context’, 1 November 2018, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, [https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/30556/Address\\_by\\_Foreign\\_Secretary\\_at\\_the\\_Regional\\_Connectivity\\_Conference\\_\\_South\\_Asia\\_in\\_the\\_IndoPacific\\_Context](https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/30556/Address_by_Foreign_Secretary_at_the_Regional_Connectivity_Conference__South_Asia_in_the_IndoPacific_Context), (accessed 24 February 2020).

<sup>54</sup> G. Sloan, *Geopolitics, Geography and Strategic History*, London, Routledge, 2017, p.210.

The US strategic documents specify inter-state strategic competition as the primary concern for the US and define China as a ‘strategic competitor’ and a ‘revisionist power’ that is ‘actively competing’ against the US and its allies.<sup>55</sup> Although China has not explicitly adopted a ‘Chinese Monroe doctrine’<sup>56</sup> for regional exclusion of non-Asian actors, but it has supported the pre-eminence of the Asian powers for managing the security and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. President Xi Jinping talking about ‘New Asian Diplomacy’ said, ‘...it is for the people of Asia to run the affairs of Asia, solve the problems of Asia and uphold the security of Asia. The people of Asia have the capability and wisdom to achieve peace and stability in the region through enhanced cooperation.’<sup>57</sup>

This causes a sense of worry among the other regional contenders as several Chinese authors while drawing parallels with other historical great powers that all had initially risen as regional powers see China pursuing a policy of influencing neighbours’ politics as inevitable and natural. Nonetheless, China has officially stated that it is in favour of US’s presence in the Asia-Pacific region for a constructive role but its initiative hints otherwise,<sup>58</sup> whereas certain regional rising powers like India and Japan rather than challenging the US presence are stakeholders in the extant liberal democratic world order and benefits from it. Additionally there remains considerable challenges for China to realise its hegemonic ambitions in the region. The unpopularity of China and the lack of attractiveness of its soft power also makes it difficult for it to become the dominant power in the region. As Pant notes, ‘Its problems in East Asia,

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<sup>55</sup> The White House, ‘National Security Strategy of the United States of America’, Washington D.C., December 2017, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>, (accessed 10 February 2020); Department of Defense (DoP), ‘Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy the United States of America’, Washington D.C., DoP, 2018, <https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>, (accessed 25 February 2020).

<sup>56</sup> S.F. Jackson, ‘Does China Have a Monroe Doctrine? Evidence for Regional Exclusion’, *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, vol.10, no.4, winter 2016, pp.64-89.

<sup>57</sup> Xi Jinping, ‘Remarks at Fourth Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia on “New Asian Security Concept for New Progress in Security Cooperation”’, 5 May 2014, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People’s Republic of China, [http:// www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/t1159951.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1159951.shtml) (accessed 25 February 2020). CICA was founded in 1999 and encompasses a large number of countries from Egypt and the Middle East, South Asia (including India since its inception), Central Asia, and East Asia. The United States and Japan are observers. See <http://www.s-cica.org>.

<sup>58</sup> Jackson, ‘Does China Have a Monroe Doctrine?’

with ASEAN countries, in Central Asia and its ambiguous role in the Middle East underline a major power still in search of not only a role but also acceptance.’<sup>59</sup>

Nonetheless, these Asian countries remain skeptical over the US security commitment to Asia and its willingness to provide public goods in the region.<sup>60</sup> The Trump administration policies show preference for a ‘go-it-alone’ approach under his ‘America First’ doctrine as is evident from US withdrawal from the Trans Pacific Partnership. This has led many to argue that US is losing Asia to China and have urged for urgent actions in defence of the liberal order. Yet, this provides an opportunity for regional players like India, Japan and Australia to play an even greater role in shaping regional dynamics and bestows enhanced responsibilities on them. But the effectiveness of such an approach raises doubt over the capacity of any other country, alliance or regional grouping and their will to sustain the liberal international order.<sup>61</sup>

The support for an increasing role of India in the Indo-Pacific had begun to gain ground since the Singh government under Obama’s ‘Pivot to Asia’ strategy in 2011 that pushed for a greater focus on the Asia-Pacific. The U.S. 2008 National Defense Strategy also stated, ‘we look to India to assume greater responsibility as a stakeholder in the international system, commensurate with its growing economic, military and soft power.’<sup>62</sup> Trump also showed support for the idea of a ‘Free and Open Indo-Pacific’ (FOIP) region. The US 2017 National Security Strategy (NSS) and the summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS) clarified the ‘Free and Open Indo-Pacific’ policy with a focus on bringing Australia, India, Japan and the US together under the Indo-Pacific Partnership (IPP).<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> H.V. Pant and R. Passi, ‘Finding Asia: Debating Order, Entity and leadership’, in H.V. Pant and R. Passi (ed.), *Raisina Files 2017: Debating the World in the Asian Century*, New Delhi, Observer Research Foundation, January 2017, p.6, <https://www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/RaisinaFiles2017.pdf>, (accessed 2 January 2020).

<sup>60</sup> N. Chandran, ‘The US is trying to woo back Asian countries, but those efforts aren’t yet paying off’, Asia Politics, *CNBC*, 8 January 2019, <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/01/09/us-efforts-to-woo-back-asia-pacific-have-yet-to-take-effect.html>, (accessed 17 February 2020).

<sup>61</sup> R.J. Lieber, ‘Is the US a disruptor of world order?’, in R. Passi and H.V. Pant (ed.), *Raisina Files 2018: Debating Disruption in the World Order*, vol.3, New Delhi, Observer Research Foundation, January 2018, pp. 15-17, [https://www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Raisina\\_Files\\_2018\\_Web.pdf](https://www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Raisina_Files_2018_Web.pdf), (accessed 8 January 2020).

<sup>62</sup> U.S. Department of Defence, ‘National Defense Strategy’, Washington D.C., Homeland and Security Digital Library, June 2008, p.14, <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=487840>, (accessed 15 February 2020).

<sup>63</sup> E. Demir, ‘Fragmented or Integrated Asia: Competing Regional Visions of the US and China’, *Rising Powers Quarterly*, vol.3, no.2, 2018, p.46.



### **III. Relevance of the Study**

It is clear that India's perception of itself has changed dramatically, as has its view of the world and how the world looks at India. The motto of 'India Everywhere' chosen by the large Indian delegation to the Davos Summit of 2006 speaks of this 'resurgent India' that has not forgotten its legacy but engages in global diplomacy with renewed confidence as a 'post post-colonial state'.<sup>64</sup> The study therefore is relevant on two levels: first to understand what kind of power India wants to be and what role it will play in the liberal global order which also provide an understanding of the state behaviour of the rising powers and second to understand notions of 'Indian exceptionalism' and identity construction in relation to foreign policies and how these matter. It identifies certain key themes and arguments that will resonate across the case studies in the study.

### **India's Rise and Strategic Debates**

India participated in key international negotiations that aimed at building the post war international order. On one hand it aimed to redefine the global governance agenda and on the other it had a strong interest in the existing global institutions. India's foreign policy centred on her declared policy of 'non-alignment' as to avoid getting entangled in the Cold war alliance politics for the pursuit of an independent foreign policy ensured her freedom of action and allowed her to take independent positions on issues of national and international importance. India was seen as practising what has been called the 'universalism of the weak' as evident in its stand on the Korean crisis, the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NNPT) and 'New International Economic Order'(NIEO) to cite a few.<sup>65</sup> Skeptics argued that this not only curtailed India's great power ambitions in the region but relegated it to a state of 'rule taker' in global governance processes.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> J.L. Racine, 'Post-Post-Colonial India: From Regional Power to Global Player', *Dans Politique étrangère*, vol 5, 2008 (Hors série), pp.65- 78, <https://www.cairn.info/revue-politique-etrangere-2008-5-page-65.htm>, (accessed 9 February 2020).

<sup>65</sup> C.R. Mohan, 'Rising India: Partner in Shaping the Global Commons', *The Washington Quarterly*, vol.33, no.3, 2010, pp. 133-148.

<sup>66</sup> W.P.S. Sidhu, P.B. Mehta and B. Jones, 'A Hesitant Rule Shaper' in W.P.S. Sidhu, P.B. Mehta and B. Jones (eds.), *Shaping the Emerging World: India and the Multilateral Order*, Washington D.C., Brookings Institution Press, 2013, p.16.

The major shift that has happened over the last three decades is transformation in India's hard power capabilities and greater attention to devise and implement new strategies to advance India's core national interests instead of just moral projection. India has developed significant economic and military capabilities over the past two decades and it is widely recognised that India is emerging as an important player in Asia and in the world. India has managed to register and sustain a high rate of economic growth around 6-7 % average annually (and 7.2 % in 2017) since the 1991 economic reforms until recently because of the current economic slowdown that has brought down the GDP growth rate to 5% for the fiscal year 2019-2020(4.8% in the first half) from 6.9% in the previous year.<sup>67</sup> However it is the world's sixth largest economy in nominal GDP with 2.264 trillion USD in 2016, fourth in terms of purchasing power parity and is one of the fastest growing markets.<sup>68</sup> India remains one of the biggest military powers with steadily growing military capabilities, is the second largest arms importer (2015-2019) and has given renewed attention to defence modernisation.<sup>69</sup> India conducted its nuclear testing in 1974 and 1998, developed nuclear weapons capabilities and an indigenous missile programme.<sup>70</sup> India is the sixth country in the world to have a nuclear triad capability and can engage in nuclear commerce despite not being a signatory to the Non-proliferation Treaty as a result of India-US nuclear Deal since 2008. It has made many advances in its space research programme by sending Mars Orbiter mission (Mangalayan I) in 2014 and missions to the Moon (Chandrayan) that puts India in the top space league. It is believed therefore that all these technological achievements prove the fact 'India might not have the best technology in the world but ...have some of the most brilliant minds working hard to

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<sup>67</sup> Press Trust of India, 'India's GDP growth rate for 2019-20 estimated at 5% against 6.8% in FY19', *Business Standard*, New Delhi, 7 January 2020, [https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/gdp-first-advance-estimates-predict-economic-growth-at-5-in-2019-2020-120010700990\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/gdp-first-advance-estimates-predict-economic-growth-at-5-in-2019-2020-120010700990_1.html), (accessed 15 February 2020).

<sup>68</sup> 'India GDP 1960-2018', *Trading Economics*, <https://tradingeconomics.com/india/gdp>, (accessed 3 April 2018).

<sup>69</sup> H. Singh, 'What are the Defence Capabilities of India?', *Jagran Josh*, 18 March 2019, <https://www.jagranjosh.com/general-knowledge/defence-capabilities-of-india-1552910299-1>, (accessed 10 July 2019); Fleurant A. et al., 'Trends In International Arms Transfers, 2016 (SIPRI Fact Sheet, February 2017)', <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/Trends-in-international-arms-transfers-2016.pdf>, (accessed 4 November 2017); E. Roche, 'India was world's second-largest arms importer in 2015-19: Report', *Livemint*, 10 March 2020, <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/arms-imports-from-russia-decreased-in-2015-19-due-to-drop-in-india-sales-report-11583772984894.html>, (accessed 15 March 2020).

<sup>70</sup> India has Supersonic Cruise Missile BrahMos, surface to surface ballistic missiles (Prithvi), intercontinental Ballistic missile (ICBMS-Agni series) and has nuclear triad capability.

put India on the world map among the top space agencies.’<sup>71</sup> India is thus looked upon as a ‘knowledge economy’ for its highly skilled human capital in the form of engineers, doctors, scientists and business managers who are students from elite institutes in India – Indian Institute of Science, Indian Institute of Technology, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Indian Institute of Management and several others.<sup>72</sup> They have further pursued higher education abroad, fared well there as evident from a flourishing Non-Resident Indian community (NRI) worldwide and even at home they are also putting India on the global map, for instance, through innovation in technology, business, biomedical research or energy security.

India is the fifth largest navy in the world with a large fleet of 2 aircraft carriers, amphibious transport dock, frigates, destroyers and 1 nuclear powered submarine and 14 conventionally powered submarines, corvettes, patrol vessels, fleet tankers and auxiliary vessels.<sup>73</sup> It is also expanding its naval power and expanding its maritime activities in the IOR and beyond both westwards and eastwards. India has undertaken a rapid modernization in order to develop blue water capabilities<sup>74</sup> and strengthening relations with Japan and other South East Asian countries like Vietnam, Indonesia and Singapore which is testimony to the fact that India is willing to play a bigger role in the Indo-Pacific region and Asia. India is and also will be reaping the benefits of its ‘demographic dividend’ as being the youngest country in the world. India’s former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram notes, ‘India’s share of the working age population will continue to rise. Nearly one-half the additions to the Indian labour force over the period 2011-30 will be in the age group 30-49, even while the share of this group in advanced countries will decline. This means greater production, savings and investment

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<sup>71</sup> ‘These 5 achievements by ISRO proves that the space agency had a record-breaking 2017’, *India Today*, 29 December 2017, <https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/gk-current-affairs/story/achievements-by-isro-in-2017-1118417-2017-12-29>, (accessed 9 July 2019).

<sup>72</sup> B. Debroy, ‘India’s Soft Power and Cultural Influence’, *Challenges of Economic Growth, Inequality, and Conflict in South Asia*, Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on South Asia, Singapore, 24 November 2008, <http://eproceedings.worldscinet.com/9789814293341/toc.shtml>, (accessed 10 September 2016).

<sup>73</sup> Institute of Strategic Studies, ‘Analysis of Indian Naval Capabilities: Implications for Pakistan’, Issue Brief, Islamabad, 2016, <http://www.issi.org.pk/issue-brief-on-analysis-of-indian-naval-capabilities-implications-for-pakistan/>, (accessed 9 July 2019).

<sup>74</sup> Scott, D., ‘India’s Drive for a ‘Blue Water’ Navy’, *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, vol.10, issue 2, 2007-2008, pp.1-42.

in India as the demographic dividend is reaped.<sup>75</sup> India is also contributing to reshaping the global institutions by supporting United Nations (UN) Security Council reforms, to make the international economic order more equitable and raising concerns of the third world developing countries in climate change negotiations, contributing to UN peacekeeping, giving development assistance programmes under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programmes to other developing countries and engaging in maritime diplomacy and regional institutions in the IOR. However, India continues to grapple with the challenges of unresolved border disputes with its neighbours, Islamic radicalism in the region, terrorism being exported from its western neighbour- Pakistan and China's increasing assertiveness in South Asia and Indian Ocean region which are both states with nuclear weapon capabilities.

In order to adapt with the changing realities of 'the emergence of the so- called unipolar world'<sup>76</sup> which is under continued pressure to be transformed into a polycentric order induced by 'the end of the Cold war, the accelerating process of globalisation and the emergence of transnational challenges',<sup>77</sup> Indian political leadership moved away from the narrow understanding of 'non –alignment' as to remain equidistant from both the power blocs-USA and USSR and focussed on 'developing friendly and good relations with all the major countries'<sup>78</sup> on equal terms. It renewed its traditional ties with the South East Asian countries and began re-engaging with the neighbouring countries in the Indian Ocean region with a primary focus on 'economics' and 'development diplomacy' for facilitating socio economic transformation of India by maintaining high rates of economic growth, promoting regional connectivity and ensuring security against internal and external threats. This was evident in the Indo-US nuclear Deal when the Manmohan Singh government (UPA-I) pushed for the passage of the Agreement as necessary for ensuring energy

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<sup>75</sup> P. Chidambaram, 'Speech of Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on "The Rise of the East: Implications for the Global Economy"', Delivered at South Asia Institute and Mahendra Centre at the Harvard University, Boston, 17 April 2013, in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations-2013 Documents*, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2014, pp.114-115.

<sup>76</sup> Y.Sinha, "Non-alignment still Relevant" – Sinha, Interview with Y. Sinha, *The Hindu*, 20 August 2002.

<sup>77</sup> S. Saran, 'Present Dimensions of the Indian Foreign Policy', Shanghai, 11 January 2006, [http://www.indianembassy.org/newsite/press\\_release/2006/Jan/2.asp](http://www.indianembassy.org/newsite/press_release/2006/Jan/2.asp), (accessed on 4 March 2016).

<sup>78</sup> P. Mukherjee, 'External Affairs Minister's Speech on "India's Foreign Policy Today" at Peking University in Beijing', Beijing, 6 June 2008, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2008, <http://www.mea.gov.in/cgibin/db2www/meaxpsite/coverpage.d2w/coverpg?sec=ss&filename=speech/2008/06/06ss01.htm>, (accessed 4 March 2016).

security that would benefit the Indian economy and the populace. India showed the willingness ‘to do business with all’ as a result of which trade and bilateral economic relations became the cornerstone of India’s relations with the world (including China that emerged as the largest trading partner of India in 2017-2018).

The fixation with ‘non-alignment’ as a cardinal component of Indian identity in global politics has continued as Indian policy makers reconstructed its non-alignment towards a multi-alignment framework by holding onto its present day variant ‘strategic autonomy’.<sup>79</sup> The *Non-Alignment 2.0* document during the Congress led UPA government recognised that, ‘... great power competition of a classical kind will continue to define aspects of the global order’ and the imperative is to ensure that ‘no other state is in a position to exercise undue influence on us [India]—or make us act against our better judgement and will.’<sup>80</sup> Khilnani and others noted:

Nonalignment 2.0 has to be articulated in a context where power itself is becoming far more diffused and fragmented... Alongside the U.S. and China, there will be several other centres and hubs of power that will be relevant, particularly in regional contexts... [which will] ...require a very skilful management of complicated coalitions and opportunities—in environments that may be inherently unstable and volatile rather than structurally settled. This also provides India with rich opportunities, especially if it can leverage into the international domain some of its domestically acquired skills in coalition management and complex negotiation.<sup>81</sup>

In a similar note the 2012 U.S. National Intelligence Council cautions these rising powers that, despite ‘strong fundamentals— GDP (gross domestic product), population size, etc.’ they will also need to ‘learn to operate in networks and coalitions in a multipolar world.’<sup>82</sup> As a result of this when no single country can decide on rule making, becoming a ‘rule shaper’ seems a more credible and probable ambition for India. India is henceforth more likely to become ‘one of a small number of powers with the ability to play a major role in shaping the evolution of rules of the road’ as is already

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<sup>79</sup> The redefining of ‘non-alignment’ in the post-cold war to maintain India’s strategic autonomy has been discussed in Chapter 4. Also see, Pant and Siper, ‘Non-Alignment and Beyond’.

<sup>80</sup> Khilnani et.al, *Nonalignment 2.0*, p.10.

<sup>81</sup> Khilnani et.al, *Non-Alignment 2.0*, p.9.

<sup>82</sup> See National Intelligence Council, ‘Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds’, Washington, 2013, [https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/GlobalTrends\\_2030.pdf](https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/GlobalTrends_2030.pdf), (accessed 14 February 2020).

evident, for example, in India's approach to climate change, energy, and maritime security.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, the *Non Alignment 2.0* document further adds, 'we [India] need to devise appropriate responses that address the unpredictable ways in which weak states, terrorist groups and new post-modern media-based and other forms of power, can influence or threaten our interests'<sup>84</sup>

This paved the way for 'strategic partnership' based on 'shared values and convergence of fundamental interests' between the two countries on matters of strategic importance ranging from economics, terrorism, non-proliferation and maritime security and others. The US willingness to help India to emerge as a 'major world power in the 21<sup>st</sup> century'<sup>85</sup> has been welcomed by the security elites (not the Leftists) as long as such partnership is on 'equal terms' and without compromising India's relations with other major powers such as Russia, Japan and even China. This has spurred additional scholarly debates in the elite circles.<sup>86</sup> Although former Prime Minister (PM) Singh echoed former PM Vajpayee's belief that India and USA are 'natural allies', the UPA government (with Left party as part of its coalition government) remained deeply ambivalent about a strategic partnership with the USA. The UPA-II held back to build on the bilateral relations post the Indo-US nuclear deal despite coming back to power with a bigger majority in 2009 because of Congress's obsession with preservation of strategic autonomy as was evident in India's cautious response to US pivot strategy. This has led Indian strategic experts like Mohan to conclude that, 'The UPA government has talked the talk, but has been afraid to walk the walk'<sup>87</sup> despite signing up for strategic partnerships with a number of countries, not just major powers, but also in the extended neighbourhood. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) under A.K.Antony showed reluctance to boost military ties or to engage in defence diplomacy. The Indo-USA relations began to gain momentum under Modi's government that started with Modi's visit to USA followed by President Obama being invited as the Chief Guest for India's 66th Republic Day Celebrations in 2015 and the visit resulted in significant

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<sup>83</sup> Sidhu, Mehta and Jones, 'A Hesitant Rule Shaper', p.12.

<sup>84</sup> Khilnani et.al, *Nonalignment 2.0*, p.10.

<sup>85</sup> 'US to help make India a 'major world power'', *China Daily*, 26 March 2005, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-03/26/content\\_428361.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-03/26/content_428361.htm), (accessed 27 June 2019).

<sup>86</sup> These scholarly debates have been addressed at length in the literature review chapter.

<sup>87</sup> C.R. Mohan, *Modi's World: Expanding India's Sphere of Influence*, Noida, Harper's Collins Publishers, 2015, p.39.

defense outcomes and pushed India-USA to jointly work in the Indo-Pacific region with other regional partners.

The BJP election manifesto pledged to ‘create a web of allies’ that apparently suggests the end of India’s attachment to non-alignment, yet Modi himself has not devalued the need to ensure strategic autonomy. He remarked that, ‘[t]here is no reason to change India’s non-alignment policy that is a legacy and has been in place’, and added, ‘But this is true that today, unlike before, India is not standing in a corner. It is the world’s largest democracy and fastest growing economy. We are acutely conscious of our responsibilities both in the region and internationally.’<sup>88</sup> It is noted that words like ‘non-alignment’ and ‘strategic autonomy’ were less frequently used (almost negligible) in policy texts or in PM’s speeches since 2014 which signalled an important strategic shift in how Indian leadership perceived a greater global role for India.<sup>89</sup> He This was clearly stated by former Foreign Secretary and the present External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar at the IISS Fullerton Lecture in Singapore that gave a comprehensive picture of the aims of Indian foreign policy of the Narendra Modi government. He remarked that, ‘The transition in India is an expression of greater self confidence. Its foreign policy dimension is to aspire to be a leading power, rather than just a balancing power. Consequently, there is also a willingness to shoulder greater global responsibilities.’<sup>90</sup> This was demonstrated in India’s role in providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in Nepal and evacuation operations in Yemen, its extraordinary records in peace-keeping missions and in its efforts to keep the maritime commons safe and secure. There is also a strong impetus given to energising Indian diplomacy to serve a key ‘role in our [India’s] national development’ by making ‘full use of personal chemistry, narratives, culture and diaspora.’<sup>91</sup> As a result of this, there is an increasing belief and recognition of India’s

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<sup>88</sup> WSJ Staff, ‘Read an Edited Transcript of the Wall Street Journal’s Interview With Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’, *Wall Street Journal*, 26 May 2016, <https://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2016/05/26/read-an-edited-transcript-of-the-wall-street-journals-interview-with-indian-prime-minister-narendra-modi/>, (accessed 20 January 2020).

<sup>89</sup> S. Ganguly, ‘Has Modi truly changed India’s Foreign Policy?’, *The Washington Quarterly*, vol.40, no.2, 2017, p.132.

<sup>90</sup> S. Jaishankar, ‘IISS Fullerton Lecture by Dr. S. Jaishankar, Foreign Secretary in Singapore’, New Delhi, 20 July 2015, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2015, [https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/25493/IISS\\_Fullerton\\_Lecture\\_by\\_Foreign\\_Secretary\\_in\\_Singapore](https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/25493/IISS_Fullerton_Lecture_by_Foreign_Secretary_in_Singapore), (accessed 24 February 2020).

<sup>91</sup> S. Jaishankar, ‘Remarks by Foreign Secretary at the release of Dr. C. Raja Mohan’s book “Modi’s World-Expanding India’s Sphere of Influence”(July 17, 2015)’, New Delhi, 18 July 2015, Ministry of

capabilities to contribute and participate more actively as, ‘The world is beginning to believe that we mean business, whether in business or otherwise. And as we proceed, perhaps it is time to reassess our ability to drive and lead on global issues, and be active and nimble rather than neutral or risk-averse.’<sup>92</sup> The other significant shift under Modi government has been its emphasis on projecting a muscular regional policy: ‘where required we will not hesitate from taking strong stand and steps’<sup>93</sup> and this was evident when the Modi government not only undertook surgical strike operations in Pakistan territory in 2016 and 2019 but also chose to publicise it or was inhesitant to take a strong stand on the India-China Doklam border stand off in 2017.<sup>94</sup>

Yet India is seen as suffering from an exalted self image by itself by self-declaration of its greatness even though in relative terms of economic and military capabilities India still has a lot to catch up and is seen as one that is yet to recognise its responsibilities as a great power. Indian foreign policy establishment prefers to see India’s greatness as a birth right and something that the world owes as a favour to India to recognise her as one. Secondly, it has been argued that India’s foreign policy suffers from a lack of a grand strategic vision as the Indian government is yet to produce a single coherent national strategy document which has led some scholars to lament the absence of foreign policy frameworks or a grand strategy in India.<sup>95</sup> Indian strategist, Karnad argues that India does not fulfil the requirements to be considered as a great power yet because it lacks ‘a driving vision’, a sense of ‘national destiny’, a defining of its ‘national interests’, and willingness to use coercion and force in support of

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Extrenal Affairs, Government of India, [https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/25491/Remarks\\_by\\_Foreign\\_Secretary\\_at\\_the\\_release\\_of\\_DrC\\_Raja\\_Mohans\\_book\\_Modis\\_WorldExpanding\\_Indias\\_Sphere\\_of\\_InfluencequotJuly\\_17\\_2015](https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/25491/Remarks_by_Foreign_Secretary_at_the_release_of_DrC_Raja_Mohans_book_Modis_WorldExpanding_Indias_Sphere_of_InfluencequotJuly_17_2015), (accessed 24 Fenruary 2020).

<sup>92</sup> Jaishankar, ‘Remarks by Foreign Secretary at the release of Dr. C. Raja Mohan’s book “Modi’s World-Expanding India’s Sphere of Influence”(July 17, 2015).’

<sup>93</sup> Mohan, *Modi’s World*, p.39.

<sup>94</sup> Racine, ‘Post-Post-Colonial India.’

<sup>95</sup> See A. Mazumdar, ‘India’s Search for a Post-Cold War Foreign Policy: Domestic Constraints and Obstacles’, *India Quarterly*, vol.67, no.2, 2011, pp. 165-182; P.B.Mehta, ‘Still Under Nehru's Shadow? The Absence of Foreign Policy Frameworks in India’, *India Review*, vol.8, no. 3, 2009, pp.209-233; H.V. Pant, ‘Indian Foreign Policy Challenges: Substantive Uncertainties and Institutional Infirmities’, *Asian Affairs*, vol.40, no.1, 2009, pp.90-101; H. V. Pant, ‘A Rising India’s Search for a Foreign Policy’, *Orbis*, vol.53, no.2, 2009, pp. 250-264; H.V. Pant, ‘Introduction’, in H. V. Pant (ed.), *Indian Foreign Policy in a Unipolar World*, New Delhi, Routledge, 2009, pp.1-20; H.V. Pant, ‘Indian Strategic Culture: The Debate and its Consequences’, in D. Scott (ed.), *Handbook of India’s International Relations*, London, Routledge, 2011, pp.14-22.



national interests' and 'imaginative' use of both hard and soft power.<sup>96</sup> It is argued that India's economic rise might have strengthened India's great power ambitions but 'it has not been accompanied by a commensurate enlargement of the country's policy horizon'<sup>97</sup> because of the prevailing confusion over whether India should be a great power or not and if so then of what kind. This is seen as a result of the incoherence that characterizes a fragmented political system which expresses itself in foreign policy with contrasting voices on India's place and role in the world, sometimes at the senior leadership level and has made India's foreign policy largely reactive in nature. BJP leader Yashwant Sinha<sup>98</sup> has also identified the absence of a single Vision document, seminal or 'strategy papers' by the Indian government that delineates the preferred geopolitical systems or which defines and grades India's core national interests. This absence of a long term vision that leads to ad hoc policy making is seen as worrisome by many in New Delhi. An associated problematic area which is the hard power deficit also follows from this 'absence of strategic vision, political will, credible threat perceptions, and appropriate strategy and plans.'<sup>99</sup> Finally, the other major issue is the lack of a bureaucratic and institutional apparatus in charge of foreign relations to further its influence as the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) is critically understaffed for the kind of foreign policy activism that India wants to pursue.

It is argued that despite certain shifts in the foreign policy India's transition from the 'universalism of the weak' to 'exceptionalism of the strong' is yet to be fully realised.<sup>100</sup> It is strongly felt that in order to sustain the liberal order and its governance processes which India has largely benefited from and that has assisted its rise in the post Cold war period, India needs to provide its leadership rather than just participation. As Pant remarks, 'rather than simply being a beneficiary of global public goods, it will now have to actively generate, sustain and secure them.'<sup>101</sup> India has slowly embraced

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<sup>96</sup> Karnad, *Why India is not a Great Power?(Yet)*, p.1

<sup>97</sup> Malone, *Does the Elephant Dance?*, p.72; Admiral (Retd.) R. Menon and R. Kumar, *The Long View from Delhi: Indian Grand Strategy for Foreign Policy*, Delhi, Academic Foundation, 2010; C.R. Mohan, *Peaceful Periphery: India's New Regional Quest*, Pennsylvania, Center for the Advanced Study of India, 24 May 2007.

<sup>98</sup> Yashwant Sinha is a senior BJP leader who served as successively the Foreign Minister and Finance Minister in the Vajpayee regime (1998-2004).

<sup>99</sup> Karnad, *Why India is not a Great Power?(Yet)*, p.11.

<sup>100</sup> Mohan, 'Rising India: Partner in Shaping the Global Commons'; Sidhu, et.al, 'A Hesitant Rule Shaper'; H.V. Pant, 'Rising India and Its Global Governance Imperatives', *Rising Powers Quarterly*, vol.2, no.3, 2007, p.11.

<sup>101</sup> Pant, 'Rising India and Its Global Governance Imperatives', p.9.

the liberal order particularly the liberal economic agenda to boost its economic growth<sup>102</sup> and the liberal order has also welcomed its rise because of its democratic credentials. India however still resists certain institutions that are constraining or not representative of its concerns. It continues to be reluctant in fully embracing and internalizing all components of the liberal global governance agenda such as democracy promotion,<sup>103</sup> the responsibility to protect<sup>104</sup> and remains sceptical of neoliberal global trading regimes.<sup>105</sup> The Trump administration has been critical of India's trade policies and referred to India as 'the highest tariff nation in the world' which has constrained Indo-US trade relations from realizing its full potential in his recent visit to India in February 2020, though the Indian authorities have defended the import duty to be well within the commitment given to the World Trade Organisation (WTO).<sup>106</sup> It is believed that India finds it difficult to drop its ideological past and 'ideas such as sovereignty, non-intervention and strategic autonomy' that are deeply rooted in its strategic culture and are part of its global identity. Second, its military focus still remains defined by the traditional threats posed on its land frontiers by its hostile neighbors.<sup>107</sup> The willingness to project military power beyond its immediate neighborhood has not been internalized yet by the political elites in New Delhi. Indian leaders remain cautious about dominant conceptions of power, are extremely conservative in the use of military power, with a largely inward focus unlike other great powers in the past and continue to discuss the merits of the concept of non-alignment while promoting the value of nuclear disarmament.<sup>108</sup> Lastly, the major challenges to India's path to greatness have also been from within-the challenges of poverty, illiteracy, lack of health care, unemployment, lack of infrastructure and internal strife based on socio-cultural religious differences.

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<sup>102</sup> R. Mukherjee, 'India and Global Economic Governance: From Structural Conflict to Embedded Liberalism', *International Studies Quarterly*, vol.16, no.4, 2014, pp.460-466.

<sup>103</sup> See, I. Hall, 'Not Promoting, Not Exporting: India's Democracy Assistance', *Rising Powers Quarterly*, vol.2, no.3, August 2017, pp.81-98.

<sup>104</sup> See, K. Bommakanti, 'India's Evolving Views on Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and Humanitarian Interventions: The Significance of Legitimacy', *Rising Powers Quarterly*, vol.2, no.3, August 2017, pp.99-124.

<sup>105</sup> See, M.S. Sharma and P. Bhogal, 'India and Global Trade Governance: Re-Defining Its "National" Interest', *Rising Powers Quarterly*, vol.2, no.3, August 2017, pp. 125-146.

<sup>106</sup> TNN, 'Trump says India's tariffs highest, and it's not fair', *Times of India*, 26 February 2020, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/trump-says-indias-tariffs-highest-and-its-not-fair/articleshow/74310398.cms>, (accessed 27 February 2020).

<sup>107</sup> Pant, 'Rising India and Its Global Governance Imperatives', p.9.

<sup>108</sup> See Pant, 'Rising India and Its Global Governance Imperatives', p.11; S. Menon, 'India's Role in Global Politics' (Prepared but Undelivered Speech by National Security Advisor), 15 July 2011 cited in B. Karnad, *Why India is not a great Power (Yet)*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2015, p.66.

Therefore it is stated that the government intends to work for ‘the attainment of India’s grand strategy, the purpose of which is to transform India, so that every Indian has a fair chance of achieving his potential, untrammelled by poverty, illiteracy, and disease.’<sup>109</sup>

It is true that despite the significant development of both hard and soft power capabilities, India is still in the ranks of an ‘emerging power’ but it cannot be said that India lacks a driving vision, a sense of destiny, has un-defined ‘national interests’ or is unwilling to use force when needed. There is no single strategic doctrine but there have been strategic writings and policy papers, though scattered on India’s strategic interests, national security and foreign policy besides the MEA officials who have been vocally speaking about India’s national priorities and international role on various platforms within and outside India. Additionally there are debates over whether a country like India should or should not have a grand strategy as it might limit its flexibility of options. Also on the maritime front, it has been an exception over the last few years where India has published maritime doctrine and strategy papers with a clear outline of the areas of primary and secondary interest for India and elaborated on the role of the Navy. Additionally, it is true that Indian elites show a discomfort or hesitancy with the conception of power (at least in rhetoric) but there have been moments when India’s political leadership has sought military power projection in domestic context or within South Asia. This has further become a crucial component under Modi’s strategy to deal with Pakistan-terrorism nexus. However, India’s predisposition to exercise influence without the use of coercive power –is a narrative that has underpinned India’s foreign policy discourse for the last six decades (though there remain much contestations to this argument)and has been consistent and even led to the re-invention of India’s policy of ‘strategic restraint’ in the context of India’s surgical strikes. The shifts in Indian foreign policy in last quarter of a decade have been ‘transformational’ as India now not only wants to pro-actively shape global outcomes but there are now growing demands on India to make more contributions to the maintenance of the global order. For instance, accelerated outreach by other Asia-Pacific nations like Japan and Vietnam followed by India’s deepening relations with Australia and Indonesia shows their willingness to

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<sup>109</sup> S. Menon, ‘Speaking Notes at the 14th Asian Security Conference on Non-traditional Security Issues’, New Delhi, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, 14 February 2012, [https://idsa.in/keyspeeches/ShivshankarMenon\\_14ASC](https://idsa.in/keyspeeches/ShivshankarMenon_14ASC), (accessed 15 February 2015).

welcome India to play a key role in maintaining stability and security in the Indo-Pacific region, primarily ‘a balancing role’ against Chinese assertiveness with regards to maritime territorial disputes in East and South China sea.<sup>110</sup> India’s enhanced ‘defence diplomacy’ with East and South East Asian countries and ‘economic diplomacy’ in the neighbourhood is seen as an external balancing strategy in response to Chinese ‘strategic encirclement’ theories in the Indian Ocean region. But it is also true that India’s motivation for deeper engagement with the region exists independent of its relationship with China and is a result of India’s aspirations for a greater role in Asia, including as a security provider. It is increasingly being recognised in New Delhi that in order to realise its foreign policy objectives to achieve a great power status India cannot remain just a challenger or stakeholder in the global governance but has to contribute to it. It has to provide leadership in its own backyard to ensure its rise regionally and globally. But how it chooses to do so depends on how it perceives itself in relation to others and what kind of power it wants to become.

### **Ideas of ‘Exceptionalism’ and ‘Greatness’**

It is possible to identify competing discourses on ‘ideas of India’ or ‘*Indianness*’ but the post-independent security elites have always operated with a strong sense of an Indian Self with a distinct worldview owing to its vast size, geographical position, huge demography, resources, thriving democracy and cultural diversity with ‘great power’ aspirations and potential; one that is conscious of its ‘rightful’ place in the world and destined to play a major role in world affairs. They see India as an ‘exceptional’ state with a ‘civilizational consciousness’ and have (re)produced it as a ‘different great power’<sup>111</sup> which has left an everlasting imprint on Indian society and its strategic thinking. Mehta notes, ‘India certainly has a sense that the greatest source of its power in the world will be the power of its example.’<sup>112</sup>

Firstly, the idea of inevitability of India as a ‘great power’, in a sort of a natural entitlement can be sourced from Nehru’s writings and speeches which has also

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<sup>110</sup> D. Rajendram, ‘India’s new Asia-Pacific strategy: Modi acts East’, *Analysis*, Lowy Institute for International Policy, Sydney, December 2014, p.3, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/indias-new-asia-pacific-strategy-modi-acts-east.pdf>, (accessed 11 September 2017).

<sup>111</sup> Cohen, *India: Emerging Power*, p.34.

<sup>112</sup> Mehta, ‘Still Under Nehru’s Shadow?’, p.218.

emphasized on India's geographic centrality to play a major role in Asia. Nehru believed that 'if left to itself, greatness will come to it' but such greatness will not be dependent on power projection outwards as, 'India is self-contained, harbours no design on the integrity of other states, and has no ambition outside India.'<sup>113</sup> A sense of the Self was evident in Balgangadhar Tilak's memorandum to George Clemenceau for the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 that espoused India's right for self-determination and stated that a free self-determined India would be a source of stability. Further Nehru's idea of India was constructed as opposed to the 'West' and entailed sustained involvement in peacekeeping, endorsing human rights, anti-racism, anti-colonialism, disarmament and pursuing non-alignment by virtue of which it emerged as the leader of the Third world. This feeling that India would inevitably emerge as a great power is a historically perpetuated idea that has been nurtured by the Indian foreign policy establishment for decades.

The most common and strong belief among India's security elite community is that with these increasing material capabilities, she is once again destined to emerge as a 'great state', which matches the historical and civilizational accomplishments of the Indian people. India's foreign policy had rested on an expansive vision of the country's destiny; but for long India had lacked the resources to transform this into reality. Cohen writes, 'India has long been counted among the have-nots. This situation is rapidly changing, which is what will make India such an interesting "great" power for the next dozen years.'<sup>114</sup> For many, India is seen to have the economic power, military strength, an important geo-strategic location and the spiritual and moral pre-eminence to achieve the global power status. As Tharoor and Saran notes, 'It matters, because in today's world of competing modernities and fractured identities, India has the legacy, tools, potential, and will to build an order that is capable of subsuming these differences, and offering a story that is compelling, replicable and sustainable.'<sup>115</sup>

It has also been argued that India is unlikely to behave in a similar manner to other great powers. But this belief that India is a 'Different Great Power' or such claims of 'exceptionalism' have consolidated over the years not only in the minds of the

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<sup>113</sup> B. Prasad, *The Origins of Indian Foreign Policy: The Indian National Congress and World Affairs, 1885-1947*, Delhi, Bookland Private, 1957, p.70.

<sup>114</sup> Cohen, *India: Emerging Power*, pp.34-35.

<sup>115</sup> Tharoor and Saran, *The New World Disorder and the Indian Imperative*, p.291.

political and strategic elite but also in the Indian society in general that complimented the conviction in India's destined greatness. This got further fuelled with the US endorsing a larger role for India as 'a rising power and a responsible global power'<sup>116</sup> in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and describes India as the 'lynchpin' to USA's Asia-Pacific strategy. India's quest for international recognition as a great power has also been predicated upon bolstering its reputation as a 'responsible power', for instance it has diligently projected and marketed itself as a 'responsible nuclear power' to distinguish herself from Pakistan, China and North Korea. A pitfall of this as Karnad said is that, 'our statecraft has got straitjacketed into a morality straight jacket' which he refers to as '*bovine pacifism*' that prevents India from acting in its own national interests and often leads to inaction and works in favour of the 'international partners' that want India to act in a way as they would like.<sup>117</sup> When the other nations (like US as withdrawing from Paris Treaty on climate change, China and Britain) are giving up on their options, Indian leadership remains trapped by 'their own sense of historical notion of morality' and this arises also because of the misreading of Vedic texts. Karnad remarks,

Nehru was against such bloody mindedness [in Rig Veda] but understood the use of morality to get his ways. He used moral actions in the 1950's to raise India's stock in the world and somehow we got tagged with morality... we got imprisoned and since then became victimised by our public proficience [and projection] of morality of what the nations can and cannot do. That is the consequence of 'a responsible state' with which we are now stuck with and that burdens our international relations.<sup>118</sup>

The study therefore seeks to understand that as India is showing an willingness to shoulder greater responsibilities, is there an emerging contradiction between its projection as a 'unique power' and its aspirations for a great power status or if its rise continues to be predicated upon re-producing India as 'a responsible power' still. This notion to act as 'a responsible power'<sup>119</sup> is a matter of interpretation by Indian elites in

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<sup>116</sup> Press Trust of India, 'India is a rising and responsible power', *IBN Live*, 4 June 2010.

<sup>117</sup> Karnad, *Why India is not a Great Power (Yet)*, p.62, p.67; B. Karnad, *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security: The Realist Foundations of Strategy*, 2nd edn., New Delhi, Macmillan India, 2005, pp.14-19.

<sup>118</sup> '*India's Missing Kootayuddha (Covert Warfare)* | Bharat Karnad | RAW | #SrijanTalks | Kulbhushan Jadhav', [Online video], Srijan Foundation, 11 September 2019, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=18MzHkuvU\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=18MzHkuvU_Q), (accessed 26 January 2020).

<sup>119</sup> S.M. Krishna, 'Statement by External Affairs Minister Shri S.M. Krishna on assumption of office', New Delhi, 23 May 2009, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, <https://www.indianembassyusa.gov.in/ArchivesDetails?id=1096>, (accessed 27 February 2020).

accordance to its interests and self-perceptions rather than externally determined. Associated with this is the view of ‘an accidental great power’ that has been ‘achieved less by design than happenstance is unique’<sup>120</sup> through US efforts (for instance in non-proliferation and maritime security) which enables India’s climb up the great power ladder without being impeded by the existing great powers that otherwise are unlikely to ease an aspirant state like India’s entry into the privileged club. But would this make India into a genuine great power rather than ‘greatness’ achieved by its own doing is a critical question to think about.

The second school of thought attributes this source of ‘greatness’ to India’s soft power arising out of India’s civilizational inheritance and cultural values. This understanding of ‘greatness’ beyond one’s relative material capabilities or strength has been at the heart of India’s ‘exceptionalism’ and ‘worldview’ writings relating to India’s strategic behaviour and has emphasized on a rising India’s moral obligation to work for global peace, to serve humanity and contribute to the welfare of the whole world drawing on the philosophies of Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore and Hindu concept of ‘dharma’ [ethics].<sup>121</sup> For instance, India’s ‘idea of moral pre-eminence’ has been a strong argument for espousing a leadership role in the NAM, advancing third world concerns in addressing asymmetries in global trading and non-proliferation regimes, in climate change talks, democratising international order by advocating for UN Security Council reforms, building South-South Cooperation through regional groupings like the BRICS, IBSA, Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multisectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)<sup>122</sup> and thereby working for creating a more equitable, fair and non-discriminatory multipolar world order.

The growing influence of India’s civilizational and cultural influence often termed as India’s ‘soft power’ has also been used to develop closer relations with the South East Asian countries through past historical, religious or cultural links and by

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<sup>120</sup> Karnad, *Why India is not a Great Power (Yet)*, p.480.

<sup>121</sup> J. Nehru, ‘Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech on 13 Decemebrr 1946 during the Constituent Assembly Debates’, *Constituent Assembly Debates of India*, Official Report, vol.I, 9-23 December 1946, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/cadebatefiles/C13121946.html>, (accessed 12 June 2014).

<sup>122</sup> BRICS is a regional grouping of developing countries including Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. IBSA is a regional grouping of India, Brazil and South Africa. BIMSTEC is a south Asian regional grouping on Techinal and Economic cooperation of Indian Ocean rim countries that includes Bangladesh, India, Myanmar and Srilanka.

engaging with Indian diaspora worldwide to advance Indian interests and influence abroad. India's former PM Manmohan Singh has been equally reliant on this 'exceptionalist' narrative in his responses to the debate on India's rise often referring to India as a 'nation bridging many global divides'.<sup>123</sup> He said:

For centuries, we have lived in peace with the world around us, travelling to distant lands as traders, teachers and scholars. Rarely has the world seen armies sailing out of India as conquerors, rather, India's influence across Asia had been one of culture, language, religion, ideas and values, not of bloody conquest' which already made it a 'global superpower', though not in the traditional sense.<sup>124</sup>

Yashwant Sinha, a senior leader of the BJP and former Minister of Finance framed his comments on India's 'civilizational exceptionalism' in terms of 'soft power,' a framing which has also been promoted by the Congress Party's President Sonia Gandhi who (felt 'uneasy' with India being labelled as a traditional military 'superpower') preferred India 'becoming a global power for peace, prosperity and progress'<sup>125</sup> and Congress Parliamentarian like Shashi Tharoor for whom the 'roots of India's soft power run deep' in a 'civilizational ethos' and this ability to exert influence without use of coercive power is considered as India's forte.<sup>126</sup> For instance by emphasising the influence of Bollywood as perhaps 'India's most successful brand ambassador internationally,' Tharoor remarked 'it's Bollywood that has helped India demonstrate that it is a player in globalisation, not merely a subject of it.'<sup>127</sup> This gives India a major advantage over

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<sup>123</sup> M. Singh, 'Text of Indian PM's Independence Day Address', *Hindustan Times*, 15 August 2007.

<sup>124</sup> M. Singh, 'PM's speech at the HT Leadership Summit- "India: The Next Global Superpower?"', New Delhi, 17 November 2006, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, <https://archivepmo.nic.in/drmanmohansingh/speech-details.php?nodeid=467>, (accessed on 3 July 2019).

<sup>125</sup> 'Sonia Gandhi outlines vision of future Indian superpower', New Delhi, *Agencia Angola Press*, 17 November 2006, [http://www.angop.ao/angola/en\\_us/noticias/internacional/2006/10/46/Sonia-Gandhi-outlines-vision-future-Indian-superpower,203e1fe1-67bd-4d42-9a00-3040f75f4296.html](http://www.angop.ao/angola/en_us/noticias/internacional/2006/10/46/Sonia-Gandhi-outlines-vision-future-Indian-superpower,203e1fe1-67bd-4d42-9a00-3040f75f4296.html), (accessed 3 July 2019).

<sup>126</sup> 'UPA plays cultural diplomacy card to achieve political diplomacy goals', *India Today*, 30 October 2006,

<https://www.google.com/search?q=upa+plays+cultural+diplomacy+card+to+achieve+political+diplomacy+goals%2C+india+today%2C+30+october%2C+2006&oq=upa+plays+cultural+diplomacy+card+to+achieve+political+diplomacy+goals%2C+india+today%2C+30+october%2C+2006&aqs=chrome.69i57.112588j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>, (accessed 22 July 2014); S. Tharoor, 'Indian Strategic Power: Soft', *Huffpost*, 26 June 2009, [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/indian-strategic-power-so\\_b\\_207785](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/indian-strategic-power-so_b_207785), (accessed 25 August 2015); P. Chacko, *Indian Foreign Policy: The Politics of Postcolonial Identity from 1947 to 2004*, London and New York, Routledge, 2012, p.2.

<sup>127</sup> Shashi Tharoor, Member of Parliament (INC), Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs. He was formerly the Senior Advisor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations (Kofi Annan), former Minister of State of External Affairs (May 2009-April, 2010) and Minister of State



the others as the *Non Alignment 2.0* strategy document summarising the Indian difference in power projection notes:

India's great advantage is that, barring certain perceptions in our immediate neighbourhood, it is not seen as a threatening power. The overseas projection of Indian power has been very limited; in its external face, India's nationalism does not appear belligerently to any country, nor as expansionist or threatening in any way. This has, in some respects, been a great asset to India. Its power has often been the power of its example.<sup>128</sup>

India is very conscious of how it is perceived by others, but it is also a necessity from within to stand out from others and emphasize its moral or positive uniqueness. For instance, where China has become a 'geo-economic' power that seeks to increase its influence through asymmetric trade power and debt-based economic grants and is often seen as a 'new colonial power' in Africa, India is likely to be 'the world's first "development superpower"' with its budget allocation for economic diplomacy crossing one-billion dollar mark directed towards its development partners in Asia and Africa.<sup>129</sup>

The Modi doctrine<sup>130</sup> has emphasized on promoting India's 'civilizational exceptionalism' referred to as *Sabhyata* and *Sanskriti* as one of the five pillars of the *Panchamrit* doctrine for projecting India's cultural soft power and making it an integral part in India's foreign policy and 'development diplomacy' as is evident in observance of the International Yoga Day or the ITEC programme. The subject of connectivity is also bolstered since it is projected as being built upon the deep-rooted historical associations with nations in Indo-Pacific and using this to its advantage holds contemporary policy relevance for India. Foreign Secretary Gokhale emphasizing India's cultural reach to revive India's connectivity with the neighbourhood said:

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for Human Resource Development (2012-2014). He has been a major proponent on the influence of India's soft power in augmenting India's role as a major power in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. See S.Tharoor, 'Speech delivered at the IIFA inauguration in Colombo', *Rediff*, 10 June 2010, [www.rediff.com/movies/column/shashi-tharoor-on-the-magic-of-bollywood/20100610.htm](http://www.rediff.com/movies/column/shashi-tharoor-on-the-magic-of-bollywood/20100610.htm), (accessed 30 July 2014); S.Tharoor, 'Talk delivered by Dr.Shashi Tharoor on "PaxIndica: India in the World of the 21<sup>st</sup> Centur"', The Centre of International Policy Studies, The City University, London, 20 February, 2015 (Personally Attended).

<sup>128</sup> Khilnani, et al. *Non-Alignment 2.0*, p.10.

<sup>129</sup> Tharoor and Saran, *The New World Disorder and the Indian Imperative*, p.229, p.284.

<sup>130</sup> The Modi Doctrine has been discussed in detail in chapter 4.

Robust connectivity has been the boon and barometer of India's prosperity and well-being in history. Our culture has been enriched by ancient linkages with the rest of the world, just as the light of Indian culture has shone in lands connected across land and seas by monks and merchants.<sup>131</sup>

This will be further elaborated in the chapter that discusses on India's 'neighbourhood policy' and how India's bolsters its presence through regional cooperation, infrastructure building and cultural engagement. But whether such 'global reach' tantamounts to 'global power' requires further considerations.

Finally, the third school of thought questions whether India should invest its resources in tackling the problems of illiteracy, poverty and socio-economic inequity at home or pursue great power aspiration which distracts the Indian establishment from solving these 'objective' challenges and will eventually prevent its rise. There are doubts raised whether India should even attempt to become a superpower or not and rather focus on realising the promise of Indian Constitution and protecting its democratic ideals that is under continued threat.<sup>132</sup> But critics of this school challenge them by stating that every country has problems and it is likely to be resolved with greater acquisition of hard power and its use to protect interests at home and abroad. Such socio-economic concerns at the domestic front should not circumscribe any country to realise its full potential.<sup>133</sup> This is reflected in the statement by former National Security Advisor (NSA) Shivshankar Menon who saw India's preference for 'strategic restraint' as a strategic choice in the foreseeable future compelled by India's economic priorities. The prime duty of India as a 'unique sort of great power' therefore should be focussed on eliminating poverty and improving the lives of its people through socio-economic development rather than engaging in arms race or balance of power politics.

These three strands of thought summarise the general ideas around India's path to 'greatness' and briefly touches upon the notion of Indian 'exceptionalism' which is deeply embedded in the Indian security elites' minds. They primarily draw from India's

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<sup>131</sup> Gokhale, 'Address by Foreign Secretary at the Regional Connectivity Conference: South Asia in the Indo-Pacific Context.'

<sup>132</sup> R. Guha, 'Will India Become a Superpower?' in *India: The Next Super Power?*, Specila Report No.10, London, London School of Economics, 2011, pp.15-16 at <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/reports/SR10.aspx>, (accessed 14 February 2014).

<sup>133</sup> A.J. Tellis et al, *Measuring National Power in the Post-Industrial World*, Santa Monica, RAND, 2000; Karnad, *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security*, pp.310-311.

identity as a ‘civilizational state’ and nationalist thinkings and writings on India’s role in the world before and after independence. But this needs further exploration on the cultural sources, the content of these ideas by identifying the major themes by examining their works and the representations of these key themes in the foreign policy discourse under the last four governments under the leadership of Vajpayee, Singh and Modi. These four governments have significantly shaped and defined India’s position in and its approach to national and world politics. It is important to understand the re-interpretations and re-productions of the notions of Indian identity and Indian ideas of ‘greatness’ to comprehend India’s state actions within the region and internationally.

#### **IV. Research Design**

The study looks at national identity constructions and its relation with Indian foreign policy with the intent to trace and understand the evolution, continuities and changes in the foreign policy discourse and practices under the two most important national political parties- Indian National Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party in the post Cold war period (1990-2019) with a special focus on NDA-I, UPA-I and II and NDA-II governments from 1998 onwards. It also undertakes a comparative study of the Indian foreign policy through three in depth case studies that predominantly focusses on the administration of three Prime Ministerial leaderships who have been considered to induce significant transformations in India’s foreign policy trajectory to make her a ‘great power’; A.B. Vajpayee (BJP), Dr. Manmohan Singh (INC) and Narendra Modi (BJP). This is an interpretative study that uses a critical constructivist approach drawing from radical constructivism and post-colonialism literature and makes use of qualitative or interpretivist methods such as discourse analysis and narrative analysis. The study is based on intensive documentary analysis (primary and secondary) and elite interviews as methods of data collection.

Following critical constructivist approach (that is rooted in poststructuralism), states are not treated as ‘given’ or ‘fixed’ entities but social constructs whose identities are never fixed and are continuously reproduced. This study does not negate or undermine the significance of structural or material factors in shaping India’s foreign policy but argues that such ‘real factors’ cannot alone be comprehended without the discursive interpretation of the security elites. The ‘security elites’ are those who are

directly and indirectly involved in national security and foreign policy decision making; these include politicians, bureaucrats, members of the defence, scientists from the nuclear energy establishment (in the Defense Research and Development Organisation, Atomic Energy Commission and the Bhaba Atomic Research Centre), strategic experts (independent or associated with thinktanks like the Institute of Defense and Studies Analysis [IDSA], under Ministry of Defence [MoD], New Delhi and the Observer Research Foundation [ORF], New Delhi) and media journalists based in New Delhi and Kolkata.

The study assumes that it is only through discursive constructions that the reality can be interpreted and the world ‘made sense of’, thereby rejecting the assumption that material facts have objective meanings and singular interpretations. The study depends on constructivist analysis of ‘foreign policy discourses- groups of statements that produce particular kinds of knowledge about a topic- norms-shared ideas about appropriate [state] behaviour as they are reproduced in public and private statements and foreign policy actions’.<sup>134</sup> It explores the representational practices in the discourse through Self /Other lenses which reproduce and reinforce such Self understandings that underpin the foreign policy interests and state practices. It draws on radical constructivist scholarship (also referred to as poststructuralism) that conceptualizes foreign policy as a boundary-drawing practice through which states constitute and reproduce their identities by demarcating the ‘inside’ from the ‘outside’, the Self from the Other and recognizes the possibility of varying degrees of Otherness (detailed in Chapter 2).

Such a reading of the relationship between state identity and foreign policy is further sensitive to a state’s cultural and historical embeddedness that remain integral to state identity discourses. This discursive/interpretive link between a state’s national identity discourses, its (in)security imaginary and foreign policies help to unravel the continuities and discontinuities in a state’s representational practices and deepen the understanding of the established and new issues in Indian foreign policy. It draws on radical constructivism, discourse theory and social antagonism as it recognizes that there are competing discourses to reinterpret the ‘idea of Indianness’ that compete for

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<sup>134</sup> P. Chacko, ‘Constructivism and Indian Foreign Policy’, in H.V. Pant (ed.), *New Directions in India’s Foreign Policy: Theory and Praxis*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019, p.48.

meaning fixation.<sup>135</sup> It brings out the political/cultural struggles or ‘social antagonism’ involved in acts of meaning fixation by competing meaning producing discourses over the character of modern Indian Self, how they (discursively) constitute what poses as ‘danger’ in form of an Other or multiple Others to the Self, thereby requiring and legitimising certain policies to secure the Self and further reinforces such identity constructions.

The present study refuses to take for granted the universal applicability of ‘Western’ concepts and theories, to explain state behaviour under one single rational model and argues that there exist an ‘Indian’ way of doing things that is largely shaped by its civilizational consciousness. This study examines how Indian policy-makers under the predominant national identity discourses look at the ‘idea of India’ differently and seek to reproduce this difference in its foreign policy behaviour vis-à-vis the Other(s) to shape a bigger role for herself in Asia and reshape the global governance agenda and processes. Secondly, the study also provides a comprehensive and comparative account through in-depth case specific analysis which the other studies (that raise similar questions) do not engage with or has restricted themselves to different time periods. Similar past studies have also preferred to focus on the general themes in shaping India’s world view rather than exploring the continuities/shifts in the state’s representational practices within those policy areas. There have been few recent studies that have sought to fill the gap and this research adds to that literature by looking at new primary documents and elite interviews. The study includes analysing the nuclear tests in 1998, Indo-US nuclear deal, India’s evolving response to Pakistan’s terror attacks and India’s Ocean diplomacy and engagement in the Indo-Pacific to understand how this ‘Indian difference’ is continuously reproduced within these policy areas.

It looks at primary documents such as party documents, parliamentary debates, writings and speeches available from government sources and conducts in depth interviews of the security elites who are directly engaged with India’s foreign policy making. 14 elite interviews have been conducted in Kolkata and Delhi - the list of which has been included in the Appendix. Several parliamentary and party documents from 1960s-1990s have been studied that have not been included in the existing works.

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<sup>135</sup> The concept of ‘social antagonism’ following E. Laclau and C. Mouffe has been discussed in Chapter 2. See E. Laclau and C. Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a radical democratic politics*, London, Verso, 1985.

Additionally, the study draws upon a wide sample of speeches and lectures on India's foreign relations from the documents published by the Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Defence, Government of India that provides a rich source of primary data collection which have been analysed at length and hence adds to the existing scholarship.

## **V. Summary**

This study aims to understand how the security elites in India have [re]defined the idea of Indianness in its foreign policy discourse and establishes its relations with India's foreign policy choices and whether such ideas assist or constrains India's great power aspirations and if so in what ways. It helps to understand on what kind of role emerging powers espouse to play regionally and in the world order. The study of Indian foreign policy presents an interesting case study as with growing material capabilities India is often expected to behave just like any other emerging power, yet Indian elites have always operated with a sense of exceptionalism. This doctoral thesis instead looks at the idea of exceptionalism as central to India's identity re-production in its foreign policy discourse and practices.

## *Chapter 1*

### **Literature Review**

Existing studies on India's foreign policy making are either empirical in nature or use traditional international relations theories such as realism and liberalism for causal explanation of foreign policy behaviour, apart from historical analyses. Some have focussed on structural-systemic factors and others have focussed on the institutional factors, domestic politics (for instance, role of political personalities) and normative influences that affect foreign policy making. But there have been limited studies that focus on India's national identity representations and its relationship with foreign policies. There have been studies that explore the role of ideas, history, values, norms and identity that establish a causal relationship between culture and policy practices. This study instead refuses to assume these normative influences or culture as given or fixed but sees them as social constructs that are reproduced, re-interpreted and re-invented by the security elites involved in foreign policy decision making. This grants a role of agency to the security elites in the process of social (discursive) construction of the Indian identity. Such studies that concentrate on exploring representational practices and [re]construction of Indian identity, 'exceptionalism' or *Indianness* in India's foreign policy discourse and analyse its linkages with practice have been limited. There have been few studies that establish links between state identity discourses and the state's foreign policies to analyse the continuities and changes or even predict future course of action but the idea of 'exceptionalism', its content and reproduction in Indian foreign policy have not been given the primary attention. It has been mentioned and acknowledged but not explored to its full length as what it means for the contemporary policymakers, or how they make use of it or rather project it to serve certain interests and how far is it successful in supporting India's rise. This study further attempts to look at how 'exceptionalism' or 'Indianness' through Self/Other constructions is being re-produced or re-invented under Modi in his first term (2014-early 2019) and whether and how is it similar to or different from his predecessors, particularly the Vajpayee and Singh governments which have not received concentrated attention hitherto. There have been a few notable exceptions in recent years but they have been on a different time line or just restricted itself to studying of one particular government, for instance either Modi or Singh. Instead this study entails a comparative

analysis of the four successive governments under three Prime Ministerial leadership that shaped India's foreign policy in the twenty-first century not only to understand the continuities and shifts in foreign policies but also to capture those continuities/shifts in the state's representational practices that result in and are re-inforced through those policies.

The first half of the literature review deals with the existing works on India's foreign policy in generation and its relation to ideas of power and the resilience or rejection of the Nehruvianism that has been an important source of Indian ideas of 'exceptionalism'. The second section looks at the literature on Indian strategic thinking and how those relate to the notion of 'exceptionalism' or 'uniqueness' which heavily draws on the writings on Indian strategic culture and worldview making it more distinct, particular and localised. I argue that a historical analysis of such modes of thoughts, self-understandings or self-imaginings are of contemporary relevance amidst growing interest in India's increasingly influential global role and debates about the kind of 'great power' India wants to be and may become. The final section explores the existing works that make use of constructivist methods to study the role of Indian identity, norms and culture and their effects on foreign policy. There exists a small yet a growing body of literature that makes use of constructivist frameworks or relies on constructivist methodologies to which this study intends to contribute and add.

### **1.1. The Pursuit of Power: Becoming 'Normal'?**

The broad argument in the literature suggests that India has continued to acquire and maintain significant economic and military capabilities over the last two decades — themselves often-used as indicators of 'normality' in international politics — and increasingly seems to behave like 'a normal nation'<sup>1</sup> by using those capabilities in ways that are not fundamentally different from other comparable states or the 'rising' or 'emerging powers'<sup>2</sup> (particularly China) to seek regional predominance and influence events abroad. India is seen as trading its *moralpolitik* (guided by Nehruvian idealism) for *realpolitik* that places national interests above all to achieve the major power status. To this regard C.Raja Mohan, strategic analyst on India's foreign and security policies,

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<sup>1</sup> Mohan, *Crossing the Rubicon*, p.xix.

<sup>2</sup> Pant, 'Introduction'.



former Member of the National Security Advisory Board (1999-2000 and 2004-06) and the Chief Editor of a leading national newspaper, *Indian Express* noted, 'India's engagement with the world since the early 1990s posits a fundamental change of course and a reconstitution of its core premises'<sup>3</sup> especially after the 1998 nuclear tests. Senior scholars or strategic analysts like Ganguly, Kapur, Mattoo, Mohan and Subrahmanyam or foreign diplomats like Malone argue that India is increasingly showing inclination to become a 'normal' state, finally comfortable with the politics of power and anarchy, placing national security above morality and normative approaches to international politics and focussing on developing hard power capabilities through economic growth, military modernization and nuclear weapons acquisition.<sup>4</sup> Thereby, the assumption made is that 'self-interested power politics' being the rational mode of state behaviour, India with its growing material strength will also maximise its vital interests like any other 'rising power' by use of realpolitik to ensure its survival and seek greater power or influence.<sup>5</sup> An additional argument is that in order to adapt to a globalised 'multi-polar' world and to respond to the challenges posed by it, India 'needs to go beyond the dearly held notions of strategic autonomy and accept its new international responsibilities'<sup>6</sup> because an excessive emphasis on strategic autonomy is an obstacle to India's quest for great power status. Following Modelski's<sup>7</sup> conception of responsibility as a trait inherent of great power status Mohan remains strongly critical of India's defensive and isolationist tendency.<sup>8</sup>

There has been a clear consensus in the literature on Indian foreign policy that looks at –economic and military capabilities-referred together as hard power-as the primary ingredient to ensure India's rise to a great power status. Nehru's non-

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<sup>3</sup> Mohan, *Crossing the Rubicon*, p.263; Also see C.R.Mohan, 'The Re-making of Indian Foreign Policy: Ending Marginalisation of International Relations Community', *International Studies*, vol.46, no.1 and 2, 2009, pp. 147-163.

<sup>4</sup> Ganguly, 'India's Foreign Policy Grows Up'; Kapur, *India -From Regional to World Power*; Mattoo, 'India's strategic And Foreign Policy Perceptions'; Mohan, *Crossing the Rubicon*; Subrahmanyam, 'Introduction'. See Introduction, p.16.

<sup>5</sup> M.Singh, 'PM's IDSA Anniversary Speech', 11 November 2005, New Delhi, <http://www.pmindia.nic.in/speech-details.php?nodeid=211> (accessed 20 February 2016); S. Menon, 'K. Subrahmanyam and India's Strategic Culture', National Maritime Foundation, 19 January 2012, New Delhi, <http://pragati.nationalinterest.in/2012/02/k-subrahmanyam-andindia%E2%80%99s-strategic-culture/> (accessed 20 February 2016).

<sup>6</sup> C. R. Mohan, Resources, Rising Powers and International Security, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Geneva, <http://www.hdcentre.org/publications/resources-rising-powers-and-international-security-O>(accessed on 20 February 2016).

<sup>7</sup> G. Modelski, *Principles of World Politics*, New York, Free Press, 1972.

<sup>8</sup> Mohan, *Crossing the Rubicon*, p.262.

alignment, peaceful diplomacy and thirdworldism were criticised following the Indo-China war and this led to a rethinking on the role of hard power in India's power calculus which was amplified as was evident from the increase in defence budget and preparedness.<sup>9</sup> It has been duly recognised that diplomacy backed without requisite amount of force is ineffective and the strength of diplomacy and influence flows from economic and military strength.<sup>10</sup> This was further reinforced by India's military success in Bangladesh in 1971 that hard power had to be the basis of national power and gave more weightage to 'military force in maintaining the territorial integrity of the State'.<sup>11</sup> Bajpai provides a classification of strategic subcultures that identifies the 'neoliberals' who prioritize the economic capabilities and the 'hyperrealists' who focus on building military capabilities.<sup>12</sup> Many see India's economic development as the necessary foundation for developing military capabilities and enhancing global influence.<sup>13</sup> Another group of scholars have highlighted the normative bases of India's power, particularly in reference to India's civilizational exceptionalism, and place primary importance on the international recognition and attractiveness of India's soft power in terms of Indian culture, political values and diaspora. They also look at India's long legacy of principled posture before and after independence that allowed it to 'exercise... a considerable moral and political force' in international affairs.<sup>14</sup> Few have

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<sup>9</sup> S. Raghavan, *War and Peace in Modern India*, Ranikhet, Permanent Black, 2010, pp.267-310; R. Chakravarti, 'India in World Affairs', *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, vol.24, no.4, 1963, p.356; S.N. Maitra, 'A New Look at Foreign Policy', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.2, no.17, 1967, p.793 cited in R. Mukherjee, 'Power and Indian Foreign Policy', in H.V. Pant (ed.), *New Directions in Indian Foreign Policy: Theory and Praxis*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019, p.30.

<sup>10</sup> See P. Prabhakar, 'A Re-examination of India's Foreign Policy', *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, vol.24, no.4, 1963, pp.368-382; M.S. Rajan, 'India and World Politics in the Post-Nehru Era', *International Journal*, vol.24, no.1, 1968, p.155.

<sup>11</sup> A. Appadorai and M.S. Rajan, *India's Foreign Policy and Relations*, New Delhi, South Asian Publishers, 1985, p.6.

<sup>12</sup> K. Bajpai, 'Indian Grand Strategy: Six Schools of Thought', in K. Bajpai, S. Basit and V. Krishnappa (eds.), *India Grand Strategy, History, Theory, Cases*, New Delhi, Routledge, 2014, pp.113-150.

<sup>13</sup> R.Thakur, 'India in the World: Neither Rich, Powerful, nor Principled', *Foreign Affairs*, vol.76, no.4, 1997, pp.15-22.

<sup>14</sup> See, N. Blarel, 'India's Soft Power from Potential to Reality?', in N. Kitchen, (ed.), *IDEAS Reports-Special Reports*, SRS010, LSE IDEAS, London School of Economics, 2012; I. Hall, 'India's New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power and the Limits of Government Action', *Asian Survey*, vol. 52, no.6, 2012, pp.1089-1110; J. Lee, 'Unrealised Potential: India's 'Soft Power' Ambition in Asia', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, vol.4, 2010; D. Malone, 'Soft Power in Indian Foreign Policy', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.46, no.36, 2011, pp.35-39; R.D. Mullen and S. Ganguly, 'The Rise of India's Soft Power', *Foreign Policy*, 8 May 2012, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/05/08/the-rise-of-indias-soft-power/> (accessed 8 January 2016); U. Purushothaman, 'Shifting Perceptions of Power: Soft Power and India's Foreign Policy', *Journal of Peace studies*, vol. 17, no.2/3, 2010, [https://www.academia.edu/1559443/Shifting\\_Perceptions\\_of\\_Power\\_Soft\\_Power\\_and\\_Indias\\_Foreign](https://www.academia.edu/1559443/Shifting_Perceptions_of_Power_Soft_Power_and_Indias_Foreign)

also argued that ‘a naked exercise of power’ is likely to be short lived and less effective than if the same is couched within a moralistic framework which carries greater legitimacy and can produce influence as the others see value in emulating that model.<sup>15</sup> The normative capabilities are believed to have set India apart from many other middle or rising powers that could rarely claim to possess such normative resources and soft power pull that India has in the post-1945 world order. Former diplomat and writer Bandopadhyay recognises that there exist both the strands in Indian foreign policy: where on one hand the ‘extreme Realists’ would ‘equate national interest with national power’ and focus on material strength, primarily military and economic strength and on the other, there are the ‘extreme Idealists or Utopians’ who would stress on ‘some universal moral aspirations of mankind,...and be willing to sacrifice the material power of the nation’.<sup>16</sup> Then, there would be the ‘moderate Realists and Idealists’ who ‘would be willing to combine the material interests and power of the state with some more general and universal objectives, in different degrees...and arrive at a synthetic conception of the national interest.’<sup>17</sup> Many have preferred such a mix of both the realist and idealist ways of thinking that accords greater flexibility for India in its external engagement. This is also evident in ancient Indian statecraft and Indian epics like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharat*<sup>18</sup> that are infused with a blend of both ethical concerns, rationality and use of force.

As discussed, non-alignment remains the core tenet in respect to ensuring ‘autonomy in decision making,’ in domestic politics and ‘freedom of thought and action’ in external relations resulting in ‘an independent foreign policy’. The literature remains divided to describe nonalignment as either marked by Nehruvian idealism or

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\_Policy, (accessed 10 March 2016); S. Tharoor, ‘India as a Soft Power’, *India International Centre Quarterly*, vol.35, no.1, 2008, pp.32-45; C. Wagner, ‘From Hard Power to Soft Power? Ideas, Interaction, Institutions and Images in India’s South Asia Policy’, *Heidelberg Papers in South Asian and Comparative Politics*, Working Paper no.26, South Asia Institute Department of Political Science University of Heidelberg, March 2005, <http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/volltextserver/5436/1/hpsacp26.pdf>, (accessed 23 February 2015).

<sup>15</sup> See, J.K. Patnaik, ‘International Political Economy and Regime Analysis: A Developing-Country Perspective’, in K. Bajpai and S. Mallavarapu (eds.), *Theorising the Region*, New Delhi, Orient Longman, 2005, p.50; D. Ollapally, ‘Foreign Policy and Identity Politics: Realist versus Culturalist Lessons’, in K. Bajpai and S. Mallavarapu (eds.), *Theorising the Region*, New Delhi, Orient Longman, 2005, p.131.

<sup>16</sup> J. Bandyopadhyaya, *The Making of India’s Foreign Policy: Determinants, Institutions, Processes and Personalities*, New Delhi and Mumbai, Allied Publishers, 2003 (Reprinted 2006), p.4.

<sup>17</sup> Bandyopadhyaya, *The Making of India’s Foreign Policy*.

<sup>18</sup> The Indian epics and their influence on Indian strategic culture have been discussed in Chapter 3.

based on realpolitik. Under the UPA government (2004-2014),<sup>19</sup> senior Congress politician, who also served as the Defence Minister, EAM and the Finance Minister, Dr. Pranab Mukherjee reaffirmed the continued relevance of non-alignment and said, ‘We have an independent foreign policy based on the principles of non-alignment laid down by our first Prime Minister. All successive governments of all political shades have adhered to these principles’<sup>20</sup> Further Mukherjee noted, ‘We don’t believe that the movement has lost its relevance, it has acquired contemporary relevance in fostering cooperation among developing nations, particularly known as South-South cooperation.’<sup>21</sup> In response to former US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice’s statement advising India to ‘move past old ways of thinking’ by abandoning nonalignment as ‘it has lost its meaning’ and joining a new US-led ‘global alliance of democracies’, Mukherjee said that, ‘there is no apparent contradiction in expanding cooperation and democracy of the world and the NAM [non-alignment movement]... There can be no question of India diluting firm and abiding commitment to non-alignment. India remains committed to its ideals.’<sup>22</sup> Being the largest democracy in the world, India is often viewed as a natural partner of the United States and the West in general<sup>23</sup> whereas other scholars and practitioners have stressed on India's continued pursuit for foreign policy autonomy<sup>24</sup> and its role in ‘counter-hegemonic coalitions’ such as the NAM or groupings like the BRICS, RIC (Russia-India-China) and BASIC.<sup>25</sup> These have become important platforms to challenge the prevalent inequality or injustice of ‘Western neo-colonialism’ that places India in opposition to the United

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<sup>19</sup> Sinha, “‘Non-alignment still Relevant – Sinha’”; Mukherjee, ‘External Affairs Minister's Speech on “India's Foreign Policy Today” at Peking University in Beijing.’

<sup>20</sup> Mukherjee, ‘External Affairs Minister's Speech on “India's Foreign Policy Today” at Peking University in Beijing.’

<sup>21</sup> ‘NAM still has contemporary relevance, says foreign minister’, *The Hindu*, New Delhi, 30 June 2007.

<sup>22</sup> ‘NAM still has contemporary relevance, says foreign minister.’

<sup>23</sup> See N.R. Burns, ‘America’s Strategic Opportunity with India’, *Foreign Affairs*, vol.86, no.6, 2007, pp.131-146; F. Zakaria, *The Post-American World*, London, Allen Lane.,2008; R. Fontaine and D. M. Kliman, ‘International Order and Global Swing States’, *The Washington Quarterly*, vol.36, no.1, 2013, pp.93-109.

<sup>24</sup> See A.Mattoo, ‘Is our Foreign Policy Favouring’, *The Economic Times*, 4 October 2005: [http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2005-1004/news/27486281\\_1\\_foreign-policy-iaea-india](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2005-1004/news/27486281_1_foreign-policy-iaea-india) (accessed 14 February 2016); R. Sikri, *Challenge and Strategy: Rethinking India’s Foreign Policy*, New Delhi, Sage, 2009; V. Narang and P. Staniland, ‘Institutions and Worldviews in Indian Foreign Security Policy’, *India Review*, vol.11, issue.2, 2012, pp.76-94; Khilnani et al., *Non-Alignment 2.0*.

<sup>25</sup> See N. Koshy, *Under the Empire: India’s new Foreign Policy*, New Delhi, Leftword, 2006; A.Narlikar, ‘Peculiar Chauvinism or Strategic Calculation? Explaining the Negotiating Strategy of a Rising India’, *International Affairs*, vol. 82, no.1, 2006, pp.59-76; M. Dubey, *India’s Foreign Policy: Coping with the Changing World*, New Delhi, Pearson, 2013.

States and European Union in international organisations to give its voice to the concerns of smaller countries and shape a more democratic and just multipolar world order.

Those supporting such an argument of a shift from Nehruvian idealism to a more 'realist' or 'pragmatic' approach to foreign policy have themselves conceded the resilience of Nehruvian principles and non-alignment. Mohan said that, 'despite extraordinary transformations of India's foreign policy since the 1980's, some ideas seem eternal.'<sup>26</sup> Similarly Subrahmanyam also noted that 'large sections of this country's political, bureaucratic, academia and media elite still find it difficult to free themselves from the shibboleths of the last three decades.'<sup>27</sup> Hymans writes that though the 'soft idealism' of the Nehruvian approach to change the dynamics of international politics has been definitively abandoned, yet the rhetoric particularly in the speeches and statements of Indian leaders failed to show a dramatic alteration in the vocabulary and practice of Indian foreign policy.<sup>28</sup> Strategic experts like Karnad who has pushed for a proactive foreign and military policy including the further development of thermonuclear capabilities criticised the *Non-Alignment 2.0* for being '...more Nehruvian than anything Nehru had ever practised'<sup>29</sup> and that was unlikely to elevate India in-to a great power status.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), nonetheless reinterpreted the nonalignment emphasizing the importance to ensure autonomy in decision making and act according to individual assessment of national interests predominantly by preserving the instruments of power including the nuclear weapons as deterrence and autonomy were seen to be inter-linked.<sup>30</sup> The then EAM Yashwant Sinha while focussing on his country's efforts to build military and economic 'hard power,' as well as political and ideational 'soft power,' also noted that 'India's search for great power status is not an end in itself' and linked it to maintenance of independent decision making as 'India's power capabilities are a guarantee of the freedom and security of its people... a means

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<sup>26</sup> C.R. Mohan, 'India's Foreign Policy Transformation', *Asia Policy*, vol.14, 2012, pp.108-110.

<sup>27</sup> Subrahmanyam, 'Introduction', p.viii/x.

<sup>28</sup> J. Hymans, 'India's Soft Power and Vulnerability', *India Review*, vol.8, 2009, pp.234-265.

<sup>29</sup> Karnad, *Why India is not a Great Power?(Yet)*, p.60

<sup>30</sup> Mattoo, 'India's Strategic and Foreign Policy Perceptions.'

of advancing the welfare of our people and a tool for preserving and consolidating the autonomy of our foreign and domestic policy.’<sup>31</sup>

The first group of scholars argues that the continued reluctance to embrace ‘unfiltered power politics’ is rooted in this legacy of non-alignment and suspicion towards ‘Western powers’ that aimed for ‘empire building’ which Nehru rejected as it fuelled wars and conflicts over rivalry and competition for resources.<sup>32</sup> Pursuit of power therefore came to be viewed as something immoral and ‘to be limited and ultimately eliminated’<sup>33</sup> which some scholars assume has blinded the worldview of Indian leaders to the reality of international affairs, for instance, had resulted in the debacle of Indo-China war in 1962.<sup>34</sup> Mukherjee therefore argues that, ‘Indian foreign policy embraced the pragmatism of *realpolitik* but not the aggrandizing drive of *machtpolitik*.’<sup>35</sup>

The second group of scholars looks at non-alignment as geared towards gaining status and prestige instead of defining it as a moralist stance.<sup>36</sup> Few of those who favoured a ‘pragmatic’ shift did not undermine the utility and relevance of non-alignment to secure India’s national interests by remaining outside of Cold war alliance politics in the initial years but were critical of its implementation.<sup>37</sup> It has been criticised

<sup>31</sup> Y. Sinha, “‘What It Takes to be a World Power’”, Address to the India Today Conclave 2004’, 3 December 2004, [http://www.indianembassy.org.cn/press/eam\\_indiatoday.htm10](http://www.indianembassy.org.cn/press/eam_indiatoday.htm10), (accessed 1 December 2015); A.B. Vajpayee, ‘Address to the India Today Conclave 2004 on “India Tomorrow: Building an Indian Century”’, 3 December 2004, <<http://pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?relid=1305&kwd=>>, (accessed 1 December 2015).

<sup>32</sup> A.P. Rana, ‘The Intellectual Dimension of India’s Nonalignment’, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol.28, no.2, pp. 299-300; S. Kalyanaraman, ‘Nehru’s Advocacy of Internationalism and Indian Foreign Policy’, in K. Bajpai, S. Basit and V. Krishnappa (eds.), *India’s Grand Strategy: History, Theory, Cases*, New Delhi, Routledge, 2014, p.153.

<sup>33</sup> Chakravarti, ‘India in World Affairs’, pp.355-367; D. Lal, ‘Indian Foreign Policy, 1947-1964 (Part 1)’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.2, no.19, 1967, p.881.

<sup>34</sup> See, R. Khan, ‘Crisis of National Interest in India’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.3, no. 26/28, 1968, pp.1095-1104.

<sup>35</sup> R. Mukherjee, ‘Power and Indian Foreign Policy’, in H.V. Pant (ed.), *New Directions in Indian Foreign Policy: Theory and Praxis*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019, p.35.

<sup>36</sup> D. Lal, ‘Indian foreign Policy, 1947-64,’ Part 2, *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.2, no.20, p.937.

<sup>37</sup> Mohan, ‘India’s Relations with Great Powers’; Mohan, *Crossing the Rubicon*, 2004; C.R. Mohan, ‘Managing Multipolarity: India’s Security Strategy in a Changing World’, in C.R. Mohan and A.Sahni (eds.), *India’s Security Challenges at Home and Abroad*, NBR Special report, no. 39, The National Bureau of Asian Research, May 2012, <http://www.openbriefing.org/docs/indiassecuritychallenges.pdf>, (accessed 1 December 2015); C.R. Mohan, ‘The Changing Dynamics of India’s Multilateralism, in W. Pal Singh Sidhu, P.B. Mehta and B Jones (eds.), *Shaping the Emerging World: India and the Multilateral Order*, Washington D.C., Brookings Institution Press, 2013, pp.25-43; J. Singh, *Defending India*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1999; Mishra, ‘Statement by Brajesh Mishra at the Munich Security Conference on “Rising World Powers in Asia”’; J. Singh, ‘Introduction: Towards A New Asia’, in J. Singh (ed.), *Reshaping Asian Security*, New Delhi, Knowledge World, 2001, pp.ix-xix; Karnad, *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security*; S. Baru, ‘Strategic Consequences of India’s Economic Performance’, New Delhi, Academic Publishing, 2006; G.Parthasarathy, ‘Forget about NAM but Nonalignment has its

due to certain departures, for instance the Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty or India's involvement in the Bangladesh war in 1971. A third group of scholars describes non-alignment as a balancing power strategy, like Subrahmanyam sees it as 'a strategy of balance of power for a militarily weak but large and self-confident nation in a bipolar world...'<sup>38</sup> Therefore, it is seen as based on *realpolitik* and a kind of 'power politics', though it did not imply a ruthless pursuit of power but intended at a 'measured and cautious pursuit of self-interest' through an independent foreign policy which further enabled Indian leadership to leverage its bargaining power in multilateral institutions, particularly on issues of economic development.<sup>39</sup> Many see it as a mix of both idealism and realism as Mansingh concludes that the answer lies between the extremes and one need not confuse Nehru's strategy with tactics<sup>40</sup> or what Bajpai refers to as 'modified structuralism'.<sup>41</sup> Mansingh argues that there is a need for calibration of the present foreign policy rather than creating a brand new one as Indian foreign policy has maintained a unique consistency and integrity even if it responded to global changes in the past decades. Finally, there are few accounts that discuss whether India should or not aspire for great power status and instead focus on the internal challenges within.<sup>42</sup>

## **1.2. Indian Strategic Thinking and Worldview**

Senior Congress leader, Former EAM and President Pranab Mukherjee said that, 'India's foreign policy is also based on its civilization, culture, its history and its

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Relevance', *Tribuneindia*, 26 July 2007, <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2007/20070726/edit.htm#4>, (accessed 14 February 2015); S.Tharoor, *Pax Indica: India and the World of the Twenty-First Century*, New Delhi, Penguin, 2012.

<sup>38</sup> K.Subrahmanyam, 'India and the Changes in the International Security Environment', in L. Mansingh (ed.), *Indian Foreign Policy: Agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Foreign Service Institute, New Delhi, 1997, p.65; D.P. Fidler and S. Ganguly, 'India and Eastphalia', *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, vol.17, no.1, 2010, p.151 also views non-alignment as a balancing strategy.

<sup>39</sup> See, R. Harshe, 'India's Non-Alignment: An Attempt at Conceptual Reconstruction', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.25, no7/8, 17-24 February 1990, p.400; Chakravarti, 'India in World Affairs', p.358.

<sup>40</sup> L. Mansingh, 'Foreign Policy Imperatives for a Post-Nuclear India', cited in N.S. Sisodia and U.C.Bhaskar (eds.), *Emerging India: Security and Foreign Policy Perspectives*, New Delhi, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, Department of Defence, 2005, pp.45-46.

<sup>41</sup> K. Bajpai, 'India: Modified Structuralism', in M. Alagappa (ed.), *Asian Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1998; Also see S.D. Krasner, 'Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regime Intervening Variables', *International Organization*, vol.36, no.2, 1982, pp.185-205; Mehta, 'Nehru's Shadow', p.210.

<sup>42</sup> This has been discussed in the Introduction chapter, p.38.

commitments.<sup>43</sup> Thus, it is important to include a discussion on the existing literature on India's strategic culture which draws out the major themes arising from the cultural and civilizational consciousness that are re-interpreted by the security elites to reproduce the idea-of 'Indianness'. This would be the starting point to have a sense of how the security elites defined India's worldview and its place in it. There are three competing themes that have been used to define Indian identity and around which writings on Indian strategic culture are found- geography, culture, and religion.<sup>44</sup> Tanham sparked the debate by concluding that there was an absence of grand strategic thought, 'lack of expansionist military tradition' resulting in passivity in military affairs and strategic culture. The reasons as identified were: 'the lack of a monolithic political entity in India', the Indian geography that gave 'a feeling of security and made her inherently defensive', lack of political unity, lack of coordination and synergy between economic and military power as an outcome of Hindu cultural concepts and its assumed superiority amounting to complacency.<sup>45</sup> Similar views of passivity in strategic thinking have been shared by Jaswant Singh<sup>46</sup> arising from 'a non-territorial, emotional, non-proselytizing Indian nationalism'.<sup>47</sup> Jones<sup>48</sup> identified certain 'cultural and mythological traits' for the moderation in use of force in Indian mind-set.<sup>49</sup> Cohen sees India as having a culture of 'strategic restraint' arising from a

<sup>43</sup> P. Mukherjee, 'Speech of External Affairs Minister in the Rajya Sabha replying to the short duration discussion on the Suo Moto statement made by him in both Houses of Parliament on "Foreign Policy Related Developments" on March 31', New Delhi, 19 March 2008, in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *Foreign Relations-2008 Documents*, New Delh, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, p.104.

<sup>44</sup> E. Sridharan and A.Varshney, 'Towards Moderate Pluralism: Political Parties,' in L.Diamond and R.Gunther (eds.), *Political Parties and Democracy*, Baltimore, MD, John Hopkins University Press, 2001, pp.225-226.

<sup>45</sup> G. K. Tanham, *Indian Strategic Thought: An Interpretive Essay*, Santa Monica, CA, Rand Corporation, 1992; G.K.Tanham, 'Indian Strategic Thought: An Interpretive Essay', in K. Bajpai and A.Mattoo. (eds.), *Securing India: Strategic Thought and Practise, Essays by G.K.Tanham*, New Delhi, India, Manohar Publications, 1996, p.73.

<sup>46</sup> Jaswant Singh was the former External Affairs Minister during Pokhran II nuclear tests and Kargil war from 1998-2004 and a senior leader of the BJP party.

<sup>47</sup> J. Singh, *Defending India*, New York, St.Martins Press, 1999, pp.2-9; R.Das, *Revisiting Nuclear India: Strategic Culture and (In) Security Imaginary*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2015, p.16.

<sup>48</sup> R. Jones, 'India's Strategic Culture and the origins of omniscient paternalism', in J.L.Johnson, K.M.Katchner and J.A.Larsen (eds.), *Strategic Culture and Weapons of Mass Destruction: Culturally based Insights into Comparative National Security Policy Making*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp.117-138.

<sup>49</sup> Tanham, *Indian Strategic Thought: An Interpretive Essay*; Tanham, 'Indian Strategic Thought: An Interpretive Essay', p.73.



defensive mindset<sup>50</sup> or is reluctant to enter into military coalitions.<sup>51</sup> Subrahmanyam argues that post 1947 India saw itself as a status-quo oriented non-expansionist power and therefore without a ‘paranoid sense of insecurity’ that necessitates serious strategic planning.<sup>52</sup> Singh<sup>53</sup> and Subrahmanyam<sup>54</sup> argued that besides civilian control on armed forces Nehru’s personalised foreign policy showed little enthusiasm to hold much democratic dialogue and debate on national security issues thereby preventing development and institutionalisation of strategic thinking, policy formulation and implementation that had continued over the successive governments. Gordon also finds that Indian strategists are reluctant to take hard decisions on strategy constituting a strong tendency to hedge<sup>55</sup> whereas Ollapally characterizes this in reference to nuclear decisions as exemplary of ‘non-decision’<sup>56</sup> and Mattoo ascribes this to the ‘regime of secrecy’.<sup>57</sup> Bajpai recognizes a lack of rigor in strategic thinking compared to Europe as being relatively newly independent.<sup>58</sup> Both Barsur (in reference to nuclear policy) and Gordon identify an incremental progress in India’s strategic culture.<sup>59</sup> Sidhu supports the presence of a strong strategic culture communicated

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<sup>50</sup> S.P. Cohen and S. Dasgupta, *Arming Without Aiming: India’s Military Modernization*, Washington D.C., Brookings Institution Press, 2010, pp.1-28

<sup>51</sup> Tanham, ‘Indian Strategic Thought: An Interpretive Essay’, p.73.

<sup>52</sup> K. Subrahmanyam, ‘Foreword to J. Singh’, in J. Singh, *Defending India*, Basingstoke, Macmillan Press, 1999, pp.x-xiv.

<sup>53</sup> Singh, *Defending India*, p.34

<sup>54</sup> K. Subrahmanyam, ‘Nehru and Defence Policy’, in M.V.Kamath (ed.), *Nehru Revisited*, Mumbai, Indus Source Book, 2016, pp.84-85; K.Subrahmanyam, ‘Nehru’s concept of Indian Defence’, *Strategic Analysis*, vol. 32, no.6, 2008, pp.1179-1190.

<sup>55</sup> S. Gordon, *India’s Rise to Power in the Twentieth Century and Beyond*, New York, St. Martin’s Press, 1995, p.5.

<sup>56</sup> D. Ollapally, ‘Mixed motives in India’s search for nuclear status’, *Asian Survey*, vol. 41, no.6, 2001, pp.925-942.

<sup>57</sup> A. Mattoo, ‘Raison d’etat or adhocism’, in K. Bajpai et.al. (eds.), *Securing India: Strategic Thought and Practise*, New Delhi, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 1996, p.206.

<sup>58</sup> K. Bajpai, ‘State, Society, and Strategy’, in K.Bajpai et.al (eds.), *Securing India:Strategic Thought and Practise*, New Delhi, India, Manohar Publications,1996, pp.140-157; K. Bajpai, ‘Indian Strategic Culture’, in M. R. Chambers (ed.), *South Asia in 2020: Future Strategic Balances and Alliances*, Carlisle, PA, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, November 2002, pp.245-303.

<sup>59</sup> R.M. Barsur, ‘Nuclear Weapons and Indian Strategic Culture’, *Journal of Peace Research*, vol.38, no.2, 2001, pp. 181-198; Gordon, *India’s Rise to Power in the Twentieth Century and Beyond*, p.5; R.Babbage and S. Gordon (eds), *India’s Strategic Future: Regional State or Global Power?*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 1992.£

through oral traditions that boast of a realist strategic thought as evident in Indian Puranic epics, Kautilya's Arthashastra and Nehru's idealism-realism mix.<sup>60</sup>

A cohesive Indian strategic culture, the presence or the lack of it has also been linked to the question of India's existence as a single geographical space and its political divisiveness.<sup>61</sup> Singh held India's geography as responsible for the lack of a unitary sense of Indianism. India's history of continuous subjection to external invasions and plundering is intimately tied to India being located at a focal point in the Asian landmass.<sup>62</sup> Subhas Bose, one of India's celebrated freedom fighters who led the Indian National Army (INA) and defended the use of force in the freedom struggle for self-defense saw India's geography and the Hindu culture as the most important characteristics that gave India unity. He wrote, 'Geographically, India seems to be cut out of from the rest of the world as a self-contained unit. Bounded on the north by the mighty Himalayas and surrounded on both sides by the endless ocean, India affords the best example of a geographical unit.'<sup>63</sup> The INA regiments were for the most part Hindu soldiers from the British Indian Army who collaborated with the Imperial Japanese Army after their surrender. India-Japan strategic relations can be traced back to the important role of the INA and Bose in India's freedom struggle.

The first predominant aspect that these Indian strategic writings have emphasized is India's lack of extra-territorial ambitions beyond its borders and her interests being confined to the defense of its frontiers and the region from foreign interference. The second key aspect draws attention to the component military cultures within India and the influences of other non-mainstream political entities besides the British Raj that have made India's strategic culture ever more absorbing, diverse and

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<sup>60</sup> W.P.S. Sidhu, 'Of Oral traditions and ethnocentric judgements', in K.Bajpai et al. (eds.), *Securing India: Strategic Thought and Practise, Essays by G.K.Tanham*, New Delhi, Manohar Publications, 1996, pp.174-188.

<sup>61</sup> H. Singh, 'India's Strategic Culture: The Impact of Geography', *Manekshaw Paper*, no.10, New Delhi, Centre for Land Warfare Studies [CLAWS], 2009, p.2; Tanham, *Indian Strategic Thought*; W.Churchill, 'W. Churchill's speech on 18 March 1931 at the Royal Albert Hall, London', quoted in C. Coote (ed.), *Maxims and Reflections*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1949.

<sup>62</sup> Singh, 'India's Strategic Culture', p.1.

<sup>63</sup> S. C. Bose, *The Indian Struggle, 1920-1934*, London, 1935 (Published in India 1948 and was banned by the British Government), p.2, [http://www.induslibrary.com/wpcontent/uploads/2015/07/the\\_indian\\_struggle\\_.pdf](http://www.induslibrary.com/wpcontent/uploads/2015/07/the_indian_struggle_.pdf), (accessed 10 December 2016).

even amorphous.<sup>64</sup> For Das, before 1947 the Indian sub-continent which had been a geographical unit for ages was a region with several kingdoms and at times with ‘more than one empire in India, each ruling a different region’<sup>65</sup> with distinctive military traditions. Eraly on the differing military cultures wrote, ‘For the Rajput, war was an end in itself; for the Maratha it was only a means. Rajputs played the game, Marathas played to win.’<sup>66</sup> Cooper’s work mentions the presence of Christians, Muslims and Sikhs soldiers in Maratha Hindu forces who were not fighting for a broader Indian or Hindu cause.<sup>67</sup>

In the cultural relativist literature, the western way of warfare is largely seen to be secular and rational as opposed to the Oriental civilizations where warfare essentially has cultural or religious attributes as non-western societies tend to emphasize moral and civilizational traits.<sup>68</sup> Undoubtedly religion has played a salient role in conditioning India’s military traditions, statecraft and diplomacy.<sup>69</sup> Rosen had identified India’s strategic culture as representing a predominant ‘Hindu mind-set’.<sup>70</sup> BJP leader and former EAM and Defence Minister Jaswant Singh<sup>71</sup> claims Hindu civilization or culture as the principal constituent of India’s strategic culture. He said, ‘above all else, India is Hindu and Hindus think differently from non-Hindus ...it is this ‘ism’ [i.e.Hinduism]

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<sup>64</sup> J. Black, ‘Determinism and Other Issues’, *Journal of Military History*, vol.68, 2004, p.1227, p.1229 cited in L. Sondhaus, *Strategic Culture and Ways of war*, Routledge, London,2006, p.3; Das, ‘State, Identity, and Representations of Danger’, p. 2008.

<sup>65</sup> G. Das, ‘George Tanham’s Views on Indian Strategic Thought An Interpretation’, *Scholar Warrior*, Spring 2011, p.7, [https://www.claws.in/images/journals\\_doc/Spring2011-FinalIssue.21-27.pdf](https://www.claws.in/images/journals_doc/Spring2011-FinalIssue.21-27.pdf), (accessed 22 July 2015); Black, ‘Determinism and Other Issues’.

<sup>66</sup> A. Eraly, *The Mughal Throne: The Saga of India’s Great Emperors*, London, Phoenix, 2004, p.435 cited in L.Sondhaus, *Strategic Culture and Ways of war*, Routledge, London, 2006, p.94.

<sup>67</sup> R. Cooper, *The Anglo-Maratha Campaigns and the Contest for India: The struggle for Control of the South Asian Military Economy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p.3, p.22 cited in L. Sondhaus, *Strategic Culture and Ways of war*, Routledge, London, 2006, p.93.

<sup>68</sup> For a detailed discussion on Religion and evolution of ways of warfare in India, see K. Roy, *Hinduism and Ethics of Warfare in South Asia: From Antiquity to the Present*, Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p.4.

<sup>69</sup> A. Narlikar and A. Narlikar, *Bargaining with a Rising India, Lessons from Mahabharata*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014.

<sup>70</sup> S. Rosen, *Societies and Military Power: India and its Armies*, Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1996.

<sup>71</sup> Jaswant Singh is a retired officer in the Indian Army, a senior leader of the BJP party and a former Cabinet Minister. He held the portfolios of Minister of Finance in 1996, External Affairs Minister (1998-2002), Minister of Defence (2000-2001) in the BJP led NDA-I government during Pokhran II nuclear tests and Kargil war.

that has given birth to a culture from which we hope to extract the essence of its [i.e., India's] strategic thought.'<sup>72</sup>

There have been additional studies that explore Indian thinking on international relations and look at different worldviews, strategic visions such as 'Gandhianism', 'Moralism' and 'Nehruvianism'. Bajpai has identified three different subcultures- 'Nehruvianism', 'neoliberalism' and 'hyper-realism', each characterised by differing attitudes toward internal security, regional security and relations with great power.<sup>73</sup> Whereas Ollapally and Rajagopalan give a simpler classification of Indian foreign policy being contested by two perspectives, termed as 'nationalist' and 'pragmatist'.<sup>74</sup> Scholars like Pant<sup>75</sup> criticise the continuities in Indian approach and condemn them as 'irresponsible and dangerous' and unlikely of how rising powers tend to behave whereas Narlikar<sup>76</sup> continues to appreciate the merits of the traditional concepts. However these analyses do not explain that in what ways these policies are distinctively 'Indian' and lack focus on the representational practices in the foreign policy discourse and established their relation with state practices. These works trace the various schools of thought to explain different types of state behaviour at different times, or traces general evolution of India's rise.

Similar to these works this study makes use of Nehru's, Gandhi's and the Hindu nationalist thinkers' speeches and writings but shows how such ideas and thoughts remain relevant or how are these reproduced in the discourse with the use of narrative analysis and how these reflect upon the policies. Most works simply assume that Indian policy-makers are today still heavily influenced by these ideas but do not produce empirical work to re-affirm such claims through in depth case studies or makes a comparative examination of India's foreign policy discourses and practices under Congress and BJP administrations. The schools of thought or strategic visions appear rather static and do not take into account the possibility of evolutionary change. This one-dimensional view ignores the multiple ways in which the 'material' and 'ideational' dimensions are closely intertwined and can – as this study will show – only

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<sup>72</sup> Singh, *Defending India*, p.5.

<sup>73</sup> Bajpai, 'Indian Strategic Culture.'

<sup>74</sup> D. Ollapally and R. Rajagopalan, 'The Pragmatic Challenge to Indian Foreign Policy', *The Washington Quarterly*, vol.34, issue. 2, 2011, pp.145-162.

<sup>75</sup> Pant, 'A Rising India's Search for a Foreign Policy.'

<sup>76</sup> Narlikar, 'Peculiar chauvinism or strategic calculation?'

acquire meaning through discourses in the first place. Moreover, most works on Indian foreign policy thinking tend to place greater emphasis on India's strategic community, i.e. scholars, journalists and retired governmental/military officials, than India's actual decision-makers or by looking at parliamentary policy debates or studying BJS and BJP party documents to draw on the competing discourses for re-interpreting the idea of India. Also the works on Nehruvian policies do not adequately bring out the spatial and temporal Othering as reproduced in its foreign policies to reproduce the idea of India as espoused by Nehru which this study also engages with.

### **1.3. Literature on Exceptionalism**

The literature is replete with the analyses of different collectives or groups, primarily nation-states making a claim for 'exceptionalism' that helps to justify and legitimise state actions to its audience, or sometimes gives an 'oughtness' to exercise power as it is couched within a unique moral framework.<sup>77</sup> It also provides a sense of 'positive self-imagination', legitimate ideas of statehood or reinforces a belief that they are a special case 'outside' the common patterns<sup>78</sup> making certain actions plausible or producing a sense of belief that they should be treated differently by implying that a state and its features are 'unique' and 'exceptional'. In addition to highlighting a 'unique' geography, history, and political culture, security elites also tend to (re)construct 'exceptionalism' through a series of discursive practices that distinguished the Self from the Other(s). This study examines and analyses the representational practices by the state-elites that attempt a [re]construction of Indian identity in the post-Cold War foreign policy which is argued to be behaving similarly to other rising powers under the dictates of *realpolitik*. Therefore it is important to explore the reproduction of the Indian difference or 'Indian-ness' in India's foreign policy discourse and whether it holds sway.

It is possible to identify two major themes that divide the exceptionalism literature in political science and international relations. Some of these studies focus on

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<sup>77</sup> P. Brummett, 'Gender and empire in Late Ottoman Istanbul: caricature, models of empire and the case for Ottoman exceptionalism', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, vol.27, no.2, 2007, p.302; T. Ricento, 'The discursive construction of Americanism', *Discourse and Society*, vol.14, no.5, 2003, p.613.

<sup>78</sup> See A.D. Smith, *National Identity: Ethnonationalism in Comparative Perspective*, Reno, University of Nevada Press, 1991.

the cultural, religious, historical, strategic or societal characteristics of a state or a nation that could serve as the basis of the claims of difference<sup>79</sup> and in most cases ultimately for the construction of claims of superiority vis-à-vis other states or nations<sup>80</sup>. Other studies focus on to explain certain ‘anomalies’ that defy generalizations related to various laws, theories or expectations, in the political science or international relations literature to explain a certain deviation from the common norm.<sup>81</sup> The focus of this particular study is related to the former nature of exceptionalism and national identity literature.

Stefan Berger notes that, ‘the nineteenth century witnessed the increasing professionalization of historical writing’<sup>82</sup>, and historians commonly wrote national histories, and usually showed ‘remarkable zeal in demonstrating the uniqueness of their particular nation-state’.<sup>83</sup> Often strongly affected by international events and with implicit (or at times explicit) political aims academic writing of national histories were permeated with concepts of national exceptionalism and distinct national characteristics. The German historian Heinrich von Treitschke advocated the cause of German nationalism through his writings where he tried to revive ‘the idea of the Fatherland’ and throughout his academic career championed ‘the emergence and spreading of aggressive nationalism in Wilhelmine Germany.’<sup>84</sup> Much of the written history in Germany before the First World War resonated themes of national pride and national exceptionalism. German historians like Friedrich Meinecke in his first major work, elaborated on the gradual development of the German nation-state and

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<sup>79</sup> S.M. Lipset, *American exceptionalism: A double edged sword*, New York, W.W. Norton, 1996.

<sup>80</sup> G. Hodgson, *The myth of American exceptionalism*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2009; G. Merom, ‘Israel’s national security and the myth of exceptionalism’, *Political Science Quarterly*, vol.114, no.3, 1999, pp.409-434.

<sup>81</sup> A.Kazempur, ‘A Canadian exceptionalism? Trust and diversity in Canadian cities’, *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, vol.7, no.2, 2006, pp.219-240; G. Mahajan, ‘Indian exceptionalism or Indian model: Negotiating Cultural Diversity and Minority Rights in a Democratic Nation-State?’, in W. Kymlicka, & B. He (eds.), *Multiculturalism in Asia*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2005, pp.288-313; D. Studlar, ‘Canadian exceptionalism: explaining differences over time in provincial and federal voter turnout’, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, vol.34, no.2, 2001, pp.299-319.

<sup>82</sup> S. Berger, M. Donovan and K. Passmore, ‘Apologias for the nation-state in Western Europe since 1800’, in S. Berger, M. Donovan and K. Passmore, *Writing National Histories: Western Europe since 1800*, London, Routledge, 1999, p.10.

<sup>83</sup> Berger, Donovan and Passmore, ‘Apologias for the nation-state in Western Europe since 1800’, p.12

<sup>84</sup> P.Winzen, ‘Treitschke’s influence on the rise of Imperialist and anti-British nationalism in Germany’, in P. Kennedy and A. Nicholls (eds), *Nationalist and Racist Movements in Britain and Germany before 1914*, London, Macmillan, 1981, p.154.

distinguished between ‘political’ and ‘cultural’ nation while considering Germany to be in the latter group.<sup>85</sup> Jules Michelet and Lavissee displayed a clear historical emphasis on the role of the people and significance of the Revolution in the construction of French national identity and their writings reflected a partisan interest, predicated on the notion of ‘French exceptionalism’. Their writings reflected a sense of ‘glowing patriotism’ and an ‘intense sense of Frenchness’ combined with a strong wave of universalism.<sup>86</sup> Daniel Bell argued that American exceptionalism put forth the idea that ‘the United States, in becoming a world power a paramount power, a hegemonic power, because it was democratic, would be different in the exercise of that power than the previous world empires’.<sup>87</sup> While American exceptionalism draws on its lack of ‘history’, central to ‘Indian exceptionalism’ has been ‘the particularity of its history as an ancient civilization, which gives India the capacity to produce a better, more ethical modernity’<sup>88</sup> by drawing on the salience of Hindu cultural concepts of ‘dharma’. It remains central to India’s identity discourses, readings of history and Self-Other constructions. There is a major attention paid to American exceptionalism<sup>89</sup>, but there are also discussions of others’ claims to exceptionalism such as the Asian, Chinese, Canadian, and Israeli varieties, just to cite a few.

Exceptionalism therefore ultimately characterises the production of boundaries between states (nations, groups, etc.). By establishing what the state ‘is’ and what it ‘is not’, it appears in all its supposed exceptionality. Indeed, exceptionalism, or a sense of ‘positive uniqueness’, is a defining characteristic of nationalism. This is clearly a key aspect of the relational concept of identity; again, identity is known crucially by what it ‘is not’, that is difference. The reproduction of ‘diversity within unity’ — of ‘positive’ or ‘legitimate’ uniqueness or exceptionalism — is a process referred to here as ‘exceptionalisation’ as central to the national identity construction.<sup>90</sup> The category of the ‘abnormal’, in contrast, exemplifies ‘illegitimate’ difference, or ‘diversity without

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<sup>85</sup> F. Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism and the National State*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1970, p.10.

<sup>86</sup> J. Michelet, C. Cocks and G.Wright, *The History of French Revolution*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1967, p.13.

<sup>87</sup> D. Bell, ‘The End of American Exceptionalism’, *The Public Interest*, vol.41, Fall 1975, pp.193-224.

<sup>88</sup> Chacko, *Indian Foreign Policy*, p.196.

<sup>89</sup> I. Tyrell, ‘American exceptionalism in an age of international history’, *American Historical Review*, vol.96, no.4, 1991, pp.1031-1055.

<sup>90</sup> Smith, *National Identity*.

unity' and not desirable. The Self could often be constructed as both 'legitimately exceptional' (through the process of 'exceptionalisation') and 'illegitimately abnormal' that could lead to *temporal* Othering of the Self. In order to redress the Self's 'negative abnormality' and in the wake of new 'dangers' as constructed through Otherness, the state elites have often argued and acted to realise and secure a more 'normal' Indian Self through significant steps towards building comprehensive national strength, through defence modernisation, nuclear weaponisation, forging strategic partnerships with United States and Japan to balance against an 'assertive' China.

There have been several studies that draw on the Self-Other constructions to understand the dynamics of interstate interaction. Weldes examines the Cuban missile by understanding national interests constructed through security 'imaginaire' which itself was the result of the representations of Self.<sup>91</sup> Campbell focusses on the identity formation in United States foreign policy through 'discourses of danger' and on negative Othering that entails a more aggressive engagement against Others.<sup>92</sup> Neumann's study on European identity formation against the changing perception of Turkish and Russian 'Others' focus on the complexity of identity formation as the representations of Other may vary depending on the nature of Self-understandings ranging from liberal, conservative or radical.<sup>93</sup> Hopf studies the construction of Soviet identity on lines of class, modernity, nation, the New Soviet man and great power during the years of 1955 and 1999 that draws a link between internal and external Others and their implications for foreign policy practices.<sup>94</sup> The post-colonial literature focusses on the complex relations between the colonized Self and the colonial Other which could be characterized by either annihilation, violent removal of the Other or an emulation of the Other and at times may be both. Emulation of the Other in the post-

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<sup>91</sup> J. Weldes, *Constructing national interest: United States and the Cuban missile crisis*, Minneapolis and London, University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

<sup>92</sup> D. Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1998.

<sup>93</sup> Neumann, *Uses of the Other: 'The East' in European Identity Formation*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

<sup>94</sup> T. Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2002.



colonial world has been studied by Nandy<sup>95</sup> and Chatterjee<sup>96</sup>, whereas Bhabha has hinted at a certain case for hybridisation.<sup>97</sup> Chacko also refers to the internal critiquing of the Self or as referred to by Diez and Hansen, the process of *temporal* Othering<sup>98</sup> as central to India's identity production in India's postcolonial discourse particularly under Nehru which resulted in a partial emulation or 'mimicry' of the Western modernity but framed it in a 'Indian way' or what Chacko describes as an ethical project.<sup>99</sup> While the narratives of identity focussed upon in this study draw on the post-colonial identity literature but it is not restricted to the conceptualisation of Self-Other to such postcolonial lens as India's global engagement and interactions with neo-liberal order has transformed it into a 'post post-colonial state'. However what is significant to note here is that there is a possibility of liminality and where the Other is seen as similar or familiar and not as 'dangerous' as it otherwise might be deemed, though Norton has argued that those similar to us may represent a graver threat.<sup>100</sup> This study does focus on the notion of difference but accepts the possibility of different range of Otherness as will be discussed in the next chapter.

#### **1.4. Constructivism, Identity and Indian Foreign Policy**

It has been argued that scholars of Indian foreign policy have been at the forefront to contribute to the development of constructivist theories and scholarship through case

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<sup>95</sup> Nandy saw the recovery of the Indian Self through the masculine-feminine dichotomy, where appropriation of both were needed to find its authentic Self. He was interested in the co-constitution of identity between India and the Victorian England, where the latter represented a more masculine Other that needed to be emulated by the Indian Self in order to get out of the subject position. See A.Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1988.

<sup>96</sup> Chatterjee argued based on his study of the Indian case, where the ruling elites attempted to produce a different identity discourse that challenged the colonial claim to domination, but at the same time accepted the 'modernity' premise of the post-Enlightenment rationalist discourse and marginalized the rural India. See P.Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

<sup>97</sup> For Bhabha emulation did not entail a complete loss of Self as he saw the possibility of resistance within such process of 'replication' which is never complete or perfect. What it produces is never identical to the image of the original but something different because of the context in which it is being reproduced that the result is something 'hybrid, ambivalent and is a subversion of the master discourse'. See in H.K.Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London, Routledge, 1994; Also see A. Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, London, Routledge, 1998 for a discussion on Bhabha's work.

<sup>98</sup> T. Diez, 'Europe's Other and the Return of Geopolitics', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, vol.17, no.2, 2004, pp.319-335; L. Hansen, *Security as Practise: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, London, Routledge, 2006, pp.49-50.

<sup>99</sup> Chacko, *Indian Foreign Policy*, p.15.

<sup>100</sup> A. Norton, *Reflections on Political Identity*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1988.

studies. Muppidi's contribution in the *Cultures of Insecurity* showed the relevance of constructivist approaches to the study of Indian foreign policy analysis. Muppidi pointed to inability of the mainstream liberal and realist approach and instead underscored the importance of India's colonial history and 'post colonial security imaginary' to understand India's continued insecure relationship with the USA and friendly relations with the Soviet Union in the Cold war years by using Althusser's notion of articulation and interpellation.<sup>101</sup> Krishna's work on India's intervention in Srilanka's civil war argued that 'an entity called "India" is coeval with a discourse called "Indian foreign policy".'<sup>102</sup> Many other studies have used critical constructivist frameworks and insights to analyse India's foreign policy in South Asian region, its approach to international intervention, its regional engagement and conflicts, its bilateral relationships, in the Asia-Pacific region in the maritime sphere and the foreign policy of BJP.<sup>103</sup> Such works that relies on critical constructivism in Indian foreign policy also draws heavily from the post-colonial literature focussing on the relations between the colonized Self and the colonial Other and notions of 'mimicry' and 'ambivalence' as discussed above which have been crucial to understand the construction of post-colonial identity and India's persistent claims to exceptionalism, its long standing territorial conflicts with its neighbours and emphasis on autonomy.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>101</sup> H. Muppidi, 'Postcoloniality and the Production of International Insecurity: The Present Puzzle of US-Indian Relations', in J. Weldes, M. Laffey, H. Gusterson and R. Duval (eds.), *Cultures of Insecurity: States, Communities and the Production of Danger*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

<sup>102</sup> S. Krishna, *Postcolonial Insecurities: India, Sri Lanka, and the Question of Nationhood*, Minneapolis and London, University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

<sup>103</sup> S. Singh, *India in South Asia: Domestic Identity Politics and Foreign Policy from Nehru to the BJP*, London and New York, Routledge, 2013; Chacko, *Indian Foreign Policy*; P. Chacko, 'A New "Special Relationship"?' Power Transitions, Ontological Security, and India-US Relations', *International Studies Perspectives*, vol.15, no.3, 2014, pp.329-346; P.Chacko, 'Foreign Policy, Ideas and State-building: India and Politics of International Intervention', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, vol.21, no.1, May 2018, pp.346-371; P.Chacko and A.E. Davis, 'The Natural/Neglected Relationship: Liberalism, Identity and India-Australia Relations', *The Pacific Review*, vol.30, no.1, 2017, pp.26-50; S. Singh, 'From a Sub-Continental Power to an Asia-Pacific Player: India's Changing Identity', *India Review*, vol.13, no.3, 2014, pp.187-211; Ogden, *Hindu Nationalism and the Evolution of Contemporary Indian Security*; W.W. Widameier, 'The Democratic Peace Is What the States Make of It: A Constructivist Analysis of the US-India 'Near-Miss' in the 1971 South Asian Crisis', *European Journal of International Relations*, vol.11, no.3, 2005, pp.431-455; S. Chatterjee, 'Ethnic Conflicts in South Asia: A Constructivist Reading', *South Asian Survey*, vol.12, no.1, 2005, pp.75-89.

<sup>104</sup> Chacko, *Indian Foreign Policy*; H. Muppidi, *The Politics of the Global*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2004; S. Biswas, "'Nuclear Apartheid' as Political Position: Race as a Postcolonial Resource?", *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, vol.26, no.4, 2001, pp.485-522; R.Das, 'A Post-colonial Analysis of India-United States Nuclear Security: Orientalism, Discourse and Identity in International Relations', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, vol.52, no.6, 2017, pp.741-759; R. Mathur, 'Sly Civility and the Paradox of Equality/Inequality in the Nuclear Order: A Post-Colonial Critique', *Critical Security Studies on Security*, vol.4, no.1, 2015, pp.52-72; A.E. Davis, 'A Shared

Commuri also adopts a similar Self/Other lenses to examine the impact of the internal contestation between competing discourses of ‘secular’ and ‘religious’ conception of national identity on its external relation with Pakistan and China during the Vajpayee government.<sup>105</sup> Chacko examines the construction of post-colonial identity through studying Nehru’s, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi’s writings and BJP documents to understand India’s foreign policy, regional politics and nuclear tests until 2004. She retheorizes foreign policy as postcoloniality which she defines as a ‘self reflexive ethico-politico project of identity construction that emerged in reaction to the colonial encounter’.<sup>106</sup> In another analytical piece she explores the US representations of the ‘rise of India’ discourse in American policies and commentaries that form the basis of ‘special relationship’<sup>107</sup> that led to the Indo-US nuclear deal. Following Chacko’s argument it is argued that India’s ‘civilizational exceptionalism’, remains important because it forms the basis of India’s biographical narrative and sense of the Self.

There have been lesser works that use conventional constructivism which has concentrated mostly on Euro-centric accounts of global norms. There have been recent works that make use of such approaches and notion of state identity, norm contestation and norm localisation to understand India’s approach and evolving posture on the Responsibility to Protect Doctrine, Indo-US relationship, India’s engagement with climate change governance, portrayal of itself as a responsible nuclear power and its approach to regional multilateralism in South Asia.<sup>108</sup> There have been few studies that draws a link between domestic politics, identity formation and foreign policy but aim at a causal explanation. Engelmeier examines the domestic identity formation within the Indian state and argues that foreign policy has been and continues to be an integral

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History? Postcolonial Identity and India-Australia Relations, 1947-1954’, *Pacific Affairs*, vol.88, no.4, 2015, pp.849-869.

<sup>105</sup> G. Commuri, *Indian Identity narratives and the Politics of Security*, New Delhi, Sage Publications Private Limited, 2010.

<sup>106</sup> Chacko, *Indian Foreign Policy*, p.3.

<sup>107</sup> Chacko, ‘A New “Special Relationship”?’

<sup>108</sup> A. Michael, *India’s Foreign Policy and Regional Multilateralism*, Springer, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013; A. Bloomfield, *India and the Responsibility to Protect*, Farnham, Surrey, England, Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2016; H. Stevenson, ‘India and International Norms of Climate Governance: A Constructivist Analysis of Normative Congruence Building’, *Review of International Studies*, vol.37, no.03, 2011, pp.997-1019; K. Sasikumar, ‘Branding India: Constructing a Reputation for Responsibility in the Nuclear Order’, *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, vol.13, no.3, 2017, pp.242-254; Z. Selden and S. Strome, ‘Competing Identities and Security Interests in the Indo-US Relationship’, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 2016, DOI:10.1093/fpa/orw029.

part of the country's nation building project.<sup>109</sup> Ogden provides a normative analysis wherein he develops a concept of India's 'security identity' to explain the complex interplay between India's domestic political development and security and foreign policy in the international system under the BJP led NDA government between 1998-2004. It shows how this 'identity' can explain BJP's security policies or has constrained BJP's desired policy norms and finally the influence of the BJP led NDA government on this identity.<sup>110</sup> He has also looked at Pakistan's support to insurgencies has further entrenched the Pakistan-terrorism nexus in India's (domestic and foreign) security perspective. This study builds upon these aforementioned workd and extends it to include further discussion on India's evolving military response to the recent Pulwama and Balakot strikes.<sup>111</sup> The existing literature on India's foreign policy and maritime engagement in the Indo-Pacific region reflects the historical dominance of overtly positivist approaches in International relations. Chacko provides a normative account on the changing ideas of state building and the emergence of the 'Indo-Pacific discourse' which provides insight into India's emerging role in the region but the study is focussed only on the Congress led UPA government and further does not adequately explore India's Self/Other representational practices in its maritime engagement.<sup>112</sup> There have been other studies that do take into account the significance of ideational factors or 'modern' India's self-perceptions in shaping or constraining state behaviour to emerge as a 'global power'<sup>113</sup> or gives an overview of India's strategic culture, an understanding of its historical and institutional foundations, problematizes the idea of nation and explicates national security policy formulation to tackle both external and internal security challenges and emphasizes the role of the state.<sup>114</sup> Narang and

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<sup>109</sup> T.F.Engelmeier, *Nation-Building and Foreign Policy in India: An Identity-Strategy Conflict*, Delhi Foundation Books, 2009, p.304.

<sup>110</sup> C.Ogden, 'Post-Colonial, Pre-BJP: The Normative Parameters of India's Security Identity, 1947-98', *Asian Journal of Political Science*, vol.17, no.2, 2009, pp.215-37; Also see, C. Ogden, 'A Lasting Legacy: The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance and India's Politics', *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, vol.42, no.1, 2012, pp.22-38.

<sup>111</sup> C. Ogden, 'Tracing the Pakistan-Terrorism Nexus in Indian Security Perspectives: From 1947-to 26/11', *India Quartely: A Journal of International Affairs*, vol.69, no.1, 2013, pp.35-50.

<sup>112</sup> P. Chacko, 'The Rise of the Indo-Pacific: Understanding Ideational Change and Continuity in India's Foreign Policy', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol.68, no.4, 2014, pp.329-346.

<sup>113</sup> S.S. Prabhu and N. Mohapatra, 'Reconstructing India's Identity in World Politics: An Emerging Convergence between Public Diplomacy and Constructivism', *Sociology and Anthropology*, vol.2, no.6, 2014, pp.227-231, DOI: 10.13189/sa.2014.020603, <http://www.hrpub.org/download/20140902/SA3-19602577.pdf>, (accessed 10 March 2020).

<sup>114</sup> S. Paranjpe, *India's Strategic Culture: The Making of National Security Policy*, New Delhi, Routledge, 2012.

Staniland's study identifies a 'strategic core' in security and foreign policy worldviews amongst the policymaking elites by analysing the interplay of ideas, institutions and personalities.<sup>115</sup>

The nuclear weapons and disarmament have been one popular area where both conventional and constructivist methods have been used. The construction/re-construction of an 'exceptional' national Self image through Othering practices in the foreign policy process in the wake of India's changing material conditions has not received much attention. This study moves beyond the the debate between idealism and realism divide for understanding Indian foreign policy and looks at foreign policy as a site for identity formation/re-production through discursive practices by security elites that distinguishes the Self from the Other(s). Chacko, Nizammani and Das<sup>116</sup> have drawn on similar framework to analyse the discursive construction of identities, (in) security imaginaries to explain India's nuclear policies that draw on performative nature of identity making. However, Chacko does not adequately analyse the Othering practices by the state elites that lead to the identity formation and her period of analysis ends in 2005. The study extends the cases over a specific period of time spanning from 1998-2019 and also includes a new range of case studies that were not included in her discussion. Nizammani's account of nuclear discourses in India and Pakistan, utilized constructivist methods of narrative analysis which this study also intends to use but Nizammani looks at the period until the nuclear explosions in 1998. These works however fall short of analysing the reproduction of Indian difference /exceptionalism which this study seeks to do and extends it to study the Indo-US nuclear deal and India's engagement with the non-proliferation regime. Further Das depends on secondary literature during the initial years of nuclear programme whereas this analysis draws heavily on intensive study of primary documents, such as speeches, ministry reports, related parliamentary debates (that remain largely under-examined in these works), party documents, nuclear doctrine, media reports and elite interviews which provide rich sources for analysing representational practices and the internal social/cultural

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<sup>115</sup> Narang and Staniland, 'Institutions and Worldviews in Indian Foreign Security Policy.'

<sup>116</sup> Chacko, *Indian Foreign Policy*; H.K. Nizammani, *Roots of Rhetoric: Politics of Nuclear Weapons in India and Pakistan*, Westport, Praeger Publishers, 2000; R. Das, 'State, Identity, and Representations of Danger: Competing World Views on Indian Nuclearisation', *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, vol. 46, no. 1, February 2008, pp.2-28.

contestations for meaning production or fixation to continuously reproduce this Indian difference rather than focussing on external views of India by the others.

There have been further works that used constructivism for analysing the domestic politics of nuclear policy, the gendered and racialized nature of nuclear debates, India's engagement with the non-proliferation regime and the global nuclear order and for analysing the causes either domestic or the international context leading to nuclear tests in 1998 and through which India transformed itself into a nuclear weapon state.<sup>117</sup> In addition, recent works have focussed on India-Pakistan nuclear diplomacy and India's nuclear relations with USA and Australia on civilian nuclear energy.<sup>118</sup> This study adds to that literature by looking at new documents and including evolving debates on India's nuclear doctrine and efforts to enter the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). There have also been other works that look at the economic –security nexus and links it with nuclear policies.

There are several contemporary analyses of India's approach to world politics that draw references to historically embedded ideas of Indian 'exceptionalism' but do not explicitly discuss the content of such ideas.<sup>119</sup> There have been three significant works that make explicit reference to the idea of Indian 'exceptionalism' in the recent years-by Sullivan,<sup>120</sup> Chacko<sup>121</sup> and Wojczewski.<sup>122</sup> Sullivan partly explored the social

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<sup>117</sup> P.Chacko, 'The Search for a Scientific Temper: Nuclear Technology and the Ambivalence of India's Postcolonial Modernity', *Review of International Studies*, vol.37, no.1, 2011, pp.185-208; P.Malik, *India's Nuclear Debate:Exceptionalism and the Bomb*, New Delhi, Routledge, 2014; R. Das, 'State, Identity and Representations of Nuclear (In)Securities in India and Pakistan', *Journal of Asia and African Studies*, vol.45, no.2, 2010, pp.146-169; K.Frey, *India's Nuclear Bomb and National Security*, London and New York, Routledge, 2006; Muppidi, *The Politics of the Global*; Mathur, 'Sly Civility and the Paradox of Equality/Inequality in the Nuclear Order'; L.Varadarajan, 'Constructivism, Identity and Neo-liberal (In)security', *Review of International Studies*, vol.30, no.3, 2004, pp.319-341; Biswas, "Nuclear Apartheid" as Political Position'; S. Biswas, *Nuclear Desire: Power and the Postcolonial Nuclear Order*, Minneapolis and London, University of Minnesota Press, 2014.

<sup>118</sup> M.E. Carranza, *India-Pakistan Nuclear Diplomacy: Constructivism and the Prospects for Nuclear Arms Control and Disarmament in South Asia*, Lanham, Rowman and Littlefield, 2016; Chacko and Davis, 'The Natural/Neglected Relationship'; R. Das, 'The United States-India Nuclear Relations after 9/11: Alternative Discourses', *Asian Journal of Political Science*, vol.20, no.1, 2012, pp.86-107; Das, 'A Post-colonial of India and United States Nuclear Security.'

<sup>119</sup> See, for example, I. Abraham, 'The Future of Indian Foreign Policy', *Economic & Political Weekly*, vol.42, 2007, pp. 4209-4212; S. P. Cohen, 'India Rising', *The Wilson Quarterly*, vol. 24, no. 3, 2000, pp. 32-53; Cohen, *India: Emerging Power*; Narlikar, 'Peculiar Chauvinism or Strategic Calculation?'; M.S. Pardesi, 'Understanding the Rise of India', *India Review*, vol.6, no.3, 2007, p. 213.

<sup>120</sup> K.Sullivan, 'Exceptionalism in Indian Diplomacy: The Origins of India's Moral Leadership Aspirations', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, vol. 37, issue. 4, 2014, pp.640-655.

<sup>121</sup> Chacko, *Indian Foreign Policy*.

<sup>122</sup> Wojczewski, 'India and the Quest for World Order.'

construction of certain ideas of 'Indian exceptionalism', particularly those centred on India's unique capacity to offer moral leadership in world affairs that came to be embedded within the Indian diplomats through social practices as well as the institutional setting within which they evolved. She traced the emergence of these ideas of exceptionalism, but concentrated on pre-independence writings on India's nationhood and religious discourses on 'Indian exceptionalism' while briefly discussing the Nehruvian and Hindu cultural nationalism discourses and its implications for Indian foreign policy. She explores the roots and sources of such ideas but does not include any detailed examination of the discursive representations of the notion of *Indian difference*. Wojczewski looks at the discursive struggle between the Post-Nehruvian discourse and the Hypernationalist discourse in the post-Cold war foreign policy to explore the establishment of a 'discursive hegemony' in defining India's world view and its role in it. India defined itself against the colonial Other- the 'West' but also vis-à-vis the *temporal* Other in its colonised Self in the process and the two constitutive *spatial-political* Other(s) -Pakistan and China. The study builds up on his works but intends to fill the gap as he did not explore the identity/difference construction or the representation practices of Otherness with reference to specific case studies. Wojczewski is largely focussed on India's world order conceptions by establishing the 'discursive hegemony' of the Post-Nehruvian discourse and the influences of the Hyper-nationalist discourse that has shaped the former and also the study is limited to the period until 2014. Chacko and Das instead restricted themselves to the study of the nuclear discourse and did not include the recent debates on India's nuclear doctrine or on India's entry into the Nuclear Suppliers group. Hence the project focusses on how Indian 'exceptionalism' or difference as reproduced and sustained in India's foreign policy discourse with particular focus on specific case studies such as India's nuclear tests in 1998, Indo-US nuclear agreement, India's evolving response to deal with Pakistan sponsored terrorism and its expanding maritime presence in the Indo-Pacific region under Modi's 'Act East'.

There have been recent works that study how Modi government has tried to 'reground key elements of Indian foreign policy in Hindu nationalist ideology, to recast the language of international relations in its distinctive idiom, and redirect Indian diplomacy in ways that better fitted its political agenda'<sup>123</sup> but has not focussed

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<sup>123</sup> Hall, *Modi and the Re-invention of Indian Foreign Policy*, p.17.

adequately on Self/Other representational practices or has just remained focussed on examination of the Modi period. Another recent attempt has been made by Wojczewski that examines the interplay of populism, Hindu nationalism and Modi's foreign policy in relation to surgical strikes, Hindu internationalism or public diplomacy by combining the elite/people (up/down antagonism) distinction with the inside/outside imagination.<sup>124</sup> Also Chacko had tried to explore the shift from a 'transformational identity' under Congress to an 'aspirational identity' under BJP to explain the continuities and shift in India's military response in the context of 'surgical strikes' but does not provide a detailed elaboration on the re-invention of the concept of 'strategic restraint' and additionally lacks discussion on Modi's internal Othering practices that has shaped India-Pakistan dynamic in the current climate and challenges India's idea of pluralistic and inclusive Self.<sup>125</sup> The study draws from all these works, particularly on Wojczewski, Das, Commuri and Chacko and builds upon them to explore the content and relevance of Indian 'exceptionalism' to understand the changes and continuities in India's Self/Other representations in its foreign policy and study their implications. The ideas and methods have been extended to different case studies on policy areas and compare the present Modi government policies with the previous Congress and BJP governments.

Apart from the limited discussion on the formation and representation of identity on Indian foreign policy, most of the existing scholarship on Modi, the BJP, and Hindu nationalism, have also not theorised or elaborately discussed on the role of identity in the BJP's foreign policy.<sup>126</sup> This is because most of these studies implicitly or explicitly draw on realist and liberal IR theory, which treats the state as unitary actor with a given identity. Few constructivist studies have explored the role of identity in the BJP's foreign policy and have provided useful insights for us to build upon.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> T. Wojczewski, 'Populism, Hindu Nationalism, and Foreign Policy in India: The Politics of Representing "the People"', *International Studies Review*, vol.0, 2019, pp.1-27.

<sup>125</sup> Chacko, *Constructivism and Indian Foreign Policy*, pp.54-61.

<sup>126</sup> S. Chaulia, 'BJP, India's Foreign Policy and the 'Realist Alternative' to the Nehruvian Tradition', *International Politics*, vol.39, no.2, 2016, pp.215-234; Bajpai, 'Indian Grand Strategy'; I. Hall, 'Multialignment and Indian Foreign Policy under Narendra Modi', *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, vol.105, no.3, 2016, pp.271-286; Ganguly, 'Has Modi Truly Changed India's Foreign Policy?', pp. 131-143; S.Singh (ed.), *Modi and the World: (Re)Constructing Indian Foreign Policy*, Singapore, World Scientific, 2017; S.Gupta et al, 'Forum: Indian Foreign Policy under Modi: A New Brand or Just Repackaging?', *International Studies Perspectives*, 8 August 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1093/isp/eky008>, (accessed 2 March 2019).

<sup>127</sup> See, Singh, *India in South Asia*; Chacko, *Indian Foreign Policy*; Ogden, *Hindu Nationalism and the Evolution of Contemporary Indian Security*; M. Chatterjee-Miller and K. Sullivan de Estrada,



These works predominantly treat identity as something which is internally generated, what Wojckzweski, describes as a ‘property’ of the state that impacts on its foreign policy and thereby draw a rather rigid boundary between ‘domestic’ and ‘foreign’, though he uses and draws from these studies as well. They place scant attention on how the ‘foreign’ as the site of difference makes possible the (re)production of state identities which can be addressed with the help of a relational conception of identities drawing from poststructuralist approach that concludes that ‘identities are inherently instable and incomplete, as they can only be constituted and practiced against the difference of an Other.’<sup>128</sup> This study draws from both these approaches, as it does not refute the domestic generation of such Self understandings in the sense that the security elites remain deeply rooted in India’s civilizational consciousness who are at the forefront in the re-production of these Self/Other constructions, but concludes that identity always operates in relation to the difference in India’s foreign policy discourse and practices which also re-inforce such ideas of ‘Indian exceptionalism’. The study will show that even in this process of the formation of state identity, the elites have always re-produced Self/Other representations.

### **1.5. Summary**

There have been few studies that explore in-depth the content of Indian excetionalism, its relevance and how it is produced and sustained in India’s foreign policy discourse and practices. These studies have not provided yet a comprehensive account of the broad themes and how these are reproduced by the security elites in the policy texts and practices to re-define the notion of ‘Indian-ness’. This research ought to explore the shifts and continuities in the representational practices of such identity/difference constructions and their implications for India’s foreign policy regionally and internationally. They have instead emphasized on identifying the variable factors for causal explanations as most studies on India’s foreign policy analysis tend to do. This study aims to fill those lacunae with a concentrated focus on the re-production of Indian identity and explains whether such claims of exceptionalism and Self-perceptions [vis –a-vis the Other(s)] hold relevance or not in understanding its foreign policy choices.

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‘Pragmatism in Indian Foreign Policy: How Ideas Constrain Modi’, *International Affairs*, vol.93, no.1, 2017, pp.27–49.

<sup>128</sup> Wojczewski, ‘Populism, Hindu Nationalism, and Foreign Policy in India’, p.4.

This chapter has provided a detailed discussion on the resilience of normative ideas in India's security thinking, discussion on the existing literature on the debates centred on the lack of a cohesive Indian strategic culture, worldview and 'grand strategy', and compared with other studies that have focussed on state's or nation's claims of exceptionalism. Finally, the chapter has analysed the existing literature on Indian foreign policy that have promoted the constructivist research agenda and ideas of Indian identity on which the thesis draws and builds upon, identifying the areas where more research analysis needs to be made. The following chapter looks at the theoretical framework and methodologies drawing upon such existing literature that will be relevant for this research thesis.

## Chapter 2

### Theoretical framework and Methods

#### 2.1. Constructivism: Identity Matters

Studies on foreign policy by diplomatic historians, practitioners and realist scholars have viewed foreign policy as the ‘external orientation of pre-established states’ with secure identities<sup>1</sup> operating in an anarchical international system. States would focus on Self-interest<sup>2</sup> which is ensuring survival through self-help measures predominantly aimed at the maximization of power by building military capabilities and accumulating wealth.<sup>3</sup> These scholars are interested in the reasons why certain foreign policy decisions or behavior happens and emphasize material capabilities and systemic influences. The neoclassical realists while emphasizing the influence of the country’s relative material power on its foreign policies does widen the scope by recognizing the importance of domestic politics within which foreign policy is formulated and looks at intervening unit-level variables such as decision makers’ perceptions, domestic institutions and state structure.<sup>4</sup> They assume that decision makers can make an objective assessment of an independent reality, assess different options and reach at the most efficient decision to fulfill their objectives. The constructivist readings of foreign policy, instead, focus on *how* the ‘reality’ in which policy makers’ function is produced and maintained. They look at the processes through which these very subjects,

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<sup>1</sup> Campbell, *Writing Security*, p.75.

<sup>2</sup> J. Donnelly, *Realism and International Relations*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years’ Crisis 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, London, Palgrave, 2001; H.J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1948; K.N. Waltz., *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1959. For a discussion on the theories of international politics that do address foreign policy behaviour, see K.N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Long Grove, Illinois, Waveland Press, Inc, 1979, 251p on defensive realism that shifts the focus from power to capabilities and see J.Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York, W.W. Norton, 2001 for a discussion on offensive realism. Also see J. Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1991, pp. 11–12; H. Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1994; A.J.P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War*, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1961.

<sup>4</sup> G. Rose, ‘Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy’, *World Politics*, vol.51, no.1, October 1998, pp.144-172; S.M. Walt, ‘The Enduring Relevance of the Realist Tradition’, in I. Katzenstein and H.V. Milner (eds.), *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*, New York, W.W. Norton, 2002, p.211; F. Zakaria, *From Wealth To Power: The Unusual Origins of America’s World Role*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1998, argues that lack of a strong central government inhibited the harnessing of economic power for foreign policy purposes for USA’s emergence as a great power in the late nineteenth century as it remained a weak state despite being the richest country in the world.

meanings and interpretive dispositions materialize and make such decisions and policy choices possible.<sup>5</sup>

Social Constructivism posits that, ‘the fundamental structures of international politics are social rather than strictly material’<sup>6</sup> and looks at the system as socially constructed through interactions between the agent and the structure.<sup>7</sup> In opposition to state interests as being dictated by their positions in the system and the capabilities they have,<sup>8</sup> constructivists like Hall noted that the, ‘Social construction of identities [...] is necessarily prior to more obvious conception of interests.’<sup>9</sup> The agents are therefore not seen as independent of the environment in which they socialize and operate or entirely determined by material structures. As emphasized by Hopf, ‘meaningful behaviour, or action, is possible only within an intersubjective social context.’<sup>10</sup> Constructivists explore how particular states conceive of their self-identity, how interests are shaped and the ways in which material and ideational powers are interrelated in the process.<sup>11</sup> They argue that policy makers’ direct state action according to their interpretation of both physical and social world is grounded in ‘intersubjective’ meaning. Neufield defines intersubjective meanings as ‘the product of the collective self-interpretations and self-definitions of human communities.’<sup>12</sup> Identity remains crucial to this act of interpretation and representation through which ‘reality’ is comprehended.<sup>13</sup> Intersubjectivity, social meanings and identities are seen as powerful transformative practices that ascribe the material structures with social significance.<sup>14</sup> They do not

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<sup>5</sup> R.L. Doty, ‘Foreign Policy as Social Construction: A Post-Positivist analysis of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy in the Phillipines’, *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 37, no.3, September 1993, p.303.

<sup>6</sup> A. Wendt, ‘Constructing International Politics’, *International Security*, vol. 20, no.1, Summer 1995, p.71.

<sup>7</sup> Wendt, ‘Constructing International Politics’, pp.71-72.

<sup>8</sup> K. Waltz, ‘Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory’, *Journal of International Affairs*, vol.44, no.1, 1990, p.36.

<sup>9</sup> J.A. Hall, ‘Ideas and the Social Sciences’, in J. K. Goldstein (eds.), *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1993, p.51.

<sup>10</sup> T. Hopf, ‘The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory’, *International Security*, vol. 23, no.1, Summer 1980, p.173.

<sup>11</sup> T. Pfefferle, ‘The International System as Social Construct’, 6 March 2014, <https://www.e-ir.info/2014/03/06/the-international-system-as-social-construct/>, (accessed 2 February 2016).

<sup>12</sup> M.A. Neufield, *The Restructuring of International Relations Theory*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 77.

<sup>13</sup>Weldes, ‘*Constructing national interests*’, pp.6-7.

<sup>14</sup> E.Adler, ‘Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics’, *European Journal of International Relations*, vol.3, no.3, 1997, pp.319-363; A. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999; J.T. Checkel, ‘Why Comply? Social Learning and

undermine the importance of the physical world they emphasize that the physical world is interpreted by subjective agents and how these interpretations are reproduced or transformed over time.<sup>15</sup>

This study follows a constructivist understanding of identity and foreign policy, nonetheless it is also important to draw a distinction between conventional constructivism and critical constructivism here.<sup>16</sup> They both give importance to identities but draw on different ontologies that distinguish between ‘material’ and ‘ideational’ world. Conventional constructivism accepts that there is space for causal explanation and looks at how certain types of identity lead to particular type of behaviour. It has tended to focus on, inter-state interaction, collective identity formation and global norms with emphasis on use of ‘positivist’ research methodologies such as process tracing case study.<sup>17</sup> Critical and radical constructivism explores the role of language in mediating and constructing social reality and uses interpretivist methodologies such as discourse analysis and narrative analysis. Committed to post positivist epistemology, and instead of uncovering the factors that cause changes in state identity and these ‘real reasons’ behind foreign policy decisions, they would focus on ‘the background conditions and linguistic constructions (discourses) that made any

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European Identity Change’, *International Organization*, vol.55, no.3,2001; J. T. Checkel and A.Moravcsik, ‘A Constructivist Research Program in EU studies?’, *European Union Politics*, vol.2, no.2, 2001, pp.219-249; M. Finnemore and K. Sikkink, ‘Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics,’ *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol.4, 2001, pp.391-416.

<sup>15</sup> See N. Tannenwald, ‘Ideas and Explanation: Advancing the Theoretical Agenda’, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, vol.7, no.2, 2005, p.19.

<sup>16</sup> See J .T.Checkel, ‘Constructivist approaches to European Integration’, Working Paper, no.6, ARENA and Department of Political Science, University of Oslo, 2006, [https://www.sv.uio.no/arena/english/research/publications/arena-working-papers/2001-2010/2006/wp06\\_06.pdf](https://www.sv.uio.no/arena/english/research/publications/arena-working-papers/2001-2010/2006/wp06_06.pdf) (5 December 2015) where he draws a distinction between conventional, interpretive and critical/radical constructivism; J.T. Checkel, ‘Social Constructivism in Global and European Politics: A Review Essay’, *Review of International Studies*, vol. 30, no.2, 2004, pp. 229-244; Adler, ‘Seizing the Middle Ground’; J.G.Ruggie, ‘What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge’, *International Organization*, vol.52, no.4, 1998, pp.855-885; T.Christiansen, K.E.Joergensen and A. Wiener (eds.), *The Social Construction of Europe*, London, Sage Publications, 2001, pp.1-21.

<sup>17</sup> M. Finnemore, ‘Norms, culture and world politics: insights from sociology’s institutionalism’, *International Organization*, vol.50, no.2, 1996, pp.325-348; J.Trondal, ‘Is there any social constructivist-institutionalist divide? Unpacking social mechanisms affecting representational roles among EU decision-makers’, *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol.8, no.1, 2001, pp.1-23; M.Finnemore and K.Sikkink, ‘International norm dynamics and political change’, *International Organization*, vol. 52, no.3, 1998, pp.887-917; M. Barnett and M. Finnemore, ‘The politics, power and pathologies of international organizations’, *International Organization*, vol.53, no.4,1999, pp.699-732; M. Finnemore and K. Sikkink, *Rules for the World:International Organizations in Global Politics*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2004; Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*; P. Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World politics*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1996.

such change possible in the first place.’<sup>18</sup> For critical constructivists drawing on poststructuralism or postmodernism approaches maintain that reality ‘can be nothing other than a text’<sup>19</sup> and emphasize the centrality of language and discourses.<sup>20</sup> Critical constructivism and its ‘post-structural’ variants take on a more radical understanding of the construction of reality and how it ‘reflect, enact, and reify the relations of power.’<sup>21</sup> The study leans towards the interpretive and radical constructivism that argues identities not only shape the national interests but generate them in the first place, give importance to interpretation in making sense of the ‘reality’ and valorise the significance of language using discourse and narrative analysis methods.

Critical constructivists such as Weldes argues that national interests do not emerge from anarchic conditions of the international system but are largely the result of interpretations by those representing the state and these interpretations are in turn reflections on the representations of the Self. She does not undermine the significance of national interests in framing policy goals, guiding state action or securing legitimacy for the same but views it as constructed from one’s self-understandings of ‘who we are’ that determines our interests and preferences and also by what or whom ‘we’ feel threatened by.<sup>22</sup> Therefore danger or threat is not seen as an objective condition out there but a result of interpretation by those who speak, talk or write about it. Weldes looks at social ‘production of danger’ or ‘insecurity’ that are seen as having constitutive identity effects as it results ‘in producing distinctions between the self and other, between friend and foe, and between states of security and insecurity.’<sup>23</sup> Weldes *et al* notes that:

Insecurities, rather than being the natural facts, are social and cultural productions. One way to get at the constructed nature of insecurities is to examine the fundamental ways in which insecurities and the objects that suffer

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<sup>18</sup> J.T. Checkel, ‘Constructivism and EU politics’, in K.E. Jorgensen, M.A. Pollack and B. Rosamond (eds.), *Handbook of European Union Politics*, London, Sage Publications Limited, 2006, p.58, <https://www.ies.be/files/documents/JMCdepository/Checkel%2C%20Jeffrey%2C%20Constructivism%20and%20EU%20Politics.pdf>, (accessed 5 December 2015)

<sup>19</sup> J.C. Alexander, *Fin de Siecle Social Theory: Relativism, Reduction and the Problem of Reason*, London, Verso, 1995, p.103.

<sup>20</sup> J.T. Checkel, ‘Constructivist approaches to European Integration.’

<sup>21</sup> Weldes, *Constructing national interest*, p.13.

<sup>22</sup> Weldes, *Constructing national interests*.

<sup>23</sup> C. Peoples and N. Vaughan-Williams, *Critical Security Studies: An Introduction*, London, Routledge, 2014, p. 22.

from insecurity are mutually constituted; ...we treat them as mutually constituted cultural and social constructions; insecurity is itself the product of processes of identity construction in which the self and the other, or multiple others, are constituted.<sup>24</sup>

Critical constructivism rejects the assumption of fixed, enduring, timeless and pre-given interests that deny the role of interpretation by policy makers in making sense of the situation they are faced with. They instead favour a historical and contextual understanding of interest. According to Weldes conventional constructivism as suggested in Wendt's work 'continue to treat states in typical realist fashion, as unitary actors with a single identity and a single set of interests[...] The state itself is treated as a black box whose internal workings are irrelevant to the construction of the state identity and interests.'<sup>25</sup> This is an over simplistic assumption that fails to capture that states as human communities or 'imagined communities'<sup>26</sup> that are formed out of 'lengthy, complex, messy and uneven processes of formation and institutionalisation.'<sup>27</sup> It is concerned with the intersubjective construction of 'common sense understandings of the world' and emphasizes the boundaries that are created by identity discourse. It 'seeks to question how particular forms of identity and particular conceptions of the 'national interest' come to predominate at any given moment.'<sup>28</sup>

Nation building has been the major task in the postcolonial societies and the educated 'security elite' remained at the forefront in defining the nation and are the primary focus in this work. The elite play a significant role in the discursive construction of national identity which emerges as a site of elite contestation to define who 'we' are and are at the helm of policy making. As McSweeney notes that 'collective identity is not out there, waiting to be discovered' but 'what is 'out there' is identity discourse' that is continuously constructed, negotiated, manipulated and affirmed by political leaders, intellectuals and countless Others to (re)produce a

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<sup>24</sup> Weldes, *Constructing National Interest*, p.10.

<sup>25</sup> Weldes, *Constructing national interests*, p.9; Also see M. Zehfuss, 'Constructivism and Identity: A Dangerous Liaison', *European Journal of International Relations*, vol.7, 2001, pp.315-48 for a critique on Wendt's treatment of state identity.

<sup>26</sup> B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* Revised edition, Verso Books, London, 1991.

<sup>27</sup> Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, *Critical Security Studies*, p.22.

<sup>28</sup> Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, *Critical Security Studies*; Weldes, *Constructing National Interests*, 1999; B.J. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-identity and the IR State*, London, Routledge, 2008.

collective image.<sup>29</sup> Wodak also focusses on the critical role played by the elite in the construction of nations which according to him ‘are both systems of cultural representation as well as political constructs.’<sup>30</sup> Ontological security theorists like Steele noted that, ‘the “Self” of the states is constituted and maintained through a narrative which gives life to routinized foreign policy actions’<sup>31</sup> and ‘identity construction is a political project’ which is continuously iterated in foreign policy making<sup>32</sup> by the state agents. Therefore for constructivists’ threat and danger, the perception of an enemy and an ally are products of interpretation, of meaning making and such interpretations and representations determine the mode of action. Identity guides interpretation of reality and helps the state elites to comprehend the situation and take a particular action that appears as more ‘reasonable,’ ‘justified’ or ‘appropriate’.<sup>33</sup>

Drawing on the critical/ radical constructivist approaches security is not just seen as the outcome of particular ideas, identifications and norms, but the concept itself becomes integral part of the constitutive relations of power.<sup>34</sup> It is further argued that identity exists only in discourse and it is never stable or secure as it cannot ever reach fixity so as to become an explanatory variable in causal foreign policy analysis and there could be competing discourses coexisting simultaneously over meaning production and fixation. This study draws on such critical constructivist readings of the relationship between identity and foreign policy by exploring the Self/Other representations. It draws from post-structuralism and post-colonialism literature to explore the different kinds of Otherness against which the Self is [re]produced and performative nature of relationship between identity and foreign policy as discussed below.

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<sup>29</sup> B. McSweeney, *Security, Identity and Interests: A Sociology of International Relations*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999.

<sup>30</sup> R. Wodak, ‘Fragmented Identities: Redefining and Recontextualizing National Identity’, in P. Chilton and C. Schaffner (eds.), *Politics as Text and Talk: Analytic Approaches to Political Discourse*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2002, pp.143-172; R. Wodak, ‘Aspects of Critical Discourse Analysis’, *Zeitschrift für Angewandte Linguistik*, vol.36, 2002, pp.5-31.

<sup>31</sup> Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*, p.3.

<sup>32</sup> Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*, p.31; L.J. Shepherd (ed.), *Critical Approaches to Security: An Introduction to Theories and Methods*, London, Routledge, 2013, p.107.

<sup>33</sup> Weldes, *Constructing National Interest*, p.13.

<sup>34</sup> A. Behnke, *Nato's security Discourse after the Cold war: Representing the West*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2013, p.45.



## **2.2. Identity and Foreign Policy**

There is a broad literature on the concept of ‘nation’ and it is important to briefly focus on it. Individuals, groups, elites, communities have engaged in defining themselves as national communities in different ways, for instance the elites often maintain and reproduce values, symbols, myths, memories and traditions that constitute and are specific to a nation. However, there has been a consensus to define nation in terms of certain objective factors such as a group of people with a common history, race, ethnicity, language or religion occupying a specific territory (possessing either one or more of these attributes simultaneously).<sup>35</sup> This is difficult to work with the case of India as India is a multi-ethnic, multilingual and secular country that emphasizes co-existence of multiple religious faiths. This is however, increasingly being challenged by the ‘Hindutva’ discourse under the present Modi led BJP government and its domestic and foreign policies imbued with a strong Hindu nationalist fervour have received massive popular support which is evident from his second term election victory in 2019 with an even bigger mandate.

It is necessary to focus on some definitions that depart from these essentialist definitions and instead adopt on a relational concept of identity drawing on post-structuralist scholarship. State identities are never seen as simply given but ‘always constructed against the difference of an other.’<sup>36</sup> Abdelal notes that ‘the content of a collective identity is ...relational to the extent that it is composed of comparisons and references to other collective identities from which it is distinguished.’<sup>37</sup> Gitika Commuri noted, ‘...national identity is not merely the constitution of a community through identification and valorisation of certain unique but common characteristics,

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<sup>35</sup> R. Poole, *Nation and Identity*, London, Routledge, 1999, p.32; A.D. Smith, ‘When is a nation’, *Geopolitics*, vol.7, no.2, 2002, pp.5–32; M.Weber, ‘The Nation’, in J. Hutchinson and A.D. Smith (eds.), *Nationalism: Critical Concepts in Political Science*, 5 Volumes, London and New York, Routledge, 2000 [1948], p.9; U. Ozkirimili, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2000, p.28; E. Renan, ‘What is Nation?’, in H. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration*, London and New York, Routledge, 1990, pp. 8-22 cited in U. Ozkirimili, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2000, p.30. Renan’s ‘What is Nation?’ was first given as a lecture in 1882. Also see A.D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford and Cambridge, MA, Blackwell, 1986. This is one possible reading of Anthony D. Smith’s argument that pre-modern ethnic communities-both preceded and provided the foundation for modern nations. See also J.A. Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism*, Chappel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1982.

<sup>36</sup> Diez, ‘Europe’s Others and the Return of Geopolitics’, pp.319–335.

<sup>37</sup> R. Adbelal, et.al, ‘Identity as a Variable’, *American Political Science Association*, vol.4, no.4, 2006, pp.695-711.

but one that is constructed in opposition to others.<sup>38</sup> Commuri defined national identity as ‘the socio-historical delineation of the national self in the presence of others, both internal and external.’<sup>39</sup>

Identity is therefore seen as always operating in relation to difference which itself is not fixed or pre-mediated by an external agency. The state requires discourses of ‘danger’ to provide a new theology of truth about who and what ‘we’ are by emphasizing who or ‘what’ we are not and what ‘we’ have to fear.<sup>40</sup> Identity is therefore *a boundary drawing practise or performance* as identity is always given in reference to something it is not. Identity remains at the heart of poststructuralist discourse analysis and the relationship between identity representations and foreign policy is seen as *performative* and *mutually constitutive*. The relationship between identity and foreign policy is the central theme in this research agenda: that ‘foreign policies rely upon representations of identity, but it is also through the formulation of foreign policy that identities are produced and reproduced.’<sup>41</sup>

David Campbell notes, ‘the constitution of identity is achieved through the inscription of boundaries which serve to demarcate an ‘inside’ from an ‘outside’, a ‘self’ from an ‘other’, a ‘domestic’ from a ‘foreign.’<sup>42</sup> Campbell shows how ‘the constant articulation of danger through foreign policy is not a threat to a state’s identity or existence; it is its condition of possibility.’<sup>43</sup> Instead of treating the state as a secure, pre-existent political community, he looks at those boundary producing practices or performances through which this political community [state] is imagined and foreign policy is one of such crucial discursive practices that is ‘central to the production and the reproduction of the identity in whose name it operates’<sup>44</sup> and constitute both the ‘state’ and the ‘international system’ simultaneously. He draws on two distinct understandings of ‘foreign policy’ and ‘Foreign Policy’, where the former refers to all societal practices of differentiation or modes of exclusion which provide the ‘discursive

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<sup>38</sup> Commuri, *Indian Identity Narratives and Politics of Security*, p.7.

<sup>39</sup> Commuri, *Indian Identity Narratives and Politics of Security*, p.7.

<sup>40</sup> D. Grondin, ‘The new frontiers of the national security state: The US global governmentality of contingency’, in M. Larrinaga and M.G. Doucet (eds.), *Security and Global Governmentality: Globalization, Governance and the State*, London, Routledge, 2010, p.84.

<sup>41</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practise*, p.1.

<sup>42</sup> Campbell, *Writing Security*.

<sup>43</sup> Campbell, *Writing Security*, p.13.

<sup>44</sup> Campbell, *Writing Security*, p. 61, p.68.

economy or conventional matrix of interpretations' in which state based practices of Foreign Policy operates. He understands state identity as the 'outcome of exclusionary practices in which resistant elements to a secure identity on the "inside" are linked through a discourse of 'danger' with threats identified and located on the "outside" and thereby not only secures its identity and boundaries but also constructs various forms of international Otherness in the process.<sup>45</sup> Whether it is the 'body' or the 'state' or particular bodies and states, the identity of each is performatively constituted by drawing boundaries between the Self and the Other. Judith Butler said in specific case of the body, 'the border between the internal and external is "tenuously maintained" by transformation of elements that were originally part of identity into a "defiling otherness."'<sup>46</sup> State identity is 'constructed by the discursive practices of those who speak about, write about, and act on its behalf'<sup>47</sup> and is thus in need of continued reproduction because 'states are never finished as entities' and 'always in a process of becoming', as they have 'no ontological status apart from the many and varied practices that constitute their reality.'<sup>48</sup>

Anderson defined nation as 'an imagined political community'<sup>49</sup> that are necessarily to be distinguished, in the ways that they are imagined and not by their falsity/genuineness. While a sense of national identity of a group of 'people' is commonly seen as preceding the reality of the state, 'nationalism', understood as 'a discourse that constructs the nation by endowing it with a particular national essence that defines national belonging and thereby creates an "imagined community"'<sup>50</sup> which can often serve as 'a construct of the state in pursuit of its legitimacy'<sup>51</sup> when the state precedes the nation. Foreign policy can then be used by populist-nationalist actors to assert their role as the 'rightful' and the 'true' representative of the 'people' and the 'nation', geared to voice and serve their interests and intended at restoring and securing popular/national sovereignty.<sup>52</sup> But this could be extended outside the domestic context

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<sup>45</sup> Campbell, *Writing Security*, p.75.

<sup>46</sup> J. Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, London, Routledge, 1990.

<sup>47</sup> Doty, 'Foreign Policy as Social Construction', p.310.

<sup>48</sup> Campbell, *Writing Security*, p.9, p.12.

<sup>49</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp.49-50.

<sup>50</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; Wojczewski, 'Populism, Hindu Nationalism, and Foreign Policy in India', p.5.

<sup>51</sup> Campbell, *Writing Security*, 1998, p.11.

<sup>52</sup> Wojczewski, 'Populism, Hindu Nationalism, and Foreign Policy in India', pp.5-6; C. Mudde and C.R. Kaltwasser, *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017.

as through such populist-nationalist oriented foreign policies these nationalist –populist actors may also seek increasing recognition as a ‘responsible’ force in the region or internationally in the shaping of the global order and in the promotion of peace and stability.

The Self-Other relations has been viewed in terms of oppositions, whereby various negative traits are attributed to the Other and the positive ones to the Self.<sup>53</sup> Poststructuralists have mostly represented Self/Other relations in radical and antagonistic terms as –‘in this hierarchical identity formation, the sovereign state community as a space of order, identity, and security is constituted by juxtaposing it to the “foreign” or “international” as a space of anarchy, difference, and insecurity.’<sup>54</sup> Both Campbell and William Connolly<sup>55</sup> focus on negative Othering. Campbell writes:

Although a positive declaration of some characteristic of the Self might be devoid of specific reference to an other, it profess nonetheless an at least implicit valuation of those who might be considered other. Of course, the nature of that valuation and its effects can vary considerably; a simple contrast need not automatically result in the demonization of the other,... in the context of Foreign Policy, the logic of identity more readily succumbs to the politics of negation and the temptation of otherness.<sup>56</sup>

The total demonization of the other is a rare possibility in actual international politics as it never really happens but Campbell argues that the possibility of Otherness is always there. Lene Hansen explores the possibility of varying degrees of difference or Otherness, ranging from fundamentally different to less than radical difference and even emulation of the Other<sup>57</sup> that transcends ‘a simple Self-Other duality’. As a result, the Self<sup>7</sup> is seen as being placed in a web of relations with various – not necessarily radically different and antagonistic – Other(s). The identity of the Self can be constructed through a variety of ‘non-Selves’ comprising complementary identities, contending identities, negative identities and non-identities. The Other can be either a spatial/external entity which is in most cases a state, but can also be a temporal Other

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<sup>53</sup> Campbell, *Writing Security*, pp.61-62.

<sup>54</sup> R.K. Ashley, ‘The Geopolitics of Geopolitical Space: Toward a Critical Social Theory of International Politics’, *Alternatives*, vol.12, no.4, 1987, pp.403–434.

<sup>55</sup> W.E. Connolly, *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1991.

<sup>56</sup> Campbell, *Writing Security*, pp.70- 71.

<sup>57</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practise*, pp.6-7, pp.33-41; Campbell, *Writing Security*, p.88.

that is the Self of the past as in the cases of the European Union (the war-ridden Europe) and post war Germany defining its identity in opposition to Nazi Germany.<sup>58</sup> This constitution of the Self and Other takes place through two simultaneous logics—a logic of differentiation and a logic of linking-articulation of identity in spatial, temporal and ethical terms.

Foreign policy conceptualized as a discursive practice implies that identity and policy as ontologically interlinked: identity comes into being through the discursive enactment of foreign policy, or what has been referred to as ‘performances’ but at the same time identity is constructed to legitimise the proposed policy that needs to be enacted.<sup>59</sup> Identities are henceforth both (discursive) foundation and product. The performative constitution of identity involves more than a geographical partitioning but proffers a range of moral valuations that are implicit in any spatialization. It produces space of superior/inferior, which can be animated in terms of any number of figurations of higher/lower.<sup>60</sup> In this context, foreign policy is a matter of an ‘ethical power of segregation’ whereby moral distinctions can be drawn through spatial and temporal delineations.<sup>61</sup> These moral concerns naturalized the Self as ‘normal, healthy, civilized, or something equally positive’ by estranging the Other as ‘pathological, sick, barbaric or something equally negative’.<sup>62</sup> The objectification of the Self through the representation of the danger is achieved through certain recurring representations and figurations: ones that are general to foreign policy and the ones that are more specific in this study to India’s own biographical narrative. The constant (re)writing of ‘Indian-ness’ as a positive unique force in the foreign policy texts suggests that these practices of foreign policy serve to enframe, limit and domesticate a particular identity which reinforce such narratives of India exceptionalism by reproducing Self/Other representations.

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<sup>58</sup> O. Waever, ‘European Security Identities’, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 34, no.1, March 1996, pp.103-132; Diez, ‘Europe’s Others and the Return of Geopolitics’; Zehfuss, *Constructivism in International Relations: The Politics of Reality*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002.

<sup>59</sup> Butler, *Gender Trouble*; Campbell, *Writing Security*, 1992; C.Weber, ‘Performative state’, *Millenium*, vol.23, no.2,1998, pp 337-349.

<sup>60</sup> Campbell, *Writing Security*, p.73.

<sup>61</sup> Campbell, *Writing Security*, p.88.

<sup>62</sup> Campbell, *Writing Security*, p.89.

### **2.3. Methodology**

The following section discusses the qualitative methods that are relevant for data collection in this thesis. It involves an extensive documentary analysis based on both primary and secondary sources. These documents are studied using constructivist and interpretivist methods of discourse analysis and narrative analysis. The following section draws upon the literature used for understanding the discursive approach relating to meaning (re)production and the concept of ‘social antagonism’ that recognises the existence of competing discourses for meaning fixation. Additionally it uses elite interviews as a primary data collection method which gives a first-hand ‘insider’ account of foreign policy decision making in addition to the available primary documentary sources.

#### **2.3.1. Discourse Analysis and Narrative Analysis**

The study uses textual analysis methods as language remains central to poststructuralist analysis to comprehend the meaning of the material reality. It looks for studying how particular entities such as the state, foreign policy or world order are practised and spoken of, rather than what their essence is, and is derived from a particular understanding of language.<sup>63</sup> These meanings are socio-linguistically constructed by different people in different times and places, representing themselves and their world as part of discursive practices.<sup>64</sup> Fierke had also emphasized the ‘centrality of language’<sup>65</sup> in the construction of security and insecurity and argues that ‘material possibility is linguistically constituted’.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, the analysis draws from a

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<sup>63</sup> M. Shapiro, *Language and Political Understanding: The Politics of Discursive Practices*, Yale, Yale University Press, 1981, p.218; Hansen, *Security as Practise*, pp.15-16; S. Mills, *Der Diskurs: Begriff, Theorie, Praxis*, Tübingen, Francke, 2007, p.8.

<sup>64</sup> R.B.J. Walker (ed.), *Culture, ideology, and world order*, Boulder, Colo., Westview Press, 1984; R.B.J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993; R.K. Ashley, ‘The Poverty of neorealism’, *International Organization*, vol.38, no.2, 1984, pp.225-286; Ashley, ‘The Geopolitics of Geopolitical Space’; J.D. Derian, *On Diplomacy: A Genealogy of Western Estrangement*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1987; J.D. Derian, ‘Mediating Estrangement: A Theory for Diplomacy’, *Review of International Studies*, vol.13, no.2, April 1987, pp.91-110; J.D. Derian, *Antidiplomacy: Spies, Terror, Speed, and War*, Cambridge, MA and Oxford, Blackwell, 1992; Campbell, *Writing Security*.

<sup>65</sup> K.M. Fierke, ‘Changing Worlds of Security’, in K. Krause and M.C. Williams (eds.), *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases*, London, UCL Press, 1997, p.225.

<sup>66</sup> K.M. Fierke, *Changing Games, Changing Strategies: Critical Investigation in Security*, Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press, 1998, p.11.

discursive, anti-essentialist ontology and understands reality as discursively constructed, i.e. the objects and subjects of the social world are constituted by discursive interpretations through which they acquire significance or meaning. ‘State sovereignty’, ‘foreign policy’ or ‘security’ are not treated as something fixed but as discursive practices here. It is primarily through language that humans interpret and represent the world they encounter and therefore there can be several ways of interpreting reality and the focus here as mentioned earlier is on the ‘security elites’ who remain at the forefront in the re-production of state identity and foreign policy decision making. Unlike the conventional constructivism the culturally and historically produced specific ‘system of meanings’ does not just regulate state behaviour but are constitutive of political identity, strategy and practice as they ‘make possible the articulation and circulation of more or less coherent sets of meanings about a particular subject matter’.<sup>67</sup>

The critical constructivism draws on poststructuralism which is a linguistic theory of meaning producing that looks at how meanings and identities in the social world are constituted and the processes through which particular meanings and identities become dominant. It draws on the works of Walker, Ashley, Derian, Campbell, Butler, Shapiro and Hansen.<sup>68</sup> Poststructuralism looks at ‘the world’ as constituted through hierarchical meaning systems which are based on binary oppositions (for instance, man/women, order/disorder, domestic/international or sovereignty/anarchy) that tend to ‘privilege certain actors, perspectives and interests, while marginalizing, excluding or threatening others’.<sup>69</sup> Following such relational ontology of meaning and what Jacques Derrida refers to as the deconstruction,<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> M. Laffey and J. Weldes, ‘Beyond Belief: Ideas and Symbolic technologies in the study of International Relations’, *European Journal of International Relations*, vol.3, no.2,1997, p.209.

<sup>68</sup> Walker (ed.), *Culture, ideology, and world order*; Walker, *Inside/Outside*; Ashley, ‘The Poverty of neorealism’; Ashley, ‘The Geopolitics of Geopolitical Space’; Derian, *On Diplomacy*; Derian, ‘Mediating Estrangement’; Derian, *Antidiplomacy*; Campbell, *Writing Security*; M. Shapiro, *The Politics of Representation: Writing Practices in Biography, Photography and Policy Analysis*, Madison, WI, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1988; M. Shapiro, *International/ Intertextual Relations: Postmodern readings of World Politics*, Lexington, MA, Lexington Books, 1989; C.Weber, *Imagining America at War: Morality, Politics and Film*, London, Routledge, 2006; Hansen, *Security as Practise*.

<sup>69</sup> T. Wojczewski, *India’s Foreign Policy Discourse and its Conception of World Order: The Quest for Power and Identity*, London, UK, Routledge, 2018 , <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=NjBiDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>, (accessed 4 February 2019)

<sup>70</sup> J. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.

poststructuralism overrides the dichotomy between the ‘material’ and the ‘ideational’ and emphasizes a structure centric understanding of discourse.

Following a non-foundationalist ontology the poststructuralists view identities as produced only in discourse. They use the term ‘subjectivities’ or ‘subject positions’ to underline the fact that identity is not something that someone has but is a position that one is constructed as having which is given or ascribed to the individuals, entities or institutions. The study emphasizes the importance of language and discourses and accepts the existence of multiple discourse with multiple meanings for such identity constructions.

The study draws on the poststructuralist discourse theory (PDT), also referred to as Essex School of Discourse theory devised by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe<sup>71</sup> that presumes that the meanings and identities of subjects, objects, or practices are constituted within relational and differential systems of signification—or discourses—which relate differences to confer meaning.<sup>72</sup> Discourse, as understood by, as a ‘structured totality of articulatory practices’, may therefore not be reduced to writing or speech but refers to ‘any complex of elements in which relations play the constitutive role.’<sup>73</sup> They argue that there is no objective reality that exists outside of the discourse and it is through competing discourses that we ascribe meaning to the world and thereby delineate, ‘the terms of intelligibility whereby a particular ‘reality’ can be known and acted upon.’<sup>74</sup> The PDT does not negate the existence of reality independent of thoughts or the relevance of material capabilities but refutes to accept ‘the possibility of an unmediated access to a material reality.’<sup>75</sup> As Laclau and Mouffe note in this regard:

The fact that every object is constituted as an object of discourse has nothing to do with whether there is a world external to thought, or with the realism/idealism opposition...What is denied is not that such objects exist externally to thought, but the rather different assertion that they could

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<sup>71</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, p.105.

<sup>72</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*.

<sup>73</sup> E. Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, London, Verso, 2005, p.68.

<sup>74</sup> R.L. Doty, *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South*, Minnesota, University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p.6; Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, p.108.

<sup>75</sup> Wojczewski, *India’s Foreign Policy Discourse and its Conceptions of World Order*.



constitute themselves as objects outside any discursive conditions of emergence.<sup>76</sup>

Discourse is essential to understand the social reality and hence, Laclau and Mouffe's poststructuralist reformulation attempts to understand the discursive character of the social world and focuses on the continuous discursive struggle for meaning fixation which it refers to as the 'social antagonism'. Different discourses stand for specific representations and understandings of social reality and seek to hegemonize or dominate the discursive space. The main objective of discourse analysis is to understand the processes of meaning fixation and to elaborate on which and how certain fixations of meaning could prevail over the others at a certain point.<sup>77</sup> Discourses categorize, symbolize and organize the world and its objects in a particular way and produce this 'reality' by making it accessible, knowable and meaningful and henceforth material capabilities (e.g. military and economic) cannot obtain their meaning and relevance outside the discursive interpretation.<sup>78</sup>

Drawing on Derrida's<sup>79</sup> insight that the constitution of identities depends on the establishment of difference and that this difference is often constructed on the basis of hierarchy as well as Carl Schmitt's emphasis on the conflictual nature of politics,<sup>80</sup> discourses are inherently seen as political, as it is the presence or construction of an Other that makes possible a subjectivity such as the state, nation, or the people, but also blocks their full realization to achieve their wholeness. The different discourses stand for different ways of representing the world, and seek to establish their particular perspective as the 'normal' or 'commonsensical' perspective, which involves the exclusion or marginalization of other possibilities and the meanings. Yet, they can fix social meanings and identities only partially and are thus always unstable, incomplete and vulnerable to the 'surplus of meaning' located in the field of discursivity or the

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<sup>77</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, p.108.

<sup>77</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, p.127; J. Torfing, 'Discourse Theory: Achievements, Arguments and Challenges', in by D. Howarth and J. Torfing (eds.), *Discourse Theory in European Politics: Identity, Policy and Governance*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p.15; D. Nabers, *A Poststructuralist Discourse Theory of Global Politics*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp.142-143.

<sup>78</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, p.105; A.M. Smith, *Laclau and Mouffe: The Radical Democratic Imaginary*, London, Routledge, 1998, p.85.

<sup>79</sup> Derrida, *Of Grammatology*; J. Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, London, Routledge, 1978.

<sup>80</sup> C. Mouffe, *On the Political*, London, Routledge, 2005, p.13.

‘discursive exterior’.<sup>81</sup> If a particular understanding of the people has become dominant and the ‘natural’ perspective, then the discourse has achieved—what Laclau and Mouffe refers to as—‘discursive hegemony’.<sup>82</sup> There are thus always overlapping discourses that attempt to fix meanings and identities, but only arrive at partial fixtures.<sup>83</sup>

Social antagonisms point to the inherent negativity in all social formations and reveal the limit points or frontiers of any discourse (and society in general), where social meaning is (still) contested and cannot be fully stabilized. Social actors are unable to attain positive and full identities, and therefore they need an Other which is held responsible for this ‘failure’ and represented as a (potential) threat to the identity of the Self. Social antagonisms thus account for the very ambivalent nature of the emergence and constitution of identities: while the Other, the antagonist, threatens the identity of the Self and blocks its full realization, yet the the Self can define itself only in opposition to the Other.<sup>84</sup>

### **Finding and Reading Documentary Sources:**

The primary documents include the governmental reports; speeches and statements of members from the political leadership who have held or hold key governmental positions like Cabinet member, Central government Ministers, Ministers of States, Members of the Parliament, members from political parties of BJP, INC and the Left who were and are directly involved with decision making, present and former diplomats and bureaucrats in the MEA, Government of India; Parliamentary and Ministry reports, Parliamentary debates and Party documents; writings of important national leaders and

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<sup>81</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, pp.110-112; D. Howarth, *Discourse*, Buckingham, Open University Press, 2000; D. Howarth, ‘An Archaeology of Political Discourse? Evaluating Michael Foucault’s Explanation and Critique of Ideology’, *Political Studies*, vol.50, no.1, 2002, p.130; D. Howarth, *Poststructuralism and After: Structure, Subjectivity and Power*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p.11.

<sup>82</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*; Wojczewski, ‘Populism, Hindu Nationalism, and Foreign Policy in India’, p.4.

<sup>83</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*.

<sup>84</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, p.176; Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolutions of our Time*, pp.17-21; U. Stäheli, ‘Die politische Theorie der Hegemonie’, in A. Brodocz and G.S. Schaal (eds.), *Politischen Theorien der Gegenwart II: Eine Einführung*, Opladen, Verlag Barbara, Budrich, 2006, pp.263-264.

any other publications from the Defence Headquarters such as military and nuclear doctrines.

Drawing on the existing literature and reading of the documents the study identifies two important discourses on Indian national identity that has sought to reproduce the idea of ‘Indianness’ –the Post-Nehruvian discourse and the Hyperrealist-Hindutva discourse (also referred to as the cultural nationalist discourse) which has been elaborated in Chapter 4. The study identifies certain themes or ‘signifiers’ in each of these discourses that binds these discourses together to produce a collective Self in a common opposition vis-à-vis the Other or multiple Others that blocks the realisation of the Self, but the Self can be defined only in its opposition to the Other and is integral to the possibility of the Self. There have been studies that have identified some of these ‘signifiers’. For instance, certain studies identify sovereignty, territorial integrity and defence, self-enlightened national interests, non-discrimination and cultural diversity as key signifiers in the Post-Nehruvian discourse.<sup>85</sup> But it lacks discussion on two accounts, firstly it makes limited discussion on the themes of the Nehruvian discourse and its re-articulation in the post-Nehruvian discourse and he does not expound on the spatial/temporal reproductions in the Nehruvian discourse at length through primary documentary analysis which is essential to understand the continuities and shifts in the representational practises and the narratives that have been central to reproduce such Self/Other reproductions in the successive UPA and NDA governments. Secondly, he did not trace the representations of these themes through in-depth case study analysis and neither did he examine documents such as parliamentary debates, reports and speeches on the case studies that are examined in this thesis. In this study through in-depth examination of three cases I examine and analyse the continuities and shifts in both spatial and temporal Self/Other constructions under Modi government’s foreign policy discourse which he did not include. Also the signifiers or themes identified under ‘Hindutva’ discourse have been re-interpreted and understood differently and narratives around ‘civilisational exceptionalism’, ‘power’ and ‘responsibility’ have been re-produced and re-framed to establish new notions of ‘responsibility’, ‘development’ and ‘leading power’. These themes/ signifiers are then studied across the available documents to understand the representational practices informing the policy practices

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<sup>85</sup> See Wojczewski, ‘India and the Quest for World Order.’

in the Indian foreign policy to provide a comprehensive and comparative account of the changes and continuities under the Congress and BJP government.

This makes use of poststructuralist discourse analysis particularly with reference to the concept of social antagonism as elaborated above to understand the two distinct discourses that sought to reproduce the idea of *Indian-ness* and to examine the internal contradictions within these discourses that makes it difficult to hold on to such claims of exceptionalism or Indian difference. The Ministry of External Affairs' website provide a rich and an elaborate source of primary documents such as the annual reports and press statements of MEA, speeches by the political and bureaucratic elites and distinguished lectures by retired diplomats. Additionally extensive research has been conducted in the Indian Parliament Library in New Delhi for a period of three months approximately to access parliamentary debates, party documents, speeches, government reports and writings by important nationalist leaders. The key words used for searching these documents included: 'Foreign policy', 'India-USA', 'Indian Ocean', 'India and NPT', 'disarmament', 'South Asia', 'India-China', 'India-Pakistan', 'neighbourhood first', 'Global Power', 'Nuclear Deal', 'Defence', 'Energy', 'ASEAN', 'Look East', 'Act East', 'India and BIMSTEC', 'India and SAARC' and so forth. Additionally, speeches have been identified on the website by looking at either specific individuals within the security elites by examining the speeches from the official website of the Prime Minister's Office archives, speeches by the EAM, Defence Minister, Foreign Secretary, Ambassadors or with the names of specific Members of Parliament, party spokesperson or diplomats and secondly, by examining published documents year-wise from official government publications particularly from 2005-2014 and 2015-2019 and selecting a representative sample from them in terms of relevance and not yet studied.

In addition to primary sources, secondary sources have been used which includes books, articles, think-tank reports and newspapers. Extensive research has been conducted to study newspaper archives from 2005-2009 on the Indo-US nuclear deal, 2010 onwards on India's maritime developments and recent newspaper articles on India-Pakistan and India-China relations at Taraknath Das Centre, Jadavpur University, Kolkata for three months in addition to newspaper archives available online to add commentary analysis on the information gathered from the primary sources.

The study also draws on the use of narrative analysis to understand how the security elites discursively re-interpret the meanings by making sense of the reality. This study looks at how the elite define the Indian Self vis-à-vis the Other in its foreign policy discourse and what role should India pursue in the global order. Therefore, the study needs to make use of elite individuals' perspective on the subject which helps us to explicate the socio-cultural context within which such interpretations and meanings are re-produced. It is a qualitative method which relies on written or spoken words or visual representations of the individuals and are linguistically subjective in nature. The narrative gives one's individual view or an account of an event to be assessed on its merits and such validation is possible. The accuracy of the story regarding its objectivity, though one needs to be attentive to the socio-cultural context, is essential and can be achieved by corroboration from other narratives. Thereby studies that rely on such techniques will need to create an aggregate of narratives each bearing on the others by drawing a wider representative sample to reach at conclusions.

Narrative refers to the ways in which individuals construct disparate facts in their own words and weave them together cognitively in order to make sense of the reality according to their re-interpretation.<sup>86</sup> Since these narratives help us understand ourselves as political beings, narrative becomes an invaluable tool in affecting individual's perceptions of political reality, which in turn affect their actions in response or in anticipation of political events and plays a significant role in the construction of political behaviour. The elites who are at the forefront of decision making in constructing state identity discourse and practices, examining those narratives through studying their speeches and statements hold political significance in establishing the official meaning producing discourse that have managed to achieve discursive hegemony, or are the oppositional discourse that are continuously countering the former and thereby determining the future course of action, either individually or collectively, in accordance to their perception of reality and thereby influence the state's policy choices. In this sense, it is argued that individuals create and use narratives to interpret and understand the political realities around them both as individuals and as collective units, i.e. as nations or groups. At times of crisis narratives are selectively appropriated that provides a 'cognitive bridge' between policy change that is seen necessary to deal

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<sup>86</sup> M. Patterson and K.R. Monroe, 'Narrative in Political Science', *Annual Review of Political Science*, 1998, vol.1, pp.315–31.

with the (in)security situation and also provide continuity to a state's autobiographical narrative or its idea of the Self. Narratives are an important methodological tools used in postmodernism/poststructuralism analysis, that are used in International Relations scholarship to understand how political actors use state narratives and domestic contestation over them to confront state insecurities and make policy changes. Narrative is also associated with a kind of knowledge that post-structuralists prefer to look at.<sup>87</sup>

### **2.3.2. Elite Interviews: Advantages and Pitfalls**

Interviews are one of the major tools in qualitative research that provides a subjective account of an event or an issue. Elite implies a group of individuals who hold, or have held in a privileged position in society and are likely to have had more influence on political outcomes than general members of the public. Some individuals are embedded in social contexts that enable power to flow through them. Mills said, 'the decisions of the power elite are of disproportionate impact compared to non-elites' and doing elite interviews brings in a set of associated problems such as problems of access, problems of authority in the interview setting, problems related to language, style and, economic capital.<sup>88</sup> One of the most important functions of the elite interviews is to help the researcher to understand the theoretical position/s of the interviewee, his/her perceptions beliefs and ideologies. They can help interpreting documents and reports or in interpreting the personalities involved in decision making, of certain events or give insight to their analysis of certain events. The elite interview should not be conducted with a view to establishing 'the truth', in a crude positivist way rather its function is to give an insight into the mind-set of the actor/s involved in shaping the society (in this policy outcomes) in which we live and the interviewee's subjective analysis of a particular episode or situation.<sup>89</sup> Through such methods we can learn more about the inner workings of the political process, the machinations between influential actors and how a sequence of events was viewed and responded to within the political establishment. Though one has to be cautious that some details may be exaggerations

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<sup>87</sup> J. Subotic, 'Narrative, Ontological Security, and Foreign Policy Change', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, vol.12, 2016, pp.610–627; S.R. Shenha, 'Political Narratives and Political Reality', *International Political Science Review*, 2006, vol 27, no.3, pp.245-262;

<sup>88</sup> J.A. Conti and M. O'Neil, 'Studying power: qualitative methods and the global elite', *Qualitative Research*, vol.7, no.1, 2007, p.69.

<sup>89</sup> D. Richards, 'Elite Interviewing: Approaches and Pitfalls', *Politics*, vol. 16, no.3, 1996, pp.199-204.

or even falsehoods. But interviews can provide immense amounts of information that could not be gleaned from official published documents or contemporary media accounts.

This study also combines the use of elite interviews with the analysis of primary documents. Primary data has been collected through intensive elite interviews that were conducted in New Delhi and Kolkata in India during research visits in September 2013, December 2015 and August 2017. The research interviews were conducted with a semi structured questionnaire that revolved around the topics of general evolution of Indian foreign policy, India's strategic culture, approach to use of military force and nuclear weapons, evolving aspects of India's nuclear doctrine of 'No first use'(NFU), India-USA nuclear deal, India's relations with Pakistan under the 'neighbourhood first' Policy, the rise of China in Indian Ocean region, India's maritime engagement in the Indo-Pacific region with particular focus on relations with Japan under India's 'Act East Policy'. Fourteen in depth elite interviews were conducted that included Members of Indian Parliament from the two predominant national political parties –both Indian National Congress and BJP, senior politicians of the political parties, General Secretary of political Parties, bureaucrats including foreign diplomats(Indian Foreign Service) in the Ministry of External Affairs, retired Army and Naval officers from Indian armed forces, defence scientists in the Defence Research and Development Organisation(DRDO) associated with India's nuclear testing and missile programme development, strategic experts associated with think-tanks that are directly related to the Ministry of Defence, Government of India- namely Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) and Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in New Delhi which hosts former military officials, diplomats in the foreign office and security experts that have been former member of cabinet committee on Security and Foreign policy matters referred to as the National Security Advisory Board(NSAB)<sup>90</sup> under the National Security Council which is an executive government body tasked with advising the Prime Minister's Office on matters of national security and strategic interests; and finally senior editors of national newspapers in both Kolkata and New Delhi. The list

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<sup>90</sup> The brainchild of the first National Security Advisor (NSA), Brajesh Mishra, a former member of Indian Foreign Service. The National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) consists of a group of eminent national security experts outside of the government Members are usually senior retired officials, civilian as well as military, academics and distinguished members of civil society drawn from and having expertise in Internal and External Security, Foreign Affairs, Defence, Science & Technology and Economic Affairs.

of the names of the interviewees has been attached in **Appendix I** at the end of the thesis. The interviewees were chosen based on their association with India's foreign and security policy making.

The elite interviewing follows a semi-structured interview pattern which includes a list of more open ended questions that allow for a discussion with the interviewee rather than a formalised set of questions, yet the list of the questions certainly includes around 25-27 questions that have been centred around the specific policy areas and general foreign policy of India. However, the valuable flexibility of open-ended questioning exacerbates the validity and reliability issues that are part and parcel of this approach. Errors could arise if the questions are poorly constructed, or the subjects are unrevealing, or, worse, misleading in their answer. Open-ended questioning-the riskiest but potentially is the most valuable type of elite interviewing-requires interviewers to know when to probe and how to formulate the follow up questions and certain other steps are needed to be taken to minimize the potential risks. The interviewer needs to keep in mind that it is not the obligation of a subject to be objective and to tell us the truth. The subjects have also a purpose in the interview as they have something they want to say and consciously or unconsciously, they've already thought about what they want to say, as they want to justify what they do. Sometimes all we want to know is the subject's point of view and this problem doesn't loom as large.<sup>91</sup> Most obviously, one way of minimising the risks is to use multiple sources of data collection and therefore corroboration of facts and analysis is essential by using other primary and secondary documentary sources. Interviewing does have severe limitations however, which means they cannot be relied upon as the sole methodology. The data collected must be reinforced by other forms of empirical data or must be based upon a broad sample of interviews, all conducted with those who enjoyed equal access to the event or activity under focus.<sup>92</sup> Elite interviewing is highly time consuming. Not only in terms of preparing transcripts but entails travelling somewhere (New Delhi and Kolkata) to conduct the interviewees, there's limited time (money) to conduct them. Finally while interviewing one needs to be careful that without demonstrating one's

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<sup>91</sup> J.M. Berry, 'Validity and Reliability Issues in Elite Interviewing', *Political Science and Politics*, vol.35, no.4, December 2002, pp.679-682.

<sup>92</sup> D.G. Lilleker, 'Interviewing the Political Elite: Navigating a Potential Minefield', *Politics*, vol.23, no.3, 2003, pp.207-214.



own personal scepticism, one can question about the weaknesses in one's own arguments by drawing attention to the oppositional arguments and claims.<sup>93</sup>

#### **2.4. Summary**

The study is a qualitative and interpretive study that draws on critical constructivist theoretical framework and adopts a relational understanding of identity through the Self/Other lenses and performative and constitutive relationship between identity and foreign policy. It uses interpretivist methodologies of discourse and narrative analysis and combines it with elite interview methods. Drawing from radical constructivist approaches (or poststructuralist approaches) the study reconceptualizes foreign policy as a discursive practice that constitutes and reproduces the state by demarcating the inside from the outside and the Self from the Other. Crucially, what the notion of an antagonism captures is that there are no universal or stable foundations underlying the meanings and identities in the social world and no single discourse is capable of imposing closure upon the world, since its formation is predicated on the construction of antagonisms and the exclusion of certain elements by drawing a political line between insider/outsider, domestic/foreign and Self/Other which determine the limits of the concrete social formation and are analysed across different time periods and governments.

Both these methods provide certain advantages alongside certain challenges that cannot be resolved on a full-proof basis, but the possibilities of the error can be reduced. The focus of the study is on India and this is a longitudinal case study design where Indian foreign policy is studied across the INC and BJP governments of Vajpayee, Singh and Modi governments over two decades, however it concentrates only the first term of the Modi government. Additionally it draws on the Nehruvian writing and party documents of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh in the initial years of post-independence to understand the shifts in the ideas of India in the post-Cold war period in the two predominant discourses.

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<sup>93</sup> Berry, 'Validity and Reliability Issues in Elite Interviewing.'

## Chapter 3

### Indian Strategic Culture: Themes, Practices and Cultural Diplomacy

*...the ancient cultures are covered up with heap of dust and sometimes filth, which the long ages have accumulated. But still they endure and the old Indian civilization is the basis of Indian life even today... In a sense, we in India are heirs to these thousands of year.*

-Jawaharlal Nehru<sup>1</sup>

*Unfortunately, Indian mores, culture and even history do not always lend themselves to conventional interpretations that are familiar to the Western intellect...there is a distinct possibility that Western researchers trying to fit Indian developments into inappropriate templates, may arrive at invalid assumptions.*

-Retd. Admiral Arun Prakash<sup>2</sup>

#### 3.1. Defining Strategic Culture

Indian strategic thinking has endorsed the predominance of state centric approaches to national security. India is seen as a ‘civilisational state’ that can be traced back to the Indus Valley Civilization which flourished in the north western parts of the subcontinent in the third millennium BC. India’s foreign policy is a product of her historical, cultural, geo-political, socio-economic compulsions and considerations originating from a ‘civilizational consciousness’ that predates the modern Westphalian nation system.<sup>3</sup> Key foreign policy principles have stood the test of time being deeply rooted in her history, culture, traditions, norms, philosophy and values.<sup>4</sup> For instance, Ashoka’s ideas of self-rule influenced India’s non-alignment policy while Buddhist philosophy of *ahimsa* and Gandhian ideas of non-violence are seen as responsible for

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<sup>1</sup> J. Nehru, *Glimpses of World History*, 2nd edn., Calcutta and New York, Asia Publishing House, 1962, p.13, Available from: Digital Library of India, <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.108462/page/n30>, (accessed 25 May 2019).

<sup>2</sup> Admiral A. Prakash (Retd.), *India’s Maritime Growth: Rationale and Objectives*, Policy Paper, no.1, New Delhi, National Maritime Foundation, July 2011, p.5.

<sup>3</sup> Paranjpe, *India’s Strategic Culture*, p.15; Bandopadhyay, *The Making of India’s Foreign Policy*, pp.15-116; R. Budania, *India’s National Security Dilemma*, New Delhi, Indus Publishing Company, 2001.

<sup>4</sup> T.N. Kaul, ‘An Integrated View of Foreign Policy’, in M. Rasgotra, V.D. Chopra and K.P. Misra (eds.), *India’s Foreign Policy in the 1990s*, New Delhi, Indian Centre of Regional Affairs, Patriot Publishers, 1990, p.5; M. Kim, ‘India’, in J. Glenn, D.A. Howlett, and S. Poore (eds.), *Neorealism versus Strategic Culture*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2004, p.82.

India's defensive attitude towards war and emasculation of state power.<sup>5</sup> India developed an intrinsic stake in advocating peace and projecting a non-violent ethos by interpreting some select Hindu texts to fulfil specific purposes.<sup>6</sup> Such [re]interpretation and calibrated use of strategic cultural claims based on selective reading by successive generations of post-independent elites have been central to the reproduction of the Indian Self as a peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and benign nation resulting in India's ideological Self-celebration.

Gray defines strategic culture as 'the socially constructed and transmitted assumptions, habits of mind, traditions, and preferred methods of operation – that is, behaviour – that are more or less specific to a particular geographically-based security community'<sup>7</sup> and is therefore context shaping. The elites are seen as embedded in a cultural context that guides their policy decisions which are in consonance with such cultural predispositions- norms, values, ideas and traditions specific to that community. These are persisting but not eternal and can change or evolve with new experiences being absorbed over a period of time.<sup>8</sup> Strategic culture is thus relevant as the 'encultured practitioners and organisations' engaged with security policy making have internalised such cultural understandings and in part [re-]construct, [re-]interpret and amend them.<sup>9</sup>

For Das, strategic culture is seen as social constructs which are produced through 'discursive re-articulation of the mainsprings of India's culture as reproduced by the successive generations of post-independent Indian political leaders via their codes of intelligibilities' which 'serve as meaning producing tools to construct commonsense realities in IR.'<sup>10</sup> It is important to look at how such meanings are formed, transformed, evolve and who articulates them and [re]produce different social,

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<sup>5</sup> L. Sondhaus, *Strategic Culture and Ways of War*, London, Routledge, 2006, p.92.

<sup>6</sup> P. Upadhyay, 'Peace and Conflict: Reflections on Indian Thinking', *Strategic Analysis*, vol.33, no.1, 2009, pp.71-83; A. Rajain, *Nuclear Deterrence in Southern Asia*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2005, p.201.

<sup>7</sup> C.S. Gray, *Modern Strategy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999, p.28.

<sup>8</sup> See C.S. Gray, 'Strategic Culture as Context: The First Generation of Theory Strikes Back', *Review of International Studies*, vol.25, no.1, January 1999, pp.49-69 for strategic culture with an ideas-behaviour nexus; See I.A.Johnston, 'Thinking about strategic culture', *International Security*, vol. 19, no.4, 1995, pp.32-64 that argues for a separation of ideas from behaviour.

<sup>9</sup> Gray, *Modern Strategy*, p.30; R.U. Zaman, 'Strategic Culture and the Rise of the Indian Navy', PhD Thesis, University of Reading, United Kingdom, July 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Das, *Revisiting Nuclear India*, p.18.

political and cultural Self-understandings of realities. Das notes that ‘strategic culture as a ‘symbolic strategy’ serves a dual purpose in defining a country’s national security agenda. First, by reinforcing a sense of legitimacy in securitisation as upheld by decision makers and, second, to create and perpetuate a sense of ‘in-group’ solidarity of a particular group’s strategic security discourse directed at ‘supposed’ adversaries.’<sup>11</sup>This socially constructed nature of strategic cultural thinking provides the politico-ideological space within which shifting notion of the state’s Self/Other identities are [re]constructed. The state and the surrounding environment are seen in a mutually constitutive relationship where the state through certain discourses not only constructs its insecurities but simultaneously reinforces the identity of the [threatened] state thereby requiring a certain security policy to deal with those insecurities. Hence the states as cultural entities are *performatively* constituted.<sup>12</sup>

### **3.2. Indian Strategic Culture and Hinduism**

India has produced four great world religions –Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism, in addition to contributing significantly to Islam (especially the Sufi tradition) and even atheist philosophy, each of which had significant influence on India’s military history and composite culture. The security apparatus being largely dominated by the Hindu nationals and majority of Indian population being Hindus,<sup>13</sup> modern India is seen as a ‘Hindu’ nation and the history of ancient India as the history of ‘Hind’ culture and progress.

Indian security elites have always highlighted the ‘syncretic’ aspect of its culture as India has absorbed influences – goods, ideas, and people – from the outside

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<sup>11</sup> Also see Das, ‘State, Identity, and Representations of Danger’; R. Das, ‘Explaining India’s Nuclearization: Engaging Realism and Social Constructivism’, *Asian Perspective*, vol.32, no.1, 2008, pp.33-70.

<sup>12</sup> Weldes, *Constructing National Interests*, 1999, p.11; Das, *Revisiting Nuclear India*, pp.18-19.

<sup>13</sup> At the census 2001, out of 1028 million population, 80.5% are Hindus, 13.4% are Muslims or the followers of Islam, 2.3% are Christians, 1.9% are Sikh, 0.80% are Buddhists and 0.4% are Jains. In addition, over 6 million have reported professing other religions and faiths including tribal religions, different from six main religions according to Census of India, 2001. According to the religious data on Census of India-2011 released by the Government of India on 25 August 2015, Hindus are 79.8% while Muslims are 14.23% in India and Christians are 2.30%. See Ministry of Home Affairs, ‘Census of India-2011’, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, New Delhi, Government of India, 26 August 2015, <http://censusindia.gov.in/2011census/C-01.html>, (accessed 2 January 2020); ‘India’s religions by numbers’, National, *The Hindu*, 26 August 2015 (updated 29 March 2016), <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/religious-communities-census-2011-what-the-numbers-say/article7582284.ece>, (accessed 4 January 2020).

world but on its own terms and has managed to survive as a single and unified political entity.<sup>14</sup> Naipaul recognised that there exist a ‘central will’ and a ‘national idea’ in India even if not as strong as in China.<sup>15</sup> The ‘idea of India’, as pointed out by India’s former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, ‘is the idea of ‘unity in diversity’. The idea of pluralism, the idea that there need be no conflict of civilizations, the idea that it is possible for us to facilitate and work for a ‘confluence of civilizations’ have a universal, a truly global relevance.’<sup>16</sup> This acknowledges the legitimacy of diverse ways (political, social, economic means and religious paths) to seek prosperity, peace and truth. This is at the core of ‘Indian exceptionalism’ which is represented as a positive source of strength and reproduces her as different from the Others [i.e. Pakistan and China in the region].

Nehru’s idea of secular tolerance constituted an important attribute in modern Indian state where Hindus and minorities particularly Muslims are to be treated as equal citizens<sup>17</sup> based on the philosophy of *sarvadharmasamabhava* (equal respect for all religions). The Nehruvian and the Post–Nehruvian discourse (under the Indian National Congress) uphold secular tolerance and integration (not assimilation) as inviolable part of ‘Indian-ness’.<sup>18</sup> In Hindu texts like *Manu Smriti*, the significance of secular tolerance has been implicit as the victorious king is expected to respect the religion, traditions

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<sup>14</sup> See A.B. Vajpayee, ‘Let us Celebrate and Strengthen our Indianness: PM Speech’, 1 January 2003, <http://www.thehindu.com/2003/01/01/stories/2003010102971100.htm>, (accessed 16 July 2016); S. Tharoor, ‘India’s Role in the Emerging World Order’, 26 March 2010, <http://www.shashitharoor.in/speeches-details.php?id=11>, (accessed 25 July 2015); Tharoor, *Pax Indica*; S.M. Krishna, ‘Speech by External Affairs Minister on “India’s Foreign Policy Priorities for the 21st Century” at launch of the “India Initiative” by the Brown University’, 28 September 2012, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, <http://www.mea.gov.in/infocusarticle.htm?20639/Speech+by+External+Affairs+Minister+on+Indias+Foreign+Policy+Priorities+for+the+21st+Century+at+launch+of+the+quotIndia+Initiativequot+by+the+Brown>, (accessed 29 July 2015); M. Singh, ‘PM’s address to the 60th session of the UN General Assembly’, 15 September 2005, <http://www.pmindia.nic.in/speech-details.php?nodeid=188>, (accessed 29 July 2015).

<sup>15</sup> V.S. Naipaul, *India a Million Mutinies Now*, New York, Viking, 1990.

<sup>16</sup> M. Singh, ‘PM’s address at International Conference on “Peace, Non-Violence and Empowerment Gandhian Philosophy in the 21st Century”’, New Delhi, 30 January 2007, [https://archivepmo.nic.in/drmanmohansingh/content\\_print.php?nodeid=449&nodetype=2](https://archivepmo.nic.in/drmanmohansingh/content_print.php?nodeid=449&nodetype=2), (accessed 29 July 2015).

<sup>17</sup> G. Parthasarathy, ‘Jawaharlal Nehru and his quest for a secular identity’, *Occasional Papers in History and Society*, First Series, vol.42, 1989, p.8.

<sup>18</sup> A. Shourie, ‘The Hindutva Judgements: The Distance that remains’, *Bharatiya Janata Party*, 24 April 1996, <http://www.bjp.org/about-the-party/philosophy>, (accessed 10 November 2015).

and customs of the land of the defeated state and it rejects any imposition of faith.<sup>19</sup> Indian strategic cultural scholarship views Indian military thought as flowing from this tolerant and absorptive Hindu tradition.<sup>20</sup>

India as a 'Hindu' nation found its explicit political projection through the ideology and practice of certain political parties such as Bharatiya Jana Sangh (the parent organisation of the current ruling party –Bharatiya Janata Party) and other religious organisations under the Sangh Parivar. It represents an alternative project of state building that believes that all religious minorities have to be assimilated in the Hindu way of life. The cultural nationalist discourse critique the lack of empathy among Indian elites after independence for India's [Hindu] past and sees Congress's secular discourse as 'appeasement politics' geared towards Muslims. Equating 'Indian-ness' with 'Hindutva' and declaring Indian Muslims and Christians as 'foreign' – remain key features of the Hindu nationalist agenda and are at odds with India's pluralist and absorptive-syncretic civilizational heritage. The Post-Nehruvian discourse sees this as based on the narrow and corrupted version of Hinduism, a claim nevertheless challenged by the cultural nationalists. However secular nationalists like Gandhi and Nehru recognised the 'composite' cultural essence of Hinduism as permeating the Indian life. Nehru wrote:

The mixture of religion and philosophy, history and tradition, custom and social structure, which in its wide fold included almost every aspect of the life of India then, and which might be called Brahminism or (to use a later word) Hinduism, became the symbol of nationalism. It was indeed a national religion with its appeal to all those deep instincts, racial and cultural, which form the basis everywhere of nationalism today. Buddhism, child of Indian thought,...was essentially international, a world religion, and as it developed and spread, it became increasingly so. Thus it was natural for the old Brahminic faith to become the symbol, again and again, of nationalist revivals.<sup>21</sup>

The influence of the Hindu texts remain paramount in Indian psyche and the security elites' have reinterpreted these for re-producing and marketing an Indian identity that

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<sup>19</sup> This is also advanced in Kautilya's Arthashastra. Personal interview with Colonel (Retd.) Pradip Kumar Gautam, Indian Army and an Expert in Kautilya studies, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, Ministry of Defence, New Delhi, 17 December 2015.

<sup>20</sup> Karnad, *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security*.

<sup>21</sup> J. Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, Calcutta, Signet Press, 1982 (Originally published in 1946), p.106.

has rendered Indian strategic culture as flexible, elastic, encompassing and arbitrary. On the question of 'what is India', Nehru replied:

...It was the past of a virile and vigorous race with a questioning spirit and an urge for free inquiry and, even in its earliest known period, giving evidence of a mature and tolerant civilization...ever searching for the ultimate and the universal...The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* were woven into the texture of millions of lives in every generation for thousands of years... if our race forgot the Buddha, the Upanishads and the great epics... It would be uprooted and would lose the basic characteristics which have clung to it and given it distinction throughout these long ages. India would cease to be India.<sup>22</sup>

This reflects on the dualistic tradition of 'cultural pacifism' and peace approach of Buddhism on one hand and the great epics of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* including the *Bhagavad Gita* that elaborates on Indian [Hindu] military values, ways of warfare, role of morality on inter-state relations, military capabilities, aspects of national power and diplomacy on the other. The relevance of these texts- the four Vedas and the Puranas on modern India's strategic thinking and in chalking out significant elements of the overarching 'Indian Military values', statecraft, warfare, ethics and diplomacy is undeniable.<sup>23</sup> Karnad argued for the 'exceptionality' in ancient Indian politico-military thought in terms of its complexities and the macro projection.<sup>24</sup> Algappa argued for exploring such concepts and making it geographically and culturally relevant to the subcontinent by spotting its resemblance in South Asian politics,<sup>25</sup> whereas Sahni disregards the central idea of *mandala* in Arthashastra as 'distinctly Indian' but similar to how most large nations view their place in the system.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> J. Nehru, 'Extracts from "India Today and Tomorrow"', *Azad Memorial Lectures*, New Delhi, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, 22 and 23 February 1959 cited in J. Nehru, 'Synthesis is our Tradition' in *Jawaharlal Nehru: Selected Speeches, Volume 4, 1957-63*, New Delhi, Publications Divisions, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1964, p.1.

<sup>23</sup> R.A. Sinari, *The Structure of Indian Thought*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1984.

<sup>24</sup> Karnad, *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security*.

<sup>25</sup> M. Alagappa (ed.), *Asian Security Practise: Material and Ideational Influences*, Stanford, CA, California University Press, 1998.

<sup>26</sup> V. Sahni, 'Just Another Big Country,' in K. Bajpai and A. Mattoo (eds.), *Securing India: Strategic Thought and Practise, Essays by G.K. Tanham*, New Delhi, Manohar Publications, pp.160-173.

### **3.3. The ‘moral’ India construct: Universal Humanism and Internationalism**

The Indian political and foreign policy establishment have always engaged in projecting India as a morally superior force and emphasized her spiritual character. The ethical code of conduct or ‘Dharma’ [*Sanatan Dharma* or the ‘eternal truth’] is seen as something unique to the Hindu civilization that deeply permeates and guides the Indian psyche. In different Indian religions and philosophies there are multiple meanings found but it essentially speaks of the cosmic law that underlies the right behaviour and social conduct.<sup>27</sup> The cultural nationalism discourse notes, ‘It is surprising that the linguists who linked the Sanskrit language to the Indo- Aryan school of languages ...could not cite a single civilization in the world outside the geography and history of India which has the word *dharma* or any word similar in phonetics or meaning.’<sup>28</sup>

Under Buddhist influences Ashoka, the ruler of the Mauryan empire that established centralised authority over a large part of the subcontinent had also propagated the idea of ‘dhamma’[dharma] in order to strengthen ideological unity among various cultural groups for consolidating the empire<sup>29</sup> that invokes religious toleration, ethics and duties for general welfare. Ashoka endorsed ‘non-violence’ (*ahimsa*) and rejected war as a means of territorial conquest after the Kalinga (Orissa) battle,<sup>30</sup> but he was no pacifist and favoured minimal use of force for strategic defence to maintain the borders.<sup>31</sup> Studies have suggested that Buddha himself permitted defensive military measures for establishing just order.<sup>32</sup> He emphasized on righteousness, social justice and welfare in his administration and upholding

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<sup>27</sup> There is ambiguity with the word ‘dharma’ as it has different meanings such as ordinance, usage, duty, justice, morality, virtue, religion or good works. The word is clearly derived from the root ‘dhr’ (to uphold, to support, to nourish). In Rig Veda it is used in the sense of ‘upholder, supporter, or sustainer’. See BJP, ‘Cultural Nationalism’, *BJP Party Documents, 2000-2005*, New Delhi, Ministry of Public Division, Bharatiya Janata Party, 2005, p.106.

<sup>28</sup> BJP, ‘Cultural Nationalism’, p.105, p.135.

<sup>29</sup> R. Thapar, *Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryas*, 1963 (reprint), New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1989), p.144.

<sup>30</sup> Asoka was interested in the Kalinga (Orissa) region as it bred war elephants and also had trade routes to Central and South Asia. See R. Thapar, *The Mauryas Revisited*, Calcutta, K.P. Bagchi and Co.,1993 (Originally published in 1987), pp.8-9.

<sup>31</sup> He was a believer in Buddhist principles but not a Buddhist monk. See G. M. Reichberg, H. Syse and E. Begny (eds.), *The Ethics of War: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, Malden, MA and Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2006, p.18; Roy, *Hinduism and Ethics of warfare in South Asia*, p.40.

<sup>32</sup> L. Schmithausen, ‘Aspects of The Buddhist Attitude Towards War’, in J.E.M. Houben and K.R. Van Kooji (ed.), *Violence Denied: Violence, Non-Violence and the Rationalization of Violence*, Leiden, Brill, 1999, pp.45-67.



‘dharma’.<sup>33</sup> Former National Security Advisor Shivshankar Menon amidst such talks of India as a ‘superpower’ domestically or ‘outside voices urging India to be a “responsible” power, to do more in the international order’, he remarked:

...a country with 1/6th of humanity, a large and fast growing economy, situated in a vital spot on multiple political fault-lines, with a great civilisation and a consistent foreign policy. Such a country was bound to be a great power – great not merely in the UN sense of the word, but great in the sense in which Ashoka envisaged greatness.<sup>34</sup>

This shows that instead of drawing from Western concepts of power that narrows down on possession of nuclear weapons or decision making authority with veto power, Indian security elites have re-interpreted ideas of ‘greatness’ and ‘power’ from Indian understandings arising out of its civilizational ethos, which also attaches importance on working for welfare of mankind and establishing just order. This is not to suggest that it negates the importance of ‘hard power’ but it places equal significance on what kind of ‘political project’ or global order would India pursue as a great power.

Amongst the six schools of Hindu philosophy the Vedanta<sup>35</sup> have had a strong influence on Indian thought and Hinduism which emphasize acceptance of all religions as true and believes in universal tolerance by respecting different paths for gaining divine wisdom. This influenced key religious missionaries like Swami Vivekananda, literary figures like Rabindranath Tagore and social reformists like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and shaped their writings on Indian nationalism and ‘exceptionalism’ in colonial India. The concept of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* looks at ‘the world as one family’ and the Hindu classical text, the *Bhagavad Gita* clearly states the ideal of ‘Oneness’ as ‘being able to see everyone in oneSelf and oneself in everyone’<sup>36</sup> is central in Hinduism.

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<sup>33</sup> Reichenberdg et. al, *The Ethics of War*, p.19.

<sup>34</sup> S. Menon, ‘India and the Global Scene: Prem Bhatia Lecture Memorial Lecture’, National Maritime Foundation, 11 August 2011, <http://prembhatiastrust.com/2011/08/11/lecture-16/>, (accessed 11 March 2020)

<sup>35</sup> Vedanta literally translating as ‘the end of the Vedas’ reflect the ideas of Upanishads which are a part of the Vedas, specifically, on knowledge and liberation.

<sup>36</sup> *Sanatana dharma* (the original name of what is known as Hinduism today) can be defined as the truth that it is divinity or pure consciousness that pervades the universe and manifests itself in various forms; the goal is to realize this divinity within; and since it takes many forms, it can be approached through many paths. See IDSA, ‘Seminar on Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam:Relevance of Ancient Indian Thinking on Contemporary Strategic Reality’, New Delhi, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, 17 February 2019, <https://www.vifindia.org/event/report/2019/february/27/seminar-on-vasudhaiva-kutumbakam%20>, (accessed on 8 July 2019); Amb (Retd) S.K.Goel, ‘Cultural Diplomacy as the pillar of India's foreign policy and VasudhaivKutumbakam’, *MEA Distinguished Lectures*, New Delhi,

The modern Hindu movements led by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda emphasized on the ‘oneness of all religions’ and propagated the Vedantic truth of ‘*karma yoga*’ reflected in the principle ‘Service to Man is service to God’ through which ‘the good of the self is reconciled with the welfare of the world: *Atmano moksartham jagaddhitaya ca.*’<sup>37</sup> For Swamiji, the national ideal for India ‘should ever be spirituality’ and the driving force of Indian nationality is renunciation which would lead to development. He lamented over the lack of spiritual foundation in the materialistic colonial West and wanted to spread the message of the Upanishads to the West for which he organised Ramakrishna Mission outside India that works towards propagating the universal principles of Vedanta and true ideas about India, religion and culture centred around human welfare service, [for instance, social work such as disaster relief, medical assistance to poor, education and cultural studies] peace and protecting the universe including the nature and all its elements. He believed that future religion of the world- ‘Service to Man’ should begin from the Indian soil. Vivekananda called for blending the best values of both West and East and saw education as key to realise the abolition of religious and social exploitation and all-round freedom of man.

It has also influenced Indian thinking to see the whole world as a shared ecological space and to accept shared responsibilities for managing global commons and contributing to global governance processes on climate change, environmental degradation or to work for ‘shared peace and prosperity’ and regionalism in South Asia as to reduce poverty and strengthen Asian security. It helps to move towards ‘a different conceptualization of Other—from an ‘I-Thou’ approach to an ‘I-We’ approach’.<sup>38</sup> Emphasizing India’s role as an aid donor that has been extended over a broad spectrum of technical cooperation to 156 nations, former EAM, Defence Minister and President Mukherjee said:

We also strive for India to be a factor of stability and a voice of moderation in the world, whose progress is beneficial to the creation of an equitable, peaceful and stable world order. Our civilisational philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, ...has shaped our approach as equitable rather than self-

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Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 25 June 2019, <https://www.mea.gov.in/distinguished-lectures-detail.htm?825>, (accessed 6 July 2019).

<sup>37</sup> Swami Ranganathananda, ‘Ramakrishna-Vivekananda’s Vision of Religion, Harmony and Peace’, in G.T. Martin and P.A. Murthy, *Conflict, Harmony and Peace* (Dr. Santi Nath Chattopadhyay Felicitation Volume), International Society for Intercultural Studies and Research, Kolkata, Sagnik Books, 2015, p.5.

<sup>38</sup> IDSA, ‘Seminar on Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.’

centred... The current world order is one of "general un-alignment", a de-hyphenation of relationships, and re-engagement amongst several major powers in informal alliances to deal with issues on the basis of convergence of interests.<sup>39</sup>

PM Modi reiterated that India's belief in 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' and traditions of carrying everybody along gives India an identity different from all other countries. This resonates in his slogan of 'sabkasaath, sabkavikas, sabkavishwas' in his 'neighbourhood first' policy in domestic context for creating and harnessing the socio-cultural force of Indian unity geared towards economic growth and international diplomacy.<sup>40</sup> However the need of reciprocity is needed to realise its full potential and to work for mutual benefits and prosperity.

Rabindranath Tagore<sup>41</sup> referred to as the 'Vishwakabi' (World's Poet) who wrote India's national anthem and wrote several compositions on patriotism also rejected parochial nationalism that could result in narrow sectarianism or feelings of hatred and instead believed in the idea of 'Universal humanity' or what he described as '*Viswa-Manavata*' that invokes the '... idea of transcending the narrow for a greater, all-embracing, human and humane ideal'<sup>42</sup> and envisioned a world without any boundaries. In an article titled 'Unity through Education' (*Sikshar Milan*), he said that a real union can only be realised when nations come together retaining their individual freedom as 'Real unity comes through respect of each other's identity'<sup>43</sup> which imperialism never allows. This was reflected in the belief that such 'openness' to

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<sup>39</sup> P. Mukherjee, 'Address by External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee at the National Conference of Confederation of Indian Industry on India's Foreign Policy', New Delhi, 29 April 2008, in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *Foreign Relations-2008 Documents*, New Delhi, External Publicity Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2009, pp.152-153.

<sup>40</sup> N. Modi, 'India's belief in "VasudhaivaKutumbakam" makes the country unique: PM Modi', News Services Division, *All India Radio*, 14 September 2018, <http://newsonair.nic.in/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=352823>, (accessed 6 March 2019).

<sup>41</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, a poet, writer, educationist, painter, musician and who won the Nobel Prize in Literature and wrote India's and Bangladesh's national anthems is a national figure in India. He established the educational institute, Visvabharati – the 'India of the World' or the 'Universal India' in 1921 which was declared to be a Central University and an institution of national importance by the Act of Parliament, 1951.

<sup>42</sup> P. Mukherjee, 'Speech by External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee on the occasion of inauguration of Rabindranath Tagore Centre in Kolkata', Kolkata, 1 June 2008, in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *Foreign Relations-2008 Documents*, New Delh, Public Diplomacy Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2009, p.158.

<sup>43</sup> R. Tagore, 'Siksar Milan', August-September 1921 cited in U.K. Majumdar, 'Rabindranath's Vision of National Integration and World Peace', in R. Datta and C. Seely (eds.), *Celebrating Tagore: A Collection of Essays*, New Delhi, Allied Publishers, 2009, p.110.

influences and ideas should not lead to weakening of India's own identity. PM Singh had noted:

We seek to build a new India which, in the words of Gandhiji, will be like a house with windows open on all sides; let ideas from all the cultures and civilisations of the world freely flow in; but we must refuse to be blown off our feet by any one of them. This is the true essence of Swadeshi and we shall not compromise on this essential principle.<sup>44</sup>

Tagore supported revitalising relations with the West and this manifested in the establishment of the educational institution, 'Visva Bharati' at Shantiniketan with the intent of re-opening the channel of communication between the East and West.<sup>45</sup> Tagore said, 'We did Europe injustice because we did not meet her on equal terms. The result was the relation of superior to inferior; of insult on the one side and humiliation on the other.'<sup>46</sup> He spoke of Asian unity through 'a spirit of true sympathy' and this influenced India's role in the Asian Relations Conference of March 1947 and the adoption of Five Principles of Panchsheel. Today, cultural diplomacy is an integral part of Indian foreign policy to strengthen and reinforce people-to-people contacts that transcends political boundaries. It is an important tool to augment India's global influence as noted by Mukherjee that, 'India, a cultural super power, is in a unique position to facilitate this cultural interaction...It is distinguished by antiquity, continuity, refinement, diversity and an ability to assimilate the best from outside without losing its own inherent character and authenticity.'<sup>47</sup> The Gandhian values also have an influence on Nehru's idealism and Panchsheel, has found its expression in all

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<sup>44</sup> M. Singh, 'Speech of Shri Manmohan Singh, Minister of Finance Introducing the Budget for the Year 1996-97', Ministry of Finance, Government of India, [https://eparlib.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/117/1/Budget\\_Speech\\_Interim\\_1996-97.pdf](https://eparlib.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/117/1/Budget_Speech_Interim_1996-97.pdf), (accessed 11 March 2020)

<sup>45</sup> P. P. Basu, 'Tagore's Thoughts on Man and his Environment' in R. Datta and C. Seely (eds.), *Celebrating Tagore: A Collection of Essays*, New Delhi, Allied Publishers, 2009, p.14, pp.13-20.

<sup>46</sup> H. Ansari, 'Speech by Vice President of India on "Calibrated Futurology: India, China and the World" at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences', Beijing, 30 June 2014, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, [http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/23518/Speech\\_by\\_Vice\\_President\\_of\\_India\\_on\\_Calibrated\\_Futurology\\_India\\_China\\_and\\_the\\_World\\_at\\_the\\_Chinese\\_Academy\\_of\\_Social\\_Sciences\\_Beijing\\_June\\_30\\_2014](http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/23518/Speech_by_Vice_President_of_India_on_Calibrated_Futurology_India_China_and_the_World_at_the_Chinese_Academy_of_Social_Sciences_Beijing_June_30_2014), (accessed 8 March 2018).

<sup>47</sup> Mukherjee, 'Speech by External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee on the occasion of inauguration of Rabindranath Tagore Centre in Kolkata', pp.158-159.

its democratic institutions (including village Panchayats at the grass root level) and for soft power diplomacy.<sup>48</sup>

Consequently Hinduism and modern 'Hindu' India is continuously reproduced as peaceful, non-violent, pacifist in nature particularly in the pre-independence and immediate years of post-independence strategic writings. India's NAM policy under further reinforced such constructions.<sup>49</sup> Gandhian re-interpretation of Indian epics of war was also an attempt to reposition non-violence as rooted in Vedic Hinduism as the 'true religion of the warrior'.<sup>50</sup> The idea of oneness and service for welfare of mankind has been a recurring theme in the nationalist writings of 'Indian exceptionalism' that is reproduced time and again in India's foreign policy discourse to define a greater global role for India as a 'responsible power' in a multipolar world order.

### **3.4. India's 'realpolitik': Warfare and Statecraft**

Indian strategic writings have nonetheless challenged the stereotype of a pacifist 'Hindu India' by referring to the episodes of warfare elaborated in the Vedas [*Rig Veda*], Purana epics of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* which are at the roots of the Vedic Hinduism and the lessons of statecraft and war elaborated in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*.<sup>51</sup> The Hindu mode of warfare distinguishes between '*dharmayuddha*' or 'righteous war' for defensive purposes and '*kutayuddha*' or 'covert war' that disregards dictates of morality, is aggressive in orientation (though they have not been practised in pure form in history)<sup>52</sup> and uses diplomatic methods that have an element of deception to weaken

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<sup>48</sup> The Indian Constitution including the concepts of fundamental rights, directive principles, abolition of untouchability, rights for the under privileged and the marginalized, were all inspired by Gandhian thought and philosophy. The five principles of peaceful co-existence are respect for each other's territorial integrity, non-aggression, non-interference in other's internal affairs, equality and peaceful co-existence. See, P. Mukherjee, 'Remarks by External Affairs Minister on "Peace, Non-Violence and Empowerment -- Gandhian Philosophy in the 21st Century"', New Delhi, 29 January 2007, in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *Foreign Relations-2007 Documents*, New Delhi, Public Diplomacy Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2008, p.152.

<sup>49</sup> Such an idea was also promoted by philosopher-statesman Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975).

<sup>50</sup> Gandhi downplayed the physical warfare and mobilisation of massive army [of monkeys] by Rama to defeat Ravan and re-interpreted the epics as the inner duel between good and evil in human consciousness. See J.V. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1988, p.105, pp.112-113 in Karnad, *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security*, p.35; W. Borman, *Gandhi and Non-Violence*, SUNY Press, 1986, p.174; M. Gandhi, *The Bhagavad Gita According to Gandhi*, Berkeley, California, North Atlantic Books, 2009 (Originally published in 1946), p.3.

<sup>51</sup> Sidhu, 'Of Oral Traditions and Ethnocentric Judgements.'

<sup>52</sup> Roy, *Hinduism and Ethics of warfare in South Asia*.

the enemy or limit their options such as espionage, assassination, disinformation, court intrigues, bribes and even psychological oppression.

Absolutism of national interest is prominent in the *Rig Veda* that states that the duty of the king is to destroy the enemy by fair means or foul to advance state interests and power and morality is only a matter of personal inclination of the ruler. Karnad argues that given such rich cultural sources of 'kutayuddha' traditions,<sup>53</sup> India should have been the masters of it, but it failed to do so unlike Pakistan or China. Former Foreign Secretary Saran while commenting on Chinese strategic thinking as found in Sun Tzu's writings said that, '...in China deception is accorded a value more significant than in other cultures'.<sup>54</sup> Karnad on Chinese skilful practise of covert warfare and following the idiom that 'a country is known by the enemies it keeps' said:

China is great at it and uses covert means all the time. For instance, how the Chinese have got us to think of Pakistan as a very difficult enemy that we have to fight all the time. The Chinese have got us to reduce ourselves to Pakistan's size, given our fixation with Pakistan. It is tragic to see this diminution of India to that state[Pakistan] instead of being worried and obsessing about China that is right there. This is how our diplomacy has got down to where success and failure is judged whether or not and by how we act publicly to our Pakistani counterparts. India needs to move away from some of these foolish constraints that we have put on ourselves- psychological, political and military and deal with China instead of Pakistan and become a great power.<sup>55</sup>

Hyper-realists like him remains critical of the lack of attention on strategic measures to deal with the Chinese threat by successive governments which resist India's rise to emerge as a great power (yet). Such use of covert methods have been justified in three Indian classical texts on political science, statecraft, warfare and security related issues- *Arthashastra*, *Nitisara* (or the Elements of Polity) and *Sukraniti*<sup>56</sup> that proclaims the

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<sup>53</sup> T.B. Mukherjee, *Inter-state relations in Ancient India*, Meerut and New Delhi, Meenakshi Prakashan, 1967, pp.164-168.

<sup>54</sup> S. Saran, *How India Sees the World: Kautilya to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, New Delhi, Juggernaut Books, 2017, p.120.

<sup>55</sup> 'India's Missing Kootayuddha (Covert Warfare)|Bharat Karnad | RAW |#SrijanTalks | Kulbhushan Jadhav', [Online video].

<sup>56</sup> R.P. Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra, Part II: An English Translation with Critical and Explanatory Notes*, 2nd edn., 7th reprint, Delhi, Motilal Banarsi Dass, 2010; R. Mitra (ed.),

ultimate aim is to ensure defeat of the enemy. The *Sukraniti* favours covert means than to march armies as it is costly in terms of human lives and natural resources. These are also found in Purana epics as Lord Krishna is believed to have supported the use of unrighteous means for righteous causes in war and said: ‘When the number of one’s foes [becomes] great, their destruction should be effected by [all] contrivances and means.’<sup>57</sup> They have also been put in practice by Mughals and the British Empire in India.

The idea of territorial expansionism as mentioned in the ancient book of *Aitreya-Brahmana* even talked of control on the seas.<sup>58</sup> In *Mahabharata* when Arjuna (one of the pandava brothers) refused to participate in war, Lord Krishna referring to the ‘Dharma’ (moral duty or just action) fit for a king also said, ‘...for one belonging to the kingly race, there is nothing which brings more fame than war’.<sup>59</sup> The epics’ view of ‘morality’ is something not absolute but rather which evolves according to the context or what is referred to as ‘situational ethics’.<sup>60</sup> This idea has also been a key theme in the Nehruvian secular discourse as Nehru’s reading of the *Bhagavad Gita* also promotes upholding of ‘yugadharma’ [relevant of its time].<sup>61</sup>

Yashwant Sinha, the then EAM in the BJP government emphasized on peaceful settlement of disputes through dialogue and concessions as practiced in ancient India such as sending emissaries for political negotiations found in *the Mahabharata* and elaborated in *Arthashastra* and therefore not exclusively practised by the West. This shaped India’s internationalism as Sinha remarked:

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*The Nitisara or the Elements of Polity* by Kamandaki, Bibliotheca Indica: Collection of Oriental Works, The Asiatic Society of Bengal, no.179, Calcutta Baptist Mission Press, 1861. Revised with English translation by S.K. Mitra, Calcutta, The Asiatic Society (reprinted), 1982[1849]; B.K. Sarkar, *The Sukraniti*, 2nd edition, New Delhi, Oriental Books Reprint Corporation/Munshiram Manoharlal, 1975 (Originally published in 1914).

<sup>57</sup> Mukherjee, *Inter-state Relations in Ancient India*, pp.72-73.

<sup>58</sup> B.K. Sircar, ‘Some Basic Ideas of Political Thinking in Ancient India’, in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, vol II, Calcutta, The Ramkrishna Mission, Institute of Culture, 1962 (originally published in 1937), p.523, [https://estudentdavedanta.net/Cultural\\_Heritage\\_Vol\\_II.pdf](https://estudentdavedanta.net/Cultural_Heritage_Vol_II.pdf), (accessed 11 February 2019).

<sup>59</sup> A.M. Shastry (trans.), *The Bhagavad Gita*, <http://www.celextel.org/bhagavadgita>, (accessed 10 December 2015).

<sup>60</sup> ‘The morality of an act is a function of the state of the system at the time the act is performed.’ This Garrett Hardin says is ‘the fundamental tenet’ of situational ethics. See G. Hardin, *Exploring New Ethics for Survival: The Voyage of the Spaceship Beagle*, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, UK, Penguin Books, 1972, p.134 cited in B. Karnad, *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security: The Realist Foundations of Strategy*, New Delhi, Macmillan, 2002, p.10.

<sup>61</sup> Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p.81. ‘Yuga dharma’ refers to the concept of moral conduct according to the context and therefore is evolutionary, referring to ‘situational ethics’ in a certain period.

India, after independence made a signal contribution to diplomacy by ushering in the 'Non-Aligned Movement'. India can be considered a pioneer in 'Developing Country Diplomacy' which involved efforts to place issues such as development, de-colonization, racism etc. on the international agenda. Even today in the UN and other multilateral fora, India retains its image as a country which is in the forefront of putting across developing country perspectives on international issues. We, in India, have proved by our talent and contributions that skills in diplomatic practice are not the monopoly of the rich and the powerful or exclusive to the Western world.<sup>62</sup>

The above excerpt highlights the rich cultural sources of episodes of bargaining and negotiating tactics in diplomacy on which India had drawn upon. In *the Ramayana*, Ravana also emphasizes the significance of consultation.<sup>63</sup> In the Puranas, particularly the '*Yuddhakandam*' war or other forms of employment of military power are viewed as instruments of last resort. The ruler has been advised to initiate war under unavoidable circumstances only if there is certainty of victory which is defined as 'gain of land, wealth and ally'.<sup>64</sup> Vibhishana, brother of Ravana said, '...only that which cannot be accomplished by the three methods [conciliation, gift, creating dissension] should be accomplished by the show of power according to wise men.'<sup>65</sup> Within both Puranas and Sukraniti, a king is advised to consider the correlation of forces, analyse his own strength and weakness in relation to others and to gauge the 'conjuncture of circumstances' before engaging in war.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Y. Sinha, 'Inaugural Distinguished Persons Lecture by External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha on "Diplomacy in the 21st Century" organized by the Foreign Service Institute of the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, 3 January 2003', in A.S.Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations-2003 Documents*, New Delhi, External Publicity Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2004, pp.66-67.

<sup>63</sup> In Ramayana he who carries out consultation with friends or men of equal standing (ministers) before an endeavour is excellent, who analyse the merits and demerits of an endeavour alone is a mediocre man and who doesn't think at all and leave all to fate is a base man. This is elaborated in Section VI, *YuddhaKandam* (War Section) in *Ramanayam* by Sage Valmiki (Translated by P. R. Ramachander). See PR Ramachander (trans.), 'Section VI, *YuddhaKandam* (War Section) in *Ramanayam* by Sage Valmiki', [http://www.celextel.org/epics\\_and\\_puranas/ramayanam/yuddha\\_kandam.html](http://www.celextel.org/epics_and_puranas/ramayanam/yuddha_kandam.html), (accessed 10 December, 2015).

<sup>64</sup> This in Shanti Parva section of the epic, the Mahabharata and in Devi Purana; See Mukherjee, *Inter-State Relations in Ancient India*, p.72, pp.123-124; Karnad, *Nuclear Weapons and India's Security: The Realist Foundations of Strategy*, New Delhi, Macmillan, 2002, pp. 5-6.

<sup>65</sup> P.R. Ramachander (trans.), 'Verse 9.8 In the Ninth Saga, in Section VI, *YuddhaKandam* (War Section) in *Ramanayam* by Sage Valmiki', [http://www.celextel.org/epics\\_and\\_puranas/ramayanam/yuddha\\_kandam.html](http://www.celextel.org/epics_and_puranas/ramayanam/yuddha_kandam.html), (accessed 10 December, 2015).

<sup>66</sup> Sircar, 'Some Basic Ideas of Political Thinking in Ancient India', p.523.



Another key classical text has been *the Arthashastra* (variously translated as ‘science of politics’ or ‘treatise on polity’) that favours gaining power through use of offensive force, deception and treachery if needed. Kautilya views the conquest and establishment of hegemony as desirable ends for a state ruler to achieve the position of the *chakravartin*-the universal hegemon.<sup>67</sup> Mohan argues that internal balancing, alliances, asymmetric approaches are as old as statecraft and henceforth not some borrowed concepts from the West as these could be found in Kautilya’s times.<sup>68</sup> Kautilya’s concept of mandalas or circles, gives a detailed account of the concentric circle of states perceived as allies or enemies that can shift either through change in geographical proximity or through inter-state interactions. According to Kautilya a good leader is a ‘conqueror’ who attempts to maximise power at all times and prepares for war either actively and passively. Retired Colonel P.K. Gautam, strategic expert at the IDSA who specialises on Kautilyan studies said:

It shows how India thought of warfare, military geography, terrain analysis and weather. He also talks of types of diplomacy-‘Mantrashakti’ (war only with diplomacy), ‘Prabhavshakti’ (through influence by economic and material capabilities) and ‘Utsahshakti’ (enthusiasm, courage and personality of leadership). The Manmohan Singh government is similar to ‘Mantrashakti’ and Modi’s leadership is evidently towards Utsahshakti.<sup>69</sup>

Kautilya also stated four ways of diplomatic means to settle disputes in order to avoid war if possible which are –*sama*(making peace through conciliation), *dana*(gift or economic and other aid),*bheda* (sowing dissension in the enemy ranks by various devices), and *danda* (punishing the enemy through war or other means). As P.K Gautam notes ‘Arthashastra is 25% of warfare that talks of how to win without fighting.’<sup>70</sup> The idea of entering into peace agreements or friendship treaties has been practised since

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<sup>67</sup> Kautilya is also known as Chanakya or Vishnugupta. All References to the Arthashastra are based on P. Rangaran reading of Kautilya.

<sup>68</sup> There is lack of sufficient study on Kautilya in Indian educational curriculum for the Indian Foreign Service probationers, military practitioners and defense institutes and thinktanks with few exceptions recently with short capsules on Arthashastra now being included in the curriculum at Staff College. See C.R. Mohan, India and Balance of Power, *Foreign Affairs*, July-August 2006, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2006-07-01/india-and-balance-power>, (accessed 12 April 2014).

<sup>69</sup> Personal interview with retired Colonel P.K. Gautam, Indian Army, and currently a Research Fellow (Expert in Kautilyan Studies), IDSA, Ministry of Defence, Government of India, New Delhi, 17 December 2015.

<sup>70</sup> Personal interview with retired Colonel P.K. Gautam, Indian Army and a Research Fellow, IDSA, Ministry of Defence, Government of India, New Delhi, 17 December 2015.

antiquity and in post-independent India. For instance the 1971 India-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation was entered in to achieve certain common objective though not directly related to war aims but ensuring security.

Kautilya referred to three kinds of victory in war- first that ends in righteous winning which happens without the occurrence of an actual war or the total destruction of the enemy; the second in the realisation of wealth and the third which leads to the annihilation of the adversary described as: ‘dharmavijaya’, ‘lobhavijaya’ and ‘asuravijaya’. The last kind of victory never happened in India before the thirteenth century, and Kautilya was criticized because he approved of the second kind of victory. In a personal interview an Indian strategic expert on Kautilya and a retired colonel PK Gautam of the Indian Army said:

Kautilya had attempted for political unification of the Indian subcontinent and cultural unification of India in one political unit (Chakravartin). There is no military expedition to Iran, Tibet or East and it was a satisfied power which was self sufficient in resources. Also it advocated the use of violence but with certain prescriptions- such as to incorporate defeated people in the society and not to conduct ‘asuravijaya’, like the Mongoloids. The victor ruler is supposed to respect the people’s religion, language, faith. It was not only about conquest and capture but protection (‘palna’).<sup>71</sup>

This establishes that even within the realist writings on Indian strategic thinking, India is not seen as holding ambitions beyond the border (Himalayas to the sea) and was mostly interested in establishing trade contacts for economic prosperity within the *chakravartin* area. India was a self contained power and protecting its territory from foreign domination and internal threats were the prime factors behind the use of force and war was an instrument of last resort. Former Foreign Secretary, Saran notes that Chinese political order saw China as ‘the civilizational centre with concentric rings of subordinate states paying tribute’<sup>72</sup> and ‘placed India in a subordinate position

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<sup>71</sup> Personal interview with retired Colonel P.K. Gautam, Indian Army and Research Fellow, IDSA, Ministry of Defence, New Delhi, 17 December 2015.

<sup>72</sup> Saran, *How India Sees the World*, p.110.

in China's own mandala of interstate relations'<sup>73</sup> particularly after India's defeat in 1962.<sup>74</sup>

Finally, the role of armed revolutionary struggle against the British are widely acknowledged within the armed forces and the BJP. Ajit Doval, the National Security Advisor and General GD Bakshi cite that Lord Clement Attlee, the then British Prime Minister in post war years during his visit to Calcutta, had accounted the significant role of 'the INA activities of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose,' that resulted in British withdrawal from India<sup>75</sup> and instead saw the impact of Gandhi's Quit India movement in 1942 as "minimal".<sup>76</sup>

### **3.5 Colonial India and the British Influence**

The colonial constructions of the Indian civilization can be found in the European histories of India in nineteenth century mostly based in Britain and can be divided into two strands- the Orientalist and the Utilitarian writings which were aimed at acquiring more knowledge about the colony as that would ensure greater control of the colonised by the coloniser. As a result of colonial interests, European ideas about history, civilization and the Orient, Asia came to be seen as significantly different and emerged as the Other to the Europe. The Orientalist writings which were mostly by the British scholars who published in a periodical of the Asiatic Society of Bengal established in Calcutta in 1784 saw India as a Hindu and Sanskritic civilization and focussed on studying the origins and reconstruction of language, on religion and customs and relating them to other European languages and religious texts.<sup>77</sup> They produced the idea

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<sup>73</sup> Saran, *How India Sees the World*, p.112.

<sup>74</sup> Mukherjee, *Inter-state relations in Ancient India*, pp.164-168 (also cited in B Karnad, *Nuclear Weapons and India's security: The Realist Foundations of Strategy*, New Delhi, Macmillan, 2002, p.7); Saran, *How India Sees the World*, p.120.

<sup>75</sup> In a letter written by P.V. Chakraborty, former Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court, on March 30 1976, which narrates the interaction between him when he was acting as Governor of West Bengal in 1956, and Lord Clement Atlee, former British Prime Minister during two day visit in Calcutta on the reasons for British withdrawal from India.

<sup>76</sup> A. Doval, 'Ajit Doval on Subhash Bose and British India', 25 November 2014, <http://www.niticentral.com/2014/11/25/ajit-doval-subhash-bose-british-india-246597.html>, (accessed 10 December 2015); S. Gupta, 'The Father of the Nation', *The Views Paper*, 9 October 2007, <http://theviewspaper.net/father-of-the-nation-2/>, (accessed 10 December 2015).

<sup>77</sup> For Oriental readings see, W. Jones, *Discourses Delivered before Asiatic Society: and Miscellaneous Papers on the Religion, Poetry, Literature, etc. of the Nations of India*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., London, Charles S. Arnold, 1824; R. Inden, *Imagining India*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1990; J. Drew, *India and the Romantic Imagination*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1987; A. Leslie Wilson, *A Mythical Image: The*

of the 'spiritual east' vis-a-vis the 'materialistic west'. The Utilitarian writings<sup>78</sup> made a critique of the Indian culture as being stagnant and lacking emphasis on the values of rational thought and individualism that Europe admired best exemplified from Macaulay's disapproval of Indian education and learning, was ruled by autocratic oppressive rulers (the Maharajas and the Sultans) who were unconcerned with the welfare of the subjects and the political institutions were unrepresentative of public opinion (only with few exceptions such as under the reign of rulers like Ashoka, Chandra Gupta II and Akbar) as argued in the theory of 'Oriental Despotism' seen in Asian civilizations. Such views influenced many such commentators and administrators who were associated with India and were echoed in aspects of colonial policy to gain control of the subcontinent and restructuring of the economy to suit the colonial requirements. The British administration with centralized bureaucracy was seen capable of remedying the situation of backwardness in Indian society through appropriate legislation and exposure to western education and European missionaries in India.<sup>79</sup> Indian therefore became an inferior Other against which the superior European nation states defined themselves.

The colonial experience and British inheritance nevertheless had an impact on India's military culture. The British India saw India as a rich source of natural resources and market for its finished products but India remained integral to maintain British supremacy. India's strategic expert Mohan argues however that the colonial master-

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*Ideal of India in German Romanticism*, Durham, N.C., Duke University Press, 1964; N. Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of the Empire*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992; P.J. Marshall (ed.), *The British Discovery of Hinduism in the Eighteenth Century*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970; S.N. Mukherjee, *Sir William Jones: A Study in Eighteenth Century British Attitudes in India*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1968; E. Said, *Orientalism*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1978; R. Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance: Europe's Discovery of India and the East, 1680-1880*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1984; J.F. Staal (ed.), *A Reader on the Sanskrit Grammarians*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, MIT Press, 1972; K. Teltscher, *India Inscribed: European and British Writings on India 1600-1800*, Delhi, Oxford India Paperbacks, 1997; R. Thapar, *The Past and Prejudice*, Delhi, National Book Trust, 1975; R. Thapar, *Time as a Metaphor of History*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1996; R. Thapar, *Interpreting Early India*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1992.

<sup>78</sup> See, J. Mill, *The History of British India*, 5th edn., New York, Chelsea House, 1968; T.R. Metcalfe, *Ideologies of the Raj*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997; J. Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's The History of British India and Orientalism*, Oxford, 1992; C.H. Phillips (ed.), *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1961; V. Smith, *Early History Of India from 600 BC to the Muhammedan Conquest*, 4th edn., Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1957.

<sup>79</sup> J. Mill, *The History of British India*, 5th edn., New York, Chelsea House, 1968 cited in R. Thapar, *The Penguin History of Early India: From the Origins to AD 1300*, Gurgaon, India, Penguin Books, 2002, p.6.

subordinate representation is partially accurate of the British Raj in India as he said in a personal interview:

One part is British but another part of British-India was India also. There were Indian people [in army, navy, clerical jobs] and Indian resources that were used to establish the primacy of Britain. So the narrative that the Empire was all British and India was subordinate –is a misconception. There are works that shows that it was a collaborative enterprise, there was a co-option and Indian resources and people were used. Even within the imperial framework, Calcutta was not just a post-office to London, it had agencies of its own that did what it wanted. Scholars like Thomas Medcalf had talked of the horizontal connection.<sup>80</sup>

Therefore, Mohan rejects the superior-subordinate analysis of the British Raj in India and rather shows the influence of the British military and strategic thing as a result of the co-option of Indian people either in the form of administration or military personnel which was then followed by anti-colonial and nationalist narratives.

The British socialist thinking left a strong imprint on Nehru's thinking on nuclear weapons as was evident from his close association with British physicists and post colonial pre-occupation with the land frontiers in the north and the north west. The terrestrial imaginations of the modern Indian state can be traced back to imperial state practices which was most explicitly outlined in the geo-political vision put forth by Lord Curzon, Viceroy of British India (1898-1905) which is seen as essentially Self-serving account that conveniently deleted the long history of British maritime incursion to colonise India that began with small holdings on the southern and western Indian coast.<sup>81</sup> In the Romanes lecture delivered by Curzon after he stepped down as Viceroy, he said:

In India we have Frontiers nearly 6,000 miles long with Persia, Russia, Afghanistan, Tibet, China, Siam, and France...Second in the list of Natural Frontiers may be placed deserts, until modern times a barrier even more impassable than the sea. Asia and Africa afford the best known instances of

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<sup>80</sup> Personal interview with C.R. Mohan, Indian strategic Expert, Distinguished Fellow at Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, Former member of NSAB under National Security Council, Government of India, and Former Editor of *Indian Express*, National newspaper Daily, New Delhi, 22 December 2015.

<sup>81</sup> I. Abraham, 'A Doubled Geography', in H.V Pant (ed.), *New Directions in India's Foreign Policy: Theory and Praxis*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019, p.90.

this phenomenon... Indeed, the whole of western Asia, that part, in fact, which was exposed to Hellenic influences was for centuries cut off from India by the broad wastes of Persia and Turkestan...the third type of Natural Frontier, namely, mountains. We have already seen that mountains were the earliest of the barriers accepted by wandering man. Prima facie, also, they are the most durable and the most imposing...Such has been the position, and the decisive influence of the great mountain barriers of the world - of the Hindu Kush and Himalayas in Asia... But sometimes the mountain-barrier may be, not a ridge or even a range, but a tumbled mass of peaks and gorges, covering a zone many miles in width (for instance, the breadth of the Himalayas north of Kashmir is little short of 200 miles), ...has carried the Indian outposts to Lundi Khana, to Quetta, and to Chaman, all of them beyond the passes, whose outer extremities they guard.<sup>82</sup>

The striking feature of such imperial geopolitical account was the lack of attention on India's oceanic boundaries in the south of the country and the emphatic focus on mountains and land frontiers instead which influenced the postcolonial elites in India to look away from the sea to the mountains. This was also practised in state actions as to signing of friendship treaties to ensure non-interference in each other internal affairs treaties to bind the Himalayan kingdoms to India and made her the guarantor of their external security.<sup>83</sup> For instance, the Indo-Bhutan treaty of 1949 stated that India would 'guide' Bhutan's external affairs and brought it in the orbit of Indian influence on international politics. The last British Political Officer in Sikkim, Arthur J. Hopkinson, had also cautioned the Indian leadership in 1946 about the strategic importance of Bhutan: 'India's interest requires a friendly and contented Bhutan, within the Indian rather than the Chinese orbit.... [N]egligence or contempt would soon drive it and much else besides into the open arms of China, and bring a foreign power, perhaps Russia, to India's doors.'<sup>84</sup> This would become increasingly relevant as India-China tensions

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<sup>82</sup> G.N. Curzon, 'Text of the 1907 Romanes Lecture on the subject of FRONTIERS by Lord Curzon of Kedleston Viceroy of India (1898-1905) and British Foreign Secretary 1919-24', p.9, p.15, pp.17-19, <https://archive.org/details/frontiers00curz/page/n1/mode/2up>, (accessed 13 March 2020).

<sup>83</sup> A.Vanaik, *The Painful Transition: Burgeois Democracy in India*, London, Verso, 1990.

<sup>84</sup> S. Chawla, 'How Bhutan Came to Not Be a Part of India', Opinion-South Asia, *The Wire*, 8 February 2019, <https://thewire.in/south-asia/how-bhutan-came-to-not-be-a-part-of-india>, (accessed 13 March 2020).

flared up regarding Chinese construction of roads in Bhutan-Sikkim-India trijunction that led to the Doklam crisis.

### **3.6. Summary**

This chapter briefly summarises the evolution of strategic thinking in India and its strategic culture as being re-interpreted and discursively reproduced by security elites. Firstly, it recognises, the influence of Hinduism on Indian military values and strategic mind-set by establishing the centrality of ‘dharma’ on Hindu life, statecraft and warfare as illustrated in Ashoka’s ‘dhamma’, the epics of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Indian culture has been a human-centric that upholds the core value of ‘dharma’ which is seen as the moral conduct or ethical duty of an administrator directed towards defending the territory, ensuring its protection against internal and external threat (preventing foreign subjugation in particular) and ensuring general welfare of the people. Secondly, the chapter explores the philosophies and ideas of nationalist writings of Swami Vivekananda’s *karmayoga*, Rabindranath Tagore’s *internationalism* and Hindu cultural concepts of *Vasudhaivakutmbakam* as relevant for India’s cultural diplomacy today and are re-produced by elites that re-inforce understandings of ‘Indian exceptionalism’ to the rest of the world. Thirdly, it elaborates on the methods used in ancient and medieval India and how they were different from other cultures like China being less hesitant to use of deceptive methods and its relevance for contemporary thinking in Indian diplomacy and foreign policy. On the other hand Kautilya gives a realpolitik account of statecraft, diplomacy and war but also gives prescriptions on the use of force and violence when needed. Fourthly, it looks at the colonial influences that shaped India’s geo-political thinking and post-colonial narratives. In conclusion, it recognises the key themes of Indian strategic thinking-dharma, restraint, equality, non-discrimination, unity in diversity and internationalism as central to re-producing the idea of ‘Indian-ness’.

## Chapter 4

### What is *Indian-ness*?

#### National Identity discourses and Exceptionalism

*Is my country so small, so insignificant, so lacking in worth or strength, that it cannot say what it wants to say, that is it must say ditto to this or that? Why should my policy be the policy of this country or that country? It is going to be my policy, the Indian policy and my country's policy.*

-Jawaharlal Nehru<sup>1</sup>

*India will enter the next millennium with its head held high, a strong and prosperous nation, proud of its past and confident of its future as a leading member of the comity of nations. The mantra that will see us yet achieve this goal is the same mantra that ended foreign rule - uncompromising nationalism, nationalism that verges on devotionism as epitomised by Vande Mataram, nationalism that puts the nation above everything else.*

-Atal Bihari Vajpayee<sup>2</sup>

*The foreign policy we pursue must reflect our national priorities and concerns and be in concert with our capabilities...India's relations with the world- both major powers and our Asian neighbours-are increasingly shaped by our developmental priorities.*

-Dr. Manmohan Singh<sup>3</sup>

#### 4.1. National Identity Discourses

This chapter explores how the 'security elite' in India discursively (re-)constructed India's national identity and exceptionalism by looking at the post-independence nationalist writings on India's 'moral pre-eminence' and 'greatness' particularly in relation to India's foreign policy discourse and practices. It does not attempt to explain

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<sup>1</sup> J. Nehru, 'Reply to the Debate on the President's Address', 3 February 1950 cited in J. Nehru, 'We Cannot be Enemies for Ever', *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches and Writings, 1949-1953*, New Delhi, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, January 1954, pp.264-265.

<sup>2</sup> A. B. Vajpayee, 'The BJP's onward March', *Frontline*, vol.14, no.16, August 1997, pp. 9-22.

<sup>3</sup> A. Panda, 'Did India's 'Manmohan Doctrine' Succeed?', *The Diplomat*, 6 November 2013, <https://thediplomat.com/2013/11/did-indias-manmohan-doctrine-succeed/>, (accessed 14 September 2014).



whether India was or is actually different/exceptional or not as compared to other ‘emerging powers’<sup>4</sup> but instead focuses on how elites in India (re)produce this ‘Indian difference’ through such self-understandings. The relationship between identity and foreign policy hinges on the assumption that without an understanding of or a sense of the Self, it is not possible to understand or analyse a rising India’s foreign policy. It gives a sense of future direction and the nature of role India espouses to play regionally or globally in the present and the future international system. An understanding of ‘who we are’ is essential to understand ‘what our interests are,’ (which are never fixed) and how certain interests assume priority over the others at a particular time. India’s former EAM, P. Mukherjee said:

Foreign policy of a country is the pursuit of national interests, deriving essentially from its overall national policies, its future goals, and the self-perception of its role and destiny in the world. India's approach to the world is naturally a function of our values, civilisational heritage, historical experience, and geography. It is also of how we perceive our interests, based on principles and a broad national consensus.<sup>5</sup>

The study draws from the relationship between (discursive) construction of national identities, national interests and foreign policies. This sense of Self as always understood in relation to an Other (i.e. what it is not) or multiple Others is in need of continuous reproduction, and henceforth is relational and performative (as discussed in Chapter 3). Indian security elites continuously [re]interpret and [re]produce India’s national identity and emphasize its difference and uniqueness in its foreign policy discourse through Self/Other representational practices.

It has to be kept in mind that there can be multiple explanations of what constitutes *Indianness* and this seems appropriate to discover some sense of Indian state, society and politics. Nevertheless, the study focuses on examining India’s role as a state actor in foreign policy and hence restricts itself to the examination of discourses at the national level that bind the several fragments into a unified entity in opposition

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<sup>4</sup> The various identity labels or nomenclatures associated to these ‘emerging powers’ like India are ‘Asian’, ‘third world’ and ‘developing’ and the criterion features have been discussed in the Introduction chapter.

<sup>5</sup> Mukherjee, ‘Address by External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee at the National Conference of Confederation of Indian Industry on India's Foreign Policy’, p.151.

to a shared negativity.<sup>6</sup> Thus ‘exceptionalisation’ remains integral to this identity [re]production defined as ‘constructing positive uniqueness of self in relation to the other’.<sup>7</sup> The chapter shows and argues that the post-independent security elites had always conceived of India as nothing but an ‘exceptional state’ with a ‘civilizational consciousness’ and (re)produced India as a ‘different great power’<sup>8</sup> or else there would have been some empirical evidence of an existential discourse that constructs India as a ‘normal’ or ‘just any other state’. The nationalist movement leaders and post-colonial elites believe that by virtue of her resources, huge population and strategic location, India would eventually be a ‘great power’ and henceforth India should not and cannot be prevented or restricted by any means in her pursuit of realizing this destined greatness.

There have been studies on Indian national identity discourses<sup>9</sup> and drawing on these works we find that there are [broadly] two predominant national identity discourses-the Post-Nehruvian and the Hyperrealist-cultural nationalist. Drawing on domestic policy documents through writings, speeches, parliamentary debates and party documents of the two most important political parties in India- the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the chapter explores how the nationalist security elites have discursively [re]produced *Indian-ness* and rendered different [re]interpretations of Indian identity and strategic culture. It is problematic to straightjacket the predominance of these discourses within specific time periods as each of these discourses had established certain security practices that continued and even flourished irrespective of which party remained at the helm of affairs.

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<sup>6</sup> See chapter 2 on theoretical framework and methodology for elaborate discussion on relational identity and performativity as used in this research study.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Positive uniqueness’ is viewed as an important feature of nationalism. See A.D. Smith, *National Identity*; L.Hagström, ‘The ‘abnormal’ state: Identity, norm/exception and Japan’, *European Journal of International Relations*, 27 March 2014, p.398.

<sup>8</sup> Cohen, *India: Emerging Power*, p.34.

<sup>9</sup> K. Adeney and M. Lall, ‘Institutional Attempts to build a ‘National Identity’ in India: Internal and External Dimensions’, *India Review*, vol 4, no.3-4, 2005, pp.258-286; Bajpai, ‘Indian Strategic Culture’; Cohen, *India: Emerging Power*; Commuri, *Indian Identity Narratives*; Das, *Revisiting Nuclear India*; Ogden, *Hindu nationalism and the Evolution of Contemporary India Security*; Wojczewski, ‘India and the Quest for World Order’; Narang and Staniland, ‘Institutions and Worldviews in Indian Foreign Security Policy’; B. Parekh, ‘Defining India’s identity’, *India International Centre Quarterly*, vol.33, no.1, Summer 2006, pp.1-15.

The emergence of coalition politics are seen to have put limits on foreign policy making by shaping policy debates.<sup>10</sup> These two national identity discourses have provided the wider discursive context that informed India's post-Cold war foreign policy as a result of the continued 'social antagonism'<sup>11</sup> in reproducing the ideas of 'Indian difference/exceptionalism'. This *Indian-ness* as [re]produced by Indian security elites, thereby emerges as a durable yet a contested idea.

#### **4.2. Nehru's India and [re]interpretation of history**

Jawaharlal Nehru's core principles dominated how India defined itself after independence. The Prime Ministerial office under Nehru [also Indira Gandhi] kept a stronghold on foreign affairs, defence, industry and scientific research policymaking. Indian leadership was primarily focussed on safeguarding freedom of action in domestic and foreign policies, defending political and territorial integrity and ensuring socio-economic development. Nehru influenced by the Gandhian principles sought to create a strong, unified, sovereign, secular, pluralistic and democratic state as enshrined in the Indian Constitution,<sup>12</sup> that would maintain friendly relations with all countries and play a significant role in the international affairs. India pursued a policy of non-alignment (positive neutralism), advocated non-violence (*ahimsa*) and non-discrimination by supporting decolonisation, anti-racism and nuclear disarmament, emphasized on a principled approach to international relations based on *Panchsheel*,<sup>13</sup> worked for economic self-reliance (*swadeshi*), aimed at ensuring complete independence (*purnaswaraj*) from great power politics and championed for internationalism while preserving her 'unity in diversity' which were collectively referred to as 'enlightened national interests'.<sup>14</sup> India was reproduced as a morally

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<sup>10</sup> A. Appadorai, *The Domestic Roots of India's Foreign Policy 1947-1972*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1981, p.78; S. Baru, 'The Influence of Business and Media on Indian Foreign Policy', *India Review*, vol.8, no.3, 2009, pp.266–285; R. Chaudhuri, 'The Limits of Executive Power: Domestic Politics and Alliance Behavior in Nehru's India', *India Review*, vol.11, no.2, 2012, pp.95-115.

<sup>11</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, p.176; Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolutions of our Time*, pp.17-21. (See detailed discussion in Chapter 2 on Theoretical Framework and Methodology).

<sup>12</sup> Constitution of India, National Portal of India, [https://www.india.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/npi/files/coi\\_part\\_full.pdf](https://www.india.gov.in/sites/upload_files/npi/files/coi_part_full.pdf), (accessed 26 May 2019).

<sup>13</sup> Panchsheel includes the set of 'Five Principles of co-existence' to govern inter-state relations.

<sup>14</sup> J. Nehru, *The Unity of India Collected Writings 1937-1940*, New York, The John Day Company Inc., 1942, <https://archive.org/details/unityofindiacol006382mbp>, (accessed 10 November 2015); C. Ogden,

superior force and a leader of the newly independent, underdeveloped third world against the exploitative and power approach of Western colonialism.

Non-alignment is described as not a 'neutral or negative policy but a positive one,' to help the forces that were considered right while 'keeping away from other countries and other alignments of powers which normally lead to major conflicts.'<sup>15</sup> Retired diplomat and former Principal Secretary in the MEA, Mr. P.R. Chakraborty talking about the rationale behind NAM and benefits for India said in a personal interview:

During the cold war period India chose not to align itself with one particular group to give itself the kind of space to operate in the foreign policy domain which alignment would not have given. With the alignment India may have gained something but it also would have lost something. Indian leadership post-independence had the mind-set not to be a part of any hegemonic aspirations and the general outlook was to keep away from these international conflicts. Many countries thought similarly and India gave the lead along with Egypt and Yugoslavia which led to non-alignment.<sup>16</sup>

Such an approach left India economically and militarily weak in the region and beyond. The inward looking socialist economic approach had an impact on India's military expenditures and defence technology as limited significance was then attached to ordnance factories. These were instead geared to produce machineries like tractors and civil lighters for civilian uses rather than producing ordnances and weapon systems for defence forces. This kept Indian armed forces ill-equipped and disadvantaged to the

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*Hindu Nationalism and the Evolution of Contemporary Indian Security: Portents of Power*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014 (accessed on Oxford Scholarship Online, 20 March 2015).

<sup>15</sup> J. Nehru, 'Our Policy is Positive' in *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches and Writings, 1949-1953*, New Delhi, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, January 1954, pp.144-161. (This is an excerpt drawn from the Speech given in Parliament in presenting the Budget demand for the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, 17 March 1950); J. Nehru, 'We will not compromise' in *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches and Writings, 1949-1953*, New Delhi, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, January 1954, p.192. (This is an excerpt from the Speech given during the Foreign Affairs debate in Parliament, New Delhi, 28 March 1951).

<sup>16</sup> Personal interview with retired diplomat Dr. Pinak Ranjan Chakraborty, Indian Foreign Service, Government of India and presently a Distinguished Fellow Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, 16 December 2015. He has served as the Secretary of Ministry of External Affairs, High Commissioner to Bangladesh and as Ambassador to Thailand.

powerful neighbour-China.<sup>17</sup> Strategic expert at the ORF and former member of the NSAB, C.R.Mohan commenting on India's non-alignment policy said:

The NAM was a strategy that was a compliment to inward oriented economy, one that wanted to opt out of power politics as India was unwilling to take sides. Therefore it became a very cautious strategy that was active in terms of voice and taking positions but in terms of effect it was increasingly limited because India's relative weight was also little.<sup>18</sup>

Those who opposed did acknowledge that Nehru's *moralpolitik* gave India 'status and honour in the international community' as 'trouble shooters' or 'effective interlocutors' and the freedom to function as a 'genuinely independent state'.<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, it made India much weaker and a 'soft state' resulting in loss of territories to Pakistan and China, kept her embroiled in regional conflicts and as a victim of cross border terrorism. Nehru rejected the notion of military pacts (such as US led Baghdad Pact and SEATO including Pakistan) based upon the 'balance of power' rationale and 'negotiation from strength' because for him they produce 'a false idea of security'. He was against military alliances even with third world Asian countries and rather preferred to be more intimately connected with each other.<sup>20</sup> He was critical of the temporal nature of alliances and shifting allegiance as per convenience.<sup>21</sup> However, Nehru questioned the desirability and feasibility of a 'third force' as he said, 'The biggest countries today are small compared with the two giants. It would be absurd for a number of countries in Asia to come together and call themselves a third force or a third power in a military sense.'<sup>22</sup> Instead he was more comfortable with the term 'third area' that 'does not want

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<sup>17</sup> Personal interview with Dr. Parimal Bannerjee, Retd. Air Commodore in Indian Air Force (IAF), former scientist and official of the Defence Research and Development Organisation, Government of India, New Delhi, in Kolkata, India, 22 August 2015.

<sup>18</sup> Personal interview with C.R. Mohan, Indian strategic expert, Distinguished Fellow at Observer Research Foundation, New Delh, 22 December 2015. He is a former member of NSAB under National Security Council, Government of India and former Editor of a National newspaper Daily, *Indian Express* headquartered in New Delhi.

<sup>19</sup> Sinha, 'Inaugural Distinguished Persons Lecture by External Affairs Minister organized by the Foreign Service Institute of the Ministry of External Affairs on "Diplomacy in the 21st Century"', pp.65-72; Personal interview with Dr. Chandan Mitra, Chief Editor of national newspaper daily, *The Pioneer*, New Delhi and former Member of Parliament (BJP) in New Delhi, 22 August 2017.

<sup>20</sup> Nehru, 'Our Policy is Positive', p.147.

<sup>21</sup> J. Nehru, 'The Large Scheme of Things' in *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches and Writings, 1949-1953*, New Delhi, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, January 1954, p.221.

<sup>22</sup> J. Nehru, 'Defining Foreign Policy' in *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches and Writings, 1949-1953*, New Delhi, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, January 1954, p.231.

war, works for peace in a positive way and believes in cooperation.<sup>23</sup> NAM managed to earn for India moral goodwill in Africa, Asia and Latin America but in reality India's bilateral relations with the countries in these regions were limited.

Nehru on the question of neglect of re-armament and increasing the strength of Army, Navy and Air Force argued for strengthening of defence,<sup>24</sup> but defence to him constituted the moral strength of the country which was more than just 'large numbers of people marching up and down with guns'.<sup>25</sup> Following the 1962 debacle, the defence expenditure was increased and India's security elites including the political leadership felt the need to make India militarily strong. However Nehru was not unaware of the China threat as the strategic expert S. Kalyanaraman at the IDSA under Ministry of Defence in a personal interview said:

Nehru was aware of the China challenge but his ambitions and goal were different. His goals were more inward looking national development instead of getting sucked into the rivalry of capitalism-communism. He was but internationalist in the sense that he sought to overcome the China challenge by friendly relations that he believed would lead to reciprocal gesture from the other side and would foster cooperation. It was the triumph of hope over reality. Atleast, he was trying something new for the first time as far as modern political leadership was concerned. But his attempt to transform the relationship did not lead anywhere and resulted in border problems. India was not prepared for the China war though he was cautioned by the armed forces. It was unanticipated because of China's isolation in the international system and difficult relations with both the Western bloc and the Soviet Union that made Nehru believe that China might not be adventurous to initiate war whereas India had good relations with both which was a miscalculation.<sup>26</sup>

It was a matter of misjudgement by the Indian political leadership of Chinese intentions and proclivities towards military aggression and territorial expansionism given that China sees itself as the centre of a Sino-centric world order. Nehru's view of China was

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<sup>23</sup> Nehru, 'Defining Foreign Policy.'

<sup>24</sup> J. Nehru, 'Speech in reply to the Debate on India's Foreign Policy in Parliament', New Delhi, 7 December 1950, in J. Nehru, 'The Growth of Violence', *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches and Writings, 1949-1953*, New Delhi, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, January 1954, p.179.

<sup>25</sup> Nehru, 'The Growth of Violence', pp. 179-180.

<sup>26</sup> Personal interview with S. Kalyanaraman, Strategic Expert, Institute of Defence and Strategic Analysis (IDSA), Ministry of Defence, New Delhi, Government of India, 17 December 2015.

clouded with much romanticism to the point that he declined the offer of the permanent seat at the UN Security Council once by the USA in 1950 and the second time by the Soviet Union in 1955 lest it affected India-China bilateral relations.

Under the leadership of Indira Gandhi, India was believed to have gradually begun its transformation to 'just another state' by valorising hard power capabilities instead of moral influence. Increasing attention to security and defence, use of military force to safeguard India's 'national interest, honor and dignity' and to ensure India's security and territorial integrity became India's foremost priority. This led to India's military involvement in creation of Bangladesh in (1971), the 'Indira doctrine' in the IOR that declared Indian Ocean as a 'zone of peace', the signing of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, and the 'peaceful nuclear explosion' in 1974 in order to establish India as a pre-eminent power in the subcontinent.<sup>27</sup> Regarding the shift in India's non-aligned posture after the death of Nehru, strategic expert Mohan said in a personal interview:

In the post-Nehru period there was shifting of ideologies, America was changing their mind and growing closer to China and India moved closer to the Soviet. Then India started withdrawing slowly from the historic roles that it had inherited. Finally with the outward oriented economy as a result of the economic reforms in 1991, there was a willingness to put ideas of power and exercise of power back. There were variations and differences between inside and outside the region. Inside the region there always have been interventions by India such as sending the peacekeeping forces to Srilanka (1987) or India's intervention in Maldives (1988).<sup>28</sup>

Therefore a shift in India's self-perception from helming the role of a 'third world leader' was also evident and India was willing to strengthen and project her leadership role in the region. Within the South Asian region India has shown less hesitancy in the use of force when needed which raised scepticism in the smaller neighbours about India's 'big brother' attitude to establish regional pre-eminence. The state elites

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<sup>27</sup> B.R. Nayar, 'Regional Power in a Multipolar World,' in J.W. Mellor (ed.), *India: A Rising Middle Power*, Abingdon and New York, Routledge, 2018 (Originally published by Boulder, Colo, Westview Press, 1979), [https://books.google.co.in/books/about/India\\_A\\_Rising\\_Middle\\_Power.html?id=xnCkDwAAQBAJ&source=kp\\_book\\_description&redir\\_esc=y](https://books.google.co.in/books/about/India_A_Rising_Middle_Power.html?id=xnCkDwAAQBAJ&source=kp_book_description&redir_esc=y), (accessed 10 February 2019); For detailed analysis see Chacko, *Indian Foreign Policy*, pp.109-137.

<sup>28</sup> Personal interview with C. R. Mohan, Indian strategic expert, Distinguished Fellow at Observer Research Foundation, New Delh, 22 December 2015.

therefore became further attentive and cautious towards the regional political sensitivities and employed greater 'self-restraint' in its dealing with neighbours which was evident in the 'Gujral doctrine' (except for Pakistan) that was based on the principle of giving in good faith and trust instead of expectations on reciprocity.<sup>29</sup>

**First**, Nehru saw India as the land inhabited by the Aryans [Aryavarta or Bharatvarsha] that gave its distinct civilizational roots and successfully produced a synthetic assimilation of the outside influences (which were eventually absorbed) with those that were already residing in it.<sup>30</sup> Nehru saw India being the 'birthplace of the greatest religions' as tolerant, absorptive and inclusive with a 'receptive and adaptable culture' in opposition to the 'exclusive or intolerant Pakistan'. The various races 'run into one another and on the whole form a definite unit, racially and culturally.'<sup>31</sup> Henceforth, India had retained and preserved her basic identity despite 'the influences and at times wrath brought on to it by outside contacts.'<sup>32</sup> Nehru saw India as a singularly unified area linguistically because even if there were multiple languages coexisting simultaneously, they shared an intimate association between them.<sup>33</sup>

**Second**, a unique characteristic as emphasized was India's resolve to remain strong and resilient in the face of invasions or refusal to submit to foreign subjugation. The military resistance during the Great mutiny of 1857 against British forces or Chandragupta Maurya's (who established the largest [Hindu] empire in India) successful attempt to drive back Alexander's forces proved India's urge to freedom.<sup>34</sup> Nehru said India had existed since ancient ages much before the British advent not only just as an old civilisation but also as an administrative unit [under the Mauryan Empire that stretched upto Central Asia] and had experienced peaceful stretches of orderly governance.<sup>35</sup> Industry, transport and communication made British India a single

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<sup>29</sup> P. Murthy, 'The Gujral Doctrine and Beyond', *Strategic Analysis*, vol.23, no.4, 1999, pp.639-652.

<sup>30</sup> Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p.105.

<sup>31</sup> J. Nehru, *India and the World*, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1936, p.187; Also see J.Nehru, 'The Unity of India', *Foreign Affairs*, vol.16, no.2, January 1938, pp. 231-243.

<sup>32</sup> Citing Vincent Smith Nehru reiterates the existence of 'a deep underlying fundamental unity far more profound than that produced either by geographical isolation or political suzerainty' in India. See Nehru, *The Unity of India*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>33</sup> The Indo-Aryan languages were derived from Sanskrit and the Dravidian languages though not derived from Sanskrit contained at least fifty percent words from Sanskrit while Hindustani (or Hindi), had close associations with each other and was being spoken by many and even understood by greater numbers. See Nehru, *The Unity of India*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>34</sup> Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p.109.

<sup>35</sup> Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p.107.



unitary state and brought 'a sense of political unity' among the local masses who shared nationalist sentiment for a united and free India against the British colonialism.<sup>36</sup> This was not superimposed from above but was a natural outcome of 'a basic unity amongst the people of India' that had always existed culturally and was 'not religious in the narrow sense of the word'.<sup>37</sup>

**Third**, Nehru believed in India as an inherently 'great' and 'exceptional' power destined to play a major role in world affairs resulting not from its material capabilities but from a sense of 'civilizational identity'. He saw inevitability of India's greatness given India's history, geography that would enable her to play a larger role in Asia, mental outlook and circumstances in which India found itself.<sup>38</sup> Yet, he felt such claims of superiority in the East should not be premised on depreciating the significance of material factors as superficial things and elevating spiritual things and moral values only.<sup>39</sup> The Western colonialism became the constitutive Other,<sup>40</sup> though Nehru felt that the problems of modern industrial civilization were not inherent in the modernity itself but in its western manifestation. He called for a selective appropriation of Western modernity<sup>41</sup> as India could learn from Western experiences in order to grow and prosper instead of merely copying them. He noted:

...in whatever direction we may grow we must grow out of roots from which our nation draws sustenance and follow the genius of our people... Whatever the field of activity- and this applies specially to the field of foreign policy- India must function according to the ways and methods of her own thinking, if she has to have any weight.<sup>42</sup>

**Fourth**, Nehru's understanding of morality was not devoid of his sense of realism. The nationalist elites saw Indian foreign policy as constructed on ethical lines or *dharma*.

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<sup>36</sup> Nehru, *The Unity of India*, p.19.

<sup>37</sup> Nehru, *The Unity of India*, p.15.

<sup>38</sup> J. Nehru, *India's Foreign Policy: Selected Speeches, September 1946-April 1961*, New Delhi, Publications Division, Government of India, 1961, p.22, p.56; K.S. Murthy, *Indian Foreign Policy*, Calcutta, Scientific Book Agency, 1964, pp.18-19.

<sup>39</sup> P. Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1993.

<sup>40</sup> Muppidi, 'Postcoloniality and the Production of International Insecurity', p.131.

<sup>41</sup> Chacko, *Indian Foreign Policy*, p.9.

<sup>42</sup> J. Nehru, 'Ferment in Asia', in *Jawaharlal Nehru: Selected Speeches, Volume 2, 1949-1953*, New Delhi, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, January 1954, p.146.

However, 'dharma' in itself is relative and depends on the times and the conditions prevailing, apart from some basic principles, such as adherence to truth, non-violence, etc. This 'yugadharmā', the ideal of the particular age, has always to be kept in view.<sup>43</sup> Nehru admitted that 'idealistic' or 'moral' approaches are not sufficient in themselves but being a realist also has its disadvantages as he fails to look beyond the tip of his nose. He wrote:

Idealism alone will not do. What exactly is idealism? ... Idealism is the realism of tomorrow. It is the capacity to know what is good for the day after tomorrow or for the next year and to fashion yourself accordingly.<sup>44</sup>

Nehru was aware that the 'very purpose may be defeated by means unsuited to the end' and therefore as Chanakya had suggested 'war must always serve the larger ends of policy and not become an end in itself'.<sup>45</sup> The larger purpose is the betterment of the state and not the defeat or destruction of the enemy. He wrote that the old Indo-Aryan theory of warfare strictly laid down non-employment of illegitimate methods as a war for a righteous cause must be righteously conducted (whether and how far it was practised could be debated).<sup>46</sup>

**Fifth,** Nehru was aware of the influence yielded by the Great Powers by virtue of their abundant resources<sup>47</sup> and that militarily and economically India remained weak as compared to great powers, but her potential resources were vast. He critiqued the 'military outlook' of these countries gripped with fear and found military solutions ineffective as these nations were then prepared to take extreme steps while losing sight of the objective and this made war inevitable.<sup>48</sup> Nehru had strong belief in diplomacy and statesmanship that was being replaced with the 'verbal warfare in the strongest language' that made conflict more probable. He was against the so called 'new diplomatic game of maligning, defaming and cursing other countries'<sup>49</sup> unlike its western neighbour-Pakistan that from time to time engaged in such 'war propaganda'.

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<sup>43</sup> Kautilya is also referred to as Chanakya in ancient scripts and history texts. See Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p.76, p.81.

<sup>44</sup> Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p.183.

<sup>45</sup> Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p.93.

<sup>46</sup> Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p.108.

<sup>47</sup> Nehru, 'Ferment in Asia', p.185.

<sup>48</sup> Nehru, 'Ferment in Asia', pp.164-165.

<sup>49</sup> Nehru, 'Defining Foreign Policy', p.230.

But Nehru was no pacifist nor was he totally defensive in terms of military action particularly on the domestic front. The assumption that Nehru's defensive approach to use of force was altered under the 'militant nehruvianism' of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi is partially incorrect. Strategic expert C.R.Mohan refuses to abide by such categorizations to classify India's behaviour as he noted in a personal interview:

It is difficult to frame India's behaviour into narrow terms of anti-colonialism, Nehru's NAM and realism under Indira Gandhi. There are no empirical works that could explain everything and there are variations in terms of time and space and also in terms of individual leaders. Even Nehru's internationalism in 1950s was not defensive. In 1950s, Nehru was taking positions on Indo-China, on Korea, sending peace keeping troops, taking position on disarmament. Nehru signed the three defence treaties with Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. Pakistan won't say that India was defensive and even domestically Nehru took military action in Goa. Henceforth, the challenge is to capture those variations and explain the changes that are happening. But there is an element of continuity in India's behaviour in many ways.<sup>50</sup>

Nehru showed no hesitancy when it came to use of force within India whenever it was felt needed even as also evident from the police action in Hyderabad in 1947. Additionally, Nehru's internationalism had an emphatic use of moralistic projection with well defined national interests under the garb.

**Finally**, Nehru was critical of narrow nationalism. He said at a certain stage nationalism as a phenomenon could contribute towards growth, strength and unity of a nation against foreign domination but could also lead to exclusionary practices in the process of differentiation if done aggressively.<sup>51</sup> Therefore his foreign policy also had a strong aspect of internationalism such as working for Afro-Asian solidarity, human rights and nuclear disarmament. Talking on Nehru's internationalism and the contradictions within the Nehruvian policies when it came to securing vital 'national interests' strategic expert S.Kalyanaraman, IDSA defends this dualistic and ambivalent approach in a personal interview. He said:

Nehru was branded as either a woolly headed idealist when he was talking about NAM, world peace and internationalism or as a hypocrite when he was

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<sup>50</sup> Personal interview with C.R. Mohan, Strategic Expert, Former member of NSAB and a Distinguished Fellow at Observer Research Foundation, New Delh, 22 December 2015.

<sup>51</sup> Nehru, 'Ferment in Asia', pp.162-163.

pushing through peace or security treaties with Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, or was authorizing military action for liberation of Goa, or seeing a reasonable level of military preparedness in the 1950s, threatening Pakistan with military action in early 1950s and laying foundations for autonomous fuel cycle capability. They do it without understanding the fact that when you are dealing with national security, your heart might lean towards one particular policy but your mind tells that you have to cater to the reality as it exists. A complicated scenario is presented where both aspects of his internationalist aspiration and his duty as Prime Minister to safeguard national interest are seen.<sup>52</sup>

With the end of Cold war and ushering of the new liberal economic reforms in 1991<sup>53</sup> India re-adjusted its foreign policy to re-engage with the world with a renewed approach. The initiation of the Look East Policy in 1993 was a strategic step in this direction. Remarking on the transition in India's foreign policy in the post-cold war era (under Congress led governments) retired Indian diplomat and Former Foreign Secretary, MEA and a Distinguished Fellow, ORF Mr. Pinak Ranjan Chakraborty said in a personal interview:

There are two aspects to a foreign policy of any country. The first is the core interests of the country and second is the changing international environment. If there is any cataclysmic event such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, then obviously India has to readjust and re-orient its foreign policy alike every country that was tweaking its foreign policy to suit the new era. We had one single superpower or hyperpower but then again over the years we have seen that the superpower need not exercise the kind of hegemony or interventionist policies that America tried to do but failed. Followed by the rise of China and the rise of India (to some extent) economically there has been a certain shift in the 'balance of power'. So Asia today is producing more than 50% of GDP and then with India's stature also growing, its foreign policy had to adjust and change. Then in the 90s we had the economic crisis and the economic liberalisation which led to the LEP saying that 'India was looking too much towards the West'. Some of these Eastern countries were partisans in the cold

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<sup>52</sup> Personal interview with S.Kalyanaraman, Security and Strategic Expert, Research Fellow, IDSA, New Delhi, 17 December 2015.

<sup>53</sup> Soviet Union was and is still the largest defence supplier of India and had vetoed on the resolutions to the settlement of the Kashmir on several occasions at the UN Security Council that had worked in the favour of India which preferred Kashmir to be resolved bilaterally between the parties' concerned - India and Pakistan.

war and part of the security structures. With the end of the cold war those security structures faded away and died a natural death and India re-engaged with the East.<sup>54</sup>

The 'Look East' has shifted India's way of looking at the world with an 'eastward vision' initially with an economic focus to enhance trade linkages. This has translated to an increasing willingness 'to play a more active and prominent strategic role in the region as exemplified by enhanced defence diplomacy in East and South East Asia'<sup>55</sup> under NDA-II government's 'Act East' strategy and 'neighbourhood first' policy that focusses on regionalism, connectivity projects and multilateral naval exercises which have been initiated under the previous UPA governments, but are being carried forward and implemented with renewed enthusiasm under Modi's leadership.

In conclusion, Nehru's foreign policy can be characterized as 'idealistic nationalism' which was imbued with a strong sense of history, nationalistic fervour and 'the aggressive use of morality to advance national interest.'<sup>56</sup> After independence an articulation of 'Indian exceptionalism' was premised on reproducing certain unique characteristics such as celebrating its 'unity in diversity', 'its ability to exercise influence without coercive power', rejecting the 'fear psychosis' and 'power politics' of the West,<sup>57</sup> emphasizing on 'defence by friendship' and advocating internationalism. However, it needs to be pointed out that India simultaneously was pursuing economic self-sufficiency, arms build-up and laying the foundations of atomic energy and nuclear programme.<sup>58</sup> The Nehruvianists argued that 'non-alignment' policy paved the way for 'value based politics' and added to the international leverage of India that allowed it to 'punch above its weight.'<sup>59</sup> Some have seen 'non-alignment' as a pragmatic policy to carve an independent space for herself,<sup>60</sup> for receiving aid and technical assistance from

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<sup>54</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Pinak Ranjan Chakraborty, Retired Diplomat, Former Secretary at MEA, Government of India and a Distinguished fellow at Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, 16 December 2015.

<sup>55</sup> Rajendram, 'India's New Asia-Pacific Strategy', pp.2-3.

<sup>56</sup> Karnad, *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security*, p.3.

<sup>57</sup> Chacko, *Indian Foreign Policy*, p.1.

<sup>58</sup> P.F. Power, 'Indian Foreign Policy: The Age of Nehru,' *The Review of Politics*, vol.26, no.2, April 1964, pp.263-264.

<sup>59</sup> S. Khilnani, *The Idea of India*, New York, Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1997.

<sup>60</sup> Subrahmanyam, 'Nehru and Defense Policy', p.82; A. Kennedy, 'Nehru's Foreign Policy: Realism and Idealism Conjoined' in D. Malone, C.R. Mohan and S. Raghavan (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Indian Foreign Policy*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2015, pp.97-99; J.N. Dixit, 'Jawaharlal

both<sup>61</sup> and that enabled India to exercise limited influence despite inadequate material clout in the 1950s,<sup>62</sup> whereas the critics have blamed it for weakening India's defence capabilities and leaving her alone without any trusted friends or partners.

### **4.3. The Post-Nehruvian Discourse and the Manmohan Doctrine**

Under the UPA led INC government, **first** and foremost India's requirement has been to ensure that Indian economy should experience and sustain robust growth rates (an annual growth rate of 7 to 8 per cent) which should be directed towards employment generation and socio-economic development of the lowest rung with emphasis on developing the social sectors and rural infrastructure.<sup>63</sup> India would enhance her regional and global standing by forging 'mutually beneficial' strategic partnerships with major powers and other Asian countries.<sup>64</sup> PM Manmohan Singh in the UPA I and II regime summarised that national security must be based on three pillars- First, a strong economic, technological and social base; second, developing adequate defence capability by making use of modern science and technology; and, finally, establishing mutually beneficial partnerships, in the strategic, economic and technological spheres, aimed at enlarging India's policy choices and developmental options. This will determine India's global engagement<sup>65</sup> as outlined in the Manmohan doctrine that states:

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Nehru-Architect of India's Foreign Policy', in M.V. Kamath (ed.), *Nehru Revisited*, Mumbai, Indus Sources Book, 2016, pp.55-57.

<sup>61</sup> Devdutt, 'Non-Alignment and India,' *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 23, no.1-4, January-December 1962, pp.380-397; E.M. Hause, 'India: Non-committed and non-aligned', *The Western Political Quarterly*, vol.13, no.1, March 1960, pp.70-82.

<sup>62</sup> W. Levi, 'India Debates Foreign Policy', *Far Eastern Survey*, vol.20, no.5, March 1951, pp.39-52.

<sup>63</sup> M. Singh, 'Interview of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh with daily Toronto Star', New Delhi, 17 January 2005, in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations – 2005 Documents*, New Delhi, External Publicity Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2006, p.3.

<sup>64</sup> B. Mishra, 'No to Subservient Relations', *India Today*, 18 September 2007, <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/No+to+subservient+relations/1/1231.html> 2007, (accessed 11 January 2016); N.Rao, 'Transcript of Foreign Secretary Smt. Nirupama Rao's Speech at the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI)', Paris, 5 May 2011, <http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-State-ments.htm?dtl/359/Transcript+of+Foreign+Secretary+Smt+Nirupama+Raos+speech+at+th277e+French+Institute+of+International+Relations+IFRI+Paris>, (accessed 22 July 2015).

<sup>65</sup> M. Singh, 'PM releases the Journal – "India & Global Affairs"', New Delhi, 10 January 2008, <https://archivepmo.nic.in/drmanmohansingh/speech-details.php?nodeid=619>, (accessed 15 March 2018); M. Singh, 'Lecture by Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh on the Foundation Day of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyseis', New Delhi, 11 November 2005, in A.S.Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations-2005 Documents*, New Delhi, External Publicity Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2006, p.233.

A free India had to be also a prosperous India. This has been the central vision of our foreign policy and must continue to remain so...The single most important objective of Indian foreign policy has to be to create a global environment conducive to the well-being of our great country. Second, that greater integration with the world economy will benefit India and enable our people to realize their creative potential. Third, we seek stable, long term and mutually beneficial relations with all major powers. We are prepared to work with the international community to create a global economic and security environment beneficial to all nations.<sup>66</sup>

Following from Kautilya who wrote that ‘a healthy economy is a sound foundation for well-funded armed forces,’<sup>67</sup>New Delhi believes that economic growth would facilitate greater allocation for defense budget (around 3% of the national GDP if economy continues to grow at 8%) and military [equipment] modernization. It adopts a broad and holistic vision of security that necessitates development of capabilities beyond defense. The new notions of ‘Comprehensive National Power’ give high weightage to economic, social, scientific, technological, educational and cultural aspects of power<sup>68</sup> and these are significant areas where India would like to play a key role in shaping global norms. As former EAM, P. Mukherjee noted:

India's envoys abroad today represent a different India. It is an India that may not have yet solved all its problems, but is still resurgent and confident. It is an India that is no longer satisfied with being a spectator in any arena. It is an India willing to be heard with a voice that can make a difference to any outcome...it is an India that has not only a vital stake in the future of the world - whether we view this future in political, economic or even environmental or energy terms - but also the wherewithal to play a decisive role in shaping this future.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> M. Singh, ‘Excerpts of PM's address at the Annual Conclave of Indian Ambassadors/High Commissioners abroad in New Delh’, 4 November 2013, <https://archivepmo.nic.in/drmanmohansingh/speech-details.php?nodeid=1387>, (accessed 12 April, 2016).

<sup>67</sup> M. Singh, ‘Extracts from the speech of Prime Minister Dr.Manmohan Singh at the Combined Commanders Conference’, New Delhi, 20 October 2005, in A.S. Bhasin (ed), *India's Foreign Relations-2005 Documents*, New Delhi, External Publicity Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2006, p.218.

<sup>68</sup> Singh, ‘Extracts from the speech of Prime Minister Dr.Manmohan Singh at the Combined Commanders Conference’, p.218.

<sup>69</sup> Mukherjee, ‘Address by External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee at the National Conference of Confederation of Indian Industry on India's Foreign Policy’, pp.156-157.

Associated with this was an increasing need for India's foreign policy to reflect its national priorities and concerns that should match with her increasing capabilities to emerge as exemplary of a 'different great power' for others to emulate. The idea of building or transforming India would depend on imaginative use of New Delhi's both 'hard' and 'soft power' capabilities. Former Foreign Secretary Saran wrote:

Today India is on the cutting edge of economic, technological and developmental transformation of significant dimensions. She is regarded as a factor of stability, a model of secularism and plurality and as an economic power that is destined to play a greater role in international affairs. In keeping with this changing image of India, we have adopted a foreign policy, which has a clear focus, a sense of maturity and responsibility, and a vision to make India strong and prosperous in the 21st century.<sup>70</sup>

This readjustment in foreign policy to secure its core interests should not entail discarding India's long cherished principles or normative considerations. The Manmohan doctrine states that:

our foreign policy is not defined merely by our interests, but also by the values which are very dear to our people. India's experiment of pursuing economic development within the framework of a plural, secular and liberal democracy has inspired people around the world and should continue to do so.<sup>71</sup>

With the central focus on economic, connectivity and trade and the need to diversify sources of energy to sustain India's economic growth, the Post-Nehruvian discourse envisaged a significant expansion of maritime activities by the Indian Navy in the IOR and in the Asia- Pacific. Recognizing the salience of India's geography with a long coastline, island territories, sea routes that connect India to the Gulf on the west and to Far East has shaped India's strategic perspectives to re-embrace and re-define India's role as a maritime power in the region. Former Defence Minister in the UPA government and former President in the NDA-II government P.Mukherjee noted:

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<sup>70</sup> S. Saran, 'Address by Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran at the Shanghai Institute of International Studies: "Present Dimensions of the Indian Foreign Policy"', Shanghai, 11 January 2006, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, <https://www.mea.gov.in/incoming-visit-detail.htm?2078/Present+Dimensions+of+the+Indian+Foreign+Policy++Address+by+Foreign+Secretary+Mr+Shyam+Saran+at+Shanghai+Institute+of+International+Studies+Shanghai>, (accessed 4 February 2017).

<sup>71</sup> Singh, 'Excerpts of PM's address at the Annual Conclave of Indian Ambassadors/High Commissioners abroad in New Delhi.'



First, that India is both a continental and maritime nation with a territory of over 3, million sq kms, a land frontier of 15,000 kms, a coastline of 7,500 kms, and a population of 1.1 billion, the second largest in the world. Second, its location at the base of continental Asia and the top of the Indian Ocean gives it a vantage point in relation to both West, Central, continental and South-East Asia, and the littoral States of the Indian Ocean from East Africa to Indonesia. Third, India's peninsular projection in the Ocean which bears its name, gives it a stake in the security and stability of these waters.<sup>72</sup>

The geo-strategic position of India in the Indian Ocean Region makes it a resident maritime power in the region with crucial responsibilities to ensure the safety of the sea lines of communication to keep a control over the trade and fuel transit routes. Under the 'Look East', New Delhi aims to re-establish India's strategic footprint in the Asia-Pacific by restoring India's traditional linkages with the region and re-integrating India to its 'immediate' and 'extended neighbourhood'.<sup>73</sup> India has pursued actively cooperative regional arrangements such as SAARC, BIMSTEC, dialogue with ASEAN and in East Asia, the IBSA forum with Brazil and South Africa, RIC - the trilateral initiative with Russia and China, and the India-Africa Summit under a vision of 'shared prosperity' for strengthening India's political and economic ties with the immediate neighbourhood and the Asia-Pacific region through this renewed vigour of regionalism.<sup>74</sup>

**Second**, India's state sovereignty as manifested through India's pursuit of 'strategic autonomy', that is understood as 'the ability to pursue an independent foreign policy based on one's own assessment of national interests' emerged as 'the article of faith' in India's foreign policy. Non-alignment as a principle in present India's foreign policy requires a re-interpretation to remain relevant. Former EAM K. Natwar Singh

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<sup>72</sup> P. Mukherjee, 'Speech of Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace on "India's Strategic Perspectives"', Washington (D.C.), 27 June 2005, in A.S. Bhasin (ed), *India's Foreign Relations-2005 Documents*, New Delhi, External Publicity Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2006, p.188. Also available at [http://www.indianembassy.org/press\\_release/2005/June/11.htm](http://www.indianembassy.org/press_release/2005/June/11.htm), (accessed on 14 April 2016); P. Mukherjee, 'India's Security Challenges and Foreign Policy Imperatives', New Delhi, 3 November 2008, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, <http://meaindia.nic.in/speech/2008/11/03ss01.htm>, (accessed 13 January 2015).

<sup>73</sup> T. Haokip, *India's Look East Policy and the Northeast*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2015; Mukherjee, 'Speech of Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace on "India's Strategic Perspectives"', pp.188-192.

<sup>74</sup> Mukherjee, 'Speech of Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace on "India's Strategic Perspectives"', pp.188-192.

argued that, ‘It is not about what it gives... It is not a dogma; it is not a doctrine; it is independent thinking.’<sup>75</sup> This is evident in India’s aversion to enter into alliance systems and the preference for forging ‘well rounded strategic partnerships’ with all major powers which allows greater freedom of choice, flexibility of options and room for manoeuvre with all the major powers thus maintaining its foreign policy independence. Former Secretary, MEA Mr. P.R. Chakraborty on the salience of developing co-operative relations with strategic partners said in a personal interview:

Non-alignment was no longer relevant in that sense. Rather than ‘multi-alignment’, we would say it has more cooperative relations with certain countries and these are more issue based. So on climate change and certain other issues we have teamed up with China because we felt we have similar thinking. We are looking at how our own economy can be sustained and can grow through various programmes that the new government has adopted which has led to rethinking on several related issues. We are not aligned or re-aligned really but to deal with countries on the basis of issues through cooperative relations. Our foremost national interest and policy goal is to seek the transformation of India into an economically developed and prosperous country and to get rid of all our liabilities such as poverty, illiteracy, lack of health care etc.<sup>76</sup>

For the post-colonial security elites, India ‘is too large a country to be boxed into any alliance or regional or sub-regional arrangements, whether trade, economic or political’<sup>77</sup> despite keeping the closest relations with the United States, China, Russia, Japan, France, UK and so many other countries.<sup>78</sup>

**Third**, it draws an encompassing notion of ‘self –enlightened national interests’ as PM Singh said, ‘we must balance the pursuit of national interest with a clear

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<sup>75</sup> K.N. Singh, ‘Interview of External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh by Karan Thapar for BBC programme “Hard Talk-India”’, New Delhi, 8 April 2005, in A.S.Bhasin (ed.), *India’s Foreign Relations – 2005 Documents*, New Delhi, External Publicity Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2006, p.43.

<sup>76</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Pinak Ranjan Chakraborty, Indian Foreign Service, Retired Diplomat and Former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India and currently a Distinguished Fellow, Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, 16 December 2015.

<sup>77</sup> M. Singh, ‘Excerpts of Speech to Combined Commanders’ Conference’, *Targeted News Service*, 13 September 2010, [www.lexisnexus.com](http://www.lexisnexus.com) (accessed 5 March 2018).

<sup>78</sup> P. Mukherjee, ‘Address by External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee on the occasion of National Launch of Global India Foundation: “India and the Global Balance of Power”’, New Delhi, 16 January 2007, in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *India’s Foreign Relations -2007 Documents*, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2008, pp.136.

appreciation of what other nations perceive as their core interests. To advance our own security interests, we must engage in cooperative, constructive and mutually beneficial relations with all major powers of the world.<sup>79</sup> It includes a holistic view of security encompassing both traditional and non-traditional security threats that includes ensuring food security, water security, energy security and environmental security. The UPA-I government prioritised energy security and signed the India-US nuclear agreement and has been actively participating in climate change negotiations. In the Copenhagen climate change talks in 2009, India showed greater flexibility in its negotiation strategy that proved India's credibility as a responsible partner to be a part of the solution.

Drawing from Indian culture rooted in 'dharma' that has been human-centric, the principal duty of the administrator is seen as ensuring the welfare of the people. The Post-Nehruvian discourse linked this to greater access to technology and the need to harness atomic energy for socio-economic development and domestic transformation of India. Former EAM Mukherjee said, 'Human capital is the most valuable resource that we have. For us, the concept of sustainable development must include the needs of our people for health, nutrition, education and housing so as to provide to all a life of dignity in a clean, safe and healthy environment. The challenge is to have more access and integration with global technology.'<sup>80</sup>

**Fourth**, it is believed that state sovereignty can only be secured if it is backed with comprehensive national strength in pursuit of its vital interests through building indigenous capabilities rather than depending on others for its own security. There emerged a strong elite consensus that nuclear weapons remain the ultimate source of state sovereignty and prevent interference of major powers in internal affairs of relatively weaker states like India. Although, focussed on building indigenous technological capabilities, it recognised the importance to access global markets and facilitate inter-connectedness. The Post Nehruvian discourse embraced economic liberalisation and globalisation and recognised the importance of engaging in trans-border trade and commerce for economic growth. Former PM Singh noted:

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<sup>79</sup> Singh, 'PM releases the Journal – "India & Global Affairs."'

<sup>80</sup> P. Mukherjee, 'Keynote Address by External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee on "Globalization, Growth & People" at the 87th Annual Conference of ASSOCHAM', New Delhi, 3 June 2008, in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations -2008 Documents*, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2009, p.167.

Our Party managed the transition, fashioning our external and national security policies with precise perception of national interests, a clear sense of priorities and a calibrated exercise in creating new equations with the emerging power centres in a transformed global situation. We reformed and revitalized our economy. We ensured India's effective participation in the processes of globalisation in a manner responsive to our multifarious and complex interests.<sup>81</sup>

Globalisation is represented as a challenge that threatens state sovereignty and diffuses the notion of territorial borders as a result of transnational challenges like terrorism. But it also gives an opportunity to establish India as a big market to attract large scale foreign investment to ensure higher economic growth and technology modernisation. The Post- Nehruvian discourse sees economic disparities as intended towards sustaining and strengthening neo-colonial and racist attitudes by the major powers particularly led by the West (USA being at its forefront) and therefore emphasizes for 'equity and fairness' in trade or climate change regimes while expressing its intent to shoulder greater responsibilities in finding solutions to global challenges.<sup>82</sup> The UPA government further took measures aimed at creating a just and stable international order by supporting efforts to reform the UN Security council, making its agencies and organs more representative of the membership of the world organization and this required India to strengthen its relations with all the major and emerging powers.<sup>83</sup>

**Fifth**, the Post–Nehruvian discourse sees Indian democracy as an asset to draw closer to other like-minded liberal democracies [such as USA and European Union] for combating global terrorism or managing global commons. But India refrains from democracy promotion under the US led initiatives that have clear 'anti-China' undertones.<sup>84</sup> The NDA government also reaffirmed that India would never participate

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<sup>81</sup> M. Singh, 'PM's address to the AICC', New Delhi, 21 August 2004, <https://archivepmo.nic.in/drmanmohansingh/speech-details.php?nodeid=8>, (accessed 11 April 2018)

<sup>82</sup> O. Abdullah, 'Statement by Shri O. Abdullah, Minister of State for External Affairs, India at The World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance', Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2 September 2001, [http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches/Statements.htm?dtl/5932/Statement\\_by\\_Shri\\_Omar\\_Abdullah\\_Minister\\_of\\_State\\_for\\_External\\_Affairs\\_India\\_at\\_The\\_World\\_Conference\\_Against\\_Racism\\_Racial\\_Discrimination\\_Xenophobia\\_and\\_Related\\_Intolerance](http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches/Statements.htm?dtl/5932/Statement_by_Shri_Omar_Abdullah_Minister_of_State_for_External_Affairs_India_at_The_World_Conference_Against_Racism_Racial_Discrimination_Xenophobia_and_Related_Intolerance), (accessed 5 March 2018).

<sup>83</sup> Singh, 'PM's address to the AICC.'

<sup>84</sup> Singh, 'India's Strategic Culture: The Impact of Geography', p.5.

in forcibly exporting or imposing democracy on to reluctant states.<sup>85</sup> India has nonetheless, supported the development and maintenance of democratic practices in Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives through financial aid and by assisting in capacity building in Afghanistan.

**Finally**, the Post- Nehruvian discourse aims to protect and preserve the internal diversity and heterogeneity arising from ethnic, regional, religious, linguistic, caste and socio-economic differences and aims to construct a unified ‘inside’ within India. In the Post-Nehruvian discourse, difference and diversity is therefore not seen as a threat from within, but a natural condition of India that needs to be embraced and can be managed through accommodation and not by assimilation or creating uniformity. Further, the Post-Nehruvian discourse has emphasized India’s absorptive culture and cultural outreach as an important facet of India’s ‘soft power’. Former Defence Minister, EAM and President Mukherjee said:

Historically, India has been a fundamentally ‘open’ society...It is customary to talk of strategic perspectives in terms of ‘hard’ power: our strategic perspectives were those of trade, religion, culture, spirituality, and the arts; and later, the political morality of Gandhi.<sup>86</sup>

This has been at the core of India’s re-engagement with the South-East Asian neighbours that further expanded to countries in the Far East. Under both the UPA administrations (I and II) ‘Look East’ expanded to include strategic, military and political dimensions. The NDA-II government under Modi has further added and expanded defence and security aspects to bilateral partnerships with countries like Japan, Vietnam, Singapore and Indonesia and is participating actively in forming multilateral coalitions to cooperate on maritime security and holding joint naval exercises with the US, Japan and Australia in the Indo-Pacific region. Former Secretary, MEA, Mr. P.R. Chakraborty noted in a personal interview that:

India re- engaged with the East under ‘Look East’, because India had historically already engaged with South-east Asian countries through cultural

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<sup>85</sup> K. Sibal, ‘Special Media Briefing by Foreign Secretary Kanwal Sibal on the Visit of Prime Minister to Kuala Lumpur to attend the NAM Summit’, New Delhi, 18 February 2003, in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *India’s Foreign Relations –2003 Documents*, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2004, p. 254.

<sup>86</sup> Mukherjee, ‘Speech of Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace on “India’s Strategic Perspectives”’, pp.188-189.

and religious links with the spread of Buddhism that originated in India to other Asian countries. Indian culture is pretty pervasive in South East Asian countries and had strong trade linkages.<sup>87</sup>

The Post-Nehruvian discourse therefore placed prime importance on ‘economic growth’ through ‘multi-alignment’, developing indigenous defence capabilities to safeguard the territorial integrity and autonomy in foreign policy making. ‘Swadeshi’[self-reliance] did not signify ‘economic isolation’ but ‘self –reliance in building a prosperous India which interacts as an equal with other countries in the world’<sup>88</sup> by embracing liberalisation and globalisation particularly in terms of accessing new technologies, cooperation with all major and smaller countries, engagement in international organisations and regional integration, active involvement in regional grouping and architecture building in South Asia and Indian Ocean region. Former President Mukherjee also claimed that, ‘we taught the entire world that we have to live in peace’<sup>89</sup> which has been a key theme in re-producing India’s uniqueness and is exemplary for the others. The Congress led UPA governments worked towards creating a fair and equitable multipolar order and emphasized on India’s democracy, pluralism and cultural soft power. But the overriding priority of India’s internal and external security policies is to get rid of the challenges of disease, hunger, illiteracy and poverty as noted by the National Security Advisor (NSA), Shiv Shankar Menon that, ‘India would only be a responsible power if our choices bettered the lot of our people....’<sup>90</sup>

#### **4.4. The Hyperrealist-Cultural Nationalism discourse**

The hyperrealist discourse with the cultural nationalism or *Hindutva* (Hindu-ness)<sup>91</sup> sub-discourse provided an alternative state building model based on Hindu identity.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Pinak Ranjan Chakraborty, IFS, Retired Diplomat, Former Secretary at Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India and currently a Distinguished Fellow at Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, 16 December 2015.

<sup>88</sup> M. Singh, ‘Speech of Shri Manmohan Singh, Minister of Finance Introducing the Budget for the Year 1996-97’; Also see A. Padmanabhan, ‘Self-reliance Has Different Meanings for India’s Policy’, *Rediff*, 20 August 2001, <https://www.rediff.com/money/2001/aug/20man.htm>, (accessed 10 March 2020).

<sup>89</sup> K. Srinivasan, ‘Values in Indian Foreign Policy: Lofty Ideals Give Way to Parochial Pragmatism’, in K. Srinivasan, J. Mayall and S. Pulipaka (eds.), *Values in Foreign Policy: Investigating Ideas and Interests*, London and New York, Rowman and Littlefield International Ltd., 2019, p.140.

<sup>90</sup> Menon, ‘India and the Global Scene: Prem Bhatia Memorial Lecture.’

<sup>91</sup> The term *Hindutva* was coined by the Hindu nationalist and philosopher V.D. Savarkar (1923) in his treaty *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?*, which is the first systematic account of the Hindu nationalist ideology.

<sup>92</sup> Singh, *A Call to Honour*, p.405.

It can be traced back to the religious movements of revival of the Hindu India and was further consolidated under the Sangh Parivar.<sup>93</sup> The hyperrealist discourse encompassed the Swatantra Party and Jana Sangh parties that opposed Nehruvian approach of non-alignment and socialist principles in 1950's and 60's.<sup>94</sup> The Hindutva sub-discourse include key bodies such as the Hindu nationalist non-governmental, cultural organisation of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and their Hindu political wing of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)<sup>95</sup> that promoted national unity through strengthening national defence to protect the Hindu nation. The *Sangh Parivar* exercises significant influence on the decision making of the BJP till date.<sup>96</sup> It also found support among several military personnel, diplomats and strategic experts referred to as the ultra-realists or hyperrealists<sup>97</sup> who shared criticism for the 'disregard for military power' and instead drew from the glorious past of Hindu warfare and statecraft traditions to deal with internal and external threats from a 'position of strength'. The Hindu nationalist discourse attaches importance to strengthening 'hard power' capabilities but concedes more prominence to the 'cultural dimension of state power' drawing from the Indian (Hindu) civilisation to consolidate India's national and cultural unity.<sup>98</sup> Equating *Indian-ness* with the Savarkarite idea of

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<sup>93</sup> The Sangh Parivar includes Bharatiya Jana Sangh (the precedent of the Bharatiya Janata Party), Rashtriya Swayam Sevak and Vishwa Hindu Parishad. The last two are Hindu religious organisations with the BJP as its political wing.

<sup>94</sup> Cohen, *Emerging Power: India*, p.43, p.46; Wojczewski, 'India and the Quest for World Order'; M. Krettunen, 'Nuclear Weapons and Indian Foreign Policy: A Responsible Nuclear Weapon Power', , Helsinki, National Defense University, 2009, pp.87-88, [https://www.doria.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/74133/StratL1\\_27w.pdf?sequence=1](https://www.doria.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/74133/StratL1_27w.pdf?sequence=1), (accessed 3 January 2016).

<sup>95</sup> Shyama Prasad Mookerjee (the then president of the Hindu Mahasabha) and Golwalkar established the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS—Indian People's Alliance), the precursor of BJP in 1951 on the eve of India's first general elections.

<sup>96</sup> See an overview of the *Sangh Parivar* in C. Jaffrelot (ed.), *The Sangh Parivar: A Reader*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2005; For an overview of the rise of Hindu Nationalism, see C. Jaffrelot (ed.), *Hindu Nationalism: A Reader*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2009.

<sup>97</sup> These include senior BJP political leaders like A.B. Vajpayee, L.K. Advani, Jaswant Singh, Yashwant Sinha, Arun Jaitley, Sushma Swaraj, M.J. Akbar, Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, Dr. Chandan Mitra, Ram Madhav and Manohar Parrikar to mention a few amongst many others and the current Prime Minister, Narendra Modi who got assigned to BJP from RSS in 1985. These include (former )military and intelligence personnel such as Bharat Verma, Gurmeet Kanwal, Raja Menon, General GD Bakshi and General Malik, and some members of Indian foreign service, bureaucrats and prominent retired diplomats like Kanwal Sibal, Satish Chandra and G. Parthasarathy and several policy analysts or strategic experts who served as government advisors as National Security Advisors such as Brajesh Mishra and Ajit Doval or in the National Security Advisory Board like Brahma Chellaney and Bharat Karnad under various terms of BJP government.

<sup>98</sup> Wojczewski, 'India and the Quest for World Order', p.181.

*Hindutva*, and the RSS head Golwalkar's<sup>99</sup> re-defining of national identity on lines of Hindu religion, culture and history, senior BJP leader L.K Advani said, 'If India is de-Hinduised, there will be no India left anymore.'<sup>100</sup> Instead the ultra/ hyperrealists don't share such *Hindutva* philosophical inclinations, but the works of the ultra-realists have been appropriated and co-opted by the cultural nationalists to push for strengthening defence preparedness and developing power projection capabilities.<sup>101</sup>

**First**, Swami Vivekananda's ideal of *Spiritual Nationalism*, Sri Aurobindo's all-inclusive *Sanatan Dharma*, Deendayal Upadhyay's *Integral Humanism* have had a strong influence on the cultural nationalism discourse. The cultural nationalism discourse sees no difference between *Hindutva* and 'Bharateeyata', as both are expressions of the same 'chintan' (thought) that, 'India belongs to all, and all belong to India'.<sup>102</sup> *Hindutva* as the unifying principle is rooted in this concept of 'one nation, one people, one culture and one ideal'<sup>103</sup> to realise a uniform and strong Hindu *rashtra*.<sup>104</sup> To fulfil this cultural uniformity, Savarkar had two measures in mind, 'Unite Hindus and Militarise Hinduism' against potential internal and external aggressors.<sup>105</sup> Yet, the cultural nationalists have not desisted from appreciating and priding on India's 'unity in diversity'. Former PM Vajpayee, considered as a moderate Hindu nationalist said:

Our diversity is as much a source of India's greatness – and of Indians' pride in their nation -- as her antiquity...we must never forget, is that living with

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<sup>99</sup> M.S. Golwalkar, *We and Our Nationhood Defined*, Kale, 1947, 83p.

<sup>100</sup> L.K. Advani, *My Country, My Life*, New Delhi, Rupa, 2008, p.864.

<sup>101</sup> A. Ahmed, 'Indian Strategic Culture: The Pakistan Dimension', in K. Bajpai et.al (ed.), *India's Grand Strategy: History, Theory, Cases*, New Delhi, Routledge, 2014, <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=R3k9BAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>, (accessed 10 November 2015).

<sup>102</sup> A.B. Vajpayee, 'Let us celebrate and strengthen our Indianness: PM', PM Speech, 1 January 2003, <http://www.thehindu.com/2003/01/01/stories/2003010102971100.htm>, (accessed 16 July 2016).

<sup>103</sup> BJP, *Election Manifesto*, 1998, New Delhi, India, BJP Central Office, 1998; Khilnani, *Ideas of India*, p.51; G. Chowdhury, 'Communalism, nationalism, and gender : Bharatiya Janata Party(BJP) and the Hindu Right in India', in S. Ranchod-Nelson and M.A. Tetreault (eds.), *Feminist approaches to Contemporary Debates*, London, Routledge, 2000, pp. 98-118 cited in R. Das, 'Strategic culture, identity and nuclear (in)security in Indian Politics: Reflections from critical constructivist lenses', *International Politics*, vol. 47, no.5, 2010, p.485.

<sup>104</sup> BJP, *Election Manifesto-1998*.

<sup>105</sup> V.D. Savarkar, *Hindutva*, Delhi, Hindi Sahitya Sadan, 2003 (Originally published as *Essentials of Hindutva*, 1923 and retitled as *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?*, 1928).



diversity, and yet weaving a thread of unity and harmony through it, has been a way of life throughout India since time immemorial.<sup>106</sup>

**Second**, the cultural construction of geography and territoriality as found in ancient texts which is rooted in the idea of ‘Greater India’ has been emphasized in the cultural nationalist discourse. The cultural nationalists refer to the conflict between ‘traditional Hindu India’ based on *Sanatan Dharma* and the ‘modern secular India’. The word ‘modern’ is understood as ‘western’ whereas the ‘traditional’ Hindu idea is referred to as the soul and backbone of India which connects the people of India to their geography in a manner unknown to any other civilisation and constitutes the very basis of Indian nationhood.<sup>107</sup> Aware of India’s central position in the Indian Ocean the NDA-II government is taking concerted actions in the IOR by forming a ‘grouping with island states’ to create ‘a new multilateral alignment in the Indian Ocean, with India at the centre’<sup>108</sup> and has intensified engagement with Indian Ocean littoral states like Maldives, Mauritius and Seychelles. The BJP looks at to a putative Vedic Past before the Islamic invasion when there was within safe and extended borders of an ‘Akhand Bharat’ (Undivided India) there existed a ‘coherent cultural hindutva concept of peace and harmony’.

The hyperrealist/cultural nationalist discourse embraced a ‘geo-cultural’ idea of India that is deeply connected to the geographical representation of India [Bharat] as reproduced in the Hindu religious texts and ancient epics-*The Mahabharata* and *The Ramayana*. The Hind-Bharat is strategically located with a vast coastline, its links stretching from Central Asia to Far East and constituting a ‘bridge between the East and the West’ which plays an important role in India’s selfhood and calls for an expanding maritime role in the Indian Ocean and beyond.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Vajpayee, ‘Let us celebrate and strengthen our Indianness: PM.’

<sup>107</sup> BJP, ‘Cultural Nationalism’, *BJP Party Documents*, 2000-2005, New Delhi, BJP Central Office, 2005, pp.130-131.

<sup>108</sup> D. Brewster, ‘Modi Builds India’s Sphere of Influence in the Indian Ocean’, *The Interpreter*, 17 March 2015.

<sup>109</sup> BJP, ‘Cultural Nationalism’; R. Das makes a between the ‘political/territorial’ and ‘cultural’ interpretation and representation of the statist identity to explain the nuclear policies under Congress and BJP governments respectively. My study adds on to this argument that the cultural representation of geography and territoriality is central to the Hindutva discourse and the BJP (re)constructs a ‘geo-cultural’ concept of Indian Self that draws on the idea of ‘Greater India’ from various religious texts and mythologies on Indian statecraft and practise of war as will be discussed in the section on the hyperrealist-cultural nationalism discourse. See R. Das, ‘Strategic culture, identity and nuclear (in)security in Indian Politics: Reflections from critical constructivist lenses’, *International Politics*, vol.47, no.5, 2010, pp.472-496.

**Third**, it reasserts that Hinduism is unlike Semitic religions, [particularly Islam and Christianity], which does not have a global agenda to convert the adherents of other faiths and beliefs or eliminate those faiths which denied not just validity to Hindu Dharma, but also theologically denied its right to exist as a religion. The BJP party document notes:

Hindu Dharma was an abstract and the need of the Hindus to think, and function together, with a sense of unity manifested through the action oriented concept of *Hindutva*... Thus, *Hindutva* is the kinetic form of Hindu Dharma... Hindu Dharma had no conflict with other religions and therefore it was non-combative in character, and therefore unorganised, and even without needing an organisation... it lacked the aggressive content needed to measure up to the aggressive Semitic faiths that had a global mission to convert the whole world to their faith.<sup>110</sup>

The need to organise was henceforth imposed on Hindus and gave birth to *Hindutva* that became the organising principle for the Hindus. This 'non-conflicting' in precept and practice 'is its [Hindu Dharma] differentiating uniqueness, its strength and its weakness, particularly in its interface with Islam and Christianity.'<sup>111</sup> The Islamic faith however posed a greater challenge to Hindu India and led to Hindu India's disintegration. The BJP party document states:

The Islamic belief in exclusive validity is identical to that of Christianity. But the problems of Hindus in their interface with Islam are even greater. Islam came into *Bharat* mainly as an invading faith; it was imposed here through statecraft and military, both of which were driven by faith... The Islamic impact on India led to huge transfer of populations and territories from the Hindus to Islam. First Afghanistan, then Pakistan and Bangladesh, ceased to be part of India, after the people in those societies ceased to be part of the Hindu society.<sup>112</sup>

Pakistan's military aggression, its reluctance to desist from anti-Indian activities and its 'India-specific' atomic programme,<sup>113</sup> had led BJP to recognise a 'nuclear armed'

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<sup>110</sup> BJP, 'Cultural Nationalism', p.118.

<sup>111</sup> BJP, 'Cultural Nationalism', p.116

<sup>112</sup> BJP, 'Cultural Nationalism', p.117

<sup>113</sup> The Kashmir insurgency is a conflict between separatist groups in Kashmir and the Government of India. Few of the groups favour Kashmir's accession to Pakistan while others support complete independence of Kashmir. There is a strong Islamist element among the insurgents, with some identifying themselves with the Jihadist movement and joining Lashkar-e-Taiba, which is held responsible for causing terrorist activities in India.

Pakistan as the prime cultural/religious threat to Hindu India. Pakistan's resort to 'coercive measures of force', terrorist operations on Indian soil and 'nuclear blackmail' are believed as 'conscious political or strategic choice of the governments.'<sup>114</sup> Former Foreign Secretary under the BJP led NDA government referring to Pakistan's military policy to make 'India bleed with thousand cuts' said that:

Pakistan was born on the basis of extremist muslim demands and the roots of its identity lie in ideologically confrontational Islam...Political Islam, as opposed to pious Islam,...has long been used against India, first to break it up and now to continue wounding it through recourse to terrorism.<sup>115</sup>

India until recently has not been able to forge an effective counter strategy due to what has been referred to as the listlessness of the previous governments. Pakistan's nuclear programme is seen as an 'evil design' that is militaristic, India-centric and imperative to sustain Pakistan's self-image as 'possessing two great assets –Islam and technology.'<sup>116</sup> Indian elites have always vocally stated that Pakistan tested within few days of the Pokhran II and its nuclear developments predated India's nuclear programme. A nuclear threat from Pakistan had been anticipated since late 1978 and Zulfikar Bhutto, the man seen as 'obsessed with acquiring nuclear weapons' had led to 'a nuclear stalemate in the subcontinent,' whereas India is portrayed as a 'victim' or a 'helpless bystander' that has been forcefully 'dragged into a nuclear mire'.<sup>117</sup> On the other hand, India has maintained a restrained posture against an irrational, intolerant, unstable, aggressive and vengeful Pakistan that attempts to Balkanize India. New Delhi believes that Pakistan is prone to indulge in 'mad escalation' as it is 'a military state whose narrative of humiliation and hatred fuels its identity...will always be tempted by

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<sup>114</sup> A.B. Vajpayee, 'Vajpayee at the 57th Session of the United Nations General Assembly', 13 September 2002, <http://archive.pmo.nic.in/abv/speech-details.php?hodeid=9126>, (accessed 23 May 2015); BJP, *Foreign Policy Resolutions and Statements 1980-1999*, New Delhi, BJP, 2000[1999], p.3, p.5; Y. Sinha, 'Speech by External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha on "India's Foreign Policy Today" at the Diplomatic Academy', Moscow, 20 February 2003, in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations- 2003 Documents*, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2004, p.102.

<sup>115</sup> K. Sibal, 'Speech of Foreign Secretary Kanwal Sibal at the Geneva Forum on "Challenges and Prospects"', Geneva, 23 January 2003, in A. S. Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations-2003 Documents*, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2004, pp.75-76.

<sup>116</sup> Singh, *A Call to Honour*, p.71.

<sup>117</sup> Nizamani, *Roots of Rhetoric*, pp.55-56.

bloodlust, revenge and national honour’ but ‘India must never stoop to its level’<sup>118</sup> and needs to respond differently.

Jaswant Singh, the EAM in the NDA government complained about the ‘high-civilizational sense of chivalrous warfare’ of Hindu India that naively expected similar behaviour from the opponents which led to its defeat in the hand of invaders.<sup>119</sup> Referring to ‘an accommodative and forgiving Hindu milieu’<sup>120</sup> and Buddhist influences, Singh argues that India had fell prey to the invading ‘barbaric hordes’.<sup>121</sup> He felt that the ‘moral aspect’ had interfered with India’s pursuit of national interests in four key issues -Tibet; Sino-Indian relations; India-Pakistan stand-off and the nuclear armament as a result of which, ‘Ambiguity and a lack of clarity about national purpose on all the four became the national stand’ for India.<sup>122</sup>

**Fourth**, the Hindutva discourse recognizes that the understanding of secularism in independent India was similar to that practised in Christendom based on ‘*Dharma Nirapekshata*’ or neutrality of the state towards religious faith. But this made secular India allergic to Hindu Dharma, which has been transformed to understand secularism as ‘sarvapanthsamabhava’ or equal protection to all religions as the very essence of Hindu Dharma.<sup>123</sup> The cultural nationalist instead criticised the decline from ‘*Dharma Rakshana*’ which meant the primary duty of the State to protect ‘dharma’ [religion] in all aspects as practised by ancient Indian States to ‘*Dharma Nirapekshata*’ in post-independent India. The protection of Hindus within India, in the region and worldwide and to work for their general welfare became the top priority under the NDA-II government.

**Fifth**, as opposed to the Nehruvian ‘avoid war’ approach, cultural nationalists argue that not peace, but war is the test of a civilisation’s approach to humans and other civilisations, as if a civilisation had a culture of war ethics it is deemed as a ‘superior

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<sup>118</sup> G. Das, ‘Army’s surgical strikes did more than save India’s izzat’, *Times of India*, 8 October 2016.

<sup>119</sup> J. Singh, ‘What Constitutes National Security in a Changing World Order? India’s Strategic Thought’, Occasional Paper no.6, Centre for the Advanced Study of India, Philadelphia, PA, University of Pennsylvania, 1998 cited in K. Venkatshamy and P. George (eds.), *Grand Strategy for India 2020 and Beyond*, Institute For Defence Studies & Analyses New Delhi, 2012, [https://idsa.in/system/files/book/book\\_GrantStrategyIndia.pdf](https://idsa.in/system/files/book/book_GrantStrategyIndia.pdf), (accessed 18 August 2016)

<sup>120</sup> Singh, *Defending India*, 1999, p.13

<sup>121</sup> V.D. Savarkar, *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?*, 2003[1928], p.13

<sup>122</sup> Singh, *Defending India*, pp.42-43.

<sup>123</sup> BJP, ‘Cultural Nationalism’, p.119.

civilisation'.<sup>124</sup> The party document states that 'Aggressive, acquisitive and greedy war ethics' have been fundamental to empire building that had been adopted by the Abrahamic and Hellenistic civilisations, particularly Islamic and Christian as the predominant norm.<sup>125</sup> This is evident in Pakistan sponsored terrorists' killing of sleeping soldiers at Uri attacks<sup>126</sup> or mutilation of bodies of Indian armed forces by Pakistan army. The cultural nationalist discourse argues that Hindu civilisation followed a very high level of war ethics as wars for acquisition of territories, wars for conquest even in the sense of personal power and aggrandisement were considered unethical. The victorious Hindu kings are also forbidden to impose their laws, morals, cultures and faith on the conquered territories and people, whereas the Abrahamic war model encourages wars for religious conquests.<sup>127</sup> On the other hand Indian Muslims and Christians are still considered somewhat superior to the Muslims and Christians in the rest of the world as they learn to be more tolerant in a multicultural society and are closer to the ideal world citizen. They are expected to 'take on the role of leaders of their communities in the world' and set new standards. A monocultural society instead is seen as inferior that makes a man 'narrow in outlook, intolerant and unfit as a world citizen.'<sup>128</sup>

**Sixth**, the hyperrealist-Hindutva discourse reproduces Indian difference by asserting its cultural difference and India's sovereignty and self-determination through its assertion of strategic autonomy backed by comprehensive national power through self-sufficiency, modernisation and building indigenous defence capabilities as similar to the West.<sup>129</sup> But post-colonial India remains cautious of the discriminatory (neo-) colonial practices of 'Western' state and non-state actors, particularly the United States because of its exercise of control on access to nuclear fuel and technology.<sup>130</sup> In the early 1990s the BJP emphasized on 'swadeshi' or self-reliance to protect the interests

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<sup>124</sup> BJP, 'Cultural Nationalism', p.71, p.68.

<sup>125</sup> A. Doval, 'Religious Terrorism: Civilisational Context and Contemporary Manifestations', New Delhi, Vivekananda International Foundation, 2011, [www.vifindia.org/node/269](http://www.vifindia.org/node/269), (accessed 26 December 2014).

<sup>126</sup> Das, 'Army's surgical strikes did more than save India's izzat.'

<sup>127</sup> BJP, 'Cultural Nationalism', pp.68-69.

<sup>128</sup> M.S.N. Menon, 'Our "look-East" Policy', *The Tribune*, 8 November 2002, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, <https://www.mea.gov.in/articles-in-indian-media.htm?dtl/13365/Our+lookEast+policy>, (accessed 12 March 2020).

<sup>129</sup> Singh, *A Call to Honour*, p.170; Wojczewski, 'India and the Quest for World Order', p.208.

<sup>130</sup> Wojczewski, 'India and the Quest for World Order', p.208

of small farmers and traders and had opposed foreign ownership of business. But, the 1991 economic reforms pushed a reconsideration of party's position on economic policies and resulted in debates amongst the Hindu nationalists.<sup>131</sup> The RSS initially opposed and criticised the liberalisation reforms but eventually the BJP in 1992 adopted an accommodative approach towards a liberal economic policy that gained popular appeal amongst the aspiring urban, consumerist middle class and the youth electorate base at the home and accounted for the rise of BJP in the 1990s, besides its religious movement centered around the Ram Janmabhoomi agitation regarding the building of the supposed Ram temple at Ayodha that further motivated the Hindu nationalist workers –the *kar sevaks*.<sup>132</sup> It cautiously embraced the opening up of the domestic market, access to high technology in key sectors but retained a 'strongly protectionist posture vis-a-vis the world market.'<sup>133</sup> Also elements within the *Sangh* and the BJP remained highly suspicious of foreign trade and overseas investments from foreign firms, acceptance of loans from foreign monetary institutions like IMF or wary of the WTO rules and favoured growth through 'patriotic consumption' instead.<sup>134</sup> The primary concern has been the impact of globalisation in the corrosion of Indian culture and 'Hindu identity'. A senior BJP leader, former Minister of Commerce(1990-91) and a veteran Harvard educated Hindu nationalist Subramaniam Swamy see globalisation as posing a double threat to the economy by opening it up to attacks from 'international raisers and speculators' and to the culture as 'Globalisation can alter values, spread diseases more easily, and disrupt the family system'<sup>135</sup> and henceforth called for limits to be placed on such forces of globalisation given India's increasing integration in 'global markets' and 'connectivity'. The RSS affiliates have criticised foreign investment in India's retail sector and 'Make in India' scheme and called for developing indigenous technologies through domestic capital funding. RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat strengthening its focus on 'self-reliance' with globalisation put forth a nationalist

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<sup>131</sup> W.K. Anderson and S.D. Damle, *The RSS: A View to the Inside*, New Delhi, Penguin Viking, 2018, p.11.

<sup>132</sup> Hall, *Modi and Re-invention of Indian Foreign Policy*, pp.107-108; T.B. Hansen, 'The ethics of Hindutva and the spirit of capitalism', in T.B. Hansen and C. Jafflerot (eds.), *The BJP and the Compulsions of Politics in India*, 2nd edn., New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2001, p.306; K. Nag, *The Saffron Tide: The Rise of the BJP*, New Delhi, Rainlight, 2014, pp.106-121.

<sup>133</sup> Hansen, 'The ethics of Hindutva', p.301; Nag, *The Saffron Tide*, p.145.

<sup>134</sup> Nag, *The Saffron Tide*, p.130; Hansen, 'The ethics of Hindutva', p.305; Hall, *Modi and Reinvention of Foreign Policy*, p.108.

<sup>135</sup> S. Swamy, *Hindus under Seige: The Way Out*, New Delhi, Har-Anand, 2007, p.81, p.90

economic vision. He said that, 'the purpose of development is to make individuals independent and self reliant' by developing and using 'indigenous products' rather than those imported from outside in order to achieve greater efficiency and make India 'corruption-free'.<sup>136</sup> He had further called for such self-reliance in defense sector as he said, 'The country cannot be assured about its security without the total self-reliance in the field of defence production even while continuing with the multilateral exchanges wherever necessary. The pace of national efforts in this direction has to be accelerated',<sup>137</sup> thereby reaffirming as well that India should accept 'knowledge and technology from everywhere' but on its own terms.

This hyperrealist/cultural-nationalism discourse is however not completely anti-western, anti-globalisation or anti-modern. It embraced western modes but drew from Hindu traditions. It notes that India became a subject nation for missing out on industrial revolution and its failure to evolve a tradition of 'strategic thought' that are seen as the main reasons for its backwardness.<sup>138</sup> But a modernised India had to be complimented with a 'virat [virile] Hindu identity'.<sup>139</sup> While recognising the importance and necessity to maintain a steady rate of economic growth, the hyperrealist discourse remains wary of the deepening inequalities that have resulted between the developed and the underdeveloped and emphasize on the principles of equity and fairness and protection of state sovereignty.

**Seventh**, the hyperrealist favours a realpolitik approach to national security and gives primary attention to pursuit of India's national interests. Vajpayee said, 'In a situation where every nation is giving priority to its own self-interest, we are likely to be left behind if we did not look at our interests.'<sup>140</sup> They saw 'power and force at the core of international relations'<sup>141</sup> where states are driven by self-interest, engaged in

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<sup>136</sup> Press Trust of India, 'We need a vision of "Made by India": Swadeshi Jragran March', *Economic Times*, 25 December 2015; Hall, *Modi and Reinvention of indian Foreign Policy*, p.109.

<sup>137</sup> S.K. Ramachandran, 'Need self-reliance in defence production, says RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat', *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 18 October 2018, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/need-Self-reliance-in-defence-production-says-rss-chief-mohan-bhagwat/story-q8IUe0LwdO7YZinjoCcFzM.html>, (accessed 5 March 2020).

<sup>138</sup> Singh, *Defending India*.

<sup>139</sup> S. Swamy, *Virat Hindu Identity: Concept and its Power*, New Delhi, Har-Anand, 2013, p.21.

<sup>140</sup> Also see BJP, *Foreign Policy Resolutions and Statements 1980-1999*, New Delhi, BJP, 2000[1998], p.71.

<sup>141</sup> B. Chellaney, 'Challenges to India's National Security in the New Millennium', in B. Chellaney (ed.), *Securing India's Future in the New Millennium*, New Delhi, Orient Longman, 1999, p.558; B. Chellaney, 'India must no longer ignore its nuclear imperatives', *Pioneer*, 17 January 1999.

conflictual and competitive relationship with each other, are hierarchically organised in the international order according to their relative material and non-material capabilities and are allocated rights and obligations accordingly.<sup>142</sup> With a more military and state-centric concept of national security the hyperrealists argued that India should emerge as one of the most powerful nations in the new Asia-centric multipolar world order<sup>143</sup> by accumulating comprehensive national power (both hard power and soft power capabilities) in commensurate with her vast size and demography, geographical position and human resources.<sup>144</sup> In a multi-polar world with diverse centres of power, influence and also perspectives, India's role, its aspirations and its own perspectives hold relevance because India has emerged as a huge and growing market, with significant advances in the knowledge economy as an IT and R&D hub, has sustained a steady economic growth, has shown desire to integrate more fully into the global market, and has been a resilient democracy (also reaffirmed in the Post-Nehruvian discourse) and these achievements make its prospects to make a difference even brighter.<sup>145</sup>

The Ministry of External Affairs Annual report 1998-99 states that, 'We view foreign policy as an integral part of the larger effort of building the nation's capabilities: through economic development, strengthening social well-being and the quality of life, and of

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<sup>142</sup> Wojczewski, 'India and the Quest for World Order', p.184.

<sup>143</sup> See B. Mishra, 'Statement by B. Mishra at the Munich Security Conference on "Rising World Powers in Asia: Implications for Regional and Global Security"', p.17; Kanwal, 'China's long March to World Power Status', p.1713; Advani, 'The NDA Regime and National Security – A Performance Appraisal', p.1, p.15; Singh, *A Call to Honour*, p.274; Parthasarathy, 'Emerging Power Equations: Is Multipolarity Achievable?'; S.Chandra, *Indian Foreign Policy*, 2011, p.184, <http://www.vifindia.org/article/2011/may/19/Indian-Foreign-Policy>, (accessed on 16 August 2017).

<sup>144</sup> Karnad, *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security*, p.xii, p.xvii; B.Verma, *Fault Lines*, New Delhi, Lancer, 2009, p.13; A. Doval, 'India's Strategic Criticality: Need for an Effective National Response', 2010, <http://www.vifindia.org/print/375>, (accessed 10 January 2018); P.K. Singh, Y.K. Gera and S. Dewan (eds.), *Comprehensive National Power*, New Delhi, Vij Books Pvt. Ltd., 2013, p.16, p.235; BJP, *Foreign Policy Resolutions and Statements 1980-1999*, New Delhi, BJP, 2000[1996], pp.64-65; BJP, 'For a Strong and Prosperous India', *Election Manifesto*, 1996, New Delhi, BJP Central Office; BJP, 'BJP urges government to test, deploy nuclear arms', *Morning Sun*, Dhaka, 9 August 1996, p.2; BJP, 'Weak nations don't make history', *BJP Today*, vol.8, no.8, 1999, pp.4-7; K.C. Pant, 'Pokharan-II and Security Ramifications External and Internal', in BJP (ed.), *BJP Achievements & Looking Ahead: Party Document*, vol.9, New Delhi, BJP, 2006, p.85; Wojczewski, 'India and the Quest for World Order', p.185.

<sup>145</sup> Sibal, 'Speech of Foreign Secretary K. Sibal at the Geneva Forum on "Challenges and Prospects"', Geneva, p.74; Y. Sinha, 'Speech by External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha at Harvard University on: "Resurgent India in Asia"', 29 September 2003, in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations- 2003 Documents*, New Delhi, External Publicity Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2004, p.180; Y. Sinha, 'Interview of External Affairs Minister Y. Sinha with Khaleej Times of Dubai', New Delhi, 25 July 2003, in A.S. Bhasin(ed.), *India's Foreign Relations-2003 Documents*, New Delhi, External Publicity Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2004.



protecting India's sovereignty, territorial integrity and security, not only in its defence and economic aspects, but in the widest strategic sense of the term.'<sup>146</sup> The priorities which can be identified as the key signifiers have remained the same under the successive governments but the strategies, nature and intensity of engagement have amplified. The hyperrealist/cultural nationalist discourse recognises the importance of developing security relations with the 'wider neighbourhood' which included the South-east Asian countries, but rejects the inevitability of India-China conflict and refused to see the relationship in terms of a 'zero-sum' game, though India began to grow closer to the US during the same period. Former PM Vajpayee of the BJP led NDA government talking about India's approach in a 'multi-polar' world said:

...inspired by an ethic of pluralism and consensus ...the need today is for a cooperative multipolar world order, which accommodates the legitimate interests and aspirations of all its constituent elements. We should discard Cold War concepts such as balance of power and spheres of influence. In this conviction, India does not seek to develop relations with any country to 'counterbalance' another. Both India-USA relations and India-China relations have their own compelling logic.<sup>147</sup>

The BJP government under Vajpayee had also sought to develop friendly relations with China by focussing on economic cooperation and emphasizing Asian solidarity and had refrained from 'containing China' narratives, yet it was not naive to underestimate the difficulty in the management of that competition between the two neighbours. Even in India's South –East Asia policy it rejected the idea of 'balancing against China'. Former EAM Sinha said:

We must also debunk the theory that India's 'Look East' policy of greater engagement with ASEAN is somehow aimed at containing China...we have now entered Phase-II of the 'Look East' policy, which encompasses not only the ASEAN Ten but also China, Japan, and other....While it is undeniable that China and India are in some sense competitors, it is also clear that, just as the US and Europe, we can be both partners and competitors at the same time...Likewise, the argument that the dominant theme of China's South Asia

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<sup>146</sup> Government of India, 'Annual Report 1998-1999', Ministry of External Affairs, 1999, <https://eoi.gov.in/eoisearch/MyPrint.php?1562?000/0017>, (accessed 11 March 2020).

<sup>147</sup> A.B.Vajpayee, 'Interview of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to Wen Huibao', Shanghai, New Delhi, 21 June 2003, in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations -2003 Documents*, New Delhi, External Publicity Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2004, p.692.

policy is to prevent the rise of a potential rival or competitor in the form of India is a defeatist argument. There are probably some in our neighbourhood who seek to play their 'China connection' or 'China card' to 'counter' or even 'contain' India. The bankruptcy of this approach is however becoming increasingly evident. China cannot objectively be a competitor for India in South Asia.<sup>148</sup>

The discourse under Modi government also continues to recognise that both can be partners in multilateral forums which can have a positive effect on the region and the bilateral relations looks promising with potential for increasing cooperation. Former President Mukherjee in the NDA-II government to this regard said:

Our joint contribution to the world economy as well as regional and global stability, cannot be underestimated: India and China are poised to join the ranks of leading global powers. It is incumbent on us, as emerging economic powers to remain equally focused on nurturing regional and global prosperity. We both are at the threshold of an opportunity to join hands and create a resurgence, a positive energy, an "Asian Century"...Our defence & security exchanges now include annual military exercises. There is greater Chinese investment in India and vice versa...trade and commerce can be the most powerful agents in reinforcing our complementarities...in the past decade there has been substantial growth in our bilateral trade and investment ties, but there is a vast untapped potential waiting to be fully realised. We invite Chinese companies to participate in the 'Make in India' initiative and to join us in Start Up India. Let us jointly innovate to create a new model for business.'<sup>149</sup>

Although as will be shown New Delhi under NDA-II is far less emphatic on the 'Chindia' construct and has been worrisome over the Chinese led initiative of One-Belt One Road initiative (OBOR) and the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the building of deep sea water ports in the Indian ocean littoral and has also refused to

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<sup>148</sup> Y. Sinha, 'Admiral R.D. Katari Memorial Lecture by External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha on "The Emerging India – China Relationship and its impact on India/South Asia"', New Delhi, 22 November 2003, in A.S. Bhasin(ed.), *India's Foreign Relations-2003 Documents*, New Delhi, External Publicity Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2004, pp.757-758.

<sup>149</sup> P. Mukherjee, 'Address by the President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee at the Peking University, China on the Topic "India –China Relations: 8 Steps to a Partnership of the People"', 26 May 2016, Press Information Bureau, Government of India, President's Secretariat, [file:///F:/Documents/Address%20by%20the%20President%20of%20India,%20Shri%20Pranab%20Mukherjee%20at%20the%20Peking%20University,%20China%20on%20the%20Topic%20%E2%80%9CIndia%20%E2%80%93China%20Relations\\_%208%20Steps%20to%20a%20Partnership%20of%20the%20People%E2%80%9D.html](file:///F:/Documents/Address%20by%20the%20President%20of%20India,%20Shri%20Pranab%20Mukherjee%20at%20the%20Peking%20University,%20China%20on%20the%20Topic%20%E2%80%9CIndia%20%E2%80%93China%20Relations_%208%20Steps%20to%20a%20Partnership%20of%20the%20People%E2%80%9D.html), (accessed 11 March 2020).

participate in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) trade arrangement as it is seen to affect India trade surplus negatively. India is already a member of three technology related export control groups including the MTCR and seeks to enter the NSG which has been roadblocked by China. New Delhi believes this is because of China's reluctance to acknowledge India as an equal peer.<sup>150</sup>

**Lastly**, they see nuclear weapons as the ultimate weapon to safeguard India's sovereignty and is opposed to capping India's strategic nuclear programme. The nuclear tests were conducted under the BJP government in 1998 but this has been the result of a long process that started under Nehru who laid the early foundations. In a personal interview citing the continuity in India's nuclear programme since the time of Congress Mr.P.R Chakraborty, former Foreign Secretary in MEA said:

The only radical change in policy when the NDA government took over was really the nuclear tests. But the previous (Congress) government under Narsimha Rao had readied everything and even before that under Rajiv Gandhi had prepared the technology. They did not do the tests as it was a political call but the technology was ready. In fact, it is said that Narsimha Rao had ordered the tests but did not take the final call. All Vajpayee had to do was to take the decision. But certain circumstances perhaps forced the tests- the CTBT and the negotiations that were taking place. The Western powers were trying to manipulate all those negotiations so that India would be caught in the bind and India would never be able to test again. So that is why we went for the tests.<sup>151</sup>

The Hindutva discourse do recognises the long term challenge posed by China as 'a source of competition' but continues to see her as an important economic partner. Vajpayee did make an implicit reference to China as a nuclear threat in his letter to Clinton post the nuclear tests, but eventually the BJP government had framed the tests in accordance with the Post-Nehruvian 'nuclear apartheid' argument based on 'equity' and 'non-discrimination'. Further, there has been no change in India's nuclear doctrine under the Modi government which had initially claimed to review the nuclear doctrine, particularly the NFU policy before the 2014 elections. India emerged as a nuclear

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<sup>150</sup> Amb (Retd) N. Deo, 'India in a changing global order', Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Indore, *MEA Distinguished Lectures*, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 7 July 2018, <https://www.mea.gov.in/distinguished-lectures-detail.htm?753>, (accessed 10 May 2019).

<sup>151</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Pinak Ranjan Chakraborty, Indian Foreign Service, Former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India and presently a Distinguished Fellow at Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, 16 December 2015.

weapon state in 1998 under the BJP government and all the successive UPA and NDA-II governments have been expanding India's missile programme and space programme.

To conclude, the hyper-realists and the cultural nationalists lay emphasis on establishing peace and security in India's neighbourhood and in the region. Pakistan sponsored Islamist terrorism, energy security, creating favourable conditions for India's economic development, the reform of the Security Council, promoting multi-polarity, finding an adequate response to doctrines diluting the principles of sovereignty and promoting a more equitable equation between the developed and the developing world in the political, economic and technological domains are some of the challenges facing Indian foreign policy that have been recognised by the Hindutva discourse.

#### **4.4.1 Hindu nationalism and 'Moditva': Re-inventing India?**

Under Modi India is making a conscious shift towards a 'clear and responsible articulation' of India's national interests, objectives and diplomatic tools to achieve them as enunciated in the *Panchamrit* of 'Modi's doctrine' drawn by Ram Madhav who was appointed as the General Secretary of the BJP. The 'Panchamrit' pronounces an 'India First' ideology. He said, 'Whatever we do, it must be for India' to safeguard the honour of the country and to protect the interests and aspirations of its people at home and abroad.<sup>152</sup> The shift has not only been in terms of outlining national priorities, policy initiatives but executing them to realise this 'New India'. The project of India's 'transformation' as Modi believes is 'inseparable from its external context'. At the 2017 Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi he said, 'Transformation, therefore, is not just a domestic focus. It encompasses our global agenda. For me, Sab Ka Saath; Sab Ka Vikas is not just a vision for India. It is a belief for the whole world. And, it manifests itself in several layers, multiple themes and different geographies.'<sup>153</sup>

Modi pursued a globalised foreign policy by injecting enormous energy into diplomacy, crafting joint vision statements, attending multilateral meetings at both regional and global multilateral forums including the Group of 20 (G20), BRICS, ASEAN and the UN General Assembly and visited near around 20 countries within the

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<sup>152</sup> D.P. Bhattacharya, 'My definition of secularism means India first, Narendra Modi tells overseas Indians', *Mail Today*, 10 March 2013.

<sup>153</sup> Modi, 'Inaugural Address by Prime Minister at Second Raisina Dialogue.'

first year.<sup>154</sup> The then EAM Mrs. Sushma Swaraj commenting on Modi's foreign policy activism noted that Delhi, 'has moved with speed and resolve, rarely seen in Indian external engagements, to rebuild our partnerships across the world'<sup>155</sup> through what the Foreign Office declared as 'breakthrough diplomacy'. India's mission is intended at accelerating economic growth, boosting investment, creating jobs and transforming the quality of life of its people and similar to former PM Singh placed India's economic development first. Modi's election campaign was strongly centred on a populist and nationalist agenda of 'acche din' (good days) to realise a 'corruption-free' India that is 'pro-commerce', 'pro-business', 'pro-investments' and would ensure 'inclusive development' for all Indians and this made him extremely popular among the middle class and the youth. Mrs.Swaraj said 'In the last few months, Prime Minister has laid out a clear vision of India's role and place in the world; signalled willingness to assume leadership expected from the world's largest democracy; and demonstrated ability to turn commitments into action and convert opportunities into outcomes.'<sup>156</sup>

India's relations with its neighbourhood is kept at the forefront in Modi's foreign policy priorities. India's priorities for international engagement are outlined as: 'Rebuilding connectivity, restoring bridges and rejoining India with our immediate and extended geographies' with emphasis on trade, Foreign direct investment(FDI), connectivity and infrastructure building and engaging in dialogue with regional groupings more pro-actively. The Modi government also intends to reposition India as a leading commercial power in South Asia and Indian Ocean region.<sup>157</sup> Modi supports 'FDI led manufacturing-based model of growth' and focusses on developing infrastructure to enhance connectivity and commerce. 'Economics' retains the central focus and henceforth Modi further stressed on 'shaping relationships networked with India's economic priorities' and building strong strategic partnerships with key states, securing energy supplies and attracting increasing flows of investments. Indian youth forms a importance resource for Modi's vote-bank and Modi gives concentrated

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<sup>154</sup> 'Details of Foreign/Domestic Visit: Details of Foreign/Domestic Visits of Prime Minister since 26.05.2014', PMINDIA, 20.02.2020 (updated), <https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/details-of-foreigndomestic-visits/>, (accessed 21 February 2020); M. Chand, 'Journey across Continents', Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 7 April 2017, [https://www.mea.gov.in/Journeys\\_Across\\_Continents/index.html#book5/](https://www.mea.gov.in/Journeys_Across_Continents/index.html#book5/), (accessed 22 August 2018).

<sup>155</sup> Press Trust of India, 'India moving with speed to rebuild global partnerships: Swaraj.'

<sup>156</sup> Press Trust of India, 'India moving with speed to rebuild global partnerships: Swaraj.'

<sup>157</sup> It has been discussed in depth in the following case study chapters.

attention on tapping on India's 'demographic dividend' by 'making India a human resource power to be reckoned with, by connecting our talented youth to global needs and opportunities' which would enhance India's international standing.<sup>158</sup>

The Modi government has been shifting the discourse by redefining Indian foreign policy priorities-both in substance and style. The five pillars of Modi doctrine have focussed on *Suraksha* (security and defence), *Samriddhi* (shared economic prosperity and mutually beneficial cooperation), *Sambaad* (strengthening dialogue between governments, government-business, government to people), *Samman* (protecting the dignity of the country and every Indian in and outside of India), *sabhyata and sanskriti* (emphasizing India's civilizational heritage and cultural links with the world) and constitute the 'Panchamrit' of the foreign policy doctrine. The National General Secretary of BJP, Mr. Ram Madhav elaborating on the 'panchamrit doctrine' said that this gives foreign policy under Modi a distinct Indian identity. In a personal interview he said:

These are the five pillars of [Hindu] India's foreign policy. The first two were always part of Indian foreign policy and also for any other country and there are additional things that Modi has added which are important to understand the shift in India's foreign policy. Indian government attaches great importance to *samman*-the dignity and honour and dignity of the country and every Indian wherever he/she is living. If any single Indian is in distress anywhere in the world some foreign policy establishment has been made accountable to attend and redress his grievances, right upto sub-ministers. This is reflected in the proactive measures taken to evacuate Indian nationals and others from Yemen in Rahat operation. It has brought us rich dividends and due to the focussed and concerted efforts by PM Modi India's stature has increased, as a country India is more respected. Today an average Indian feels more proud of his identity as an Indian anywhere in the world and feels more connected to India and there is a special emphasis to create that feeling.

Second, he added *sambaad* (dialogue). Earlier it was restricted to two areas where government engaged: G-G and G-B (government to government and government-business). Modi expanded this engagement to the Indian diaspora and diaspora engagement have become very big and integral to India's foreign policy, and then further to the local communities, through initiatives

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<sup>158</sup> Modi, 'Inaugural Address by Prime Minister at Second Raisina Dialogue.'

such as visiting universities, special efforts to interact with the local media, meeting scientists, noble laureates, or special groups if any in any country which has given us richer dividends. He has been meeting several thousands of foreign visitors and no other Indian Prime Minister had done it ever. This has helped to create greater awareness about India and to make India more prominently known in those countries.

The third pillar is *suraksha* i.e. security interests and India will engage with other countries to realize those and *samriddhi* which is prosperity as the fourth pillar which means engaging with business to enhance trade and investments.<sup>159</sup>

The diaspora engagement has become an important foreign policy tool under Modi to expand India's reach and influence regionally and globally. This is in continuation with the Singh government that saw diaspora as advancing India's core national interests, particularly in gaining US domestic support for the conclusion on the Indo-US nuclear deal. But for Modi and RSS leaders like Bhagwat, diaspora also serve as exemplars for Indian cultural values and conveyors of key Indian ideas to the rest of the world. Modi talking about Indian students and professionals in USA said,

The talent of Indian professionals has strengthened the technology leadership of American companies... Indian Diaspora has been the biggest contributor to this in the USA. These ambassadors of India are not only contributing to the economy of USA with their talent and hard work. Rather, we are also enriching American society with their democratic values and rich culture.<sup>160</sup>

In addition to tapping the diaspora for its knowledge, talent and skills, they are also important sources for bringing in investment to fund projects like 'Make in India' and the NDA-II government gave them a warm welcome to be involved in the building of 'Brand India' and thereby creating a sense of 'belongingness' to the country amongst the overseas Indians. Even Vajpayee and Singh had reached out to diaspora by making it easier for Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) and the Non-Resident Indians (NRI) to

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<sup>159</sup> Personal interview with the National General Secretary of BJP, Mr. Ram Madhav, New Delhi, 24 August 2017.

<sup>160</sup> N. Modi, 'Translation of Press statement by the Prime Minister on the State Visit of the President of the United States of America to India', 25 February 2020, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, [https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/32420/Translation\\_of\\_Press\\_statement\\_by\\_the\\_Prime\\_Minister\\_on\\_the\\_State\\_Visit\\_of\\_the\\_President\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_of\\_America\\_to\\_India](https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/32420/Translation_of_Press_statement_by_the_Prime_Minister_on_the_State_Visit_of_the_President_of_the_United_States_of_America_to_India), (accessed 5 March 2020).

enter, bring their know-how and invest capital in India which have been further extended under Modi that allows indefinite extension of stay in India with the Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) document and relaxing the rules concerning the inward investments from NRIs, POIs or OCIs which would no longer be considered as foreign investment but similar to domestic capital.<sup>161</sup>

For enhancing *Suraksha* [security], Modi has also strengthened India's defence diplomacy under 'Act East' strategy to enhance military cooperation and security partnerships with Japan, Vietnam, Singapore and Indonesia, alongside strengthening India's power projection capabilities under 'Make in India' and in his vision for 'SAGAR' that uses India's both hard and soft power capabilities to augment India's regional role. India has also undertaken defence modernisation plans such as signing major defence acquisition deals with France and USA, holding joint military exercises with partner nations. The defence modernisation has been pursued under the previous government, but the major shift has been in the intensity and the nature of defence diplomacy. The NDA-II government has placed special attention to India's maritime role and intends on 'building development partnerships that extend from the islands of the Indian Ocean and Pacific to the islands of the Caribbean and from the great continent of Africa to the Americas'.<sup>162</sup> India's Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale during the 2019 Raisina Dialogue organised by ORF remarked that, 'India has moved on from its non-aligned past. India is today an aligned state-but based on issues.'<sup>163</sup> India is having a stronger position in multilateral institutions and therefore it should strive to emerge as a rule shaper. New Delhi intends at 'creating Indian narratives on global challenges' and to help 're-configure, re-invigorate and rebuild global institutions and organizations'<sup>164</sup> rather than undermining the liberal order and its institutions as China seeks to do. This rising global stature has enabled India to play a bigger role in shaping policy debates and the India's large economy is recognised as a key factor that would enable India to become a rule maker than a rule taker. Hence, India wants to seek membership of the UN Security Council, Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and other

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<sup>161</sup> Hall, *Modi and Re-invention of Indian foreign policy*, p.99

<sup>162</sup> Modi, 'Inaugural Address by Prime Minister at Second Raisina Dialogue.'

<sup>163</sup> N. Basu, 'India is no longer 'non-aligned'', says Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale', *The Print*, 10 January 2019, <https://theprint.in/diplomacy/india-is-no-longer-non-aligned-says-foreign-secretary-vijay-gokhale/176222/>, (accessed 12 March 2020).

<sup>164</sup> Modi, 'Inaugural Address by Prime Minister at Second Raisina Dialogue.'



export control groupings, actively participate in building regional security architectures in IOR and Indo-Pacific region and climate change negotiations.

Under Modi, India is claimed to be changing fast into one of the most open economies in the world with FDI inflows being at an all-time high, rising by 40 per cent.<sup>165</sup> India has also moved up to the 63<sup>rd</sup> position in the World Bank Index of 'Ease of Doing Business' and in the Global Competitiveness Index.<sup>166</sup> The Goods and Services Tax introduced in July is India's biggest economic reform measure ever that created a unified market of 1.3 billion people. Programmes like 'Digital India', 'Start Up India', 'Skill India' and 'Make in India' (to transform India into a manufacturing hub) are seen as changing the economic landscape of the country assisting India to turn into a knowledge based, skill supported and technology driven society and emphasizing energy cooperation, green finance, and digital economy in BRICS.<sup>167</sup> The common objective that binds the Asian region together has been the need to sustain continued growth and development through trade negotiations, FTAs and regional connectivity projects. India views FTAs as an important tool to enhance its trade and investment, and has signed a number of trade agreements with various countries (most of the existing ones are with the Asian countries) or groups making her one among the top countries in Asia with the maximum number of FTAs. According to the Asian Development Bank Institute, India has around 42 trade agreements (including preferential agreements) which are either in effect or have been signed or under negotiation or proposed with each differing in terms of the level of their economic development from the other. India has also launched its own infrastructural projects to enhance inter-connectedness in the region such as the 'Sagar Mala' project and 'Project Mausam'. But there is a lack of cooperation to generate complementarities even for mutual benefit arising out of such individual initiatives due to conflicting interests and

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<sup>165</sup> K. Suneja, 'FDI inflows up 28 percent in Q1 to \$16.3 bn', *Economic Times Bureau*, 5 September 2019, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/fdi-inflows-up-28-percent-in-q1-to-16-3-bn/articleshow/70986011.cms?from=mdr>, (accessed 10 December 2019).

<sup>166</sup> Y.S. Sharma, 'India jumps to 63rd position in World Bank's Ease of Doing Business 2020 report', *Economic Times Bureau*, 24 October 2019, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/india-jumps-to-63rd-position-in-world-banks-doing-business-2020-report/articleshow/71731589.cms?from=mdr>, (accessed 10 December 2019).

<sup>167</sup> N. Modi, 'Intervention by Prime Minister at the Dialogue with BRICS Business Council in Xiamen, China', 4 September 2017, [https://www.mea.gov.in/SpeechesStatements.htm?dtl/28914/Intervention\\_by\\_Prime\\_Minister\\_at\\_the\\_Dialogue\\_with\\_BRICS\\_Business\\_Council\\_in\\_Xiamen\\_China\\_September\\_04\\_2017](https://www.mea.gov.in/SpeechesStatements.htm?dtl/28914/Intervention_by_Prime_Minister_at_the_Dialogue_with_BRICS_Business_Council_in_Xiamen_China_September_04_2017), (accessed 11 September 2018).

scepticism about the economic and strategic implications of such FTAs and projects particularly between the two competing countries in Asia.

Lastly, the most unique feature has been Modi's emphatic focus on India's civilizational exceptionalism and his explicit focus on soft power diplomacy that imbues Modi's foreign policy with the spirit of 'Indiannes'. In a personal interview with Mr. Ram Madhav further added:

Finally, the most unique feature is *sabhyata* (civilizational exceptionalism). Modi wears India's cultural values on his sleeves. He does not hesitate to talk about India's civilizational values and his speeches have reflection of India's cultural and civilizational aspects. He refers to the Bhagavad Gita, utters Sanskrit slokas and gifts the Gita to other leaders and speaks of civilizational values in his speeches which earlier for political reasons we never used to do. We recognised that India's culture and religion has a big soft power value, so he visited Buddhist temples in Japan, mosques in Central Asia, Gurudwaras and temples in South East Asia which is unique. The distinctness of Modi's government are in these five pillars.<sup>168</sup>

Modi's use of 'soft power' makes explicit reference to Hindu nationalist conceptions of India and he himself takes pride in his 'Hindu identity' and this is further reflected as the government has initiated a series of 'inter-religious' and 'inter-cultural' dialogues. He emphasizes India's 'civilizational exceptionalism' and 'soft power' through the use of religion, culture and diaspora to forge deeper ties with Indian Ocean littoral countries and Far East. One of the priorities of his international engagement is, 'Spreading the benefits of India's civilizational legacies, including Yoga and Ayurveda, as a global good'<sup>169</sup> and turning India into a 'world guru' with increasing respect for Indian traditions, ideas, culture and values. Modi sees India's role in the world and the nation's foreign policy as rooted in India's civilizational consciousness. India's 'strategic intent is shaped by our civilizational ethos of: realism, co-existence, cooperation and partnership' which makes India see 'the whole world as one family' and to look beyond its self-interests. Modi said:

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<sup>168</sup> Personal interview with the National General Secretary of BJP, Mr. Ram Madhav, New Delhi, 24 August 2017.

<sup>169</sup> Modi, 'Inaugural Address by Prime Minister at Second Raisina Dialogue.'

But, self interest alone is neither in our culture nor in our behavior. Our actions and aspirations, capacities and human capital, democracy and demography, and strength and success will continue to be an anchor for all round regional and global progress...It is a force for peace, a factor for stability and an engine for regional and global prosperity.<sup>170</sup>

The RSS head Mohan Bhagwat also drawing on the civilizational roots that distinguished Bharat from those states practising ‘power-politics’ or ‘expansionism’ said;

Rashtra [Nation] is not made artificially. Our existence as Rashtra is based on Sanskriti and people, which is unique and entirely different from the nation-state concept rooted in power. Our Sanskriti, that binds us together in a common thread despite our different languages, regions, sects, religions, castes, customs, etc; and the source of this Sanskriti, our eternal life values that envision humanity as a global family, is our collective bonding spirit.<sup>171</sup>

The RSS has also been vocal in its demand for drafting a new education policy that is India-centric, borrows from the ancient texts and cultural practices; is imparted in the mother tongue and in Bhagwat’s words will ‘hopefully include our value based systems.’<sup>172</sup>

There has been a continuity in India’s foreign policy but several dimensions have also been added to re-adjust India’s foreign policy to pursue its national interests while holding on to its cherished principles. Former diplomat and Secretary, MEA Mr P.R.Chakraborty in a personal interview summarised this as according to him:

India’s core foreign policy goals will not change very much. One will find the tools being manipulated to achieve the same goals-which are the core goals in Indian foreign policy. Any government who comes to power cannot ignore these goals. The topmost priority is to protect the frontiers and the borders of India and second, the domestic transformation of India. But there will be different approaches for instance reforms such as economic liberalisation, and

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<sup>170</sup> Modi, ‘Inaugural Address by Prime Minister at Second Raisina Dialogue.’

<sup>171</sup> M. Bhagwat, ‘Summary of the Vijayadashami 2017 address of Sarsanghchalak Dr. Mohan Bhagwat’, 30 September 2017, Rashtriya Swyamsevak Sangha, <http://rss.org/Encyc/2017/9/30/mohan-bhagwat-vijayadashami-speech-2017.html>, (accessed 14 March 2020).

<sup>172</sup> ‘RSS chief hopeful NEP will be rooted in Indian culture, ethos’, *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 18 August 2019, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/rss-chief-hopeful-nep-will-be-rooted-in-indian-culture-ethos/story-QoAVZkCpFXj16rliKymIO.html>, (accessed 2 March 2020).

Modi wants to go ahead to bring in more FDI, and is encouraging 'Make in India' initiative. India is now far more globally engaged in terms of trade and investment. Our foreign trade is more than 50% of GDP (earlier it was 3% of GDP) today which we cannot ignore and programmes like Swachh Bharat (Clean India), or on healthcare are to facilitate the domestic transformation to a more developed society.<sup>173</sup>

As is evident from the above discussion, the primary goal has been inward oriented to transform the lives of its people. Both the INC and BJP governments have seen the relation between India's external relations and internal policies as seamless. Indian government will take all measures to protect her 'vital interests' to realise the fulfilment of these goals which can be broadly summarised as- safeguarding her territorial integrity, ensuring independence in foreign policy making, facilitating socio-economic transformation of India, working for international peace and cooperation and finally preserving India's cultural heritage expounded in its principle of 'unity in diversity' which is being challenged and redefined under Modi's Hindutva nationalism and Hindu internationalism in the region and worldwide. Indian foreign policy is evidently emerging as a natural expression of its Hindu identity.

#### **4.5. Summary**

This chapter provides a detailed account of the two predominant India's national identity discourses and how each of these discourses have re-defined the idea of India in divergent ways. The Nehruvian idea produces a secular idea of India whereas the Hindutva idea propagates an assimilative view of India. First, it draws a detailed account of Nehruvian policies and its ideas of exceptionalism, identifying the key themes and Self/ Other constructions of the Indian Self in opposition to the colonial West and also in relation to Pakistan, whereas China is viewed under the frame of 'Asian unity' and makes a detailed discussion of Nehru's non-alignment policy. The chapter then looks at the transformed Post-Nehruvian discourse under the Indian National Congress by drawing on its key principles as 'non-alignment' gave away to an 'un-aligned' or 'multi-aligned' world, yet Indian elites held on to safeguarding

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<sup>173</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Pinak Ranjan Chakraborty, Indian Foreign Service, Former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India and a Distinguished Fellow at Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, 16 December 2015.

India's 'strategic autonomy' in foreign policy decision making. Drawing on Nehruvian principles the Post-Nehruvian discourse reproduces a secular and neoliberal idea of Indian Self that has been viewed as the 'hegemonic' foreign policy discourse in the post-cold war era.<sup>174</sup> The emphasis on economics under the Singh doctrine<sup>175</sup> in the UPA regime (2004-2014) became central to augment India's rise and influence. Both the Congress and the BJP have endorsed a 'neo-liberal' approach to open market and free trade as it is increasingly recognised that, 'Market protection is giving way to dismantling of trade barriers. Competition is the mantra, free trade the 'dharma' and multilateralism the altar on which the economic relations are now conducted.'<sup>176</sup>

The 'Nehruvian idealism' however came under criticism<sup>177</sup> and contestation from the hyperrealist discourse which included, 'a renascent conservative-realist' perspective and second a more ideologically driven 'Hindutva' (or cultural nationalist) viewpoint, both of these sub discourses that have found political space in the BJP<sup>178</sup> and converge in their appreciation of national strength (*shakti*), peace (*shanti*) and growth (*vikaas*) by strengthening hard power capabilities, regional connectivity and cultural diplomacy. India was seen as requiring a pragmatic approach based on *realpolitik*<sup>179</sup> to correct the lack of political capacity to define its strategic priorities and the absence a 'distinct strategic doctrine' to tackle its adversaries.<sup>180</sup> The

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<sup>174</sup> See Wojczewski, 'India and the Quest for World Order', p.95, p.180. In his study Wojczewski ends his period of analysis from 1990 to 2014 and does not include the analysis of the first term of Modi government from 2014- 2019.

<sup>175</sup> Dr. Manmohan Singh himself initiated the economic reforms as the Finance minister in 1991 and has been the mastermind for liberalising Indian economy and to draw in greater foreign direct investment (FDI) to boost India's economic growth.

<sup>176</sup> A.S. Bhasin(ed.), *India's Foreign Relations-2005 Documents*, New Delhi, External Publicity Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2006, p.ii.

<sup>177</sup> J.B. Kripalani, 'For Principled Neutrality: A new Appraisal of Indian Foreign Policy', *Foreign Affairs*, vol.38, no.1, October 1959, pp.49-50, pp.56-60; G.P. Srivastava, 'Second Thoughts on Indian Foreign Policy', *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 21, no.2, April-June 1960, pp.143-153; S. Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, Indiana, Oxford University Press, 1993, p.106; M. Edwardes, 'Illusion and Reality in India's Foreign Policy', *International Affairs*, vol.41, no.4, January 1965, pp.48-58.

<sup>178</sup> Cohen, *India: Emerging Power*, p.43.

<sup>179</sup> See Mohan, *Crossing the Rubicon*, 2003; A. Kapur, *India: From Regional to World Power*, New York, Routledge, 2006; Ganguly, 'India's Foreign Policy Grows Up'; Karnad, *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security*, p.95; B. Chellaney, 'Nuclear-Deterrent Posture', in B. Chellaney(ed.), *Securing India's Future in the New Millennium*, New Delhi, Orient Longman, 1999, pp.141-222; Advani, *My Country, My Life*, p.611.

<sup>180</sup> Chellaney considers India as a 'lamb' that has distinguished itself by reposing trust in adversaries such as the 'wolf' China and 'jackal' Pakistan and had cried foul when they deceived it. It sought to redress it by making hitherto 'lamb' India economically and militarily strong to deal with them. See B. Chellaney, 'Hug, Then Repent', *Hindustan Times*, 26 January 2000.

hyperrealist/cultural-nationalist discourse challenged and resulted in the much needed mutation and transformation of the Nehruvian discourse to pursue a larger regional and international role for a rising India commensurate with its 'great power' aspirations.<sup>181</sup> The rising influence of the *Hindutva* discourse under the BJP since the 1980s left a mark on the Post-Nehruvian discourse<sup>182</sup> particularly on India's stance towards strengthening India's hard power capabilities evidently in India's overt nuclearisation in 1998. The UPA governments focussed on increasing India's economic growth, developed deeper 'strategic relationships and economic partnerships' with all major powers and countries in the neighbourhood and other regions. The 'Look East' policy initiated under Narsimha Rao led Congress government in early 1990s translated into the 'Act East' under Modi with the intent of expanding India's 'spheres of influence' and its 'arc of ambit'.<sup>183</sup> Under Modi Indian Navy has expanded its maritime presence in the 'Indo-Pacific' theatre by making a 'strategic turn' eastwards, pursued defence modernisation and enhanced India's defence diplomacy with partner countries like USA, Japan and Israel and reached out to the Indian diaspora with an emphatic use of religion based 'soft power' diplomacy.

The hyperrealist-BJP discourse re-produces a geocultural idea of the Indian Self drawing from ancient texts that establishes India's central position in the Indian Ocean and entrust Hindu India to defend the 'Akhand Bharat' which has been fragmented by the inferior Other-Pakistan and intends to disrupt India's territorial integrity. The discourse reinterpretes the key tenets of secularism, dharma and *Indian-ness* to

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<sup>181</sup> This has been discussed in several studies (see Chapter 2 for literature review) but not fully explicated with concentrated focus on the discursive articulation of Indian exceptionalism in these national identity discourses and its reproduction in India's foreign policy through in depth case studies.

<sup>182</sup> See S. Chaulia, 'BJP, India's Foreign Policy and the 'Realist Alternative''; S.D. Muni and C.R. Mohan, 'Emerging Asia: India's Options', *International Studies*, vol.41, no.3, 2004, pp.313-333; J. Chiriyankandath and A. Wyatt, 'The NDA and Indian Foreign Policy', in K. Adeney and L. Sáez (eds.), *Coalition Politics and Hindu Nationalism*, London, Routledge, 2005; K. Sridharan, 'Explaining the Phenomenon of Change in Indian Foreign Policy under the National Democratic Alliance Government', *Contemporary South Asia*, vol.15, no.1, 2006, pp.75-91; C. Ogden, 'Norms, Indian Foreign Policy and the 1998-2004 National Democratic Alliance', *The Round Table*, vol.99, no.408, pp.303-315; Ogden, *Hindu Nationalism and the Evolution of Contemporary Indian Security*; Chacko, *Indian Foreign Policy*; Wojczewski, 'India and the Quest for World Order'; Das, *Revisiting India's Nuclear Policy*.

<sup>183</sup> The term 'sphere of influence' or the 'extended neighbourhood' has been used under the NDA government under PM A.B. Vajpayee's administration and the ultra-realists or pragmatist that sought to develop stronger economic, political and military relations with the major powers and East Asian countries whereas the current BJP government under Narendra Modi administration uses the term the 'arc of ambit' that seeks to enhance India's area of operations and a greater engagement with countries from West Asia and Indo-Pacific as will be discussed in following chapters. See C.R. Mohan, *Modi's World: Expanding India's Sphere of Influence*, Noida, Harper Collins Publishers India, 2015.

reproduce the 'Indian exceptionalism' in forms of statecraft, warfare that distinguishes between Hindu civilization as superior from the Other -Abrahmic faiths against which Hindu India needs to be defended. They believe that India's greatness can be realised primarily by strengthening India's military muscle and cultural unity. Under Modi's first term, he has sought to re-invent the ideological foundations of his foreign policies which he sees as emanating from India's civilizational ethos with an 'India-first' ideology. He has placed primary importance on reconnecting India with its 'immediate' and 'extended neighbourhood' through commerce, connective and culture as enumerated in the Panchamrit doctrine with special emphasis on religious soft power diplomacy.

Both of these discourses give an idea of the key principles and themes of Indian-ness, the worldviews of India's security elites, their [re]interpretation of India's strategic culture and in the process reproduces different temporal and spatial-political Others against which the Indian Self is defined. This helps to unravel the 'idea of India' that is reproduced in the key texts and foreign policy discourse and will be relevant to understand India's behaviour through in-depth case studies as follows in the next chapters.

## Chapter 5

### India's Nuclear Discourse and 'Exceptionalism': From an 'Outlier' to Renewed Engagement

*India is now a nuclear weapon state. This is a reality that cannot be denied. It is not a conferment that we seek; nor is it a status for other to grant. It is an endowment to the nation by our scientists and engineers. It is India's due, the right of one-sixth of humankind. Our strengthened capability adds to our sense of responsibility; the responsibility and obligation of power.*

-Atal Bihari Vajpayee<sup>1</sup>

#### 5.1. Introduction

Atomic energy has been central to India's postcolonial identity production as a strong, modern and independent nation-state and the security elites still grapple to continuously reproduce India's national identity and her sense of *exceptionalism* in the nuclear policy discourse. Former National Security Advisor, Shiv Shankar Menon,<sup>2</sup> noted that, 'Nuclear decision making in India is an example of strategically bold decisions combined with tactically cautious steps, a pattern that is not uniquely Indian but one that Indian foreign and security policy has made its own.'<sup>3</sup>

The possibility of harnessing atomic energy presented an equal opportunity for both the most and the least developed states to utilise its power potential as they 'would be beginning on relatively even footing'<sup>4</sup> and therefore could not be missed. India is continuously reproduced as a 'responsible' and 'restrained' power that has been 'forced' to go nuclear but remains vowed to elimination of nuclear weapons and has adopted a nuclear posture based on minimum deterrence and 'no first use'. The first

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<sup>1</sup> A.B. Vajpayee, 'Statement by Prime Minister: Recent Nuclear Tests in Pokhran', *Lok Sabha Debates*, New Delhi, 27 May 1998, Col. 279.

<sup>2</sup> S. Menon served as the National Security Advisor (Fourth) to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh from January 2011-May 2014 and also as the Foreign Secretary, India's top diplomat from October 2006-July 2009 and prior to that he was the Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan and Sri Lanka and the Ambassador to China and Israel.

<sup>3</sup> S. Menon, *Choices: Inside the Making of India's Foreign Policy*, New Delhi, Penguin Random House India, 2016, p.184.

<sup>4</sup> I. Abraham, *The Making of an Indian Atomic Bomb: Science, Secrecy and the Postcolonial State*, New York, Zed Books, 1998.



half of the chapter looks at this performative enactment of India's identity and her sense of *difference* in the nuclear discourse through boundary (re)production between the Self and the Other(s) since independence until the Pokhran tests in 1998. It adopts a constructivist and interpretive approach to analyse the representational practices in the nuclear discourse. The second half of the chapter looks at how this [re]production and recognition of 'Indian exceptionalism' as a responsible nuclear power culminated in the signing of the Indo-US Civilian Nuclear Agreement. It also explores the reproduction of 'Indian-ness' post the Indo-US nuclear deal as India re-engages with the non-proliferation order after having been brought into the mainstream that allows it to participate in nuclear commerce. India has gained membership of various export control groupings, is further seeking entry in the NSG, inked civilian nuclear energy cooperation agreements with several countries and has thereby made a transition from being an outlier into a responsible stakeholder and intends to emerge as a norm-shaper in the non-proliferation regime.

## **5.2. Nehru's 'Scientific Temper' (1948-1964) and temporal Othering**

India's atomic policy post-independence has been defined by Nehru's vision of what has been characterised as 'idealistic nationalism' to establish a postcolonial state that was united, strong and 'ethically' modern.<sup>5</sup> The post-independent elites wanted to hold on to the idea of India as a distinct 'civilizational state' with an inherent 'greatness' and 'moral pre-eminence' destined to play a major role in the international affairs.<sup>6</sup> With a keen interest in science and infrastructure building, Nehru headed the portfolios of atomic energy, industrial research and natural resources, defence, economic planning and external affairs. Improving the socio-economic conditions by building infrastructure and basic heavy industries was attached prime importance rather than strengthening the country's defence. To Nehru's belief India had no enemies (as no one would attack a big country like India); attacks from the neighbouring countries were

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<sup>5</sup> T.T. Poulouse, *Perspectives of India's Foreign Policy*, New Delhi, Young Asia Publishers, 1978, p.102; P. Chacko refers to this as India's attempt to construct an ethical modernity in its approach to science and nuclear energy. See Chacko, *Indian Foreign Policy*, p.3.

<sup>6</sup> These narratives of self-representations in India's national identity discourses have been elaborated in Chapter 4 and 5.

not imminent; military alliances were not felt necessary and were rejected; and finally security was expected to flow from internal economic and political development.<sup>7</sup>

Nehru's secular India favoured 'strength through peace'<sup>8</sup> and entailed an ambivalent approach to Western practices of rationality, science and modernity. On one hand it resisted Western colonialism but on the other political leadership being exposed to the Western society and education appreciated the transformative power of science and its benefits for the betterment of human society. They believed that India's colonial subjugation under Britain was largely because of India's failure to embrace the scientific approach and rational inquiry by holding on to superstitions instead<sup>9</sup> which needed to be remedied. Following the understanding of mimicry/difference paradox of post-colonial societies,<sup>10</sup> it is evident that though Nehru wanted to modernise India through industrialisation, economic development, and embracing modern technology, he also remained critical of the Western model of modernity that came through colonial exploitation.<sup>11</sup>

India with scarce resources and a colonial history had always attempted 'catching up with the desired modernity,'<sup>12</sup> but Nehru rejected an outright adoption of a technology that has been used for human devastation. He favoured peaceful uses of atomic energy for generating power for public consumption and developmental purposes.<sup>13</sup> He advocated general disarmament instead of arms control based on the principles of 'equity, fairness and non-discrimination' which was expected to create 'an

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<sup>7</sup> Kapur, *India: From Regional to World Power*, pp. 99-100.

<sup>8</sup> This has been elaborately discussed in Chapter 4 under Nehru's idea of 'Indianness'

<sup>9</sup> A. Nandy, *Traditions, Tyranny and Utopias: Essays in the Politics of Awareness*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1986, p.310; J. Nehru, 'Control of Nuclear Energy', Statement in the House of People (Lok Sabha), 10 May 1954, in *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches 1955-57*, New Delhi, The Publications Division, Government of India, 1961, p.289.

<sup>10</sup> Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments*.

<sup>11</sup> Chacko, 'The Search for a scientific temper', pp.185-186.

<sup>12</sup> Abraham, *The Making of an Indian Atomic Bomb*, p.19, p.105.

<sup>13</sup> Chacko, 'The Search for a scientific temper', pp. 185-186; R.V.R. Murthi, *Global Nuclear Regime and India*, New Delhi, Manas Publications, 2013, p.69; R.M. Barsur, *Minimum Deterrence and India's Nuclear Security*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2006, p.60.

<sup>13</sup> Constituent Assembly of India, *Legislative Debates*, 2nd Session, vol.5, New Delhi, The Publications Division, Government of India, 1948; J. Nehru, 'Problems of Peace' in *India's Foreign Policy: Selected Speeches September 1946-April 1961*, New Delhi, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1961, p.219; Murthi, *Global Nuclear Regime and India*, p.69; Nehru, 'Suspension of Nuclear Tests', in *India's Foreign Policy: Selected Speeches, September 1946 – April 1961*, New Delhi, Publications Division, Government of India, 1961, p.197.

atmosphere of co-operation'<sup>14</sup> as it was becoming technologically easier and cheaper for any industrialised country to produce nuclear and thermonuclear bombs. India was one of the first states to call for test ban as early as in 1954 and to sign the Partial Test Ban Treaty in 1963.<sup>15</sup> Such enactment of an Indian *difference* based on its emphasis on peaceful uses, rejection of use of nuclear weapons (though keeping the option open) for military purposes and advocating disarmament on every international forum (which remains consistent in India's official discourse still) allowed an otherwise poor and militarily weak state to assume a more influential role irrespective of its material clout and stood in congruence with India's non-aligned posture. This resulted in a period marked by nuclear ambivalence and a strong sense of 'nuclear exceptionalism'.<sup>16</sup>

Despite a strong admiration for science and rationality, Nehru rejected a total emulation of the Western ways but embraced modernity on 'civilizational lines' or in other words keeping the Indian ethos or consciousness in mind, as he wrote, 'there can be no real cultural or spiritual growth based on imitation.'<sup>17</sup> Science and modernity was expected to liberate India from the shackles of 'psychology of subservience' under colonization and create social change and economic development but the methods implemented for scientific progress had to be in congruence with 'the background and cultural development of a country or a community.'<sup>18</sup> Therefore he also drew on moral and cultural traditions rooted in ancient India to create a modern India that had a scientific outlook yet remained distinctly Indian.

Nehru with a strong scientific predisposition<sup>19</sup> and a group of Indian engineers and scientists many of whom were educated from England played a key role in laying the early foundations and necessary infrastructure of India's nuclear programme.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Nehru, 'Suspension of Nuclear Tests' in *India's Foreign Policy*, p.197.

<sup>15</sup> The Partial Test Ban Treaty, 1963 banned nuclear tests in atmosphere, outer space and underwater was seen by the Indian elite as a right step towards nuclear disarmament.

<sup>16</sup> Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments*; Chacko, 'The Search for a scientific temper', p.186.

<sup>17</sup> Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p.564.

<sup>18</sup> Lok Sabha, 'Foreign Policy situation', *Lok Sabha Debates*, Third series, vol. 35, 24 November 1964, New Delhi, col.1549.

<sup>19</sup> See J. Nehru, *Autobiography*, revised edn., Bombay, Allied Publishers, 1962; M.J. Akbar, *Nehru: The Making of India*, London, Viking, 1988; J.M. Brown, *Nehru: A Political Life*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2003; D. Arnold, 'Nehruvian Science and Postcolonial India', *The History of Science Society*, vol. 104, 2013, pp.360-370.

<sup>20</sup> Homi J. Bhabha, S.S. Bhatnagar, K.S. Krishnan constituted the inner circle that came to hold top-ranking positions in India's science infrastructure, scientific and planning commissions and research laboratories. There were others like Meghnad Saha, M.K. Dasgupta, B.D. Nagchaudhuri forming the outer layer who established or spearheaded research institutes or universities and organised scientific

Nehru, along with Homi J. Bhabha, a physicist and the father of India's nuclear programme<sup>21</sup> saw nuclear technology as a cheap source of power for a 'power starved' and 'underdeveloped' India's economic prosperity. It was an opportunity to instil a 'scientific temper' which according to Nehru '...should be, a way of life' as 'it is the temper of a free man.'<sup>22</sup> Recognising Nehru's vision on the importance of nuclear energy, Congress Parliamentarian, Mr. Adhir Chowdhury notes in a personal interview that:

The value of nuclear energy was first recognised by the Congress party led by Nehru. The reason was that we should not be left behind in any kind of scientific pursuit. India remained non-aligned and supported disarmament since independence, but Nehru envisaged that in the future India will require nuclear power because in proportionate to the growth of our population, there remains a mismatch between supply of power generation and demand for consumption and industrialisation. India needs a balanced energy mix in order to meet her demand for power and the foundation was established by Nehru. At the time, Mrs. Indira Gandhi took a courageous initiative which led to the Pokhran tests in 1974. India again conducted its nuclear tests in 1998 and became a nuclear weapon state. The international community realized that India is a power to reckon with.<sup>23</sup>

The 'economic' rationale for the pursuit of India's socio-economic development has been the predominant narrative since the time of Nehru which was relevant even during the debates on Indo-US Nuclear deal. It placed utmost importance on the access of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes so as to meet the energy demands of a nation that wanted to industrialise and emerge as a modern post-colonial state. It additionally draws attention to the credit of the INC and contributions of Nehru that need not be ignored, as the nuclear tests in 1998 were possible because post-independence, Nehru had the

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societies designed towards advancement of scientific research across various fields. See A. Kapur, 'India: The nuclear scientists and the state, the Nehru and the post-Nehru years', in E. Solingen (ed.), *Scientists and the State: Domestic Structures and the International Context*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1994, pp.209-229; Arnold, 'Nehruvian Science and Postcolonial India.'

<sup>21</sup> Homi Bhabha submitted the proposal to the Sir Dorab Tata Trust to create a nuclear research institute which led to the creation of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) on 19 December 1945 with Bhabha as its first Director.

<sup>22</sup> Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p.512.

<sup>23</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Adhir Chowdhury, Member of Parliament, senior leader of Indian National Congress, former Union Minister (2012-2014) and President of West Bengal Pradesh Congress, New Delhi, 22 December 2015.

vision to plan for India's future energy needs and the role of nuclear power in it that was realised in a three stage nuclear programme devised by Bhaba.

This investment in the scientific progress was seen essential to make India 'industrially and technologically strong' as to depend on '...outside factors, outside machines, outside economy, outside help' for basic commodities or defence equipment entailed a loss of independence and compromise on national sovereignty.<sup>24</sup> Throughout the 1950s India however, received technical assistance from Britain, Canada, France and United States and was reliant on the 'West' for fuel, expertise and designs to build its own atomic reactors. But she was cautious while accepting financial aid from foreign countries and emphasized the condition of 'no strings attached'.<sup>25</sup>

Even in terms of conventional weapons, Nehru focussed on domestic production but simultaneously felt the need to maintain trade relations with Anglo-American bloc as not being industrialised enough then, India had to depend on other countries for its defence equipment. Although open to explore several possibilities like the Soviet Union, it was difficult to build new channels of trade and commerce overnight as Western (British) goods were suited to the needs of India's defence services that were built up after the British model as inherited by independent India.<sup>26</sup> Accepting help from United Kingdom (UK) and the USA for Nehru did not tantamount to any compromise on India's policy of non-alignment or rejection of the 'Indian way' of thought but he believed that modern weaponry would modernise India and make it

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<sup>24</sup> LokhSabha, 'Demand for Grants-Defence Capital Outlay', *Lok Sabha Debates*, New Delhi, 21 March 1956, col.3273. It was a natural continuity of India's swadeshi fervour that was evidenced in its boycotting for using foreign manufactured products like cotton clothes, smoke during freedom struggle. See Abraham, *The Making of an Indian Atom Bomb*, p.10, p.85; I. Abraham, 'Contra-Proliferation: Interpreting the meaning of India's nuclear tests in 1974 and 1998', in S. D. Sagan (ed.), *Inside Nuclear South Asia*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2009, pp.106-133 for discussion on indigeneity narratives in nuclear programme of India.

<sup>25</sup> India's first research reactor, Apsara was built and designed in India, with assistance and fuel from United Kingdom. Canadian assistance began under the Colombo Assistance Plan that was aimed at providing aid to the developing countries of the British Commonwealth and a 40 MW research reactor agreement was signed in 1956, to be based in Trombay, named as CIRUS on the condition that it would not be used for military purposes (and without any effective safeguards on its use) which attained criticality in 1960. India-US technology cooperation began in December 1950's with the signing of a bilateral agreement that lead to subsequent US technical assistance to India's civilian nuclear plant at Tarapur in its early stages. But US and Canadian assistance were terminated after India's first nuclear detonation in 1974 and that India had used the plutonium produced as a by-product from this reactor for the underground test in May 1974 codenamed 'Smiling Buddha'. See Abraham, *The Making of an Indian Atom Bomb*, p.10.

<sup>26</sup> Nehru, 'The Large Scheme of Things', p.218.

relevant of its time.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, in the initial years, scientific research remained primarily focussed on manufacturing machineries and equipment for civilian use in agriculture or industries. There was not much impetus on the ordnance factories to produce sophisticated weaponry but for socio-economic purposes as tractors.<sup>28</sup>

Nehru had developed close relations with the British scientist and nuclear physicist, Patrick Blackett with a common appreciation for Fabian socialism and emphasis on self-reliance. Blackett over the years had advised Nehru on scientific and military matters and during his many visits to India,<sup>29</sup> he not only emerged as a 'military consultant' but also as an 'intervenor' in scientific affairs and adviser in research systems.<sup>30</sup> Blackett became valuable in the scientific and technological development for underdeveloped countries like India that were trying to both develop and apply such skills to redress socio-economic problems and build a modern military infrastructure. Members of the Indian scientific community like Bhabha, Shanti Bhatnagar, D.S. Kothari, P.C. Mahalanobis and Meghnad Saha, Vikram Sarabhai- all had close interactions with Blackett and were much receptive of his ideas.<sup>31</sup> While noting Nehru's deep passion towards science, Blackett expressed his reservations on Nehru's implementation plans to generate tangible economic benefits as Nehru 'lacked... hard-headed, industrial-minded Ministers who could push on the agricultural programme, the industrial programme.'<sup>32</sup> He remained deeply involved in Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), meeting Bhabha and other industrialists every time he

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<sup>27</sup> Nehru, 'The Large Scheme of Things', p.222.

<sup>28</sup> Personal interview with Retired Air Commodore, Indian Air Force (1966-2003) and Scientist (1987-2003) at Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) who had been involved in the Pokhran –II nuclear testing of 1998, Dr. Parimal Banerjee. Also see Chapter 4 for further discussion on Nehru's industrial, economic and atomic policy.

<sup>29</sup> P.M.S. Blackett visited India in 1947, 1948, 1950, 1953,1954,1955,1963,1964,1965,1966, 1967 and 1971.The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research , headed by Shanti Bhatnagar paid for Blackett's first visit to India in January 1947 during which he received an honorary degree from the University of Delhi and was invited to address the Indian Science Congress (of which Nehru was the President) and also the Association of Scientific Workers of India aimed to increase the application of scientific rationalism in politics and planning and to improve the working conditions of scientists. See R. Anderson, 'Blackett in India: Thinking Strategically about New Conflicts', in P. Hore (ed.), *Patrick Blackett: Sailor, Scientist and Socialist*, London, Frank Cass Publishers, 2003, pp.217-268.

<sup>30</sup> Anderson, 'Blackett in India', p.218; R.S. Anderson, 'Patrick Blackett and Military and Scientific Development of India: Empire's Setting Sun?', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.36, no.39, 29 September 2001, pp.3703-3720.

<sup>31</sup> Few of the aforementioned scientists amongst them developed personal relationships with him over the years. Bhabha and Blackett also developed close relationship from their past association in Cambridge and when Bhabha built TIFR, Blackett was closely involved.

<sup>32</sup> Anderson, 'Blackett in India', p.218.

visited India, visiting and delivering lectures at certain research institutes and appraising new research programmes.<sup>33</sup> He was aware of the ongoing conflict between the 'guns and butter'<sup>34</sup> in India that was tilted towards the imperatives of reducing poverty through industrialisation rather than on building scientific and defence policy. Blackett's report on the organization of India's defence apparatus in 1948 suggested that India's defence budget should not exceed more than 2% of India's GDP. Given India's limited economic resources and the costs entailed in importation of costly weapon system he suggested that India needs to consciously define what armed conflicts India is likely to face, should carefully choose its weapons for those conflicts and opposed the production of nuclear or chemical weapons in India.<sup>35</sup> Blackett felt that India needed to prepare itself for a 'marginal war' (particularly against Pakistan and China), thereby prevented her from acquiring or developing unnecessary weapons that would be of no use given the nature of military risks it was expected to face or strategies of no practical value and 'to make India as nearly as possible a self-sufficient defence entity as may be at the earliest possible date'.<sup>36</sup> However hyper-realists like Bharat Karnad saw this as having a negative impact on India's defence situation as he felt that it restricted India's military growth apart from doing only the barest minimum, so that India continue to remain dependant on the UK for any military help.<sup>37</sup>

The Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) was established in 1954 and along with Atomic Energy Commission (established in August 1948) remained under the stronghold of Nehru-Bhabha freed from administrative and scientific bureaucracy. The Indian Atomic Energy Act had stringent provisions regarding secrecy and strong state control over nuclear materials to prevent colonial exploitation. Although India remained involved on global platforms to promote the use of nuclear energy for economic development,<sup>38</sup> Nehru vehemently opposed international control of

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<sup>33</sup> Anderson, 'Blackett in India.'

<sup>34</sup> See Kapur, *India: From Regional to World Power*, pp.99-100 for a discussion on the debate between 'guns and butter' in the Nehru period. 'Butter' symbolized the Indian modernization drive and 'guns' symbolized the militaristic impulse in world politics. The 1962 war showed that economic and military security had to be given equal importance and the slogan became 'guns and butter' and not 'guns or butter'.

<sup>35</sup> In his 1948 report Blackett listed those weapons which should not be developed by India: atomic weapons, chemical warfare. See Anderson, 'Blackett in India', pp.217-268.

<sup>36</sup> Anderson, 'Blackett in India', p.231

<sup>37</sup> Karnad, *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security*, p.127.

<sup>38</sup> Malik, *Indian Nuclear Debate*, pp.40-41

technology and material as envisaged in the Baruch Plan of 1948 and 'Atoms for Peace' proposal of 1954.<sup>39</sup> He was against few influential countries lording over control of raw materials mined, ore processing plants or production of atomic energy as Nehru said unlike countries with adequate power resources, 'It would be disadvantageous of a country like India if that is restricted or stopped.'<sup>40</sup> Indian representative to the UN, Krishna Menon called for the need of an international atomic energy agency to promote peaceful use of atomic energy in whose constitution and rule making, countries like India needed to have a 'full say'.<sup>41</sup> The nationalist leadership from the beginning had sought to maintain India's autonomy and control over its nuclear materials and energy sector.

### **5.2.1. The lessons of 1962 War**

India's relations with its two most important neighbours China and Pakistan were troubled with historical animosities and border disputes. Pakistan however emerged as the prime external Other after partition with feelings of bitterness, communal hatred and violence from both sides. Nehru rejected the communal 'Two-Nation Theory'<sup>42</sup> on which Pakistan was built and a progressive, secular, tolerant, inclusive Indian Self was defined against this inferior Other. Kashmir emerged as a major bone of contention as its geographical position was seen as 'strategically and economically intimately related to India's security and international contacts'<sup>43</sup> and held significance for furthering India's secular identity. For Pakistan, Kashmir being a Muslim majority state had to be a part of Pakistan, and remains integral to its unfinished nation-building process and had kept India engaged in proxy wars and low-intensity conflicts since partition (discussed elaborately in India's 'neighbourhood first' policy in Chapter 6). Pakistan is held responsible for 'invading the state of Jammu and Kashmir' in 1947 and 'launching

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<sup>39</sup> Nehru's view on international control left an enduring influence on India's postcolonial sensitivities that sought to oppose any future measures that placed restriction on technology transfer and reject any international plans to impose safeguards and inspections on nuclear facilities as it was seen as an infringement of sovereignty and keeping her 'underdeveloped' and backward as will be shown in the chapter. See G. Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation*, California, University of California Press, 1999/2001, pp.27-29; Malik, *India's Nuclear Debate*, pp.49-51.

<sup>40</sup> Nehru, 'Control of Nuclear Energy', p.255.

<sup>41</sup> J.P Jain, *Nuclear India (Volumes I and II)*, New Delhi, Radiant, 1974, p.12, p.40.

<sup>42</sup> Two-Nation Theory argues that the creation of two nations of India and Pakistan are based on two different religions-Hindus and Muslims.

<sup>43</sup> J. Nehru, *India's Foreign Policy: Selected Speeches, September 1946-April 1961*, p.145.



an offensive' and force infiltration in 1965 to seize Kashmir by force, for instigating an insurgency against Indian rule and was talking about 'jihad' since the 1950s.<sup>44</sup>

China also did not recognise the McMahon Line drawn by the British representatives and made disputed territorial claims (both in Aksai Chin in western sector and Arunachal Pradesh referred to as Southern Tibet in the eastern sector on the India-China border) and displayed 'expansionist and aggressive propensities' as evident in 1950s disputes over Tibet or building roads in Aksai Chin and showed no reluctance in using force to settle disputes in its favour in 1962. China's aggressive tendencies were opposed to India's approach for peaceful settlement of disputes as Jaswant Singh, former EAM under the BJP led NDA government remarked, '...wherever vital for national security, it acted unilaterally, without any regard for legality and irrespective of consequences.'<sup>45</sup> Nehru misjudged this and instead focussed on appeasing Beijing rather than strengthening India's presence on the border areas. S.Kalyanaraman, a strategic expert at the IDSA under MoD noted, in a personal interview, the need for India to develop infrastructure capabilities on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) border and identified certain limitation that still puts India on a backfoot in the region. He said:

The Himalays play an important role as we are in a difficult terrain and if there is a two front attack, it is difficult for us. China have railways and road network on the border side. On the Indian side we are struggling because of the terrain as it is difficult to build roads that would remain in good condition over a considerable period of time. The mountain is unstable, the weather is against us because the monsoon in Arunachal makes it difficult. We have not been able to achieve these and we need far higher infrastructural investments. Even if we have the will and there are projects to build highways –like the trans-Arunachal highway, there are serious limitations for India to act with assertiveness on that side of border.<sup>46</sup>

While China's authoritarian communist regime stood in contrast to India's pluralist and democratic system, China was also viewed as an important partner with similar interests

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<sup>44</sup> Personal interview with S. Kalyanaraman, Security Expert at IDSA, Ministry of Defence, Government of India, New Delhi, 17 December 2015.

<sup>45</sup> Singh, *A Call to Honour*, p.153

<sup>46</sup> Personal interview with S. Kalyanaraman, Security Expert at IDSA, Ministry Of Defence, Government of India, New Delhi, 17 December 2015.

in developing economic relations or strengthening 'Asian solidarity and unity'<sup>47</sup> to create a fair and pluralistic world order as envisaged by Nehru in the first Asian Relations Conference held in New Delhi in April 1947 that however failed to hold sway with Cold war politics. Few Congress members like Sardar Patel and others in the MEA opposed Nehru's 'China policy' of 'accommodation and appeasement' in the late forties and early fifties. Patel cautioned against China's 'suspicion, scepticism and hostility towards India', 'Chinese irredentism and communist imperialism' and 'the expansion of China almost up to our gates'.<sup>48</sup> Nehru however felt geostrategic and military threats faced regionally were minimal and could be handled through diplomacy under 'internationalist nationalism'<sup>49</sup> and advocated peaceful coexistence with all its neighbours<sup>50</sup> as expounded in *Panchsheel*.<sup>51</sup> To this effect India accepted Chinese control over Tibet, recognised the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 and actively supported China's entry in the UN.<sup>52</sup> Both Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru saw friendly relations between China and India under 'Hind-Chin-Bhai-Bhai' prism as an imperative to the maintenance of peace and stability in Asia. Though the Indian and Chinese experience of colonial subjugation were different,<sup>53</sup> Nehru felt India and China as two large states with enduring civilizational background and a modern outlook both of whom were conducive to international politics of 'amity and friendship' were unlikely to follow the 'destructive path of Western modernity'<sup>54</sup> and would cooperate on third world matters. While constructing an 'Asian way' of doing things Nehru seems

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<sup>47</sup> S. Gurjar, Time to Resurrect the Asian Relations Conference, *The Diplomat*, 18 April 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/04/time-to-resurrect-the-asian-relations-conference/>, (accessed 16 August 2017)

<sup>48</sup> V. Patel, 'Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's letter to Jawaharlal Nehru on 7 November 1950 not only deploring Indian Ambassador KM Panikkar's action but also warning about dangers from China', <http://www.friendsoftibet.org/main/sardar.html>, (accessed 11 March 2020).

<sup>49</sup> See Kalyanaraman, 'Nehru's Advocacy of Internationalism and Indian Foreign Policy', pp.151-175.

<sup>50</sup> Parthasarathy, 'Jawaharlal Nehru and his quest for a secular identity', pp.1-9; Das, 'State, Identity, and Representations of Danger', pp.11-12.

<sup>51</sup> Drawing on Buddhism influence Nehru formulated five pillars of peaceful coexistence, Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, Mutual non-aggression, Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, Equality and cooperation for mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence that formed basis of Nehru's non-alignment and engagement with other states.

<sup>52</sup> India was one of the first countries to recognise People's Republic of China (PRC). See D.R. Mankekar, *The Guilty Men of 1962*, Bombay, Tulsi Shah Enterprises, 1968.

<sup>53</sup> See M. Mohanty, 'Colonialism and the Discourse in India and China', 1999, [ignca.nic.in/ks\\_40033.htm](http://ignca.nic.in/ks_40033.htm), (accessed 3 February 2018) for a comparative case analysis on the different nature of Indian and Chinese experience with Colonialism and approach to western practices of science and modernity.

<sup>54</sup> Nehru, *India's Foreign Policy: Selected Speeches*, 1961, p.262.

to have ignored Japan's imperialistic history and militarism since 1867 that signed several defence pacts and joined Western military alliances.<sup>55</sup> Chief Editor, *The Statesman*, Kolkata, Mr. Manas Ghosh said in a personal interview on China's deceptive and hidden intentions:

India was not taken seriously and the 1962 India-China war was the best example. India did not have the weapons to fight back Chinese. Unlike China India has no expansionist agenda or else we could have interfered in Nepal politics which it did not and nor did India play a big brother approach which it is accused of. But India left it to the Nepalese people to decide its own fate. When India does humanitarian relief operations, it is not about competition with China. Nepal was the only 'Hindu rashtra' in India's neighbourhood and traditional ties with Nepal run into centuries. But when Chinese come they come with different intentions.<sup>56</sup>

The above statement frames India as a benign actor in the South Asian region in opposition to China that seeks to 'encircle' India by expanding its influence even under the garb of humanitarian or developmental activities and also places special responsibility on India to protect the 'Hindu identity' within its frontiers and in its South Asian neighbourhood, an understanding that is largely reflected and re-produced in India's 'neighbourhood first' and 'ocean diplomacy' initiatives. The hyperrealist discourse also remained critical of Nehru's China policy. Nehru's belief that, 'India had a responsibility to promote, project and encourage China'<sup>57</sup> was perceived as patronising attitude in China which resented it and this dented India's stature. India not only remained ignorant of the Chinese incursion but lost territory in the Aksai Chin because of its lack of strategic planning, inadequate commitment to territory and scant attention towards settlement of boundaries under the influence of 'false idealism, refusing to accept dualism as the reality of most international situation'<sup>58</sup> that often obscured purposes as opposed to China's pragmatic approach. Jaswant Singh, former EAM (1998-2002) under BJP led NDA-I government noted:

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<sup>55</sup> Japan emerged as a major military power with Sino-Japanese war (1894-95), Japan's invasion of Taiwan (1895), Russo-Japan war (1904-05), and joined the Allies in World War I and the Axis forces in World War II before it renounced war in 1954.

<sup>56</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Manas Ghosh, Chief Editor, *The Statesman* (Kolkata), Kolkata, 26 July 2015.

<sup>57</sup> Singh, *A Call to Honour*, p.157

<sup>58</sup> Singh, *A Call to Honour*, p.171

We approached our immediate post-Independence years fired by the zeal of an idealist. Sharply distinct from this and standing clearly apart was China's approach of a no-nonsense realist. When seen against the total preoccupation of the People's Republic with settled boundaries, India's relative indifference to borders is in itself a lesson in statecraft. Increasingly, China began to distance itself, impatient of the woolliness of India's policy approaches... Whereas the government of the People's Republic of China, less than two years old, was already demonstrating the clarity of purpose of a pragmatic regime of long experience, with defined goals, clear objectives and a sense of national direction, we were moving differently... We were preoccupied in international projections and by imagery. In contrast China withdrew into itself, sought no international projection, and worked ceaselessly to first establish fixed boundaries... refused to be sidetracked by any consideration other than national interest. For it, that was the highest morality.<sup>59</sup>

The hypernationalist discourse while criticising the Chinese *realpolitik* approach and mind-set, also held an admiration and sense of emulation for India to develop similar qualities and mind-set as of China to survive and prosper, and recognised that the failure to be so had kept India an object of great power interventions, though of a different nature as compared to the external interventions before independence.<sup>60</sup> Nonetheless, the Chinese government came to be viewed as 'intensely ethnocentric and expansionist with a dogmatic ideology' and a 'totalitarian and hegemonic power'.<sup>61</sup> India's open, multicultural and multiparty democratic society with a federal structure in opposition to China's authoritarian regime under the tight hold of a single party and strong centralized authority is seen as a positive attribute and makes India superior to China. But it is also a weakness that allows China to exploit the faultiness and disunity within India to its own advantage. As former EAM Jaswant Singh writes:

China became a yet more of a closed society to us, India remained what it has always been, an open society, as open to study and scrutiny as to spying. There is also a possibility that we did not fully grasp the subtlety of

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<sup>59</sup> Singh, *A Call To Honour*, pp.157-158, p.160.

<sup>60</sup> See A. Kapur, 'China's Destructive Policies' in P. Nanda (ed.), *Rising India: Friends and Foes*, New Delhi, Lancer Publishers and Distributors, 2007, pp.53-75.

<sup>61</sup> Kapur, *Rising India*, p.55; S. Singh, *India and the Nuclear Bomb*, New Delhi, S. Chand and Company, 1971, pp.75-76; Nizamani, *The Roots of Rhetoric*; Also see Chacko, *Indian Foreign Policy* for a detailed discussion on postcolonial identity reproduction during the India-China war of 1962.

expression of the Chinese civilisation. It is not as if India suffers from the coarseness of the Occidentals. But our neighbour is given much more to elliptical, subtle, rather indirect and allusive statements than brazenly direct pronouncements in the manner of Western foreign offices. Our experience and learning was of the West, our current problem was with the East.<sup>62</sup>

The 1962 India-China war raised strong criticisms of Nehru's naivety and idealism, led to a feeling of breach of trust and friendship bestowed on an 'unworthy' neighbour and being 'let down by our own kind, by our system'.<sup>63</sup> It resulted in increases in India's defence expenditure, changes in its military planning and sparked debates over the atomic policy for its neglect of 'national security' coupled with the Chinese nuclear tests in 1964. China was then re-produced as a spatial political Other that India had failed to understand and act upon which became a focal point in the narratives that were critical of Nehru's Asia policy and non-alignment.

### **5.3. Re-constructing 'Neighbourhood' and the Nuclear Debate in 1960s**

During the Shastri<sup>64</sup> years India was posed with both military and nuclear threats emanating from Pakistan and China, but these were then constituted as political-strategic and military threats to the Indian Self through *spatial-political* Othering. It did not induce significant disruptions but sparked major debates on India's nuclear policies. Pakistan developed closer relations with the United States, strengthened defence relations with China<sup>65</sup> and laid the foundations to pursue a nuclear programme.<sup>66</sup> China in 1964 exploded its bomb at Lop Nur (continued nuclear testing till 1996) to which

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<sup>62</sup> Singh, *A Call to Honour*, p.158

<sup>63</sup> Singh, *A Call to Honour*, p.159; Personal interview with Mr. K.K. Ganguly, Major General(Retired) Indian Army, Kolkata, 24 August 2015.

<sup>64</sup> Followed by Nehru's death Lal Bahadur Shastri became the Prime minister who was greatly influenced by the Gandhian-Nehruvian principles. See, J.N. Dixit, *Makers of Indian Foreign Policy: Raja Ram Mohan Roy to Yashwant Sinha*, New Delhi, Harper Collins, 2004, pp.101-103; Das, *Revisiting Nuclear India*, p.93.

<sup>65</sup> Under General Ayub Khan Pakistan entered into various military alliances and bilateral agreements with the USA and received military assistance in form of finance and arms. USA supplied Patton tanks and strike aircrafts between 1963-65 which were used with USA's knowledge against India in the India-Pakistan war in 1965. See Das, *Revisiting Nuclear India*, p.94; Dixit, *Makers of Indian Foreign Policy*, pp.104-107.

<sup>66</sup> It had established its Atomic Energy Commission and the Space and Upper Atmospheric Research Commission that initiated Pakistan's indigenous missile technology but remained unsuccessful. See S. Dhanda, *Nuclear Politics in South Asia*, New Delhi, Regal Publications, 2010, p.153; Das, *Revisiting Nuclear India*, p.94.

New Delhi expressed its dismay at the lack of criticism from other nonaligned countries and major powers. In 1966 with China's continued testing, Krishna Menon, India's former Defence Minister (1957-62) and a Congress Parliamentarian<sup>67</sup> said, 'the general reaction in certain parts of the world is that a non-European, non-white nation has exploded a bomb and has, therefore broken, the monopoly,... this is rather not a very realistic or a very highly intelligent way of looking at it...China has committed one explosion-committed is the right word because it is a crime against humanity.'<sup>68</sup> Swaran Singh, the Defence Minister (during 1966-70 and 1974-76) saw this as 'China's callous indifference to the opinion of the rest of the world' that refused to sign the Partial Test Ban Treaty and constituted a 'repeated violation... of the collective will of international community'.<sup>69</sup> P.K. Deo, a Parliamentarian and member of the Ganatantra Parishad (that later merged with the pro-nuclear Swatantra Party) said that on a regional level, 'the explosion of this thermo-nuclear bomb by an expansionist, ruthless and belligerent China has posed a threat to the territorial integrity of the neighbouring countries, especially to this country to whom the Chinese attitude has been very unfriendly....'<sup>70</sup>

The Chinese tests were criticised across parties and feasible options were proposed to deal with the China threat.<sup>71</sup> Pro-nuclear voices had begun to emerge on the scene that argued for either developing nuclear weapons or to seek nuclear guarantees. The Hindu rightist Jana Sangh Party introduced a resolution for production of atom

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<sup>67</sup> V.K. Menon was a Member of Parliament (1957-67, 1969-71 and 1971-74 in Lokh Sabha; 1953-56 and 1956-57 in Rajya Sabha), the Defence Minister during Indo-China war in 1962 and Indian Ambassador to the United Nations (1952-62) and Indian High Commissioner to United Kingdom (1947-1952).

<sup>68</sup> LokhSabha, 'International Situation', *LokhSabha Debates*, Third Series, vol.35, 16-24 November 1964, New Delhi, col.1549.

<sup>69</sup> LokhSabha, 'Explosion of Hydrogen Bomb by China', *LokhSabha Debates*, 21 June 1967, New Delhi, col.6655.

<sup>70</sup> LokhSabha, 'Explosion of Hydrogen Bomb by China', col.6665.

<sup>71</sup> Four options were explored during the parliamentary discussions and in the working paper titled 'India and the Chinese Bomb' produced by the Indian Foreign Ministry in November 1964; to accept a nuclear China and coexist, to seek an umbrella protection from USA, to organise world public opinion in favour of banning nuclear weapons and making continued efforts towards disarmament and finally to manufacture nuclear weapons. See Z.I. Cheema, *Indian Nuclear Deterrent: Its Evolution, Development, and Implications for South Asian Security*, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010, p.76; J. Sarkar, 'The Making of a Non-aligned Nuclear Power: India's Proliferation Drift, 1964-8', *The International History Review*, vol.37, no.5, 2015, pp.935-936.

bombs which found support from the Praja Socialist Party,<sup>72</sup> the Swatantra Party<sup>73</sup> and certain Congress members.<sup>74</sup> Few like Y.B Chavan, the then Defence Minister (1962-66) instead recommended relying on the two super powers to deter Chinese threat which failed to garner much support. R.K. Khadilkar, a Congress Parliamentarian while being opposed to manufacturing of nuclear weapons resisted foreign dependence because:

there is some sort of a helplessness in saying openly that if we do not manufacture atom bomb there are some powers on whom we can depend quietly and they will come to our rescue. That sort of mental, psychological dependence and slavery should not be there.<sup>75</sup>

The members of the Communist party (divided between pro-soviet and pro-China factions) were similarly against accepting shelter under American nuclear umbrella and to depend on 'American imperialism.'<sup>76</sup> KollaVenkaiah, a Parliamentarian from the Communist party said that the USA was, 'the first country, the first government that

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<sup>72</sup> The Praja Socialist Party was founded when the Socialist Party, led by Jayprakash Narayan, Acharya Narendra Deva and Basawon Singh (Sinha), merged with the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party led by J.B. Kripalani (former President of the Indian National Congress and a close associate of Jawaharlal Nehru. A section of the party, led by the trade union leader George Fernandes, broke off to become the Samyukta Socialist Party in 1969. In 1972, another section merged with Fernandes' party to become the Socialist Party once more, before becoming part of the Janata coalition following the Emergency in 1977 and is now alliance with National Democratic Alliance led by BJP.

<sup>73</sup> The Swatantra Party was an Indian libertarian political party that existed from 1959 to 1974. It was founded by C. Rajagopalachari in reaction to what he felt was the Jawaharlal Nehru-dominated Indian National Congress's increasingly socialist and statist outlook. Swatantra (*Freedom*) stood for a market-based economy with the 'Licence Raj' dismantled, although it opposed *laissez faire* policies. The party was thus favoured by some traders and industrialists, but at the state-level its leadership was dominated by the traditional privileged classes such as zamindars (feudal landlords) and erstwhile princes. Located on the Right of the Indian political spectrum Swatantra was not a communal party; its membership was not restricted on the basis of religion, unlike the Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Jana Sangh. Later merged into Janata Party which also merged into Bharatiya Janata Party.

<sup>74</sup> Within Congress the pro nuclear voices such as K.C. Pant (the Secretary of Congress Party), Bhagwat Jha Azad and Harish Mathur who urged the government to give up its policy of 'nuclear celibacy' and be prepared to 'go all out' against Chinese intimidation whereas Krishna Menon and Morarji Desai represented the anti-nuclear views. See I. Abraham, *The Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb*, p.125; Das, *Revisiting Nuclear India*, p.97; Cheema, *Indian Nuclear Deterrent*, pp.116-117; G.G. Mirchandani, *India's Nuclear Dilemma*, New Delhi, Popular Press/Book Services, 1968, pp.52-53, pp.99-100; A. Kapur, *International Nuclear Proliferation: Multilateral diplomacy and regional aspects*, New York, Praeger, 1979; I. Malhotra, 'Shastri gets his way on nuclear policy', *Indian express*, 15 October 2012; M.R. Dandavate, 'Chinese nuclear Challenge to Indian democracy', in A.B. Shah (ed.), *India's Defence and Foreign Policies*, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1968, pp. 133-135.

<sup>75</sup> R.K. Khadilkar served as Deputy Speaker, Lok Sabha from 1967-1969, Minister of Supply, from 1969-1971, and Minister of Labour and Rehabilitation in 1971 and also was one of the founder member of the Congress Socialist party in 1934., left Congress in 1948 and re-joined in 1962. Lok Sabha, 'Manufacture of Nuclear Weapons', *Lok Sabha Debates*, Third Series, vol.35, 27 November 1964, New Delhi, col.2259.

<sup>76</sup> A.B Shah (ed.), *India's Defence and Foreign Policies*, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1966.

has produced this atom bomb and used it against the Asian people'<sup>77</sup> but the Soviet nuclear deterrence was seen as protection for the socialist and newly independent countries. Nonetheless, seeking protection under a nuclear umbrella was discarded as an option as India was too 'great' a nation to become a 'client state' or 'international protectorate' and also such guarantees seemed implausible at the time as US fell short of providing credible assurances every time and henceforth could not be trusted.<sup>78</sup> In 1965 while questioning the credibility of seeking protection under nuclear umbrella, Swaran Singh, the EAM (during 1964-66 and 1970-74) stated that, 'the extension of nuclear protection to non-nuclear states is difficult of implementation and does not itself constitute an effective check against the proliferation of nuclear weapons' and will also entail 'a compromise on sovereignty'.<sup>79</sup> Nonetheless, he rejected any desire to manufacture nuclear weapons despite possessing the capacity to do so if leadership ever considered the option. The focus was on developing scientific knowhow, the economic and industrial base of the country with prominent attention to electronics.<sup>80</sup>

Despite being an ardent supporter of non-alignment Shastri sought, half-heartedly though, multilateral nuclear guarantees from USA, UK and USSR but failed to secure any.<sup>81</sup> The only effective guarantee left was 'the elimination of nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles' by the nuclear powers through non-proliferation treaty which seemed implausible. The Eighteen Nation Disarmament Committee in Geneva remained the major forum for discussions with major nuclear powers and few nonaligned non-nuclear powers to push forward disarmament efforts. New Delhi saw these as 'means to an end' for 'a peaceful, progressive and just world' that should be based on principles of 'equity, non-discrimination and a mutual balance of obligations for every party.'<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> LokhSabha, 'International Situation', cols.1561-1562.

<sup>78</sup> A.G. Noorani, 'India's quest for a nuclear guarantee', *Asian Survey*, vol.7, no.7, 1967, pp.490-502; A. Kapur, *India's Nuclear Option: Atomic Diplomacy and Decision Making*, New York, Praeger, 1976; Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb*; Das, *Revisiting Nuclear India*, 2015.

<sup>79</sup> LokhSabha, 'Guarantee against Nuclear Threat', Written Answers, *LokhSabha Debates*, 29 November 1965, Col.4295; LokhSabha, 'Demand for Grants-Ministry of External Affairs', *LokhSabha Debates*, 1 April 1965, Col.7298.

<sup>80</sup> LokhSabha, 'Explosion of Hydrogen Bomb by China', col.6661, col.6663.

<sup>81</sup> M. Brecher, *Nehru's Mantle: The Politics of Succession in India*, New York, Praeger, 1968, p.127; Cheema, *Indian Nuclear Deterrent*, pp.76-77; Das, *Revisiting Nuclear India*, p.93; Malik, *India's Nuclear Debate*, p.52; Noorani, 'India's quest for a nuclear guarantee.'

<sup>82</sup> Murthi, *Global Nuclear Regime and India*, p.74; V.C. Trivedi, 'Statement by the Indian Representative V.C. Trivedi in the first Committee of the United Nations General Assembly,' 31 October 1966 in J.P.



Those in the favour of weaponisation saw nuclear weapons strategically and as 'the supreme symbol of national self-reliance' for the states without them tend to be 'ignored, disregarded and disrespected' by those who have them.<sup>83</sup> Kapur Singh from Swatantra party felt that to expect and wait for China to 'be exposed to the civilising influences of the UNO' or to mobilise public opinion against nuclearisation (which have greatly failed) are not reflective of '... a very sensible posture on the part of a person who is possessed of realistic manliness but of a person who is a neuter gender, a eunuch, or of one who lives in a paradise not of wisemen and that this is not a position into which we can let our great country slip.'<sup>84</sup> Rather, it entailed a loss of an opportunity in terms of technological advancement and also in being a part of the privileged few as, 'The N-bomb has a moral aspect. It has the aspect of moral prestige. Those who possess it stand as if they are a class apart, a superior class'.<sup>85</sup> It was felt urgent to the extent that, 'even if we have to go with one meal a day, have our own nuclear weapons... for slavery is always worse than hunger.'<sup>86</sup>

The 1962 Indo-China war exposed India's weakness (as militarily underprepared) in the face of Chinese transgressions or intrusions which hindered India's regional leadership role that it saw for itself. China's 'planned and unprovoked attacks on Indian forces at Chola and Nathula', 'training hostile forces -Nagas and Naxalites' and 'the increased aid to Pakistan' were reflective of her 'dangerous designs'.<sup>87</sup> But 'a theocratic, artificial, exclusionist, unstable and irrational' Pakistan became a threat by its very existence to the Indian Self that is reproduced as plural, secular, natural, inclusive, democratic, stable state with a successful federal polity.<sup>88</sup> Pakistan's corrupt leadership with strong military control was perceived as resorting to

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Jain (ed.), *Nuclear India*, vol.II (Reprinted), Delhi, Radiant Publishers, 1974, pp.186-187. India supported several General Assembly Resolutions like Resolution 1908(XVIII), 27 November 1963 which sought general and complete disarmament under effective international control, Resolution 1931 (XVIII), 11 December 1963 which dealt with the conversion to peaceful needs of the resources released by disarmament.

<sup>83</sup> Mirchandani, *India's Nuclear Dilemma*, p.32; Shah (ed.), *India's Defence and Foreign Policies*, pp.166-167.

<sup>84</sup> LokhSabha, 'Manufacture of Nuclear Weapons', col.2273.

<sup>85</sup> LokhSabha, 'Manufacture of Nuclear Weapons', cols.2273-2274.

<sup>86</sup> LokhSabha, 'Manufacture of Nuclear Weapons.'

<sup>87</sup> Nizamani, *The Roots of Rhetoric*, p.37

<sup>88</sup> Nizamani, *The Roots of Rhetoric*, p.40.

covert means 'to pressurise India to part ways with Jammu and Kashmir' or recapture it through force. Menon<sup>89</sup> said:

Pakistan is a country that has committed aggression upon us for the last seventeen years and everything she has done is with the object of blackening the image of India in the world and at no time has she given us any peace on the 2,300 miles of our border. She has been aligned with the Western Powers on the one hand and China on the other in the hope of harassing us one way or the other.<sup>90</sup>

Pakistan's forced infiltration and 'acts of aggression' in 1965 forced India to retaliate by launching a full scale military attack on West Pakistan that ended in a UN mandated ceasefire with the subsequent conclusion of Tashkent Declaration in 1966 that did not contain a no-war pact. India's military action was construed as a defensive response to serious provocations.<sup>91</sup> Complaints were lodged with the UN observers regarding ceasefire violations by both sides.<sup>92</sup> Pakistan's rejection of the 'no war' proposal or any renunciation of the guerrilla warfare in Kashmir was indicative of the fact that the Kashmir issue was yet to be resolved. The Sangh Party document said, 'Pakistan's belligerent mood has not yet subsided and the planned violations of the ceasefire coupled with the threatening and the bellicose tone of Pak leaders' utterances point to her designs to keep up the armed pressure to reopen Kashmir issue on political level...until Kashmir problem is settled in its favour' and one will be '...indulging in self-delusion to think that Tashkent Declaration means the end of Pakistan's aggressive intentions.'<sup>93</sup>

On the other hand, NAM had left India isolated without any allies whereas Pakistan received external assistance from USA that fuelled their zest to launch offensive against India. Supporting India's militarisation and expansion of her defense

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<sup>89</sup> For details on portfolios held by V.K. Menon, see p.178, footnote 67.

<sup>90</sup> LokhSabha, 'Foreign Policy Situation', *LokhSabha Debates*, Third series, vol. 35, no.6, 24 November 1964, New Delhi, col.1542.

<sup>91</sup> J.N. Dixit, *Makers of Indian Foreign Policy: Raja Ram Mohan Roy to Yashwant Sinha*, New Delhi, Harper Collins, 2004, pp.110-112, p.115; Das, *Revisiting Nuclear India*, p.95.

<sup>92</sup> Pakistan violated the agreement reached by both sides to not occupy certain bunkers South of Dograi on the East bank of the B.R.B. Canal. LokhSabha, 'Pak firing in Dograi', Written Answers, *LokhSabha Debates*, 29 November 1965, col.4296.

<sup>93</sup> Bharatiya Jana Sangh, 'Defence and External Affairs', *Party Documents 1952-1980*, Bharatiya Janata Party, New Delhi, Ministry of Public Division, 2005, p.131.

capabilities to secure the border, Mr. Manas Ghosh, the Chief Editor, *The Statesman*, Kolkata has noted in a personal interview:

We did not have the economic or military strength. Rather than intent or skills India lacked capabilities to bargain for with the major powers. Eventually we could secure help of Russia but got clubbed as a pro-Soviet country whereas Americans were supporting the military dictators to the hilt, sending them arms, ammunitions and aircrafts to take on India. The 1965 war was fought on this premise that militarily Pakistan was superior to India then and it was a plan to cut off Kashmir from India and take control of it. If we are militarizing now, it is to secure India's national interest against these two neighbours who are unreliable.<sup>94</sup>

The close collaboration between 'expansionist' China and 'aggressive' Pakistan since then is seen as an attempt to undermine India's political unity and territorial integrity by creating internal divisions through expressing support for Pakistan's self-determination in Kashmir. The Sangh Party documents from 1965 claimed that 'the discovery of arms with Chinese markings' and 'close consultation of Chinese and Pak leaders on political and military levels at every step'<sup>95</sup> proved Pakistani collusion with China with the planned intention and purpose of subverting Indian democracy and thereby posed a 'two front' threat.<sup>96</sup> The limitation of the Nehruvian approach to deal with this hostile neighbourhood was increasingly being debated. Jana Sangh called for a more muscular approach and reorientation of India's nonalignment to deal with China and Pakistan. The Sangh Party documents stated that:

Our [India's] diplomatic missions, which have been accustomed to project and interpret the image and vision of late Shri Nehru rather than of India and her interests and aspirations as an independent national entity, are making the confusion worse confounded by their apologetic attitude in regard to even such vital questions as the Chinese aggression and Kashmir... and India must get out of what Shri Nehru himself described as 'an artificial world of our own imagination.'<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Manas Ghosh, Editor of *The Statesman* (Kolkata), Kolkata, 26 July 2015.

<sup>95</sup> Bharatiya Jana Sangh, 'Defence and External Affairs', p.130; M.S. Pardesi, 'China's Nuclear forces and their Significance to India', *The Non-Proliferation Review*, vol.21, no.3-4, p.340.

<sup>96</sup> G. Kanwal (ed.), *The New Arthashastra: A Security Strategy for India*, New Delhi, Harper Collins Publishers, 2016

<sup>97</sup> Bharatiya Jana Sangh, 'Defence and External Affairs', pp.120-121, p.129.

It was suggested that India should sever diplomatic relations with Communist China, withdraw support to China's entry in the UNO as, 'China's capacity and propensity for mischief will definitely be enhanced if she is armed with the power of veto',<sup>98</sup> and finally strengthen and modernise India's defence and develop an independent nuclear deterrence so as 'to recover territories aggressively taken by China and Pakistan'.<sup>99</sup> The Sangh made an even stronger condemnation of the China-Pakistan collaboration and noted that:

The aggressive propensities of Communist China which have been further reinforced by her entry into the nuclear club, have led to the emergence of new centres of conflict in Asia and Africa. Her tacit alliance with Pakistan against India has been further cemented and both have stepped up their propaganda and diplomatic offensive against India all over the world. They have also started a war of nerves against India through concentration of armies in Tibet and along the cease-fire line in Kashmir and by increasing the number and frequency of armed intrusions into our territory... In view of Pak-China collusion and aggressive posture of China in Ladakh, the safety of the life-line is vital not only for the safety of India but also for the defence of the entire region against Chinese expansionism.<sup>100</sup>

This Hindu wing constructed Tibet and Kashmir insurgency as cultural (in)security threats to 'Hindu' India and proposed taking effective counter-measures against anti-India propaganda of China and Pakistan, by revealing to the world 'true facts about their aggressive activities and the barbarities being committed by them on Tibetans and Hindus of East Bengal.'<sup>101</sup> With Indonesia's tilt towards China, the perceived hostile Pakistan-China-Indonesia axis was constituted as a danger to democracy in Asia and averse to peaceful settlement of disputes. The Sangh Party document stated:

the emergence of the totalitarian axis of Peking, Pindi and Jakarta, aimed against India, the only bulwark of democracy in Asia, is a grim reality. All these three countries entertain no compunction in regard to the use of armed forces to settle international problems and share a common antipathy

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<sup>98</sup> Bharatiya Jana Sangh, 'Defence and External Affairs', p.122

<sup>99</sup> Bharatiya Jana Sangh, 'Defence and External Affairs.'

<sup>100</sup> Bharatiya Jana Sangh, 'Defence and External Affairs', pp.120-121, p.129

<sup>101</sup> Bharatiya Jana Sangh, 'Defence and External Affairs.'

towards the United Nations. This axis is therefore a growing threat to world peace.<sup>102</sup>

The pro-nuclear voices were gradually gaining ground, but the resolution to produce bombs moved by Sangh members was defeated and India's official narrative remained committed to disarmament yet without closing the option of weaponisation.<sup>103</sup> Bhabha had also announced the possibility of exploding an atom bomb within eighteen months in 1964,<sup>104</sup> but senior military officers rejected any potential utility and instead called for improving conventional defence to tackle threats emanating from the neighbourhood.<sup>105</sup> But the leadership simultaneously authorised on-going preparations for a Subterranean Nuclear Explosion Project which paved the way for the 1974 'Peaceful Nuclear Explosion' (PNE) and allowed the expansion of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) activities to develop expertise and infrastructure for indigenous missile programme in the long term.<sup>106</sup> China and Pakistan were recognised as potential nuclear threats that pushed the debates on nuclearisation, however they were mostly reproduced as conventional political-military threats.<sup>107</sup>

#### **5.4. The PNE: The 'Outlier' and self-reliance**

This period witnessed India's rejection of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NNPT) aimed at preventing horizontal proliferation of nuclear technology (but not vertical proliferation) as being 'based on [India's] enlightened self-interest and the considerations of national security'<sup>108</sup> with its continued support for equitable balanced

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<sup>102</sup> Bharatiya Jana Sangh, 'Defence and External Affairs', pp.130-131. Rawalpindi in Pakistan has been referred to as 'Pindi' here.

<sup>103</sup> However many of the 'bomb advocates' did not want to be associated with the Jana Sangh as they had a 'communal' outlook and also the Communist parties were against the country going nuclear. See Das, *Revisiting Nuclear India*, p.100; P. Malik, *India's Nuclear Debate: Exceptionalism and the Bomb*, New Delhi, Routledge, 2010, p.56; Malhotra, 'Shastri gets his way on nuclear policy.'

<sup>104</sup> The paper on atomic energy prepared by Dr.Bhabha stated that this would not entail much economic cost.

<sup>105</sup> Major General D. Som Dutt, Director of IDSA, General K.M. Cariappa and Indian Army Staff, General J.N. Chaudhury (Ministry of Defence) did not favour diverting resources to produce nuclear weapons. See S. Bhatia, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, New Delhi, Vikas, 1979, pp.114-116; D. Som Dutt, *India and the Bomb*, London, International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1966, catalogue.nla.gov.au; J.N Chaudhuri, *Arms, Aims and Aspects*, Bombay, Manaktala and Sons Private Limited, 1966, p.257; Malik, *India's Nuclear Debate*, p.57; Mirchandani, *India's Nuclear Dilemma*, pp.54-55, pp.99-100.

<sup>106</sup> Das, *Revisiting Nuclear India*, pp.101-103.

<sup>107</sup> Mirchandani, *India's Nuclear Dilemma*, p.40, p.43; Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, p.111.

<sup>108</sup> P.M. Kamath, *India's Policy of No first Use of Nuclear Weapons: Relevance to Peace and Security in South Asia*, New Delhi, Anamika Publishers, 2009, p.31; Malik, *India's Nuclear Debate*.

obligations between the haves and have nots. The atomic establishment received strong impetus to prepare for nuclear testing which subsequently led to the conduct of 'Peaceful Nuclear Explosion' in 1974 and Raja Ramanna, the 'father of India's nuclear programme' saw it as an 'enabler and equalizer' but not to be used militarily or for nuclear blackmail.<sup>109</sup> The creation of IAEA placing full safeguards on all the facilities for the countries importing enrichment or reprocessing technology alongside a host of other export control groups and US embargoes were seen as perpetration of 'selective intellectual colonialism' led by the West and predominantly the USA. They placed restrictions on technology transfer to Non-Nuclear Weapon States (NNWS) like India but chose to remain blind about China's assistance to Pakistan and its covert nuclear programme<sup>110</sup> with little appreciation for India's self-restraint over the years. India therefore refused to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) that was discriminatory, unequal, racist and ineffective without a time bound framework.<sup>111</sup>

The military success in Bangladesh war of 1971 and the signing of the Indo-Soviet treaty augmented India's capability to exert regional influence. The sailing of the Seventh Fleet in the Bay of Bengal as 'an act of nuclear intimidation'<sup>112</sup> ignited increasing wariness about US intentions and the urgency to build indigenous capabilities. From early 70s the 'bomb advocates' called for preparing for nuclear testing even if for peaceful uses as the political leadership claimed to consider then. But it was not until 1980 that Mrs. Gandhi considered the establishment of India's own nuclear deterrence and nuclear strike capabilities. Reaffirming the peaceful nature of India's atomic programme and its economic purposes, Mrs Gandhi specifically stated that, 'we have no intention of developing nuclear weapons'<sup>113</sup> and provided an economic/developmental reasoning for the tests while distinguishing India's nuclear project from Pakistan's covert nuclear programme with Chinese support that was underway. She said:

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<sup>109</sup> Menon, *Choices*, p.160.

<sup>110</sup> B. Chellaney, *Nuclear Proliferation: The United States-Indian Conflict*, New Delhi, Orient Longman, 1993, p.64; Personal interview with S. Kalyanaraman, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, Ministry of Defence, New Delhi, 17 December 2015.

<sup>111</sup> R. Ramanna, *Years of Pilgrimage, An Autobiography*, New Delhi, Penguin, 1992, p.94.; J.P. Jain, *Nuclear India* (Volumes I and II).

<sup>112</sup> Zaman, 'Strategic Culture and the Rise of the Indian Navy.'

<sup>113</sup> LokhSabha, 'Statement Re: Underground Nuclear Explosion Experiment', *LokhSabha Debates*, 22 July 1974, col.266. The nuclear tests were appreciated across the political class, military elites and the atomic establishment.

This experiment was part of the research and the development work which the Atomic Energy Commission has been carrying on in pursuance of our national objective of harnessing atomic energy for peaceful purposes... All the material and equipment and the personnel involved in this project were totally Indian. India has not violated any international law or obligation or any commitment in this regard with any country.<sup>114</sup>

Delhi further reassured that, 'India is willing to share her technology with Pakistan in the same way as she is willing to share it with other countries provided proper conditions for understanding and trust are created,'<sup>115</sup> thus showcasing greater 'openness and transparency' as opposed to the 'secrecy and opaqueness' of China's and Pakistan's covert nuclear exchanges and programmes. Situating against the neo-colonial and hegemonic non-proliferation regime, Indian official discourse forwarded the non-discrimination rationale and remarked that, 'No technology is evil in itself; it is the use that nations make of technology which determines its character. India does not accept the principal of apartheid in any matter and technology is no exception.'<sup>116</sup>

India continued to stress on peaceful uses of atomic energy<sup>117</sup> under Janata government and PM Morarji Desai (1977-1980) abjured explosions even for peaceful purposes. He said, 'Explosions are not necessary for research in peaceful purposes. Enough research is done; enough knowledge is available and we can utilise all of it.'<sup>118</sup> He re-affirmed India's moral commitment to disarmament that had been ruptured with the PNE. He criticised the PNE for the subsequent pressures on India to accept safeguards on Tarapur atomic plant, 'It is Pokhran which created all this trouble and without any gain... It was made for political purposes. It did not advance any knowledge.'<sup>119</sup> But he refused to sign the NPT and emphasized on technological self-reliance as he remarked, 'We are self-reliant but they are making us more self-reliant

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<sup>114</sup> LokhSabha, 'Statement Re. Underground Nuclear Explosion Experiment', *LokhSabha Debates*, 22 July 1974, col.264-265.

<sup>115</sup> LokhSabha, 'Statement Re. Underground Nuclear Explosion Experiment', col.267; Cheema, *Indian Nuclear Deterrent*, p.159, pp.165-167.

<sup>116</sup> LokhSabha, 'Statement Re. Underground Nuclear Explosion Experiment', col.269.

<sup>117</sup> LokhSabha, 'Production of Nuclear Arms for peaceful purposes', *LokhSabha Debates*, 30 November 1977, Col.189; Lokh Sabha, 'Statement regarding manufacture of nuclear arms', *LokhSabha Debates*, 17 November 1977, col. 118.

<sup>118</sup> LokhSabha, 'Bar on Nuclear Explosions by India', *LokhSabha Debates*, vol. 16-18 (17 July- 31 August 1978), 19 July 1978, col. 373.

<sup>119</sup> LokhSabha, 'Bar on Nuclear Explosions by India', col.376.

now by not helping us. Our scientists have enough capacity to find out way.<sup>120</sup> But his decision to abjure nuclear explosion met with strong opposition from the scientific community, defence establishment, strategic analysts and certain parliamentarians who favoured a more 'hawkish' or pragmatic approach in favour of developing the nuclear bomb.<sup>121</sup> Samar Guha being an ardent 'bomb advocate' said that the P5, 'are trying to monopolise all the nuclear technology, nuclear power and nuclear energy, brow-beating all the other states, as if it is their right only to have a monopoly of having nuclear engineering or other use of nuclear energy' also needed for 'peaceful purposes, constructive purposes or developmental purposes'.<sup>122</sup> Guha opposed foregoing the option of nuclear testing and remarked, 'Let us not go back to the bullock cart age by giving up nuclear energy.'<sup>123</sup> The possibility of India engaging with less developed countries in furthering and augmenting the uses of science and technology and sharing its expertise also provided a leadership role for India. For instance, in 1978 India hosted a five Member Coordinating Committee of non-aligned countries for promoting cooperation in scientific research, developing national policies and adopting a common stand in the UN.<sup>124</sup>

The period that followed the 1974 test is a period of 'nuclear abstinence' with a marked degree of voluntarily imposed self-restraint as India waited until 1998 to weaponize and this distinguished India from the other six nuclear powers.<sup>125</sup> Hence, 'India was different, and this difference reflected well on humanity's capacity for moral reasoning, for resistance to temptations, for moderation and forbearance.'<sup>126</sup> This was further reaffirmed by the Vajpayee led NDA-I government as, 'The restraint exercised

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<sup>120</sup> LokhSabha, 'Bar on Nuclear Explosions by India', col.378.

<sup>121</sup> Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, pp.201-203; C. Paddock, *India-USA Nuclear Deal: Prospects and Implications*, New Delhi, Epitome Books, 2009, p.26.

<sup>122</sup> LokhSabha, 'Bar on Nuclear Explosions by India', col.366.

<sup>123</sup> LokhSabha, 'Bar on Nuclear Explosions by India.'

<sup>124</sup> LokhSabha, 'Meeting of Coordinating Committee of Non-Aligned Countries for Science and Technology in New Delhi', *LokhSabha Debates*, vol. 16-18 (17 July- 31 August, 1978), 19 July 1978, Cols. 98-99. India promoted cooperation in terms of development of national scientific and technological policies, joint research activities, development of technical and consultancy capabilities, information systems and public understanding and finally to adopt a common stand for United Nations Conference on Science and Technology to be held in 1979.

<sup>125</sup> The six other nuclear powers developed and deployed nuclear weapons as soon as they could with no moral pause or unease unlike India.

<sup>126</sup> G. Perkovich, 'What makes Indian Bomb Tick', in D.R. Sardesai and R.G.C. Thomas (eds.), *Nuclear India in 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 2002, p.57.



for 24 years, after having demonstrated our capability in 1974, is in itself a unique example.'<sup>127</sup>

However such narratives underplayed the incremental steps that were implemented since the early 1980's such as the considerable increase in defence expenditures that rose from \$2.38 billion in 1973-74 to \$9.65 billion in 1987-88 and to \$12.8 billion in 1997-98.<sup>128</sup> There were significant scientific and technological progress made with the development of ballistic missiles under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme in 1982-83 and in the space programme during Rajiv Gandhi's tenure as managed by the DRDO under the leadership of the A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. Media reports of Chinese nuclear assistance to Pakistan<sup>129</sup> since mid-1980s and continued US military assistance emerged as central and recurring themes in India's official (in)security discourse vis-à-vis Pakistan. Dr. Khan, the father of the Islamic bomb, and several other Pakistan's elites also announced the possibility of an atomic test in short term, as to which the Indian security community and primarily the Hindu nationalists hardened their stance in support of a robust nuclear programme. In a personal interview, Dr. Parimal Bannerjee, Member of the DRDO and member of the Pokhran-II nuclear test team and missile development said:

Pakistan after 1971 war said, 'we would eat grass and make the nuclear bomb' and went full throttle by putting all their resources and efforts. In 1980 Indira Gandhi came to know that Pakistan was manufacturing a bomb. Then she gave the impetus to develop such technology and weapon systems, as it was felt that we should also enrich ourselves with that kind of technology and develop capabilities for deterrence.<sup>130</sup>

India remained committed to disarmament and proposed initiatives such as the '*Action Plan for a Nuclear Weapon Free and Non-Violent World Order*' which was submitted to the UN General Assembly in 1988 that proposed a time bound plan 'to usher in a

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<sup>127</sup> A.B.Vajpayee, 'Statement Re: Evolution of India's Nuclear Policy Paper Laid by PM', *Lok Sabha Debates*, 27 May 1998, New Delhi, Lok Sabha Secretariat.

<sup>128</sup> S. Paul Kapur, *Dangerous Deterrent: Nuclear Weapons Proliferation and Conflict in South Asia*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2007 (Appendix).

<sup>129</sup> China was accused of alleged smuggling of uranium enrichment components to Pakistan

<sup>130</sup> Personal interview with Dr. Parimal Bannerjee, Retired Air Commodore in Indian Air Force (IAF), former Scientist at the DRDO and member of the Pokhran-II nuclear test team and missile development, Kolkata, 22 August 2015.

world order free of nuclear weapons and non-violence'<sup>131</sup> but this was ignored by the haves. Rajiv Gandhi pursued other regional initiatives and confidence building measures to normalise relations with Pakistan and promoting regional stability. It failed with the Brasstacks crisis in 1986 and the sending of peacekeeping forces to Srilanka that massively tarnished India's image and lost confidence of its neighbours in the region.<sup>132</sup>

Rajiv Gandhi's visit to USA in 1985 opened up high technology cooperation between India and USA<sup>133</sup> that emphasized on joint development and production in high tech defence areas instead of importing complete systems.<sup>134</sup> However, India's Agni missile testing in 1989 coupled with the passage of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) by the P-5 renewed the Western discontent towards India's non-proliferation efforts and Indian criticism of the West led hegemonic and discriminatory non-proliferation regimes. The MTCR in India was seen as 'a reassertion of colonialism' by the advanced nuclear haves to restrict India in the field of missile technology. This consolidated the nationalist impulse of achieving technological self-reliance and the nuclear question was strongly attached to national pride, self-assertion and national sovereignty yet again.

### **5.5. The 90s and the Renewed 'Nuclear Apartheid' Debate**

After the end of cold war India also undertook liberalisation reforms facilitating export oriented and market-friendly policies. The Clinton administration pushed for 'non-proliferation' as an important foreign policy goal and its South Asian policy was centred around to 'cap, roll back and eliminate' WMD in 'potentially the most dangerous

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<sup>131</sup> M.L Sondhi and P. Nanda, *Vajpayee's Foreign Policy: Daring The Irreversible*, New Delhi, HarAnand Publications Pvt.Ltd, 1999, p.39.

<sup>132</sup> Under General K. Sundarjit this was the largest military mobilisation of the Indian Army across the western border that heightened tensions between the two neighbours.

<sup>133</sup> High tech cooperation began in the area of computer technology and software High level exchange visit by political, science, and defence community member of both the countries that paved the way for nascent levels of security cooperation in fields of science, technology and space. While recognising America's technological superiority and concerted attempts to reduce dependence on Soviet defence imports, the political elites' continued scepticism towards America's imperialist design made them averse to importing complete systems. See Das, *Revisiting Nuclear India*.

<sup>134</sup> Malik, *The Nuclear Debate*, p.81.

region'<sup>135</sup> through various 'neo-colonial' technology denial regimes such as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), NPT and embargoes. This pushed India further towards developing indigenous technology like rocket engines and supercomputers (but it took more time to develop and master such technology).<sup>136</sup> Former President and Chief of DRDO, Kalam noted, 'Strength respects Strength. When a country is technologically strong other countries will respect it.'<sup>137</sup> Remarking on the Chinese nuclear threat and continued nuclear transfers to Pakistan shrouded under secrecy, Fernandes, the then India's Defence Minister expressed total distrust towards China's behaviour and intention that was prone to blatant betrayal. He said:

It is my firm belief that China never speaks the truth. We remember very well the role played by China as a friend... China has 300 nuclear war heads with a delivery system of 13,000 km. range capacity...it can strike at will any part of India. This nuclear arsenal is located in Tibet.<sup>138</sup>

Further commenting on Chinese occupation of 1 ¼ lakh square kilometre of Indian land Fernandes said, 'even now China has cast its covetous eye on the Indian territory and has stated its claim to that land. We must not overlook the fact that it will not hesitate to occupy that land if it got the opportunity.'<sup>139</sup> China's military assistance and training to Burma's military rule and to Pakistan were viewed as grave [in]security threats with China being 'virtually on India's borders.'<sup>140</sup> Nonetheless India-China relations improved with the signing of an agreement to maintain peace and tranquillity across the LAC in 1993.<sup>141</sup> Criticising the China-Pakistan nexus the official discourse maintained that, 'China... is helping Pakistan in developing atomic weapons and the USA is turning

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<sup>135</sup> D. Boobb and H. Baweja, 'Interview with Robin Raphael', *India Today*, 15 April 1994; R. Chengappa, 'Nuclear Dilemma', *India Today*, 30 April 1994.

<sup>136</sup> Statement made by the Head of India's Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on technology denial regimes and sanctions on transfer by the US. See R. Chengappa, 'A Nuisance', *India Today*, 15 April 1993.

<sup>137</sup> W.P.S. Sidhu, *Enhancing Indo-US Strategic Cooperation*, Adelphi Paper, no.313, IISS, Routledge, 2013, p.27.

<sup>138</sup> LokhSabha, 'India's position with Regard to Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty', col.243.

<sup>139</sup> LokhSabha, 'India's position with Regard to Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.'

<sup>140</sup> LokhSabha, 'India's position with Regard to Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.'

<sup>141</sup> Both sides agreed to reduce troop levels compatible with friendly and good relations between them and undertake confidence building measures such as providing notification of troop movements in the India-China border agreement in 1993. While recognising Chinese efforts to build relations with India.

a Nelson's eye to it...Chinese are stubborn and used to have their way.'<sup>142</sup> Such efforts to 'isolate and discriminate' against India due to the 'combined machinations of China and America' (with resumption of US military aid to Pakistan under the Hank Brown amendment) were strongly resisted as Indian elites felt 'all the nations should be treated at par'<sup>143</sup> and such 'roguish manner' in which the five hegemonic powers were behaving had to be discredited.

Despite India's pro-US shift since the mid-80s USA was seen as working against the interests and aspirations of India by forcing her to sign the 'Entry in to Force' Clause of the CTBT that opened up for ratification in 1996 which India refused to sign and ratify in the context of the 'indefinite extension of the NPT'. Delhi resisted such attempts to block India's economic advancement stating, 'America is trying to bully us into submission. We are being forced to sign CTBT. It wants to be the arbiter of our fate.'<sup>144</sup> The CTBT came to be perceived as a second instalment of the NPT, 'an inherently flawed, an unequal and an unjust treaty'<sup>145</sup> and ineffective without any time bound framework. Several official statements by US political and bureaucratic elites like Warren Christopher, the USA Secretary State, recognized India as the 'impediment' to signing CTBT to which Fernandes, responded that by 'being dubbed as a country creating problems', USA was trying 'to single out India as a target on the international fora'<sup>146</sup> and was impeding her from becoming a strong nation.

Jaswant Singh<sup>147</sup> of BJP argued that if the nuclear haves continued to employ nuclear weapons as 'an international currency of force and power,' then India had no reason to 'voluntarily devalue and ignore its national security' by continuing a policy of nuclear abstinence and self-imposed restraint as, 'India's security in a world of

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<sup>142</sup> LokhSabha, 'India's position with Regard to Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty'; Personal interview with S. Kalyanaram, Strategic Expert, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), Ministry of Defence, Government of India, New Delhi, 17 December 2015.

<sup>143</sup> K. Subrahmanyam, 'India and the International Nuclear Order', in D.R. Sardesai and R.G.C. Thomas (eds.), *Nuclear India in the Twenty-First Century*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, pp.63-84.

<sup>144</sup> G. Fernandes was the Minister of Defence from March 1998-March 2001 and October 2001-May 2004) during the Pokhran explosion and Kargil war.

<sup>145</sup> P. Mukherjee, 'Should India sign the CTBT?', *The Hindu*, 26 May 1998; Malik, *The Nuclear Debate*.

<sup>146</sup> LokhSabha, 'India's position with Regard to Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty', *LokhSabha Debates*, 2 August 1996, col.241.

<sup>147</sup> J. Singh was the Minister of External Affairs during Pokhran II under the BJP under the NDA government under PM Vajpayee and was pivotal in paving the way for India-US engagement and met with the then Deputy Secretary of State (1994-2001), S. Talbott for the Indo-US dialogue on security, non-proliferation and disarmament related issues and the two sides agreed to establish a Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism.

nuclear proliferation lies either in total global disarmament or in exercise of the principle of equal and legitimate security for all.<sup>148</sup> BJP also linked the CTBT issue with infringement of the sovereignty, integrity and unity of the country as it is, 'an issue of national pride and is linked with our security and honour' for India remains 'surrounded on all sides by hostile elements' and finally called on the nuclear powers to destroy their arsenal before 'sermonising other nations'.<sup>149</sup> The Party manifesto noted that it would seek to resist 'any form of economic or political hegemonism,' and that 'the BJP rejects the notion of nuclear apartheid and will actively oppose attempts to impose a hegemonistic nuclear regime by means of CTBT, FMCT and MTCR'<sup>150</sup> as to promote sovereign equality for all. From PM Narsimha Rao's decision to prepare for the nuclear tests which finally had to be rolled back due to US pressure of sanctions, it was evident that India was ready for nuclear weaponisation even under the Congress government. In a personal interview Dr. P. Bannerjee, Member of the DRDO and nuclear testing team recalling the episode said:

We were almost ready in 1995 for the tests but USA was closely monitoring through electronic intelligence satellite (a project of 32 billion dollar) the testing site. By the time the site was prepared for testing the US were well informed about this and they put so much pressure that Narsimha Rao had to withdraw. Our first nuclear testing was done in 1974 with code named 'Smiling Buddha', the capacity of which was 20 kilotonnes and it gave us greater confidence to continue further research and the programme has progressed over the years. Our research started with 20 KW Cirus reactor given by Canada that was put in Trombay. But in 1998 inspite of all satellite (32 billion dollar project) that were installed for 24x7 monitoring we could evade and conduct Operation Shakti.<sup>151</sup>

The non-proliferation regime and the US sanctions had further pushed the DRDO to pursue an independent nuclear programme despite close surveillance. The official discourse continued to criticise the NPT, CTBT and MTCR and emphasized for clearing out of their loopholes while the US pressure was resisted<sup>152</sup> on developments in India's missile programme. Remindful of the concerns of alleviating poverty and backwardness

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<sup>148</sup> Singh, *A Call to Honour*, p.113.

<sup>149</sup> LokhSabha, 'India's position with Regard to Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.'

<sup>150</sup> BJP, *Election Manifesto*, 1998.

<sup>151</sup> Personal interview with Dr. Parimal Banerjee, Member of the DRDO and the Pokhran Nuclear Testing Team in 1998, Kolkata, 22 August 2015.

<sup>152</sup> LokhSabha, 'India's position with Regard to Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.'

with technological progress, the leadership said, 'The entire purpose of development for us is to restore to our citizens the human rights that colonialism trampled upon. These rights are still under constant threat from poverty, social backwardness, and racial and other forms of discrimination.'<sup>153</sup> The 'promoters of the CTBT' shared little concern that 'where will the developing countries and those who are suffering from poverty and other social evils go?'<sup>154</sup> In a personal interview retired scientist from DRDO, Dr. P. Bannerjee further remarked:

This NPT created the haves and have nots. Those who have mastered the technologies, they did not want the other countries to acquire or develop that similar technology because they would have become rival or competitors to those countries who had already developed the technology. So they formed various treaties, or grouping like MTCR to distinguish between the haves and have not. No help were given to these countries so that who don't have that technology cannot have it and would have to depend on those countries which have such technologies and capabilities.<sup>155</sup>

The scientific community involved with the DRDO not only saw the non-proliferation regime as discriminatory but resisting India's potential to become at par with the 'haves' technologically in a similar manner. Gendered statements that warned against effeminacy and emasculation of the Hindu race and Indian civilization were further reproduced to support overt nuclearisation and for rejecting the CTBT to make India more strong and masculine by the right wing elites.<sup>156</sup> The Communist Party of India (CPI) that has traditionally maintained their stand against going nuclear supported India's official stand on CTBT and argued for ending this disparity through equal access to technology. This narrative against the hegemonic and aggressive approach by the P-5 prevailed across the political spectrum and even within defense, scientific and media

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<sup>153</sup> Vajpayee, 'Address at the 12<sup>th</sup> NAM summit', Durban, 3 September 1999, p.44, <http://archive.pmo.nic.in/abv/speech-details.php?nodeid=9166>, (accessed 30 March 2015).

<sup>154</sup> Lokh Sabha, 'India's position with Regard to Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.'

<sup>155</sup> Personal interview with Dr. Parimal Banerjee, Member of the DRDO and the Pokhran Nuclear Testing Team in 1998, Kolkata, 22 August 2015.

<sup>156</sup> Hindu nationalist leader Bal Thackeray said that India needed to test nuclear weapons in order to prove that 'we are not eunuchs', whereas Chellaney felt that signing the CTBT or treaty banning unsafeguarded fissile material production would be 'self-castration measures' that would turn India into a 'nuclear eunuch' and criticised India's nuclear policy of restraint as being equivalent of 'chronic impotence'. See Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, p.458.

communities and eventually created the climate for the Pokhran II tests under the NDA-I government.

### **5.6. 'Hindu' nationalism: Making India Strong**

The Hindu nationalism discourse<sup>157</sup> gained prominence under the BJP led NDA-I government in 1998 that pursued a realpolitik approach which placed prime importance on national interests, security and increasing national strength (*Shakti*) by developing hard power capabilities. It called for 'augmenting and optimizing the defence preparedness of the country'<sup>158</sup> through manufacturing nuclear bombs and delivery systems to survive in a 'hostile neighbourhood' and to protect her regional influence.<sup>159</sup> It emphasized on diversifications of sources of defence hardware supplies, maximising indigenous production (as evident also in the impetus given to 'Make in India' initiative under Modi led NDA-II government) and defence research development.

The hyperrealists and BJP elites had criticised the 'pacifist strategic outlook' and 'moralist mind-set'<sup>160</sup> that resulted in a 'purely defensive, defeatist, and reactionary approach to deal with national security threats'.<sup>161</sup> By justifying the rationale of 'peace

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<sup>157</sup> The hyper-realist discourse consists of two subdiscourses –the cultural nationalist or Hindu right wing as represented by the SanghParivar and ultra-realists consisting of several retired and contemporary military personnel, diplomats, national security advisors and strategic experts. See Chapter 5 for detailed discussion.

<sup>158</sup> BJP, 'Election Manifesto 1989', Election Manifestoes, *Party Documents: 1980-2005*, vol.1, BJP, New Delhi, BJP Central Office, 2000 [1989]. India's declining defence capability in the nineties was cited as one of the factors that prompted Pakistan's intrusion in Kargil in 1999 by Retired Major General and the Deputy Director of the Hindu Vivekananda International Foundation, G.D. Bakshi.

<sup>159</sup> B.Verma, 'Military: The Grid of Violence', *Indian Defence Review*, 2013, <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/news/military-the-grid-of-violence/>, (accessed 16 August 2017); K. Sibal, 'Dangerous Liasons: Pakistan-China nexus poses strategic threat to India', Vivekananda International Foundationa, New Delhi, 9 December 2011, <http://www.vifindia.org/article/2011/december/09/DANGEROUS-LIASIONS-Pakistan-China-nexus-poses-strategic-threat-to-India#sthash.aKiRAXCq.dpuf>, (accessed on 17 August 2017).

<sup>160</sup> B.Verma, 'India's Emerging Defence Doctrine', *Indian Defence Review*, <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/news/indias-emerging-defence-doctrine/> 1998, (accessed 16 August 2017); R. Menon, *A Nuclear Strategy for India*, New Delhi, Sage, 2000, p.23, p.38; A. Prakash, 'Emerging India: Security and Foreign Perspectives', in N.S. Sisodia and C. Uday Bhaskar (ed.), *Emerging India: Security and Foreign Policy Perspectives*, New Delhi, IDSA, 2005, p.2, p.5; R.K. Nehra, *Hinduism and Its Military Ethos*, New Delhi, Lancer, 2010; J. Singh, *India at Risk: Mistakes, Misconceptions and Misadventures of Security Policy*, New Delhi, Rupa, 2013, pp.8-9.

<sup>161</sup> Chellaney, 'Nuclear-Deterrent Posture', p.189; B. Karnad, 'India's Future Plans and Defence Requirements', in N.S. Sisodia and C. Uday Bhaskar (ed.), *India:Emerging Security and Foreign Policy Perspectives*, New Delhi, IDSA, 2005, p.95; Advani, *My Country, My Life*, p.611; A. Cheema, 'Arming 'After' Aiming: Agenda for the New Government', *Indian Defence Review*, 2014, <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/news/arming-after-aiming-a-security-agenda-for-the-new-government-at-new-delhi>, (accessed 16 August 2017).

through strength'<sup>162</sup> in favour of nuclear testing the cultural-nationalist discourse invoked the 'misrepresentation of Ashokan idealism' on the Indian psyche that needed to be redressed as 'to be prepared for war is the best way of ensuring peace.'<sup>163</sup> A BJP parliamentarian remarked:

Ashoka...was the Apostle of peace only after the Kalinga war. After the Kalinga war, there was no rebellion in the country. Nobody dared to touch the country. He proved the might in the Kalinga war. Likewise, we have to prepare ourselves. That will be a deterrent. One country is an overt Nuclear Power State and the other country is a covert Nuclear Power State...we have to accept the fact. We cannot follow an ostrich policy. So, when they are very strong and when their intentions are malicious, we have to be strong and we have to prove our might.<sup>164</sup>

Nuclear weapons came to represent the ultimate source of national strength<sup>165</sup> and prerequisite for realizing genuine strategic autonomy.<sup>166</sup> With greater defence budget allocations, the BJP election manifesto promised to '[re]evaluate the country's nuclear policy and exercise the option to induct nuclear weapons, expedite the development of the Agni series of ballistic missiles with a view to increasing their range and accuracy' and '[in]crease the radius of power projection by inducting appropriate force multipliers' to create an internally and externally [militarily] strong, powerful, uniform 'Hindu' India.<sup>167</sup> The tests were to 'build a strong, prosperous and self- confident India' which occupies its rightful place in the comities of nations<sup>168</sup> without getting

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<sup>162</sup> K.Thakre, 'Weak Nations Don't Make History: Peace is Forged by the Strong', *BJP Today*, vol.8, no.8, 16-30 April 1999, pp.4-7; B. Chellaney, 'Challenges to India's National Security in the New Millennium', in B. Chellaney (ed.), *Securing India's Future in the New Millennium*, New Delhi, Orient Longman, 1999, pp.527-595; K. Sibal, 'An anatomy of India-Pakistan Dialogue', *Indian Defence Review*, 2010, <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/news/an-anatomy-of-india-pakistan-dialogue/>, (accessed 17 August 2017).

<sup>163</sup> R. Madhav, 'Raashtram: Spritual-Ethical Concept of Nationhood', *India Foundation Journal*, vol.1, no.1, 2013, pp.29-38.

<sup>164</sup> LokhSabha, 'Manufactuire of Nuclear weapons', 1996.

<sup>165</sup> Chellaney, 'Nuclear-Deterrent Posture', p.146, p.199; B. Verma, "'India First' Policy Mandatory: What they don't teach in Indian schools', *Indian Defence Review*, vol.16, no.2, April-June 2001, <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/spotlights/india-first-policy-mandatory/>, (accessed 17 May 2019); Karnad, *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security*.

<sup>166</sup> K.C. Pant, 'Pokharan-II and Security Ramifications External and Internal', in BJP (ed.), *BJP Achievements & Looking Ahead: Party Document*, vol. 9, New Delhi, p.91; Sibal, 'Dangerous Liasons'; Singh, Gera and Dewan (eds.), *Comprehensive National Power*, p.224.

<sup>167</sup> BJP, 'Election Manifesto 1998.'

<sup>168</sup> A.B. Vajpayee, 'PM's Address at the Asia Society on "India, USA and the World: Let us work together to solve the Political-Economic Y2K Problem"', New York, 28 September 1998,



undermined by external pressures or becoming a subservient power.<sup>169</sup> L.K Advani, the then BJP president said, 'we believe that neighbours and superpowers must never be in a position to intimidate us.'<sup>170</sup> With the tests code-named as 'Operation Shakti' in May 1998, the then PM Vajpayee announced that the entire country felt a 'sense of pride' and while 'India has never considered military might as the ultimate measure of national strength' but 'the tests have given India Shakti, the tests have given India strength, they have given India self-confidence.'<sup>171</sup> In a personal interview Dr. P. Bannerjee, Member of the DRDO and Pokhran –II team said:

Operation Shakti was almost 40 kiloton watt. This underground technology was a difficult technology mastered by Russians and both the tests were underground because the seismic effect is strong. Since it was vast area the damage was minimum and we could study the results. After 3-4 days Pakistan was prepared and they had 6 tests in 7-10 days and theirs was 20 kiloton. In 1999 Vajpayee went to Lahore we signed the moratorium on further testing, and it was agreed by both the sides that those nuclear tests laboratories or reactors involved in these tests will not be attacked by either of the countries.<sup>172</sup>

Security considerations did play an important role but the tests were eventually framed against the discriminatory nuclear order in continuation with India's continued principled stand on nuclear weapons and disarmament. The Hindu nationalist discourse constructed the 'immediate neighbourhood' as 'hostile' towards India and threatened India's survival as a nation state, curbed her influence and restricted her growth. The hyperrealist/cultural nationalist discourse under NDA-I reproduced inferior and negative characterisation of India's two external spatial-political Others- China and Pakistan that sought military solutions or sponsored Islamic terrorism over territorial disputes in the region. Commenting on the peculiar security environment and the unique

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<https://asiasociety.org/india-usa-and-world-let-us-work-together-solve-political-economic-y2k-problem>, (accessed 20 May 2016).

<sup>169</sup> BJP, *Foreign Policy Resolutions and Statements 1980-1999*, New Delhi, BJP, 2000[1998], p.71.

<sup>170</sup> BJP, 'Operation Shakti: The beginning of India's journey from strength to strength', *BJP Today*, New Delhi, BJP, June 2000, pp.1-15.

<sup>171</sup> A.B. Vajpayee, 'Suo-motu Statement in the parliament, 1998', 27 May 1998.

<http://www.nuclearfiles.org/menu/key-issues/nuclear-weapons/issues/policy/indian-nuclear-policy/suo-motu-statement-pm.html>, (accessed 5 September 2016); Also see BJP, *Foreign Policy Resolutions and Statements 1980-1999*, BJP, New Delhi, BJP Central Office, 2000.

<sup>172</sup> Personal interview with Dr. Parimal Banerjee, Retired Air Commodore in Indian Air Force (IAF), Scientist at the DRDO and the Pokhran Nuclear Testing Team in 1998, Kolkata, 22 August 2015.

challenge it posed, Jaswant Singh, the then EAM and the Finance Minister in the NDA-I government wrote:

India, the only country in the world sandwiched between two nuclear weapon powers, faced a permanent legitimisation of nuclear weapons by the haves, a global nuclear security paradigm from which it was excluded, trend toward disequilibrium in the Asian balance of power, and a neighbourhood in which two nuclear weapons countries acted in concert. Clearly, this was not acceptable. India had to protect its destiny-and exercise its nuclear option.<sup>173</sup>

The then National Security Advisor, Brajesh Mishra also argued that the security environment had left no option and that India was 'forced' to 'go nuclear'.<sup>174</sup> In a personal interview with Mr. Manas Ghosh, Chief Editor, *The Statesman* (Kolkata), a leading English newspaper daily in India on the collaborative 'two front' nuclear threat posed by Pakistan and China remarked:

It is very unfair to say that India is getting stereotyped as any other world power. India had to develop the bomb, the Agni and long range missiles as a deterrence or else we would have been overwhelmed by the evil neighbours, like Pakistan and China. All major cities are also within the range of Pakistan and Chinese missiles. It was in India's national interest and to safeguard India's sovereignty and integrity. It is specifically to deter other countries to have territorial ambitions as Pakistan not only had laid claims over Kashmir but it had said that all the Muslim majority areas should be integrated in Pakistan. So India cannot sit and wait for the onslaught. India has been forced into it because of the circumstances. These countries including some major powers want India to be dependent on others for technology.<sup>175</sup>

The above statement also re-produces the Indian Self as being different from Others who did not develop nuclear weapons at will but out of compulsion and that India's nuclear programme is not directed towards any other country as the official discourse avoids any explicit mention of a 'Pakistan centric' nuclear agenda.<sup>176</sup> It is to protect

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<sup>173</sup> Sibal, 'Dangerous Liaisons', p.115.

<sup>174</sup> Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, p.405.

<sup>175</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Manas Ghosh, the Chief Editor of *The Statesman* (Kolkata) in Kolkata, 26 July 2015.

<sup>176</sup> BJP, *Foreign Policy Resolutions and Statements 1980-1999*, New Delhi, BJP, 2000[1999], pp.4-7; H.S. Nanda and A. Iqbal, 'India Rejects Pakistan's Offer to Cut Nukes', *United Press International*, 8 May 2003 cited in S.D. Sagan, 'The Evolution of Pakistani and Indian Nuclear Doctrine', in S.D. Sagan (ed.), *Inside Nuclear South Asia*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2009, p.247.

herself against the antagonistic Others that harbour territorial ambitions against her and has 'evil' intentions to further disintegrate India. They are re-produced as dangers acting in collusion to undermine India's secular Self and an assault on the geo-cultural idea of the Bharat. Here again, the development of the nuclear weapon is attached to the idea of protecting India's dignity and honour and sitting idle is seen as a sign of weakness. Few like L.K.Advani and the Defence chief, George Fernandes announced China as the major military threat by warning against the Chinese military activities and alliances, notably those involving Pakistan, Burma and Tibet, that had begun to 'encircle' India and urged Indians to abandon the 'carelessness and casual attitude' that had characterized national security thinking in recent decades.<sup>177</sup> The Post Nehruvian discourse which is less sceptical of the 'encirclement' theories also remain cautious of China's 'containment strategy'. Congress Parliamentarian and President of West Bengal State Congress, Mr. Adhir Chowdhury justifying India's nuclearisation remarked in a personal interview:

India is the largest democratic country but is surrounded by non-democratic countries where democracy has not been nurtured and India was destined to face the hostile neighbours. Naturally, when China has become the member of N-5, we cannot afford ourselves to lag behind especially in view of the South Asian security environment and at the time Indira Gandhi took a courageous initiative which manifested in the Pokhran 'peaceful' nuclear tests. In 1998 we conducted the nuclear tests again and have been recognised by the world as a power to reckon with.<sup>178</sup>

Where the hyperrealist-Hindutva discourse reproduced China and Pakistan as threats to India's territorial integrity and sovereignty, the Post-Neheruvian discourse re-constructs them as authoritarian and communist Others to the democratic Indian Self. Additionally the notion of falling behind in terms of technological advancement is unacceptable. But India-China relations during the early 90s had improved and India had lived under the shadow of Chinese bomb since 1964 and the general assertion was that China needed to be dealt through diplomatic channels where a reconciliation or accommodation seemed plausible by all the successive governments. The China threat however was rendered

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<sup>177</sup> J.F. Burns, 'India's New Defense Chief Sees Chinese Military Threat', *New York Times*, 5 May 1998, <https://www.nytimes.com/1998/05/05/world/india-s-new-defense-chief-sees-chinese-military-threat.html>, (accessed 20 August 2017).

<sup>178</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Adhir Chowdhury (INC), Member of Parliament, Former Union Minister (2012-2014) and President of West Bengal Pradesh Congress, New Delhi, 22 December 2015.

significant because of the 'growing collusion with Pakistan' and China's continued support to Pakistan's conventional and nuclear build up to keep India bogged down in regional conflicts. Amidst Pakistan's 'deeper security, political and social problems,' former EAM, Jaswant Singh argues that possession of a bomb perpetuates its 'self – delusion as a technologically advanced country' even though most of its technology is either 'stolen from an European nuclear facility' or is a 'successful outcome of espionage and assistance from a friendly power'<sup>179</sup> (China and North Korea) with constant reference to A.Q. Khan, 'the father of Islamic bomb' as the 'spy.'<sup>180</sup> The assistance given to Pakistan's clandestine nuclear and missile programme by China has been extended 'in clear violation of international arms control regimes'.<sup>181</sup>

In contrast, stands India's 'peaceful and civilian nuclear programme' guided by the Nehru-Bhaba vision that is aimed to create a technologically 'self-reliant' modern India without violating any international laws. Vajpayee said, 'Our nuclear policy has been marked by restraint and openness. We have not violated any international agreement either in 1974 or now, in 1998.'<sup>182</sup> He added, 'Our own export control regimes are extremely stringent and there has been no leakage of equipment or technology from India. Despite this we find the US unwilling to accommodate us in terms of technology transfers.'<sup>183</sup> It was henceforth in resistance to such hegemonic and 'neo-colonial' designs that aimed to keep India dependant and backward, proved to be ineffective in preventing illicit nuclear transfers to countries with 'hostile' intentions and failed to appreciate India's non-proliferation credentials. Former Foreign Secretary, Kanwal Sibal noted, 'These denial regimes that have proved ineffective in preventing proliferation to irresponsible regimes are inimical to our interests when used to deny developmental tools to states such as India with impeccable non-proliferation credentials.'<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> S.P. Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan* cited in J. Singh, *A Call to Honour: In Service of Emergent India*, New Delhi, Rupa Publications, 2006, p.71.

<sup>180</sup> Singh, *Call to Honour*, p.71.

<sup>181</sup> Subrahmanyam, 'India and the International Nuclear Order', pp.81-82.

<sup>182</sup> A.B. Vajpayee, 'Address of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to the Nation on Independence Day-2003', New Delhi, 15 August 2003, in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations-2003 Documents*, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2004, pp.154-155.

<sup>183</sup> Vajpayee, 'PM's Address at the Asia Society on "India, USA and the World."'

<sup>184</sup> Sibal, 'Special Media Briefing by Foreign Secretary Kanwal Sibal on the Visit of Prime Minister to Kuala Lumpur to attend the NAM Summit', pp.147-255; Sibal, 'Speech of Foreign Secretary Kanwal Sibal at the Geneva Forum on "Challenges and Prospects"', p.81.

The Indian political leadership announced that 'these tests were not intended to threaten any country' and re-invoked the 'non-discrimination' rationale<sup>185</sup> which resonated with the prominent members of strategic community. For instance, K.Subrahmanyam<sup>186</sup> argued that the nuclear tests were to challenge the colonial, racist and hegemonic nuclear order and was a step towards advancing nuclear disarmament.<sup>187</sup> Former EAM, Singh even titled his book chapter as 'PokhranII: the implosion of nuclear apartheid'<sup>188</sup> and argued that these tests were primarily aimed to establish India at par with the exclusive club of the P-5 and that India could no longer be treated as a second or third rate nation.<sup>189</sup> Singh wrote:

So why did we test?...The basis of Indian nuclear policy was, therefore that a world free of nuclear weapons would enhance not only India's security but the security of all nations. In the absence of universal disarmament, India could scarcely accept a regime that arbitrarily divided nuclear haves from have nots.<sup>190</sup>

The Post Nehruvian discourse also emphasized on the apartheid argument as a rationale to make India strong while remaining conscious of its non-proliferation responsibilities. Its non-proliferation track record has been recognised by the USA and this has led to the signing of the India-USA civilian nuclear deal in 2005. Mr. Adhir Chowdhury, Congress Parliamentarian noted in a personal interview:

Since 1974 we had been experiencing the nuclear apartheid as a result of which various kinds of technological advancements, various kind of scientific research got a severe blow because most of the advanced nations were reluctant to share the technical knowhow with us. But with the course of time, the world power USA recognised the strength and the importance of our country and the historical pact was signed between Bush and Manmohan Singh. We can assure that India does not entertain ever any kind of nuclear blackmail towards any country whatsoever and the track record of India has convinced the world powers that India does not have any

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<sup>185</sup> J. Singh, 'Against the Nuclear Apartheid', *Foreign Affairs*, vol.77, no.5, pp.47-59.

<sup>186</sup> Subrahmanyam was the Director of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses and key strategic expert on India's strategic and military thinking.

<sup>187</sup> K. Subrahmanyam, 'Hedging against the Hegemony', *Times of India*, 16 June 1998.

<sup>188</sup> Singh, *Call to Honour*, 2006.

<sup>189</sup> BJP, 'Pokhran II and India's security', *Swastika*, 29 June 1998, p.8, p.9; BJP, 'US nuclear hegemony over India', *Swastika*, 6 September 1999, pp.3-5.

<sup>190</sup> Singh, *Call to Honour*, p.115.

clandestine nuclear activity much to the detriment of global and Asian stability.<sup>191</sup>

The above statement further re-affirms that the tests were framed in relation to the discriminatory nuclear order and re-produces India's role as a 'responsible' nuclear power that is willing to engage in civilian nuclear commerce. Unlike its neighbours, India's nuclear programme remains committed to peaceful uses for harnessing nuclear energy and would not pose any threat to regional and global stability as is evident from its nuclear posture based on the NFU policy. It was felt that the fundamental principle of Gandhism was to resist evil, dominance and injustice<sup>192</sup> underlying this monopolistic nuclear regime that needed to be resisted as this was 'the modern version of the Whiteman's Burden doctrine.'<sup>193</sup> New Delhi reiterated time and again that India had been the first to call for nuclear test ban in 1954, for a non-discriminatory treaty on non-proliferation in 1965, for a treaty on non-use of nuclear weapons in 1978, for a nuclear freeze in 1982 and for a phased programme for complete elimination in 1988 but many of these initiatives were unaccepted and ignored by the nuclear weapon states who considered weapons as essential to their own security and what emerged was a 'discriminatory and flawed non-proliferation regime which affects our security adversely.'<sup>194</sup> The issue of 'nuclear sovereignty' was further linked with the celebration of India's scientific –technological prowess as Vajpayee said, 'These tests are continuation of the policies set into motion that put this country on the path of self-reliance and independence of thought and action.'<sup>195</sup> Singh saw the acquisition of nuclear weapon as, 'a logical next step in the evolution of India's sense of itself, its interests, and its "strategic culture"- a rite of passage, a loss of innocence about what it took to survive in a dangerous world'<sup>196</sup> and significant towards creating a muscular

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<sup>191</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Adhir Chowdhury, Congress (INC) Member of Parliament, Former Union Minister (2012-2014) and President of the West Bengal Pradesh Congress, New Delhi, 22 December 2015.

<sup>192</sup> K. Subrahmanyam noted that even Mahatma Gandhi supporting the Indian army's efforts said, 'Let our troops be wiped out to the last man in clearing the state of Jammu and Kashmir, rather than submit to the invaders' cited in V.N. Khanna, *India's Nuclear Doctrine*, New Delhi, Sanskriti, 2000, p.86.

<sup>193</sup> Kapur, *From Regional to World Power*.

<sup>194</sup> J. Singh, 'Press Statement by Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission', New Delhi, 18 May 1998, in *Foreign Relations of India Select Statements, May 1998-March 2000*, New Delhi, External Publicity Division, Government of India.

<sup>195</sup> A.B. Vajpayee, 'Suomoto Statement 1998', in *Foreign Relations of India Select Statements, May 1998-March 2000*, New Delhi, External Publicity Division, Government of India.

<sup>196</sup> S. Talbott, *Engaging India: Diplomacy, Democracy, and the Bomb*, Washington D.C., Brookings Institution Press, 2004, p.132.

India that was prepared to defend itself against adversaries. USA criticised the tests arguing that it puts India 'at the wrong side of history'<sup>197</sup> and imposed sanctions on India as per the Glenn Amendment that restricted bilateral and multilateral economic assistance. DRDO Scientist, Dr. Parimal Bannerjee remarked in a personal interview:

The nuclear tests also brought a lot of hardships, lot of embargoes on selling critical and advanced technology to India, they put restrictions on these and hampered the technological development and particularly the weapon delivery systems and space programmes. We could not import advanced computer as embargoes were there. Our Research and Development programmes suffered badly and quicker progress could not be realised as we had to develop indigenous technology. In aftermath of 1998, we lost a lot of time because delivery systems are complicated technology, they are 'thinking systems-like a human brain' which has to think itself to do necessary correction and hit the target (are referred to as intelligence missiles) for which they need to have an advanced computer. Without external help, we did not receive certain component parts of systems and therefore took a lot more time. But it gave us the impetus to develop indigenous technology; 85-90 percent of Prithvi, Agni missile components are indigenously made. The industries in India took up the challenge to develop these technologies and component parts. And Dr. Kalam was a great motivator for this indigenous programme and proposed to give the design to these industries and it could be achieved.<sup>198</sup>

These narratives of 'indigeneity' not only distinguished India's nuclear programme from its hostile neighbours, but also reproduces the continued victimization and the resilience of the Indian Self against the neo-colonial West (primarily the USA) through such non-proliferation security architecture. India's nuclear doctrine re-affirms that India is a restrained nuclear power that remains committed to act responsibly in the region. Yet, the US placed heavy economic sanctions and strict controls on technology transfers that slowed down and delayed India's nuclear and missile advancements while

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<sup>197</sup> See J.N. Dixit, 'Pokhran-II -Managing the Fallout', *The Hindu*, 23 May 1998; A. Ghose, 'Disarmament and India's Nuclear Diplomacy: Evolution of a 'Reluctant' Nuclear Weapon State', in A. Sinha and M. Mohta (eds.), *Indian Foreign Policy: Challenges and Opportunities*, New Delhi, Academic Foundation, 2007, p.985, p.1005; Subrahmanyam, 'Hedging against the Hegemony'; K. Subrahmanyam, 'India's Nuclear Policy – 1964-98', in J. Singh (ed.), *Nuclear India*, New Delhi, IDSA, 1998, pp.26-53.

<sup>198</sup> Personal interview with Defense Research and Development Organisation Scientist, Dr. P. Bannerjee who was part of the team during the Pokhran nuclear tests under A.P.J.Abdul Kalam who was the father of Indian Missile Programme at DRDO and the Former President of India. Interview taken in Kolkata, 22 August 2015.

simultaneously pushing the Indian scientists and DRDO to be self-reliant by depending on its indigenous technological knowhow and skilled manpower which adds to India's national pride and bolsters her self-confidence to emerge as a great power. However, there have always been alternative voices that emphasized on India's economy as its source of strength rather than nuclear weapons. Senior leader of the CPIM, Mohammed Salim on India's aspiration to join the nuclear club and other technology control groups under the UPA (I and II) and NDA-II governments of Singh and Modi remarked in a personal interview:

Neither India nor Pakistan could resolve old issues with the nuclear deterrent. Pakistan is continuing its business and India is suffering. We are all for indigenous nuclear development based on our nuclear resources and peaceful uses of nuclear technology. We are opposed to military uses. Every nation should find their own strength, we can develop our scientific progress without any hindrance and continue research in this field. We are never opposed to tests, but we will not engage in nuclear arms race. Nobody takes us as a big power for nuclear resources, rather India's strength is its economy, its market, human resources, and its huge pool of scientists that gives India such recognition. We should excel in that.<sup>199</sup>

The Communist Party of India were alliance partners under the INC and were significantly vocal in levelling their strong criticism against the Congress led UPA-I government during the Indo-US nuclear deal. The nuclear tests were seen as necessary and practical, but the NDA government rhetorically continued its principled opposition to nuclear weapons and supported disarmament. Former EAM, Singh had cautioned against the total abandonment of any moral 'high ground' as he explained, 'All that has happened is that the totally moral has become the realistically moral'<sup>200</sup> to deal with its adversaries that were aggressive, provocative, confrontational, strategically guided, territorially minded and accustomed to ruthless practice of *realpolitik*. He believed, 'Restraint, however has to arise from strength' instead 'upon indecision or doubt' which the nuclear tests did achieve to remove and the tests were needed to be seen 'as a part of a tradition of restraint that has characterised our [India's] policy in the past 50 years.'<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Mohammed Salim, Senior Leader of the Communist Party of India, Member of Parliament, New Delhi, 21 Decemner 2015.

<sup>200</sup> Karnad, *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security*, p.464.

<sup>201</sup> Sodhi and Nanda, *Vajpayee's Foreign Policy*, p.40.



### **5.7. A 'Restrained' Nuclear Doctrine and Disarmament**

The possession of nuclear bomb is a major contradiction for the 'land of Mahatma Gandhi and his creed of *ahimsa*,<sup>202</sup> but reiterating its non-violent posture, the government adopted a nuclear doctrine that reassures 'a responsible and restrained approach to the security challenges of the future' and which 'provides for transparency and predictability and should, therefore, serve the purpose of deterrence and stability.'<sup>203</sup> It was based on a policy of 'no-first-use,' 'no use against non-nuclear weapons states' and a 'voluntary moratorium' on nuclear testing which would be converted into a de-jure obligation. India also expressed its willingness to hold discussions on a range of issues, including the CTBT to a successful conclusion, to join the FMCT negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva provided that the treaty will be 'non-discriminatory' and to reiterate provisions to make its export control laws relating to 'sensitive technologies' more stringent. Vajpayee affirming exercise of utmost 'restraint' while maintaining a posture incumbent on the survivability of a second strike capability for an assured retaliation announced that, 'We are also not going to enter into an arms race with any Country. Ours will be a minimum credible deterrent, which will safeguard India's security - the security of one-sixth of humanity, now and into the future.'<sup>204</sup>

The BJP leadership further reaffirmed India's avowed commitment to nuclear disarmament that remains a major cornerstone in independent India's foreign policy as, the leaders 'saw it as a natural course for a country that has waged a unique struggle for independence on the basis of "ahimsa" and "satyagraha"' and reaffirming India's nuclear responsibility noted that, 'India always stood for global disarmament. India is the champion of world peace. We not only preach non-violence but we have put it into practice.'<sup>205</sup> The uniqueness was evident as India remained the only nuclear weapon

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<sup>202</sup> J. Singh, 'Why Nuclear Weapons?', in J. Singh (ed.), *Nuclear India*, New Delhi, Knowledge World, 1998, p.9, pp.9-25.

<sup>203</sup> Sibal, 'Speech of Foreign Secretary K. Sibal at the Geneva Forum on "Challenges and Prospects"', pp.81-83.

<sup>204</sup> Vajpayee, 'Statement Re: Evolution of India's Nuclear Policy Paper Laid by PM'; Also see Ministry of External Affairs, 'CCS Reviews operationalization of Indian Nuclear Doctrine', 4 January 2003, Government of India, <http://meaindia.nic.in/pressrelease/2003/01/04pr01.htm>, (accessed 18 August 2017); Also see Sagan, S.D. (eds.), 'Evolution of Pakistani and Indian Nuclear doctrine', *Centre for International Security and Cooperation*, 7 May 2008, pp.248-250, for a detailed discussion on the key elements of India's nuclear doctrine.

<sup>205</sup> Vajpayee, 'Address by Prime Minister at the 12<sup>th</sup> NAM Summit', p.38.

state that called for a Nuclear Weapons Convention for complete abolition of nuclear weapons on lines of global and verifiable instruments to tackle WMDs. Vajpayee further said, 'Our nuclear tests of 1998 were wrongly projected as our repudiation of this cause ...we will retain our commitment to universal disarmament, and will continue to argue for it in world fora,'<sup>206</sup> but linked the success of disarmament with the 'democratisation of the world order'.<sup>207</sup> The UN Security Council as New Delhi argues needs to be representative of present geopolitical realities by recognising the importance of developing countries which requires strong impetus from the major powers. India's official discourse is characterised by this duality of possessing nuclear weapons and principled commitment to nuclear disarmament by all the successive governments.<sup>208</sup>

India's nuclear doctrine over the years has been subjected to rigorous debate regarding its effectiveness and inconsistencies.<sup>209</sup> These are of considerable importance because the ultra-realists argue that the nuclear tests have not yet sufficiently demonstrated India's thermonuclear capability and requires further reconfiguration and retesting. There remained deep concerns amongst retired military officials and strategic experts regarding the 'credibility' of India's deterrent posture,<sup>210</sup> notably, Bharat Karnad and Brahma Chellaney who criticised this 'hesitancy to integrate nuclear weapons into its defence structure to make its deterrent operational in a military sense'<sup>211</sup> and thereby keeping India an 'incomplete nuclear weapon state'<sup>212</sup> even under the Vajpayee government and stressed on boosting command and control apparatus. The Congress led UPA-I and II governments took major steps to boost command and

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<sup>206</sup> Vajpayee, 'Address by Prime Minister at the 12<sup>th</sup> NAM Summit.'

<sup>207</sup> Vajpayee, 'PM's Address at the Asia Society on "India, USA and the World."'

<sup>208</sup> Indian National Congress, 'National Common Minimum Programme', New Delhi, All India Congress Party Press, 2004, p.21.

<sup>209</sup> S. Chari, 'The unfinished task', *Organiser*, 20 June 1999.

<sup>210</sup> See B.Karnad, *India's Nuclear Policy*, The University of California, Praeger Security International, 2008; A. Prakash, 'Riding Two Horses: India's Strategic Policy-making has Swung between Morality and Pragmatism', *Force Magazine*, 2009,

<http://forceindia.net/FORCEINDIAOLDISSUE/aranprakash14.aspx>, (accessed 25 August 2017);

Cohen and Dasgupta, *Arming without Aiming*, p.120; G.Kanwal, 'India's Nuclear Deterrence Must be Professionally Managed', New Delhi, Vivekananda International Foundation, 2008,

<http://www.vifindia.org/article/2012/november/08/india-s-nuclear-deterrence-must-be-professionally-managed>, (accessed 18 February 2017); V. Koithara, *Managing India's Nuclear Forces*, New Delhi, Routledge, 2008.

<sup>211</sup> Chellaney, 'Nuclear-Deterrent Posture', p.202.

<sup>212</sup> B. Karnad, 'India First', Seminar 519, 2002, <http://www.india-seminar.com/2002/519/519%20bharat%20karnad.html>, (accessed 18 February 2017); B. Karnad, '123 deal will kill India's N-tech', in *India's Nuclear Debate: Indo-US Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement*, World Focus (ed.), New Delhi, Academic Excellence, 2008, pp.338-340.

control and communication apparatus. India has developed and inducted ballistic missiles systems with different range and payloads and this have continued under the Modi led NDA-II government.<sup>213</sup> India successfully test fired the most advanced long range intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) - Agni V with a strike range of more than 5000-5800 kilometres capable of hitting 'high value targets' in China putting most of China and its eastern coastal cities like Shanghai within reach which is seen by the MoD as a 'major boost to India's defence capabilities'<sup>214</sup> and reinforce India's 'indigenous missile capabilities and further strengthens our credible deterrence.'<sup>215</sup> The DRDO is also working on development of next generation ICBMs with multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRV) technology. It cannot be denied that these missile tests not only demonstrate India's scientific and technological prowess as India will enter the privileged club in possession of ICBMs but is also intended at achieving strategic parity with China as India is engaged in 'an ongoing economic and political battle with [China] for regional dominance.'<sup>216</sup> However, drawing a difference with Pakistan's nuclear programme India's former NSA, Shivshankar Menon reasserted that, 'Unlike in certain other NWS, India's nuclear weapons are not meant to redress a military balance, or to compensate for some perceived inferiority in conventional military terms, or to serve some tactical or operational military need on the battlefield'<sup>217</sup> but are routine exercises aimed towards augmenting India's scientific and technological capabilities to make her strong and self-reliant.

Another major doctrinal debate that had been recurring over the past decade has been over the possibility of use of pre-emptive force by India against Pakistan's proxy war without nuclear escalation. Following the US rationale to launch an attack on Iraq in March 2003, India's foreign minister, Yashwant Sinha argued that India also reserved the right to use pre-emptive force against a country like Pakistan that 'similarly

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<sup>213</sup> See R. Roy-Chaudhury, 'India's Nuclear Doctrine: A Critical Analysis', *Strategic Analysis*, vol.33, no.3, May 2009, p.408, p.410 for developments in missile technology in India.

<sup>214</sup> 'India Tests Ballistic Missile, Posing new Threat to China', *The New York Times*, 18 January 2018; F.S. Gady, 'India Tests Most Advanced Nuclear-Capable ICBM', *The Diplomat*, 18 January 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/01/india-tests-most-advanced-nuclear-capable-icbm/>, (accessed 25 February 2018)

<sup>215</sup> Gady, 'India Tests Most Advanced Nuclear-Capable ICBM.'

<sup>216</sup> J. Tarabay, 'ICBM tests like India's are routine and expected. Well, most of them are', *CNN*, <http://edition.cnn.com/2018/01/18/asia/india-ballistic-test-normal-intl/index.html>, (accessed 25 February 2018).

<sup>217</sup> Menon, *Choices*, p.159.

possessed weapons of mass destruction, is exporting terrorism and lacks democracy.<sup>218</sup> George Fernandes, India's Defence Minister initially endorsing that, 'there are enough reasons to launch such strikes against Pakistan,'<sup>219</sup> later withdrew and rejected it as the government's position. Nonetheless, following the difficulties faced during troops mobilisation in Operation *Parakkram*, the Indian army developed a limited war doctrine for swift response- referred to as the 'Cold Start' doctrine that was published in 2004,<sup>220</sup> but it lacked support from the civilian leadership. However, in a recent statement, the NSA, Ajit Doval under the NDA-II government hinted that India is implementing the Cold Start doctrine which was soon withdrawn.

After the nuclear tests in 1998, Pakistan's continued incursions across the border and terrorist attacks on Indian soil spurred significant debates over the revision of nuclear doctrine regarding the development of Tactical Nuclear weapons.<sup>221</sup> Former BJP Parliamentarian, Dr. Chandan Mitra in a personal interview said that, 'If need arise, India's political leadership might reconsider India's NFU policy in the future but such a decision would be taken only if the external environment deteriorates.'<sup>222</sup> Nonetheless, emphasizing on the centrality of India's NFU, Dr. Reshmi Kazi, a nuclear expert at the IDSA under MOD in a personal interview said:

India being a non-nuclear weapon state by NPT definition and since it became an overt nuclear weapon state has adhered to no first use unlike any other NWS except for China. However, China's 'no first use' policy is somewhat diluted as it proclaims that China can use nuclear weapons on her own soil. This is tricky because then it can station nuclear weapons in Arunachal Pradesh, Taiwan and Tibet which are disputed territories with different claims and ongoing territorial conflicts. Unlike China's stand on NFU, India's NFU

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<sup>218</sup> Y. Sinha, 'The Right of Pre-emptive Strike', *Outlook*, 11 April 2003, <https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/the-right-of-pre-emptive-strike/219735>, (accessed 28 February 2017).

<sup>219</sup> 'George Tones Down pre-emptive War rhetoric', Global Newswire, *The Economic Times*, 15 April 2004, *LexisNexis Academic*, <http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe>, (accessed 28 February 2017).

<sup>220</sup> W.C. Ladwig, III, 'A Cold Start for Hot Wars?: The Indian Army's New Limited War Doctrine', *Quarterly Journal: International Security*, vol.32, no.3, winter 2007/2008, pp.158-190; S. Kapila, 'India's New 'Cold Start' War Doctrine Strategically Reviewed', *Paper*, South Asia Analysis Group, no. 991, 5 April 2004, <http://www.saag.org/papers10/paper991.html> cited in Sagan (ed.), 'Evolution of Pakistani and Indian Nuclear doctrine', p.250.

<sup>221</sup> Personal interview with Mr. K.K. Ganguly, Major General(Retired) Indian Army, Kolkata, 24 August 2015.

<sup>222</sup> Personal interview with Dr. Chandan Mitra, Former Member of Parliament (BJP) and Chief Editor of *The Pioneer*, (New Delhi), National Daily in New Delhi, 22 August 2017

policy is plain and simple without any such caveats. We will not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states or initiate attacks. There are no grey areas but it is black and white. We do not have 'first use' as United States has. We don't have 'first use' policy like Pakistan.<sup>223</sup>

The successive governments have all remain committed to the NFU doctrine which remains unlikely to change in the near future as it gives her a sense of 'exceptionalism', and appear unthreatening to her neighbours and the international community in general. It buttresses India's position to promote herself as contributing to non-proliferation objectives despite being outside the NPT rather than undermining it.<sup>224</sup> In a personal interview emphasizing the restrained and responsible character of India's nuclear posture and constructing a pivotal role for India in the advancement of nuclear disarmament, Dr. Kazi further remarked:

The NFU policy calls for restraint. We are a restrained nuclear power. There will be much political thinking before a political decision to use nuclear weapons is made. India has shown the kind of restraint maintained at every level and voiced this in various forums. This not only gives us a distinction of a restrained nuclear power but also makes us very eligible to take forward the whole disarmament process. Because this NFU policy as a non-proliferation measure can significantly contribute to global elimination of nuclear weapons.<sup>225</sup>

As Kazi noted, India irrespective of changes in the government has always remain committed to NFU because it is viewed as a disarmament and confidence building initiative, rather than a short term non-proliferation measure and is integral to India's identity re-production. Further drawing attention to the concerns of nuclear safety and security in Pakistan, Dr. Kazi added, 'We have a neighbour that has all kinds of problems like terrorist attacks within their own soil, being used for terrorist outfits causing sufficient threat to its own nuclear security.'<sup>226</sup> This has been reiterated to review

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<sup>223</sup> Personal interview with Dr. Reshmi Kazi, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses under the Ministry of Defence, Government of India, New Delhi, 22 December 2015.

<sup>224</sup> S. Saran, 'Arguments to Abandon India's 'No First Use' Policy for Nuclear Weapons are Fallacious', *Business Standard*, 22 April 2014, [http://www.business-standard.com/article/printer-friendlyversion?article\\_id=114042201335\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/printer-friendlyversion?article_id=114042201335_1.html), (accessed 16 August 2017).

<sup>225</sup> Personal interview with Dr. Reshmi Kazi, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses under the Ministry of Defence, Government of India, New Delhi, 22 December 2015.

<sup>226</sup> Personal interview with Dr. Reshmi Kazi, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses under the Ministry of Defence, Government of India, New Delhi, 22 December 2015.

and implement non-proliferation measures to deal with the security challenges in the immediate neighbourhood as former NSA Menon also noted:

Clandestine proliferation networks in our neighbourhood have already adversely affected our security. The risk of nuclear weapons or of other weapons of mass destruction falling into extremist or terrorist hand is real and must be factored into our thinking. It is clear that a new non-proliferation paradigm is necessary to deal with issues of nuclear security caused by the rise of non-state actors and their links to formal or organized structures in weak states. Today, India is the only nuclear weapon state to announce an unequivocal no-first-use commitment, and to declare that a world without nuclear weapons will enhance our security.<sup>227</sup>

India's former EAM, Natwar Singh under the Congress led UPA-I government further noted, 'India will continue to ensure that WMD-usable materials, equipment and technologies do not fall into the wrong hands whether of States or non-State actors, and in particular of terrorists. Our system of export controls is under continuous review; we continue to update these controls where necessary.'<sup>228</sup> The Post-Nehruvian discourse reiterated similar representations of India's 'impeccable non-proliferation credentials' unlike its neighbours as Natwar Singh also reaffirmed that:

Our nuclear policy is characterized by responsibility, transparency, predictability and a defensive orientation...India's policy has always been not to assist, encourage or induce any other country to manufacture nuclear weapons. As a responsible nation, India has never passed on its proven technological capabilities to anyone. India will not be a source of proliferation of indigenously developed sensitive technologies. We will

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<sup>227</sup> S. Menon, 'Address by National Security Advisor S. Menon at the 9<sup>th</sup> IISS Asia Security Summit in Singapore', 5 June 2010, in A.S.Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations-2010 Documents*, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, pp.30-31.

<sup>228</sup> K. Natwar Singh, 'Speech of External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh introducing the Motion in the Lok Sabha for consideration of the "Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Bill, 2005,"' New Delhi, 12 May 2005, in A.S. Bhasin(ed.), *India's Foreign Relations-2005 Documents*, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2005, p.164.; K. Natwar Singh, 'Statement by External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh in Rajya Sabha on the "Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Bill, 2005,"' New Delhi, 13 May 2005, *India's Foreign Relations-2005 Documents*, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2005, p.168.

remain faithful to this approach as we have been for the last several decades.<sup>229</sup>

Given her track record India is constructed as an indispensable partner in the non-proliferation efforts (particularly to the 'West'- USA) even though it chose to remain outside of the non-proliferation regime but one who had contributed to the strengthening of the regime rather than undermining it unlike many of its regime 'insiders' which has been recognised by the USA and culminated in the Indo-USA nuclear deal under the Bush administration. Former Foreign Secretary, Shyam Saran in the UPA-I government said:

We believe that general and complete disarmament, including nuclear disarmament must remain on the international agenda...India's status as a Nuclear Weapon State does not diminish its commitment to the objective of a nuclear weapon free world. Aspiring for a non-violent world order, through global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament continues to be an important plank of our nuclear policy, which is characterized by restraint, responsibility, transparency, predictability and a defensive orientation. As a responsible nuclear power with impeccable credentials on non-proliferation, we have earned increasing international recognition as a partner against proliferation.<sup>230</sup>

This became a recurring theme to facilitate the civil nuclear energy cooperation between India and USA and also for granting a NSG waiver to India to access the nuclear market and receive nuclear supplies despite being a non-signatory of NPT. Additionally, New Delhi in the last few years has showed greater willingness to engage with the global non-proliferation architecture and the USA has played a major role in India's integration process in the nuclear order. It ended India's nuclear isolation, cleared the stumbling

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<sup>229</sup> Natwar Singh, 'Speech of External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh introducing the Motion in the Lok Sabha for consideration of the 'Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Bill, 2005', p.164; Natwar Singh, 'Statement by External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh in Rajya Sabha on the "Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Bill, 2005"', p.168.

<sup>230</sup> S. Saran, 'Address by Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran at the Shanghai Institute of International Studies: "Present Dimensions of the Indian Foreign Policy"', Shanghai, 11 January 2006, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, <https://www.mea.gov.in/incoming-visit-detail.htm?2078/Present+Dimensions+of+the+Indian+Foreign+Policy++Address+by+Foreign+Secretary+Mr+Shyam+Saran+at+Shanghai+Institute+of+International+Studies+Shanghai>, (accessed 4 February 2017).

block to forge an enduring 'strategic partnership' between the two countries, and represented a transformation in their bilateral relations to 'comprehensive engagement'.

It has been argued that India's earlier 'nuclear rejectionism' which was built around the principles of global 'disarmament, equity and non-discrimination' had intentionally downplayed the security considerations underlying these normative arguments. As discussed Nehru's NAM has been described as a pragmatic policy that was couched in a moralistic framework with implicit realpolitik security interests. On similar lines it can also be assumed that 'nuclear exceptionalism' in the immediate post-independence years rather than being voluntarily pursued, it was a forced imposition because of India's internal and external circumstances during the time. But, it cannot be denied or dismissed that such a principled positions has been integral to India's identity re-production vis-à-vis the Others.

As discussed in the previous sections Indian security elites increasingly attach importance to reaffirm India's 'sovereignty' and 'autonomy' in decision making; its pursuit of economic and technological 'self-reliance' against a 'hostile' neighbourhood and a 'discriminatory' and 'neo-colonial' non-proliferation order aimed towards preventing India's growth and economic development for decades. New Delhi understood that the US which has been at the forefront of such 'neo-colonial' and 'hegemonic' non-proliferation practices, much of which have been directed towards countries like India was now willing to accommodate India in the global non-proliferation architecture. India, however remains vowed to her traditional commitment of global disarmament as has been established previously from the official narratives. Indian security elites realise that it needs to take incremental steps through supporting non-proliferation measures to achieve the ambitious, difficult and long term goal of disarmament which needs greater support and cooperation among all the major powers in the international community.

### **5.8. India –USA Nuclear deal: Integrating with the neo-colonial Other**

The current literature on the India-US nuclear deal focusses on the factors that led to the signing of the Indo-US nuclear deal,<sup>231</sup> or has looked at the entire process of

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<sup>231</sup> H.V. Pant, *The US-India Nuclear Pact: Policy, Process, and Great Power Politics*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2011; C.R. Mohan, *Impossible Allies: The United States, India, and the Global Order*,



negotiations<sup>232</sup> between the two countries and the internal roadblocks that had to be countered and overcome by both in USA and in India to bring the nuclear deal into effect. There are also studies on arguments in favour or against of the deal<sup>233</sup> which explores the debates on how this deal has strengthened or weakened the non-proliferation regime.<sup>234</sup> This section attempts to look at the re-production and re-interpretation of Indian exceptionalism within the official discourse through looking at the parliamentary debates in relation to this civilian nuclear energy cooperation agreement.

After the 1998 nuclear tests, India's position within the nuclear order has changed, though it did not receive a *de jure* legal status as a nuclear weapon state as defined within the NPT framework, but it is recognised as a *de facto* nuclear weapon capable state. India's approach to the global non-proliferation architecture, of which export control regimes have been a part, began evolving. The shift in her approach towards non-proliferation regime happened because India realised that the practical implementation of disarmament remains a far fetched goal, as a matter of fact even for herself given India's great power aspirations that has been fuelled with the 1998 nuclear tests which the security elite saw as an important strategic step towards that direction. India nonetheless maintains that it would be unable to join the NPT in its present form and could only join the treaty as a 'nuclear weapon state'.

The previous section shows that the security considerations played an important role, but Indian security elites [re]produced India's insecurity imaginary through Self/Other [re]constructions that legitimised the nuclear tests in opposition to the discriminatory non-proliferation regime. Additionally, New Delhi has pointed out the

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Delhi, India Research Press, 2006; T. Schaffer, *India and the United States in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Reinventing Partnership*, Washington DC, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2009.

<sup>232</sup> D. Mistry, *The US-India Nuclear Agreement: Diplomacy and Domestic Politics*, New Delhi, Cambridge University Press, 2014; S. Squassoni and J.M. Parillo, 'US-India Nuclear Cooperation: A Side by Side Comparison of Current Legislation', *CRS Report for Congress*, Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress, Order Code RL33561, 22 November 2006, pp.1-26, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/RL33561.pdf>, (accessed 10 March 2020).

<sup>233</sup> G. Perkovich, 'Faulty Promises: The US-India Nuclear Deal', *Policy Outlook*, Washington, D.C., Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 7 September 2005, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2005/09/07/faulty-promises-u.s.-india-nuclear-deal-pub-17419>, (accessed 5 January 2020); K.Subrahmanyam, 'India and the Nuclear Deal', *The Times of India*, 12 December 2005; 'Will Partisan Politics Nuke a Good Deal?', *The Times of India*, 22 July 2005.

<sup>234</sup> J. Carter, 'A Dangerous Deal with India', *The Washington Post*, 29 April 2006; J. Carter, 'Indian Deal Puts World At Risk', *International Herald Tribune*, 11 September 2008; E. Sollingen, *Nuclear Logics: Contrasting Paths in East Asia and the Middle East*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2007;

weaknesses of the present global non-proliferation architecture. Instead of rejecting it, India wants to aid in reforming the global non-proliferation regime to make it more efficient, legitimate and credible and one which recognises those who are in a position to contribute positively towards non-proliferation goals and not undermine it as those others (including certain member states like China) who have flouted such norms. To this regard former EAM, Natwar Singh remarked:

The non-proliferation order is coming under increasing stress both on account of the failure to make any significant progress towards nuclear disarmament as well as the failure to prevent clandestine proliferation by members of the Non Proliferation Treaty as well as some who are outside it. The infirmities of the non-proliferation order have imposed costs on India and have had an adverse impact on our security, as much of the clandestine proliferation which is today the focus of attention has tended to flow into or emanate from our neighbourhood... Unfortunately, even today we see the same inconsistencies in approach with selective focus on the recipients of such clandestine proliferation but not enough attention on the sources of supply [China].<sup>235</sup>

Through such discursive strategies Indian elite not only sought to distinguish the Indian Self from the spatial-political Others- China and Pakistan, but to engage and integrate with the 'neo-colonial' non-proliferation regime as a different case based on its nuclear track record. The 'nuclear apartheid' that had restricted India's technological pursuit and socio-economic development with stringent economic sanctions and embargoes on technology transfer had to be redressed. This necessitated India's engagement with the USA through a revised approach towards the non-proliferation regime that became the primary focus in the UPA-I government (2004-2009). India and USA signed the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) during the visit of PM Manmohan Singh to the US in July 2005, where both sides agreed that India-US relations 'are moving beyond a bilateral partnership towards a global partnership, which is anchored not only on common values but also common interests' such as 'in combating terrorism,

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<sup>235</sup> K. Natwar Singh, 'Inaugural address by External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh at the Conference on "Emerging Nuclear Proliferation Challenges" organised by Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses and Pugwash - India under the theme "India and the NPT"', New Delhi, 28 March 2005, in AS. Bhasin (ed.), *Foreign Relations-2005 Documents*, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2006, p.156.

proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and enhancing global peace.’<sup>236</sup> The Joint vision recognised that:

There has been a convergence of views on strategic and security issues and on opportunities that exist for the India-US cooperation in defence, science and technology, health, trade, space, energy and environment. There is also a growing US recognition of India's central and enhanced role in international institutions and processes. US's economic and political stakes in the growth of the Indian economy and its integration with the global market have provided impetus to the India-US cooperation in a way that meaningfully addresses constraints on India's growth, including the deficits of energy and infrastructure.<sup>237</sup>

The USA under the Bush administration saw an important strategic partnership in a 'rising' India that was growing economically and had become a state with 'advanced nuclear weapon capabilities' as defining the 21<sup>st</sup> century and henceforth upheld India's credentials as a 'responsible' nuclear power. India, on the other hand as a growing economy that has a stake in the sustenance of the 'neo-liberal' order for its own economic development showed increasing willingness to engage with the US and the non-proliferation regime which would in the long run enable her to play a role in shaping norms in the global security architecture through its membership in the export control groupings. The US help was crucial as its influence in these multilateral export control regimes is undeniable and the signing of the Indo-US nuclear Deal is viewed as a significant diplomatic achievement for India by the Ministry of External Affairs officials who were leading the negotiation process. Mr. P.R. Chakraborty, former Secretary and Ambassador in the MEA who had been a part of the Indo-US nuclear negotiations said in a personal interview:

It is a classic case of exceptionalism but it was the US who took the lead and decided on it. Earlier it was much a contested issue- particularly the Tarapur reactor. We never decided to sign the NPT. Bush felt a certain empathy towards India. It was a big roadblock. Both sides wanted to manage the issue and that is how it was managed – by making an exception for India. From the US policy to 'cap and roll back' we came down to this. It has punched a big hole in the

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<sup>236</sup> Saran, 'Address by Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran at the Shanghai Institute of International Studies: "Present Dimensions of the Indian Foreign Policy."'

<sup>237</sup> Saran, 'Address by Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran at the Shanghai Institute of International Studies: "Present Dimensions of the Indian Foreign Policy."'

NPT. Signing a NPT as a NW state would have been more difficult for India which would entail amending the NPT. And nobody else has been able to achieve this. Pakistan has blotted its record by making illicit nuclear technology and centrifugal transfers. Iran also cannot have that kind of exception.<sup>238</sup>

Therefore, India was integrated into the non-proliferation architecture as an 'exceptional' case outside the norm. This was however predicated upon the exceptionalist narrative that re-produced India as a 'responsible' nuclear power by the Indian elites at home and was internationally recognised by the USA to accommodate India as a non-NPT member state by reforming the existing structures.

But, there remains internal contradictions within the Post-Nehruvian discourse as the Communist parties had been consistent in their ideological opposition to the nuclear deal, and withdrew their support from the government as it saw closer engagement with the US resulting in the 'loss of sovereignty' as it pushed India into the US camp and compromised her non-aligned posture. Mohammed Salim, Member of the Parliament and a senior leader of the Communist Party of India- Marxist (CPIM) reviewing the Indo-US nuclear deal after 10 years said in a personal interview:

It is a paradigm shift under the Congress government taking into considerations both the compulsion and India's need and willingness to change its policies. The ruling party saw it as an opportunity to get closer to the USA rather than reviving the 'non-alignment'. The nuclear deal and the defence framework were used as popular game plan to sell the new found alignment with the US camp. It is a divided opinion. The ruling and the major opposition felt comfortable with the idea of deepening ties though there were sections (including other political parties) of the population that opposed the nuclear deal. The nuclear deal was pushed by the US because the US and nuclear suppliers companies wanted to extract some more benefits for them. The civil nuclear deal was showed as a trophy and it was projected as a centre piece of India's diplomatic success under the Congress government as a recognition for Indian exceptionalism. But it was essentially intended to pursue closer defence

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<sup>238</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Pinak Ranjan Chakraborty, Former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs and Distinguished Fellow, Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, 16 December 2015.

ties with USA, and to safeguard maritime interests in the context of rise of China in Asia-Pacific by both the sides.<sup>239</sup>

It created a conducive environment for India's increasing involvement in the global governance agenda on matters relating to non-proliferation, climate change and Asia-Pacific maritime security (discussed in Chapter 7). The NSSP with emphasis on co-operation in nuclear energy, space and high end technologies nevertheless underlined the fact that India can no longer be treated as part of the proliferation problem, but rather as part of the solution. India sought to create a global consensus on proliferation and the Indo-US Joint statement created an opportunity for India to play a greater role in the global non-proliferation efforts. Natwar Singh, India's then EAM said:

The need of the hour therefore is to move away from an exclusivist approach and to create a more inclusive framework based on principles of equality. We should evolve a framework which, on the one hand, effectively curbs and prevents proliferation and, on the other, does not unduly restrict cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear energy with states, who by their actions have strengthened the objective of non-proliferation.<sup>240</sup>

Within the domestic context Indian political leadership and the bureaucratic community worked on the India-USA Civilian Nuclear Cooperation Agreement to access nuclear energy for its economic needs. The UPA-I government was careful to reassure that this engagement in nuclear commerce to augment India's economic growth and development would be pursued without compromising India's 'sovereignty' and 'dignity'. The Post-Nehruvian discourse re-produced the USA as a 'strategic partner' that not only recognises and respects India's democratic credentials; its growing potential to play a bigger strategic role in the region and internationally in the global governance processes; is invested in India's growth and prosperity and is willing to assist India's rise. PM Manmohan Singh thus re-produced USA as an indispensable partner and integral to India's aspiration to emerge as a 'great power'. He said in the Lokh Sabha:

The United States is a super power today...If India grows in the next ten years at the rate of eight to ten per cent per annum, then we will probably become

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<sup>239</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Mohammed Salim, Member of the Parliament and a senior leader of the Communist Party of India (CPIM), New Delhi, 21 December 2015.

<sup>240</sup> Natwar Singh, 'Inaugural address by External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh at the Conference on "Emerging Nuclear Proliferation Challenges"', pp.159-160.

the third or the fourth largest economy in the world and the world will respect us. Therefore, while we know where we want to go, our objective is a multi-polar world. Our objective is to work together with other like-minded countries to manage and promote equitable management of the global inter-dependence of nations... What we are seeking is that we need an international environment which is supportive of our development efforts. India's principal concern is to get rid of chronic poverty, ignorance and diseases which still afflict millions and millions of our population... And, right or wrong, the United States influences that international environment and therefore, I do not say that there is anything wrong for us to seek close cordial relations with the US if it does not affect India's dignity and honour as a sovereign independent country.<sup>241</sup>

Manmohan Singh's government tried to mobilise domestic support by linking the Indo-US nuclear engagement with an inward oriented economic agenda. The strategic benefits of deeper engagement with the USA was justified by creating a narrative around India's economic rise and inclusive development to build popular support for the nuclear deal in the face of political opposition. Manmohan Singh underlined the need for nuclear energy in his emphasised statement after his visit to the USA as he said: 'energy is a crucial input to propel our economic growth' and therefore it was 'clearly an urgent necessity for us to enhance nuclear power production rapidly' which would enable India as a nation to 'leapfrog stages of economic development'<sup>242</sup> so far blocked by the technology control regimes. 'Economic diplomacy' became the key priority to assist India's rise under the 'Manmohan doctrine' and to legitimise certain strategic choices by the political leadership. Malone writes, 'Difficult strategic decisions, when couched in the language of economic growth and prosperity, are made more palatable to the power elite and a growing Indian middle class reaping the benefits of economic liberalization.'<sup>243</sup> It was argued that India is an energy deficient country that remains overdependent on hydrocarbons such as coal (which is plentiful in India but low quality), its oil, petroleum and gas imports and this leads to severe environmental damage. It was evidently becoming clear that, 'India's nuclear power

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<sup>241</sup> M. Singh, 'PM's reply to the Lok Sabha debate on his US visit', 3 August 2005, <https://archivepmo.nic.in/drmanmohansingh/speech-details.php?nodeid=154>, (accessed 7 July 2019).

<sup>242</sup> Singh, 'PM's reply to the Lok Sabha debate on his US visit.'

<sup>243</sup> Malone, *Does the Elephant Dance?*, p.73

programme had lagged behind'<sup>244</sup> being 'under very difficult conditions of this nuclear apartheid with which we[India] have had to live for 35 years.'<sup>245</sup> And this would be an opportunity to redress that. Mr. Adhir Chowdhury, Member of INC and Member of Parliament said in a personal interview:

Nuclear power is an energy which is needed for the development of our country. Since 1974 we had been experiencing the nuclear apartheid. But the USA had recognised the strength and importance of our country and the historic nuclear pact was signed. We got waiver from NSG to engage in nuclear trade without signing the NPT and now we are enjoying more freedom in the field of nuclear power and engaging in nuclear commerce. We have already proved ourselves as the most responsible country in the world and our credibility cannot be questioned because of our unblemished track record. As India has been growing its strength, India is recognised as a powerful country with nuclear weapons. But it is also recognised for its economic prowess and that is why nuclear apartheid was regarded as an anathema for us, but this has been removed.<sup>246</sup>

The UPA-I government under Singh therefore saw energy as the crucial barrier to this rise of 'a new India' as '...energy security is the key to India's emergence as a strong and powerful nation in the years to come.'<sup>247</sup> Further India's access to nuclear energy would also bolster India's role in strengthening efforts for climate change which has been a major criticism that had been levelled against particularly the emerging economies like India and China by the West. It would enhance India's international standing as a 'responsible' partner in managing the global commons but without compromising India's economic growth. PM Singh said:

...greater use of coal can result in environmental hazards, like CO2 emissions, though clean coal technology can help manage that situation. We are dependent on hydrocarbon imports for meeting seventy per cent of our requirements. That is too large a dependence. Therefore, in our quest for energy security, we must widen the options that are open to us and nuclear energy is one such option..., if

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<sup>244</sup> Singh, 'PM's reply to the LokSabha debate on his US visit'. India's capacity was less than 3,000 megawatts in 2005 though the target set by the AEC was 10000 mw.

<sup>245</sup> Singh, 'PM's reply to the LokSabha debate on his US visit.'

<sup>246</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Adhir Chowdhury, Member of Parliament (Indian National Congress), Former Union Minister (2012-2014) and President of West Bengal Pradesh Congress, New Delhi, 22 December 2015.

<sup>247</sup> Singh, 'PM's reply to the LokSabha debate on his US visit.'

somehow we could get rid of these restrictive regimes, then we would have widened the development option in the area of energy security that India badly needs if it is to realise its economic and social destiny.<sup>248</sup>

The MEA noted that, 'Nuclear power, as a safe and secure energy source, is an indispensable component for meeting the development needs of a large and growing economy like India'<sup>249</sup> and expressed India's commitment towards peaceful nuclear research and stressed on the importance of international cooperation including in the field of safety-related technologies. The Post-Nehruvian discourse has embraced a holistic idea of security that includes health, energy, environment, maritime security and other in its understanding of India's pursuit of 'enlightened national interests' as discussed in Chapter 5. Energy security emerged as a key priority and access to clean and safe energy was strongly emphasized by the UPA government. This would be achieved through 'diversification of energy resources, and the sources of their supply, as well as measures for conservation of energy,'<sup>250</sup> and hence, India focused on the need to carefully consider the adoption of renewable sources of energy and energy efficient and clean technologies domestically, to the extent financially feasible. The UPA government also focussed on gearing up its domestic efforts in order to achieve the necessary growth in commercial nuclear energy in addition to its US engagement.

There were two significant objectives for India apart from widening India's development options; the first being 'to acquire for India a larger space to achieve our [India's] national goals,' by ensuring that India never compromises its 'autonomy' in the management of India's nuclear programme and the strategic assets; and secondly, to engage with the US and other interlocutors to bring an end to the 'nuclear apartheid' which have restricted India's participation in nuclear commerce for decades.

The positive advantages that were realised is that foremost, it re-inforced India's self understanding as a 'different' power set to realise its great power aspirations

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<sup>248</sup> Singh, 'PM's reply to the Lok Sabha debate on his US visit'; 'PM defends US nuke deal, assures strategic autonomy', *The Economic Times*, 4 August 2005.

<sup>249</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, 'Statement of the Ministry of External Affairs on India's submission of Instrument of Ratification of the Convention on Nuclear Safety', New Delhi, 31 March 2005, in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations- 2005 Documents*, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2006, p.161.

<sup>250</sup> M. Singh, 'PM's opening remarks at the first meeting of the Energy Coordination Committee', 6 August 2005, <https://archivepmo.nic.in/drmanmohansingh/speech-details.php?nodeid=158>, (accessed 29 May 2019).



predicated on an uninterrupted access to energy resources and advanced technology to sustain high rates of economic growth; second, this provided an opportunity to shape global norms and governance agenda which further distinguished India as a responsible power vis-à-vis Pakistan that was also claiming for a similar deal and in turn re-inforced India's 'exceptionalism' narrative. The agreement recognizes India 'as a responsible State with advanced nuclear technology,' that should enable India to acquire the same benefits and advantages as those other States, 'which have advanced nuclear technology' thereby establishing her at par with the 'nuclear haves' and also led to 'dismantling of the technology denial regimes which have hitherto targeted India.'<sup>251</sup> But being integrated in this new regime also necessitated India to undertake certain obligations and to reaffirm the global non-proliferation security architecture as an 'insider' rather than an 'outsider'. PM Singh clarified: 'Predicated on our obtaining the same benefits and advantages as other nuclear powers, is the understanding that we shall undertake the same responsibilities and obligations as such countries, including the United States. Concomitantly, we expect the same rights and benefits. Thus we have ensured the principle of non-discrimination.'<sup>252</sup> India has managed to keep its fast breeder reactor outside the IAEA safeguards, secured the autonomy to decide the separation plan on reactors without any external interference and it was highlighted several times that the decision to put certain facilities and reactors under international supervision would be 'an Indian decision'<sup>253</sup> only in accordance to its own interests. In terms of safeguards, India secured an 'India-specific' safeguards. In a personal interview Former Foreign Secretary Dr. Chakraborty further noted:

We also put certain reactors to safeguards but we also kept certain reactors out of safeguards. We managed to maintain certain facilities beyond the safeguards. We kept what we thought was enough because we are not seeking a major nuclear armoury. There is no need to have 1000 nuclear warheads, 100 is enough. It is only for deterrence and a posture that we maintain and it is never going to be put to military use. The part of nuclear liability had not been fully addressed but partially addressed through the insurance pool which is a technical issue.

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<sup>251</sup> M. Singh, 'Suo Motu Statement by Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in Parliament on Civil Nuclear Energy Cooperation with the United States', New Delhi, 27 February 2006, in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations Documents-2006 Documents*, External Publicity Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2007, p.416.

<sup>252</sup> Singh, 'Suo Motu Statement by Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in Parliament on Civil Nuclear Energy Cooperation with the United States.'

<sup>253</sup> 'Delhi to draw up N-division roadmap', *The Statesman*, 26 November 2005.

There is an India-specific safeguards because the normal protocol of IAEA safeguards puts everything under safeguards as a member of the NPT. We secured an exceptionalism over there also.<sup>254</sup>

India had already declared a voluntary moratorium on testing but Indian government claimed that India did not lose the rights to conduct future testing, and if such circumstances arose on the security situation and if needed, it could be resolved with the US counterparts over discussion. The nuclear deal came under strong criticism almost immediately following the release of the 2005 Joint Statement, the March 2006 Separation Plan, and the 123 Agreement from the members of Indian political parties in the opposition and also the Left who were coalition partners in the UPA-I government, nuclear science community, and, members from the defence community who voiced criticisms and concerns over the India–US civilian nuclear initiative. One of the major concerns raised by the BJP, certain members of the defence staff and the scientists from the nuclear establishment was the right to conduct future tests which if prevented would result in an infringement on India's 'nuclear autonomy', whereas there were others who debated on the potential impact in the advancement of nuclear technology, particularly by certain scientists who opined that India needed to continue further testing.

Within India's political spectrum, scientific and defence establishment there were two lines of arguments framed in the oppositional discourses to the Indo-US Nuclear deal: first, that 'the Separation Plan could 'undermine' India's autonomy of the future course of its 'scientific research and development, ...limit its options, and compromise the integrity of India's strategic programs', and, second, that 'by engaging in discussions with, and allegedly acquiescing in the demands made by the United States, we [India] have compromised the independent foreign policy and loss of sovereignty' as was reflected when India voted with the US on Iran's economic sanctions in the UN.

The BJP took a strong stand against the nuclear deal at the time on account of not permitting any infringement on India's nuclear programme as they said, 'We will be sacrificing our national security by letting our Nuclear Weapons programme be

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<sup>254</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Pinak Ranjan Chakraborty, Former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, and Distinguished Fellow, Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, 16 December 2015.

controlled, confined and contained under international watch.<sup>255</sup> The BJP and certain members of the defence community framed their objections with regards to protection of India's nuclear independence and further development, yet the Left has rightly argued that the BJP were ideologically not opposed to the Nuclear deal as they were the first to initiate talks with the Clinton administration to facilitate nuclear cooperation with the USA under the Vajpayee led NDA-I government. Mohammed Salim, senior leader of the CPIM and Member of Parliament criticizing the BJP's political position said in a personal interview:

The BJP opposed at that time because they had objections that they started the conversation with the US counterparts to enhance Indo-US engagement in nuclear commerce, and so they feel that they should have been the one to strike the deal which was instead initiated and signed under the Congress led UPA-I government.<sup>256</sup>

This is indeed evident from the Modi government's pursuit of a greater re-engagement with the global nuclear order as it became a member of the export control groupings like the MTCR and is seeking entry into the NSG. On the contrary, explaining the Left's position on the Indo-US nuclear deal which they viewed as part of a larger strategic 're-alignment' with the USA, the Left concentrated on the need to protect and preserve India's 'strategic autonomy' in its foreign policy decision making. Mohammed Salim, Member of the Parliament and a senior leader of the CPIM reviewing the Indo-US nuclear deal after 10 years further added during a personal interview:

For the farmer, agricultural section, working class, the marginalised and poorer section, it has not brought any tangible dividends. India had a certain degree of economic sovereignty and that is why we could survive the financial crisis. But with this alignment, not only we are losing the sovereignty in decision making, we are borrowing the crisis [financial crisis] that Western world is facing. On the nuclear energy supplies there has been no tangible results in the last 7-8 years since the time the Indo-US nuclear deal was signed. No nuclear reactors have been built. We have not gained anything. It curtailed India's independent nuclear programme and research as we were trying to have low cost solutions by our

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<sup>255</sup> M. M. Joshi, 'The US-India agreement: victory for whom?', *The Hindu*, 22 October 2005.

<sup>256</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Mohammed Salim, Member of the Parliament and senior leader of the Communist Party of India (CPIM), New Delhi, 21 December 2015.

scientists to our energy needs which has been affected. In terms of real gain, not a single watt of energy has been produced.<sup>257</sup>

The Left Front refused to accept both the claims made by the UPA-I government in terms of resulting in socio-economic improvement of the 'common-man' and the 'rural India' who would in their opinion be adversely affected. For them, it would hardly lead to any major economic benefits for the country, which was evident as a result of the technical impediments on the Nuclear Liability issues, (which was later partially resolved under the Obama administration). Additionally, there has been no major tangible progress apart from the fact that India has inked nuclear cooperation agreements with many more partners. But the Left also noted that the proposed alternative for access to clean energy, i.e. the nuclear energy also do not have much substance on the economic rationale as according to CPIM leader Md.Salim, 'nuclear energy would be extremely expensive and just constitute only a meagre percentage of India's energy supply, and therefore is not cost effective'.<sup>258</sup> The Left government in response to the deal withdrew its support, but the UPA-I government managed to survive and the Indo-US nuclear deal became effective in 2008 which has emerged as a key diplomatic success of Indian diplomacy that resulted in an enhanced global recognition of 'Indian exceptionalism' as a 'responsible' power.

This could be concluded as a thought out strategy to re-produce India as a responsible global actor on climate change and to seek increasing recognition from the developed West for the same as India shows its willingness to shoulder greater responsibilities in global governance in commensurate with its great power ambitions. In addition, the narrative of 'clean energy' was used to uphold India's pursuit of 'enlightened national interests' that is sensitive to concerns and interests of other nations. Domestically, under the UPA government and the successive governments, access to energy is seen as a crucial component to produce an economically strong and a self-reliant rising 'India'. The INC under the vision of Manmohan Singh emphasized 'strategic autonomy' through 'strategic engagement with all the major powers' with a primary focus on enhancing India's economic growth, technological development and access to energy resources. Internal contradictions emerged within the Post-Nehruvian

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<sup>257</sup> Personal interview with Mohammed.Salim, Member of the Parliament and senior leader of the Communist Party of India (CPIM), New Delhi, 21 December 2015.

<sup>258</sup> Personal interview with Mohammed Salim, Member of the Parliament and senior leader of the Communist Party of India (CPIM), New Delhi, 21 December 2015.

discourse because UPA government's alliance partner, the Left bloc saw it as an infringement of India's political and economic independence and a major deviation from its legacy of non-alignment which remains integral to India's identity constructions. Interestingly, it is important to note that on one hand externally, the re-production of the Indian Self as a 'responsible' nuclear power which is a key narrative of elite understandings of 'Indian exceptionalism' has been pushed to seek integration with the global nuclear order. On the other hand, internally, India's independence in decision making as embedded in its principle of 'preserving strategic autonomy' was increasingly being questioned. But the re-production of the Indian Self and exceptionalism remained central to the debates on India-USA nuclear deal.

The Singh administration in order to justify the government's positions in reply to the criticisms levelled against it, reassured that the Indian side has refused receiving any US blueprint on nuclear facilities and rebuked allegations of the Department of Atomic Energy as getting sidelined in the negotiation process.<sup>259</sup> Those who had opposed the nuclear deal had maintained that any separation plan suggested by the US side should be rejected.<sup>260</sup> The UPA government re-affirmed that the Indo-US Nuclear deal would proceed on the basis of 'strict reciprocity' and Singh noted that 'If the US doesn't carry out its obligations, we are also free not to.'<sup>261</sup> Further, it was asserted that on the issue concerning India's acceptance of provisions of a future FMCT (even before it was negotiated by other nuclear weapon states), India had only agreed to work with other 'like-minded' countries to facilitate such a treaty in the future provided India's legitimate interests and concerns are taken into consideration.

After much diplomatic efforts India also managed to clinch the IAEA's approval and the NSG waiver as Washington gave its full force. The significant role US played in recognising India's exceptionalism on the nuclear front made US and India 'natural partners'. India also received the NSG waiver and it was recordedly a difficult negotiation process to convince the last hold out countries-Ireland, Austria and New Zealand –and holding off a late charge from China which Indian bureaucratic team

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<sup>259</sup> 'US gave blueprint on nuclear facilities', *The Hindu*, 25 November 2005; 'Delhi to draw up N-division roadmap.'

<sup>260</sup> 'India should let nuclear agreement lapse', *The Hindu*, 27 November 2005.

<sup>261</sup> 'Reciprocity key to Indo-US N-deal: PM', *The Times of India*, 17 December 2005; 'India Needn't stick to its pledge if America doesn't', *The Times of India*, 17 December 2005; 'Indo-US nuclear Deal totters on reciprocity', *The Economic Times*, 16 December 2005.

managed to resolve eventually. Congress Parliamentarian, Mr. Adhir Choudhury said in a personal interview:

The NSG has agreed to supply uranium because we have not committed any violation in the peaceful pursuit of nuclear energy and we have also declared moratorium on nuclear tests. This is because of the integrity and persistence of our nuclear programme and policies which is not inimical to any other country. Following this we have signed nuclear pacts with many countries like Japan very recently and it is an important state that India has strengthened its relations with.<sup>262</sup>

The above statement also sees the waiver granted by NSG as an 'exception' accorded to India because of its unblemished non-proliferation credentials that distinguishes India from the Other-Pakistan who also sought a similar deal but has failed to secure it. It opened up options for India to engage in nuclear commerce with other countries that were of vital strategic importance. But India also needed to make certain concessions as the 'opposing forces' within the USA wanted to prevent India's integration for it remained outside of the NPT. Mr. Pinak Ranjan Chakraborty, Former foreign secretary, the Ministry of External Affairs said in a personal interview:

The IAEA also had to agree. It was an effort specifically led by the USA and President Bush. It was hugely opposed by nuclear bureaucracy and non-proliferation mafia. India maintained a tough position because India realised that George Bush wanted the deal. The non-proliferation lobby was trying to put constraints on India's actions but we by ourselves decided that we won't need to make any further tests and for safety reasons we keep the arsenal demated with it missiles. We also back dwarfed with buying oil from Iran because the international financial institutions did not allow to make monetary transfers. The USA gradually backtracked the economic sanctions that have gutted Iran economy.<sup>263</sup>

Indian delegation led by the Foreign Secretary, Shivshankar Menon cited New Delhi's 'impeccable track record on non-proliferation despite not being a signatory to NPT'<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Adhir Chowdhury, senior leader of Indian National Congress, Member of Parliament, former Union Minister for Railways (2012-2014) and President of West Bengal Pradesh Congress, New Delhi, 22 December 2015.

<sup>263</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Pinak Ranjan Chakraborty, Former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi and Distinguished Fellow, Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, 16 December 2015.

<sup>264</sup> 'NSG: India allays fears', *The Statesman*, 22 August 2008.

in order to clinch the deal. On its side, India sought to fulfil its part by separating its military and civilian facilities and placing the latter under a new safeguards agreement and took steps to harmonize export control laws with NSG and UNSCR 1540 standards<sup>265</sup> besides opening negotiations with other export control bodies. India has always maintained that India may not be a party to NPT but India's conduct has always been in consistent with the key NPT provisions, yet India cannot join the NPT in its current form as a non-nuclear weapon state, henceforth implicitly re-asserting that India could only join the NPT as a nuclear weapon state which was a much tougher challenge. Hinting at such a possibility of India's future role in shaping and reforming the nuclear order Hillary Clinton said, 'India will be a full partner(sic) at the high table in trying to reinstate a stronger non-proliferation regime and we look forward to work with India as we try to come up with the 21<sup>st</sup> century version of NPT.'<sup>266</sup> The nuclear agreement is seen as a calibrated step to accommodate India as 'an exception' and to bring India into the mainstream and enable her to engage in nuclear trade and global non-proliferation efforts.

India ratified the Convention on Nuclear Safety<sup>267</sup> in 2005 and reiterated that, 'Fully conscious of the responsibilities arising from the possession of advanced and comprehensive capabilities in the entire gamut of nuclear fuel cycle operations, India attaches great importance to the issue of nuclear safety.'<sup>268</sup> Additionally, India took initiatives for enhancement of national measures, established a multi-layered regulatory infrastructure and enacted legislations for safety of nuclear installations and has sought

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<sup>265</sup> Natwar Singh, 'Speech of External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh introducing the Motion in the Lok Sabha for consideration of the "Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Bill, 2005"', pp.163-165; Natwar Singh, 'Statement by External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh in Rajya Sabha on the "Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Bill, 2005"', pp.167-169; K. Natwar Singh, 'Reply speech of External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh in the Lok Sabha to the debate on the Bill: "Weapons of Mass Destruction and Their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Bill, 2005"', New Delhi, 12 May 2005, in A.S. Bhasin (ed) *India's Foreign Relations – 2005 Documents*, New Delhi, External Publicity Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2006, pp.165-166.

<sup>266</sup> H. Clinton, 'Remarks at the United States Institute of Peace', 21 October 2009, <http://usip.org/files/resources/Clinton-usip-remarks.pdf>, (accessed 25 May 2017).

<sup>267</sup> The Convention on Nuclear Safety was adopted in Vienna on 17 June 1994. It entered into force on 24 October 1996. The Convention establishes a legal obligation on the part of the States Parties to apply certain safety principles to the construction, operation and regulation of land-based civilian nuclear power plants under their jurisdiction. It provides for obligatory reporting and review procedures, while recognizing the basic principle that safety of nuclear installations remains a national responsibility.

<sup>268</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, 'Statement of the Ministry of External Affairs on India's submission of Instrument of Ratification of the Convention on Nuclear Safety.'

international cooperation in areas including safety-related technical cooperation. It has also institutionalized administrative mechanisms to prevent unlawful access to such weapons and related technologies and has also been exercising controls over the export of WMD-usable materials, equipment and technologies.

The Indian Parliament also passed an overarching and integrated legislation to prohibit unlawful activities and initiatives to build upon the regulatory framework related to controls over the export of WMD-usable materials, equipment and technologies, through the 'Weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems (prohibition of unlawful activities) Act, 2005' which is in continuation of India's principle of scientific research and protecting national security.<sup>269</sup> It was emphasized that, 'India is and will remain a responsible nuclear power. We have adopted the most responsible policy on sensitive and dual-use nuclear and missile related technologies. We are committed to ensure that these do not fall into the wrong hands, especially the terrorists and non-State actors. India has an impeccable record in this regard; and India will continue to work to prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.'<sup>270</sup> India further seeks to implement a massive expansion of civilian nuclear programme, which will not only address India's energy needs but also help to bridge the ever-widening economic gap between the developed and developing world. This needs establishing a strong regulatory mechanism to ensure plant safety and safe disposal of waste.<sup>271</sup> India also hosted the workshop in association with the UN office of Disarmament Affairs.<sup>272</sup>

Predicated on such national measures, harmonisation of its export control laws with international norms and its non-proliferation track record India has applied for its membership in the NSG, after seeking membership in the other technology control

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<sup>269</sup> See Ministry of External Affairs, 'Weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems (prohibition of unlawful activities) Act, 2005', New Delhi, Government of India, [https://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/148\\_The-Weapons-Mass-destruction-And-Delivery-Systems-Act-2005.pdf](https://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/148_The-Weapons-Mass-destruction-And-Delivery-Systems-Act-2005.pdf), (accessed 10 April 2016); Natwar Singh, 'Speech of External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh introducing the Motion in the Lok Sabha for consideration of the "Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Bill, 2005"', pp.163-165; Natwar.Singh, 'Statement by External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh in Rajya Sabha on the "Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Bill, 2005"', pp.167-169.

<sup>270</sup> Natwar Singh, 'Reply speech of External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh in the Lok Sabha to the debate on the Bill: "Weapons of Mass Destruction and Their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Bill, 2005"', pp.165-166.

<sup>271</sup> 'Waiver clinched: India will have to negotiate new US ties carefully', *The Statesman*, 9 September 2008; 'Vienna: India wins the day', *The Asian Age*, 7 September 2008.

<sup>272</sup> 'India warns against proliferation of N-weapons', *DH News Service*, 11 December 2012.



regimes such as the MTCR, Wassenaar arrangement and in Australia group. On India's renewed approach to non-proliferation regime and China's continued attempts to prevent India from fully integrating into the global nuclear order, retired Ambassador and former Secretary, MEA, Mr. P.R.Chakraborty in a personal interview said:

The NSG membership has not happened yet. China is playing some games, as it wants a similar deal for Pakistan which is unlikely to happen. China had tried to prevent earlier with the NSG waiver of India. India had the MOU with the USA for technology transfer and under this there has been certain low- tech technology transfers such as radiation hardened chips for India's space programme or specific technologies. India needs technology. The technology control regimes that the West set up were essentially to deny technologies to countries like India because we had not fallen in line with their non-proliferation norms. It was a mistake not to have tested before [1968] but India was worried about repercussions and sanctions which denied technology to her for decades. We had discussions on MTCR. India has sorted out the issue. India is recognised as a nuclear power outside NPT as an exception but the full recognition will come from the membership of these regimes. Once you are a member of the group, we are at par in terms of access to technology and the responsibilities that comes along, India is willing to take up as India has never been a proliferator.<sup>273</sup>

Indian elites are still cautious of these technological regimes, yet India has renewed its terms of re-engagement with them. The official discourse of the Indo-US nuclear deal ensures the freedom of action to stay outside of the NPT, while remaining committed to its principles but being treated equally with the nuclear haves [according to the NPT definition] in terms of access to technology which essentially endorses India's position as a weapons power, allowing it to keep its arsenal and to participate in civilian nuclear and other high tech trade meaning that, 'its now bracketed with China rather than Pakistan'.<sup>274</sup> India disapproves being 'bracketed with Pakistan' as it undermines and ignores India's non-proliferation credentials and its ability to develop strong partnerships and friendships over the years which Pakistan cannot boast of. Indian elites re-produce

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<sup>273</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Pinak Ranjan Chakraborty, Former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs and a Distinguished Fellow at Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, 16 December 2015.

<sup>274</sup> 'Joining the world: NSG waiver is a diplomatic triumph for India', *The Times of India*, 8 September 2008; 'NSG hurdle crossed-India gets waiver, 34 years Nuclear Apartheid Ends', *The Times of India*, 7 September 2008.

Pakistan as an inferior Other, whereas they feel better to be recognised at par with China which is re-constructed on similar lines with India as both are two large Asian civilisations, big economies with vast demography and are partners against western hegemonic practices. In spite of Chinese positive assurances to India they had nevertheless went on with their decision to block NSG waiver which strengthened New Delhi's doubts and led the hyperrealists to conclude that 'Sentimental Hindi-Chin bhai-bhai attitudes, and old style communist reaction, remain strong among the Indian chatterati, but we must now accept that China is very reluctant to recognising India as an equal.'<sup>275</sup> Henceforth, it is argued that New Delhi should do exactly as Beijing does: 'to exercise cold tit-for-tat options when conducting foreign policy' which could be an increasing possibility under Modi's assertive nationalism.

However, there have been similar voices that have raised scepticism towards India's role in technology control export groups and instead focusses on independent nuclear research. They reconstruct the 'neo-colonial' Other in the non-proliferations and technology control regimes and raise suspicions on how far India can truly emerge as a norm-shaper within such export control groupings. Senior CPIM leader Mohammed Salim said in a personal interview:

We welcome the membership of India in the technology regimes, but there should be tangible results. We have not received any consignment of uranium or building of reactors. Still we are attending to the nitty gritty of the nuclear pact. And moreover USA is prepared to offer the same deal to Pakistan, so where is the difference? The rule has already been set by the elite club and India cannot become a major player in the global nuclear business. In this world in diplomacy it won't be offered to India on a platter. If they want to extract something more they usually offer us something. We can develop our soft skill, technical manpower and human resources in this field instead. And for that matter we wanted to have our independent research facilities which India could offer to rest of the world, low cost solution to its energy needs and peaceful uses of nuclear technology instead of becoming a part of the race in nuclear arsenal. We will not and never.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> 'Joining the World, NSG waiver is a diplomatic triumph for India', *The Times of India*, 8 September 2008

<sup>276</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Mohammed Salim, senior leader of the CPIM and Member of Parliament, New Delhi, 21 December 2015.

However India has pursued both indigenous nuclear programmes and remains committed to take national measures and international cooperation to ensure nuclear safety. India has secured membership in the prevailing export control groupings apart from the NSG and has also signed nuclear trade agreements with several countries like Russia, France, Japan, Ukraine which show India's intended willingness to (re)engage with nuclear market and non-proliferation security regimes.

### **5.9. Summary**

Post-independence the scientific drive to harness the atomic energy for socio-economic development was necessary to consolidate India as a post-colonial modern state and this constituted a temporal othering of the 'backward' and 'under-developed' Self and Western colonialism. Though security considerations were important but the non-proliferation and technology control regimes had primarily pushed India's drive to develop indigenous technological capabilities and transform as a state with nuclear weapons capability. This chapter identifies that India's nuclear developments has to be primarily understood in opposition to the 'colonial, hegemonic and discriminatory' non-proliferation and technology control regimes that sought to restrict India's access to nuclear technology (even for peaceful uses), to desist her from developing its own nuclear weapons capability and thereby restrict her socio-economic development and technological modernisation by keeping her dependant on the major powers in perpetuity. India's strong belief in 'non-discrimination' [in terms of having access to or developing technological capabilities] and to pursue an independent policy without any form of infringement on her 'sovereignty' for its own betterment and to facilitate domestic transformation has been central in India's nuclear discourse.

The nationalist elites' have always believed that India's urge to act freely in order to protect and pursue her 'national interests'[based on her understanding of Self] so as to realise India's destiny as a 'great power' cannot be curtailed, while simultaneously India sought to [re]produce India's role as a 'different' great power even in its use of nuclear energy/technology through spatial-political othering of India's neighbours-China and Pakistan as it is always argued that India unlike them had upheld non-proliferation norms and strengthened global disarmament objectives despite remaining outside of the NPT regime. Security considerations had pushed India's

nuclear programme forward but India's tests were an exercise of India's 'sovereignty' in order to secure its well defined 'vital national interests' and pursuit of socio-economic and technological development as a modern state that was destined to play a major role in the global order. In the aftermath of nuclear tests, India's engagement with the non-proliferation regime changed with the signing of the Indo-US nuclear deal that accommodated India without having her to sign the NPT and this was seen as a classic case of exceptionalism. Domestic politics has played an important role in terms of how the nationalist elite [re]produced an understanding of the Indian Self in opposition to the Others, for instance, BJP framed the nuclear tests to create a strong 'Hindu' India that had to be defended against the hegemonic nuclear order which prevented India's aspirations to emerge as a major power. Simultaneously both the post-Nehruvian and hyperrealist/cultural nationalist discourse reproduced India as an 'exceptional' power which was recognised by the world community and had culminated in the Indo-US nuclear deal, NSG waiver and enabled India to gain membership in the technology control regimes. Now that India has transformed itself into a nuclear weapon state and have been accommodated in the NPT regime without being a signatory it aims to become a norm maker, however the security elite have shown scepticism over how much of a large role will it be able to play and in the last 10 years there also has not been much advancement in building of reactors or fuel supplies.

## Chapter 6

### 'Neighbourhood First' and India's Response to Pakistan-Terrorism Nexus

#### 6.1. 'Development Diplomacy' in the Neighbourhood

The chapter looks at India's regional engagement in the 'immediate neighbourhood' under the 'neighbourhood first' policy. The priority attention accorded to South Asia under Narendra Modi's foreign policy vision was evident when he invited all the heads of states of all member states of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to his inauguration in May 2014 and outlined his 'neighbourhood approach' based on the mantra of 'sabka saath, sabka vikaas' (to take everyone along and work for welfare and prosperity for all) and recently added to this is 'sabka viswas' (everyone's trust).

This was not to alter the basic framework of the existing policy but to revamp it by infusing new dynamism in its implementation as South Asia has always received primary attention under previous NDA and UPA governments. The MEA Annual Report noted that, 'Given the highest priority attached by the Government of India to socio-economic development, India has a vital stake in a supportive external environment both in our region and globally.'<sup>1</sup> Both the Post-Nehruvian and the hyperrealist-cultural nationalism discourse recognizes that India is yet to resolve its boundary disputes with both China and Pakistan- both of which are constructed as spatial-political Others against which the Indian Self is defined, compared with and needs to be defended against. The chapter looks at the self-representational practices that reproduces the Indian Self as a force of stability and provider of public goods in the South Asia under its 'neighbourhood first' policy based on the five pillars of the *Panchamrit* doctrine and expects its regional pre-eminence to be recognised by the regional and extra-regional states. The emphatic focus on 'shared prosperity' and economics has been at the core of the UPA and NDA-I and II governments' regional engagement strategies but the NDA-II government under Modi has devised definitive

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, 'Annual Report 2008-2009', Policy Planning and Research Division, Ministry of External Affairs: New Delhi, 1 April 2009, p.i, [http://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/170\\_Annual-Report-2008-2009.pdf](http://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/170_Annual-Report-2008-2009.pdf), (accessed 5 September 2017).

methods and narratives with concentrated focus on development cooperation, connectivity, commerce, investments and cultural –religious diplomacy in the region. Statements by the key political and bureaucratic elites also signals that the NDA-II government's increasing willingness to assume the larger responsibility to protect South Asia against the destabilising force of radical Islamic terrorism and Chinese expansionsism and represents it as the [broader] Hindu space (Akhand Bharat) which Indian elites recognise as its traditional sphere of influence. Drawing from the Universalist appeal of Hinduism that believes in, 'Assimilation and respect for all ways of thinking and worship'<sup>2</sup> and by bringing in all the 'countries of Akhand Bharat together', combined with 'India-first' geostrategic vision, Modi re-produces India as the Hindu nation working for human welfare, peaceful coexistence and prosperity for all in the region as reflected in its belief in 'Vasudaiva Kutumbakam'<sup>3</sup> through promoting 'connectivity, prosperity and culture'.

The second section looks at the changes and similarities in India's self-representational practices under the two predominant national identity discourses with regard to India's most significant external spatial political Other- Pakistan. It is important to look at the changing nature of military responses under the Modi government to deal with Pakistan-terrorism nexus and its practise of 'strategic restraint' that is being re-defined with the use of surgical strikes.<sup>4</sup>

India's former Prime Minister Vajpayee announced that being recognized as 'the world's largest democracy; an emerging global economic power; the confluence of a modern nation and an ancient civilization; a powerful country, dedicated to the ideal of peace,'<sup>5</sup> it is 'India's policy and necessity to establish friendly and cooperative

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<sup>2</sup> Rashtriya Swayam Sevak, 'Building Indian Strategic Culture', *Organiser* (RSS Newspaper), 2015. [http://epaper.organiser.org/stepaper.aspx?lang=4&spage=Mpage&NB=2015-01-22#Mpage\\_6](http://epaper.organiser.org/stepaper.aspx?lang=4&spage=Mpage&NB=2015-01-22#Mpage_6), (accessed 11 December 2018).

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 3 for a discussion on 'Vasudaiva Kutumbakam'; See O.P. Gupta, 'Swearing-in Diplomacy', *Organiser*, 2014, [http://epaper.organiser.org/stepaper.aspx?lang=4&spage=Mpage&NB=2014-05-31#Mpage\\_8](http://epaper.organiser.org/stepaper.aspx?lang=4&spage=Mpage&NB=2014-05-31#Mpage_8), (accessed 10 December 2018); Wojczewski, 'Populism, Hindu Nationalism, and Foreign Policy in India', p.17; N. Modi, 'My Dream Is of a Transformed India alongside an Advanced Asia: PM Narendra Modi', 2016, <https://www.narendramodi.in/text-of-pm-s-address-at-the-mof-imf-conference-on-advancing-asia-investing-for-the-future-428109>, (accessed 22 January 2018).

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion on India's military power projection, see W.C. Ladwig III, 'India's Military Power Projection: Is the Land of Gandhi becoming a Conventional Great Power?', *Asian Survey*, vol.50, no.6, November-December 2010, pp.1162-1183.

<sup>5</sup> A.B. Vajpayee, 'Address of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to the nation on Independence Day-2003 (Extracts)', New Delhi, 15 August 2003, <https://archivepmo.nic.in/abv/speech-details.php?nodeid=9239>, (accessed 30 March, 2015).

relations with all its neighbours.<sup>6</sup> With a belief in 'a common destiny with its neighbours,' establishing a 'peaceful periphery' to leverage India's 'self-enlightened national interests' aimed at the economic betterment of every Indian citizen gained utmost priority under both the BJP led NDA and the UPA(I and II) governments over the last two decades. In South Asia, as retired Ambassador Trigunayat summarises, 'Prevalence of poverty, governance issues, underdevelopment and deep seated socio-political divisions and occasional territorial disputes in countries and between countries in the region have been the major challenges.'<sup>7</sup> India's former Foreign Secretary Ranjan Mathai therefore rightly noted, '...that immediate priorities would be in our immediate neighbourhood, that's where our immediate interests lie. And that is where our most intense interactions are.'<sup>8</sup>

The Manmohan doctrine had established the intrinsic link between foreign policy and economic aspirations of the people, sought greater economic integration regionally and globally to increase trade and capital inflows, emphasized on infrastructure building and greater use of technology in pursuit of development that would contribute towards a 'shared prosperity' in the region. PM Singh noted:

India's relations with the world – both major powers and our Asian neighbours – are increasingly shaped by our developmental priorities... we recognize that the Indian sub-continent's shared destiny requires greater regional cooperation and connectivity. Towards this end, we must strengthen regional institutional capability and capacity and invest in connectivity.<sup>9</sup>

To create a 'conducive economic environment in the immediate neighbourhood,' the UPA government recognised the need to increase intra-regional commerce, strengthen

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<sup>6</sup> Vajpayee, 'Address of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to the nation on Independence Day-2003.'

<sup>7</sup> Ambassador (Retd) A. Trigunayat, 'India and the SAARC: Implications for the neighbourhood, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bhubaneswar', *MEA Distinguished Lectures*, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 7 April 2017, <http://www.mea.gov.in/distinguished-lectures-detail.htm?655> (accessed 30 March, 2015). He is presently a Distinguished Fellow at the Vivekananda International Foundation, a policy research think tank in New Delhi.

<sup>8</sup> R. Mathai, 'First Media Interaction of Foreign Secretary after taking over charge of the office of Foreign Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi', 1 August 2013, in A. S. Bhasin(ed.), *India's Foreign Relations -2013 Documents*, p.202, New Delhi, External Publicity Division and Public Diplomacy Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2014, p.202, [Affairhttps://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/25403\\_India\\_foreign\\_relation\\_2013.pdf](https://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/25403_India_foreign_relation_2013.pdf), (accessed 5 September, 2017).

<sup>9</sup> Singh, 'Excerpts of PM's address at the Annual Conclave of Indian Ambassadors/High Commissioners abroad in New Delhi.'

regional institutions and to invest in connectivity projects in South Asia. Also former foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao in the UPA-II government said that fuelling the Indian growth engine will ensure a stabilising factor in the region. She said:

The Indian economy with its rapid growth and the impact this exerts beyond our borders, is fast becoming an anchoring element in the region. We have articulated a policy in our neighbourhood that stresses the advantage of building networks of inter-connectivity, trade, and investment so that prosperity can be shared and that the region can benefit from India's rapid economic growth and rising prosperity.<sup>10</sup>

The security elites believe that India cannot grow in isolation and they emphasize on India's role in promoting regionalism through economic cooperation, technical assistance, infrastructure and connectivity projects and strengthening institutional mechanisms. It is posited that within the SAARC 'an economically vibrant India is an asset and opportunity for all its members'<sup>11</sup> and that India is '...required to promote a form of India-led regionalism with which its neighbours are comfortable.'<sup>12</sup> Such a policy aims to demonstrate India's capability to promote regional peace, facilitate economic integration, provide public goods and seek recognition for the same. This would enable New Delhi to gain leverage as a major player in the region and further in her interactions with other major powers while taking account of sensitivities of the smaller neighbours. This regional strategy is catered to preserve and ensure India's regional primacy given her 'natural geographical advantages, economic complementarities, shared cultural heritage, and preminent strategic position'.<sup>13</sup> As India's development is intricately linked to its neighbourhood, creating simultaneous opportunities for development of India's neighbours by providing resources, equipment and training remain vital. Debnath Shaw, a retired diplomat said, 'Geographically, we

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<sup>10</sup> N. Rao, 'Address by Foreign Secretary at Harvard on "India's Global Role"', Boston, 20 September 2010, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, <https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/741/>, (accessed 12 April 2016).

<sup>11</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2005-2006*, Policy planning and Research Division, Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, Government of India, <https://www.mea.gov.in/annual-reports.htm?dtl/167/Annual+Report+20052006>, (accessed 10 November 2017).

<sup>12</sup> Amb (Retd) D. Shaw, "Foreign Policy and practices as an adjunct to National Policy: The Indian context", Speech at National Institute of Technology (NIT), Meghalaya on April 01, 2017, *MEA Distinguished Lectures*, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 1 April 2017, <http://www.mea.gov.in/distinguished-lectures-detail.htm?650>, (accessed 5 September, 2017).

<sup>13</sup> V. Kaura, 'Grading India's Neighborhood Diplomacy: A report card on Modi's 'neighborhood first' approach to foreign policy', *The Diplomat*, 1 January 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/12/grading-indias-neighborhood-diplomacy/>, (accessed 3 February 2018).



are located in the South Asian region known for its low development levels and poor quality of life for the vast majority of its people. We are also situated in what is acknowledged as the arc of global and regional terrorist activities... India cannot enjoy the fruits of growth if its immediate South Asian neighbours remain mired in poverty and lack of growth.<sup>14</sup> Thus, given 'the close and contiguous geographies' it is imperative to recognise both the common challenges and potential areas of cooperation for benefits on issues such as 'food security, health, poverty alleviation, climate change, disaster management, women's empowerment, and economic development.'<sup>15</sup>

The official discourse emphasizing 'shared prosperity and security'<sup>16</sup> envisions South Asia as 'unshackled from historical divisions and bound together in collective pursuit of peace, and prosperity.'<sup>17</sup> Drawing on ancient civilisational and commercial interlinkages, it aims to build South Asia as 'a major powerhouse of economic creativity and enterprise' and establish '... an integrated space entity in which there is free flow of goods, peoples and ideas unfettered by boundaries' which requires 'containing threats from extremism, terrorism and removing the sources of political discord.'<sup>18</sup> But this vision also re-positions India as a regional leader spearheading the regional integration process given its economic success, human resources, technological capabilities and growing military prowess. The 14<sup>th</sup> South Asian Association Regional Cooperation (SAARC)<sup>19</sup> held in New Delhi 2007 emphasized on taking concrete regional initiative from declaratory phase to implementation such as operationalization of the SAARC Development Fund, setting up of South Asian University and SAARC Food bank and to facilitate better intra-regional connectivity including physical, economic and people to people connectivity under the UPA-I administration.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Shaw, 'Foreign Policy and practices as an adjunct to National Policy: The Indian context.'

<sup>15</sup> Rao, 'Address by Foreign Secretary at Harvard on "India's Global Role."'

<sup>16</sup> Amb (Retd.) S. R. Tayal, 'Speech delivered at Sikkim University on "India's neighbourhood challenges and BIMSTEC"', *MEA Distinguished Lectures*, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 11 May 2018, <http://www.mea.gov.in/distinguished-lectures-detail.tm?752>, (accessed 27 July 2018).

<sup>17</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2005-2006*, Policy planning and Research Division, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2006, p.ii

<sup>18</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2006-2007*, Policy planning and Research Division, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, p.i.

<sup>19</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2005-06*, p.ii; Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2006-2007*, Policy planning and Research Division, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 1 April 2007, p.i, [http://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/168\\_Annual-Report-2006-2007.pdf](http://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/168_Annual-Report-2006-2007.pdf), (accessed 2 February 2018)

<sup>20</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2007-2008*, Policy planning and Research Division, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 1 April 2008,

Vajpayee had also carved a role of regional leadership for India as he said that India as 'the largest country in South Asia and the only one that shares borders with all other countries in the region, we are mindful of our special responsibility in taking the leadership in fostering co-operation.'<sup>21</sup> Modi had similarly pushed for an expansive and globalised foreign policy with an emphasized focus on the 'neighbourhood first policy,'<sup>22</sup> for boosting trade and increasing FDI inflows for economic development. The MEA Annual Report, 2015-16 notes that, 'our international outreach has been carefully tailored and directed to create the most propitious climate for domestic growth,'<sup>23</sup> and to create a regional security environment to ensure pursuit of economic goals. This is supposedly to be achieved by facilitating 'Greater connectivity and integration so as to improve the free flow of goods and services, people, energy, capital and information'.<sup>24</sup> The third pillar of the Modi Doctrine,<sup>25</sup> *Samriddhi* (prosperity) seeks to bind South Asia in a web of economic interactions so as to harness the advantage of an untapped 'big market' to the country's and her neighbours' mutual benefit. Alongside bilateral partnerships the government has moved towards adopting and implementing a regional approach through its 'Neighbourhood First', 'Look South' (referring to to the IOR), 'Act East' and 'Look West' policies. The MEA Annual Report 2015-2016 states that, 'Instead of restricting our outreach to each country separately, we approached regions in an integrated and holistic way, leveraging our complementarities across linked bilateral relationships.'<sup>26</sup> Dr. Chandan Mitra, former Member of Parliament (BJP ) and Chief Editor of an English national newspaper *Pioneer* talking about the renewed emphasis on 'economics' in India's foreign relations and diplomatic outreach said in a personal interview:

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[http://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/169\\_Annual-Report-2007-2008.pdf](http://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/169_Annual-Report-2007-2008.pdf), (accessed 5 February 2018)

<sup>21</sup> Vajpayee, 'Prime Minister Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee's Speech at Asia Society's 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Corporate Conference, "Asia's Technology Future"', New Delhi, 11 March, 2001, <https://archivepmo.nic.in/abv/speech-details.php?nodeid=9087>, (accessed 27 August, 2018).

<sup>22</sup> R. Ramachandran, 'Narendra Modi's Push for Strong Relations with Neighbours', *The Economic Times*, 3 July 2014.

<sup>23</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2015-2016*, Policy planning and Research Division, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 13 March 2016, p.ii, [http://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/26525\\_26525\\_External\\_Affairs\\_English\\_AR\\_2015-16\\_Final\\_compressed.pdf](http://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/26525_26525_External_Affairs_English_AR_2015-16_Final_compressed.pdf), (accessed 5 September 2017).

<sup>24</sup> Shaw, 'Foreign Policy and practices as an adjunct to National Policy.'

<sup>25</sup> For detailed discussion on the five pillars of Modi doctrine, see chapter 4.

<sup>26</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2015-2016*, p.ii

India started scouting around for multipolarity since the end of Indira Gandhi's era. This scouting for alternative alliances and alternative groupings have begun and it's been continued under Modi's 'assertive nationalism'. The 'Look West' policy to engage with the Middle east, the 'Look east' policy that has been converted to Act East Policy are all outcomes of this searching for an alternative identity and alternative polarity in world affairs. Rajiv Gandhi's economic policies marked a sharp departure from the socialist economic policies and India started to look for a distinct place in the world. India has entered into different associations or groupings such as the BRICS based on economic relations that have taken politics away from foreign policy. The East Asia economies have now become core of India's foreign policy because India has stopped looking at the 'West' for support and rather focussed on developing closer relations with South East Asia such as Malyasia and Japan and neighbouring countries like Myanmar.<sup>27</sup>

The above statement reflects a regional 360 degree vision under Modi's neighbourhood policy. Prime Minister Modi made a strong pitch to take regional cooperation under SAARC forward and proposed initiatives such as developing a communication and meteorology satellite for use of all members in the 2014 SAARC summit. But the SAARC has failed<sup>28</sup> to increase the intra –regional trade that stands at meagre 5% and therefore emphasis is given on strengthening alternative regional mechanisms such as the BIMSTEC (which is devoid of Pakistan) and on bilateral relations. Pakistan sponsored terrorism remains a major obstacle to realise the full potential of SAARC as remarked by former Foreign Secretary Rao that, 'our vision of an enhanced South Asian cooperation for development is challenged by violent extremism and terrorism, which originates in our region and finds sustenance and sanctuary there...repeatedly sought to undermine our sovereignty, security and economic progress, aided and abetted by forces beyond our borders.'<sup>29</sup> The BIMSTEC is seen as an alternative platform to strengthen regional cooperation among Indian Ocean littoral countries along the coast of Bay of Bengal across the 14 priority areas-commerce, investments, technology,

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<sup>27</sup> Personal interview with Dr. Chandan Mitra, former BJP Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha, 2010-2016) and Chief Editor and director of *Pioneer*, an English national newspaper daily in India based in New Delhi, 22 August 2017.

<sup>28</sup> R. Sharma, 'SAARC failed to deliver on it's promises', *Times of India*, 19 February 2017, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/saarc-failed-to-deliver-on-its-promises/articleshow/57234965>, (accessed 7 July 2017).

<sup>29</sup> Rao, 'Address by Foreign Secretary at Harvard on "India's Global Role."'

climate change, tourism, human resource development, agriculture, fisheries, poverty alleviation, transport, communication, counter terrorism, culture and people to people contacts in addition to platforms like Mekong-Ganga Cooperation.

Under Modi's 'neighbourhood first', the **first** step has been to establish contacts and boosting confidence building measures among the regional neighbours with an emphasis on *samvaad* (dialogue) through diplomatic visits to neighbouring countries and interacting with the leaders of host countries, and encouraging interaction with the scientists, industrialists, religious organisations and Indian diaspora in each of these countries. For instance, an Indian Prime Minister was visiting Srilanka after 28 years and Nepal after 17 years. Modi extended soft loans of US\$1 billion and US\$2 billion to Nepal and Bangladesh respectively for infrastructure development like rail and road connectivity in Nepal<sup>30</sup> or digital library, hydroelectric projects in Bhutan under B-2-B<sup>31</sup> relations. Several development cooperation and connectivity projects initiated under UPA-II government were reviewed for their progress to expedite their implementation such as the BCIM (Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar) corridor. Bilateral agreements were concluded, such as on trade, grid and connectivity projects with Nepal, the sensitive Land Boundary Agreement with Bangladesh and 'civilian nuclear agreement' with Srilanka. The NDA-II government focussed on sub-regional cooperation in areas of trade, transit, connectivity and hydropower such as the proposed free vehicular movement among Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal and India (BBIN) and ITEC programmes. Further bilateral Joint Commissions have been constituted to monitor and review the progress and working mechanisms were established to facilitate more cultural exchanges like India-China High Level Mechanism on Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges to support academic and scholarly exchanges.<sup>32</sup> During the swearing in ceremony Modi has assured Indian respect for sensitivities of its smaller neighbours to assuage fears of a 'big brother' attitude in neighbours and stressed on

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<sup>30</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2014-15*, Policy planning and Research Division, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 25 March 2015, pp.i-ii, [http://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/25009\\_External\\_Affairs\\_2014-2015\\_\\_English\\_.pdf](http://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/25009_External_Affairs_2014-2015__English_.pdf), (accessed 9 March 2018).

<sup>31</sup> The B-2-B relations refers to Bharat to Bhutan Relations.

<sup>32</sup> S. Swaraj, 'Message from the External Affairs Minister to the 3rd India-China Think-Tank Forum December 20, 2018', New Delhi, 20 December 2018, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, [https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/30809/Message\\_from\\_the\\_External\\_Affairs\\_Minister\\_to\\_the\\_3rd\\_IndiaChina\\_ThinkTank\\_Forum](https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/30809/Message_from_the_External_Affairs_Minister_to_the_3rd_IndiaChina_ThinkTank_Forum), (accessed 9 April 2019).

‘positive unilateralism’ underlying India’s initiative in dealing with its neighbours with a new assertiveness. Modi also gave assurances for revival of the composite dialogue at the foreign secretary level in his talks with his Pakistan counterpart.

The **second** dimension has been the focus on expanding commerce, connectivity and infrastructure building to ‘rebuild India’s bridges ... with its immediate and extended neighbourhood.’<sup>33</sup> It has pushed for next generation regional connectivity and critical infrastructure, for instance the SAGAR vision has resulted in the qualitative transformation in India’s engagement with the IOR. Under India’s ‘diplomacy for development’<sup>34</sup> approach, that promotes a holistic approach of ‘enlightened national interests,’ each global interaction is now focussed on building partnerships to bolster India’s transformative flagship programmes of urban development, infrastructure building and clean environment such as Make in India, Smart Cities, Digital India, AMRUT and Namami Gange.<sup>35</sup> Articulating a leadership role for herself in the region Foreign secretary Dr. S. Jaishankar stated that, ‘a comprehensive vision of our broader neighbourhood that reflects growing capabilities and confidence...the realization of shared prosperity... Where India is concerned, it could itself drive regional cooperation rather than be driven by it.’<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> S. Swaraj, ‘Remarks by External Affairs Minister at the 4th Raisina Dialogue’, New Delhi, 9 January, 2019, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, [https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/30896/Remarks\\_by\\_External\\_Affairs\\_Minister\\_at\\_the\\_4th\\_Raisina\\_Dialogue](https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/30896/Remarks_by_External_Affairs_Minister_at_the_4th_Raisina_Dialogue), (accessed 9 April 2019).

<sup>34</sup> Swaraj, ‘Remarks by External Affairs Minister at the 4th Raisina Dialogue.’

<sup>35</sup> See N. Modi, ‘Text of PM’s Speech at Red Fort’, 15 August 2014, <https://www.narendramodi.in/text-of-pms-speech-at-red-fort-6464>, (accessed 18 August 2018). Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June 2015 launched the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation with the focus to establish infrastructure that could ensure adequate robust sewage networks and water supply for urban transformation by implementing urban revival projects. This has been linked to other schemes like Swachh Bharat Mission (Clean India) and Housing for All 2022. See Amrut, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India, [amrut.gov.in](http://amrut.gov.in) (accessed on 9 March 2019) ; Namami Gange is the National Mission for Clean Ganga that was approved by the Union Government in June 2014 with the twin objectives of effective abatement of pollution, conservation and rejuvenation of National River Ganga that focus on creating sewerage treatment capacity, riverfront development, river surface cleaning, biodiversity conservation, afforestation, industrial effluent monitoring and raising public awareness. See, Government of India, Namami Gange-National Mission for Clean Ganga (NCMG), See Ministry of Water Resources, ‘River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation’, New Delhi, <https://ncmg.nic.in/jn>, (accessed 9 March 2019).

<sup>36</sup> S. Jaishankar, ‘Foreign Secretary’s speech at the inauguration of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP) India Center (April 06, 2016)’, New Delhi, 6 April 2016, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, [https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/26602/Speech\\_by\\_Foreign\\_Secretary\\_at\\_the\\_inauguration\\_of\\_CEIP\\_India\\_Center\\_April\\_06\\_2016](https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/26602/Speech_by_Foreign_Secretary_at_the_inauguration_of_CEIP_India_Center_April_06_2016), (accessed 4 February 2019).

The **third** dimension is the conscious and calibrated use of India's soft power in its neighbourhood diplomacy and engaging with the Indian diaspora abroad. The culture nationalist discourse have always promoted India's cultural and civilizational values as an asset to be utilized in carving a special role for India in Asia. As Vajpayee noted,

India's historic and civilisational role in Asia over millennia is well recognised. A large number of countries in Asia trace the roots of their cultural traditions to India. India has been, and continues to be, the link between West Asia and East Asia. In a sense, India is central to the Asian identity.<sup>37</sup>

There has been focus on health, education and providing humanitarian assistance even previously under the UPA regime such as the opening of the South Asian University, offering more scholarships to students from SAARC countries to study in India, putting in use India's capabilities in disaster management and undertaking relief operations in SAARC countries which have continued under the NDA-II government. India offered humanitarian assistance in April-May 2015 of US\$ 1billion to earthquake victims in Nepal (in form of grants and also a loan on generous terms) and relief supplies were sent by a transport aircraft and two navy ships during water crisis in Maldives. The Modi government attaches special importance to diplomatic out-reach for 'Revitalizing traditional ties, re-setting strategic relations and reaching out to Indians abroad'.<sup>38</sup> Modi made active use of India's religious and cultural influence (Hinduism and Buddhism that originated in India) to strengthen bilateral relations with neighbouring countries in South Asia, West Asia and East and South East Asia based on the fifth pillar of his doctrine, *Sanskriti* and *Sabhyata*. For instance, during visits to SAARC countries Modi offered prayers in Hindu temple in Nepal (Pashupathinath temple), visited Buddhist temples in Srilanka and religious cultural sites in Japan.

**Finally**, India focusses on reinforcing security cooperation with the neighbours in the Indian Ocean Region evident in regular bilateral maritime military exercises with

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<sup>37</sup> A.B. Vajpayee, 'Address by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee at the Asia Society', New York, in M.Gaur, *Foreign Policy Annual, 2001, vol. 2: Documents, 2001*, New Delhi, Kalpaz Publishing, 2005, <https://books.google.co.in?isbn=817835344X>, (accessed 9 August, 2018).

<sup>38</sup> M. Chand, *Breakthrough Diplomacy: New Vision, New Vigour*, 2 January 2015, New Delhi, External Publicity Division and Public Diplomacy Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, <https://www.mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?24635/EBook+Breakthrough+Diplomacy+New+Vision+New+Vigour>, (accessed 15 June 2019).

the neighbouring IOR countries such as Srilanka, Seychelles and Mauritius. India pledged US\$318million for development of railways and support for making a petroleum hub in Srilanka, signed key pacts with Seychelles on hydrography, renewable energy, infrastructure development and navigational charts and launched the coastal surveillance Radar Project that is aimed at bolstering surveillance capabilities of the island nation. After re-election in 2019 Modi's first diplomatic visit was to Maldives. India gave US\$ 500 million line of credit on a host of infrastructural projects to bolster Mauritius maritime infrastructure in 2015 under the overarching framework objective of 'forging a collective cooperative vision for the region' through expanding security, economic, cultural and developmental cooperation.<sup>39</sup> India is also bolstering regional mechanisms such as the IORA, BIMSTEC and Indian Ocean Naval symposium (IONS) to enhance maritime security cooperation.

## **6.2. Pakistan: The irritant Other**

Pakistan is constructed as the most significant external spatial-political Other to the Indian Self with whom India has fought four wars in 1947-48, 1965, 1971 and 1999. The bilateral relationship is fraught with deep mistrust and hostility, the unresolved Kashmir dispute that has led to frequent skirmishes at the Line of Control (LoC) and major crises with a high escalation potential. Pakistan's support to Islamic fundamentalist groups and use of 'proxy war' as an instrument of state policy, covert nuclear weaponisation directed towards India and India-centric foreign and defence policies of Pakistan prevents the normalisation of relationship between the two neighbours.<sup>40</sup> The issue of terrorism remains a disturbing irritant in India-Pakistan

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<sup>39</sup> M. Chand, 'Colour Code Blue: Sagar Yatra', *India Perspectives*, May-June 2015, vol.29, no.3, p.8, [https://issuu.com/indiandiplomacy/docs/india\\_perspectives\\_may-june\\_2015](https://issuu.com/indiandiplomacy/docs/india_perspectives_may-june_2015), (accessed 15 June 2019).

<sup>40</sup> J.N. Dixit, *India's Foreign Policy and its Neighbours*, New Delhi, Gyan Publishing House, 2001, p.44; Ministry of Defence, *Annual Report 2008-09*, New Delhi, Government of India, 2009, p.5, [https://mod.gov.in/sites/default/files/AR-eng-2009\\_0.pdf](https://mod.gov.in/sites/default/files/AR-eng-2009_0.pdf), (accessed 12 April 2017); R. Dahiya, 'Reforming the Military Institutions and National Security Strategy', in K. Venkatshamy and P. George (eds.), *Grand Strategy for India 2020 and Beyond*, New Delhi, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, Pentagon Security International, 2012, p.75; Dubey, *India's Foreign Policy*, p.39; M. Singh, 'PM's Statement in Lok Sabha on the Debate on the PM's Recent Visit's Abroad', 29 July 2009, <http://www.pmindia.nic.in/pmsinparliament.php?nodeid=39>, (accessed 18 April 2016); K. Subrahmanyam, 'Grand Strategy for the First Half of the 21st Century', in K. Venkatshamy and P. George (eds.), *Grand Strategy for India 2020 and Beyond*, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, Pentagon Security International, 2012, p.19; S. Tharoor, 'Is the Non-Aligned Movement relevant today?', *BBC News*, 30 August 2012, <http://www.shashitharoor.in/article-by-me-details.php?id=21> 2012, (accessed 16 August 2017).

relations as evident during Parliament Attacks, 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, Uri attacks and the recent Pulwama attacks in Kashmir. Increased radicalisation and influence of the extremist Islamist forces over the decades are seen as putting pressure on India's pluralistic society with serious implications for her internal security that have a spill over effect on the nature of treatment of Muslim minorities within India.

There are certain similarities and also key differences between the discourses in representing Pakistan as an inferior Other to the Indian Self or dealing with it. **Firstly**, Pakistan emerged as a result of the partition which divided the united India (Akhand Bharat). The post-independent security elites in India rejected the idea of 'two nation theory' which suggests that Hindus and Muslims cannot peacefully coexist in a single state that is dominated by a Hindu majority and is therefore antithetical to India's secular, pluralistic and tolerant state model as constructed by the Congress government post-independence. Pakistan instead became the theocratic, intolerant and monolithic Islamic state under the Muslim League against which the Indian Self defined itself. The cultural nationalist discourse similarly rejects the 'two nation theory'. During the parliament attacks in 2001, BJP leader Advani emphasized that the reason behind Pakistan's anti-Indian sentiment is Pakistan's incapability and unwillingness to accept India's success story as a plural democracy and a vibrant economy. He said:

Pakistan – itself a product of the indefensible Two-Nation Theory, itself a theocratic State with an extremely tenuous tradition of democracy – is unable to reconcile itself with the reality of a secular, democratic, self-confident and steadily progressing India, whose standing in the international community is getting inexorably higher with the passage of time.<sup>41</sup>

Pakistan with a weak and fragmented state system with interprovincial disputes, intensified ethnic, linguistic, and regional nationalism, increasing political instability, poor economic performance, low levels of social development and weakened democratic institutions due to strong military control represents an inferior and backward state in comparison to a progressive and economically rising India. Pakistan's GDP growth in 2019 stood at 4.8%, (which was lower than even Nepal's 5.5%) and has been experiencing increase in inflation rate, widening current account deficit (\$18 billion by end of June 2018) due to surge in imports, high fiscal deficit (that was

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<sup>41</sup> L.K. Advani, 'Statement by Minister: Attack on Parliament House', New Delhi, 18 December 2001, <http://parliamentofindia.nic.in/lsdeb/ls13/ses8/181201.html>, (accessed 9 September 2017).



accelerated even further in 2017 and 2018) due to rise in spending for the elections and reportedly from dwindling foreign currency reserves. In order to resolve its financial crisis Pakistan has reached out to friendly countries (Saudi Arabia and China) and has been in talks with the IMF for a second bailout in five years.<sup>42</sup> It signed a slew of investment agreements worth US\$20 billion with Saudi Arabia in February 2019. However as retired diplomat and former Secretary, MEA, Mr. P.R. Chakraborty noted in a personal interview:

In the current conditions, they are themselves hit badly by terrorism, nobody wants to visit Pakistan or even play cricket in Pakistan. The power imbalance between Pakistan and India is growing, Pakistan realizes, the whole thing for seeking equality is gone for a toss and Pakistan has become a Chinese satellite. For a long time Pakistan dreamt that India would break up and that it would be the predominant power in the region. But Pakistan fails to realize and accept that India is the home of a unique 'Indic civilisation' and is not a mere nation state. India is ten times larger than the other states in the region and its pre-eminence is an existential reality.<sup>43</sup>

Since its inception Pakistan has harboured a 'compulsive hostility' towards India that is deemed necessary to ensure its survival and coherence as a Muslim state.<sup>44</sup> Pakistan is believed to have been trapped in a civilizational conflict with India, but maintaining this opposition to India is seen as integral to forge its national identity.<sup>45</sup> The reason behind this is Pakistan's identity as a Muslim state is fraught with problems, as Cohen argues that Pakistan fails to forge a national identity based on religion because, 'most Pakistanis in rural areas remain vague about their Islam, and their religion is strongly

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<sup>42</sup> 'No, Pakistan is not out of financial crisis! Their top bank governor's remark doesn't make sense', *Business Today*, 19 February 2019, <https://www.businesstoday.in/top-story/no-pakistan-is-not-out-of-financial-crisis-their-top-bank-governor-remark-doesnt-make-sense/story/320244.html>, (accessed 11 September 2019); D.I F. Runde, 'An Economic Crisis in Pakistan Again: What's Different This Time?', *Centre for Strategic and International Studies*, 31 October 2018, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/economic-crisis-pakistan-again-whats-different-time>, (accessed 15 March 2019).

<sup>43</sup> Personal interview with retired diplomat and former Secretary at Ministry of External Affairs, Mr. Pinak Ranjan Chakraborty and presently a Distinguished Fellow at Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, 16 December 2015.

<sup>44</sup> Dixit, *India's Foreign Policy and its Neighbours*, p.137; Sikri, *Challenge and Strategy*, p.39.

<sup>45</sup> R. Rapaport, 'Tilting Again', *San Francisco Chronicle*, 13 November 2001, Media Center: Media Library, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, <http://mea.gov.in/articles-in-foreign-media.htm?dtl/15552/Tilting+again>, (accessed 25 April 2016).

intermixed with folk practices, Sufi beliefs, and even Hinduism and Buddhism.<sup>46</sup> It has been reiterated that one of the objectives that has kept the otherwise fractured Pakistan unified is to recapture the Muslim-majority territory, Kashmir, by force through conducting covert operations on Indian soil or provoking communal tensions within India which has been a constant in Pakistan's foreign policy agenda.<sup>47</sup> The aim of Pakistan is to 'destabilise India', 'wrest Kashmir' and sponsor cross border terrorism as to 'poison the secular fabric of India'. Hyperrealists like Verma argues that 'ISI has spread its tentacles to create mayhem inside India, from Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Srilanka... We can talk as much as we want. Hatred for India will not go away since that's the sole reason for sub-nationalities in Pakistan to stick together.'<sup>48</sup> Former Secretary, MEA, Mr.Chakraborty further remarked:

Their mentality and thinking is a bit warped in many ways. Pakistan's existence depends on maintaining a hostile posture towards India. This is the basic fundamental of Pakistan and that is how they are different from India – in the sense they believe that 'I have to show that I am not an Indian'. They have a huge identity crisis. They say they are more akin to Arabs which is laughed at by their own people and leadership. This cannot be sustained because finally they are part of the 'Indic civilisation' with similarity in many rituals and traditions which Pakistan refuses to accept.<sup>49</sup>

India's former National Security Advisor Menon remarked, 'Indians see Pakistan as a failed state...as an integrated criminal enterprise, lacking an identity and increasingly Talibanized, perpetually seeking revenge for 1971.'<sup>50</sup>

**Secondly**, Indian leadership believes that Pakistan's military establishment maintains close links with the terrorist organisations and has relied on the use of terrorism as a form of proxy war to keep India engaged in a prolonged low intensity

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<sup>46</sup> J. Bajoria, 'Pakistan's Fragile Foundations', *Backgrounder*, Council on Foreign Relations, 11 March 2019, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/pakistans-fragile-foundations>, (accessed 25 May 2019).

<sup>47</sup> Dixit, *India's Foreign Policy and its Neighbours* p. 136; Vajpayee, 'Let us Celebrate and Strengthen our Indianness: PM Speech'; Mukherjee, 'Speech by the Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C. on "India's Strategic Perspectives"'; Dubey, *India's Foreign Policy*, p. 53.

<sup>48</sup> Verma, 'India First' Policy Mandatory'; C. Fair, *Fighting to the End: Pakista's army's way of war*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014.

<sup>49</sup> Personal Interview with retired diplomat and Former Secretary in Ministry of External Affairs, Mr. Pinak Ranjan Chakraborty, Indian Foreign Service and a Distinguished Fellow at Observer Research Foundaton, New Delhi, 16 December 2015.

<sup>50</sup> Menon, *Choices*, p.110

conflict. In retired diplomat Ambassador Trigunayat's words, in South Asia, '...almost all countries have suffered and witnessed extremism and terrorism often exported from outside and across the borders though some have in the process become the havens of terrorist groups and camps as part of their unstated policy in order to serve their myopic untenable foreign policy goals and objectives.'<sup>51</sup> Pakistan provides safe haven inside its territory to terrorist organisations, assisting them with funds and weapons, training these radical groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) and supports separatist movements within India to disintegrate her.<sup>52</sup> Islamist religious schools commonly referred to as the Madrasas are seen as the training ground of the Taliban and mainstream Pakistani schools run by the government are believed to have been indoctrinating anti-Indian and anti-Hindu sentiments since 1947 and especially after 1979 with islamisation of the country. This continued reliance on terrorism even at the cost of undermining its own stability and integrity has therefore 'infected and become entrenched in Pakistan's state and society.'<sup>53</sup> It constitutes a major and an 'immediate threat' to the basic values that define the Indian Self and has to be protected; Pluralism, peaceful coexistence, democracy and rule of law. India's former President Patil said, 'One of the foremost threats that the civilized world is confronted, with is from terrorism and India has been its victim.'<sup>54</sup> Islamabad, with the creation of Taliban and 'the Al Qaeda networks' being '...built under its nose' in Afghanistan has emerged as 'the epicentre of international terrorism.'<sup>55</sup> Pakistan's internal security problem spilling into Afghanistan therefore creates political instability for the entire South Asian region. India sees 'a direct interest in Afghanistan,... because of the growing fusion of terrorist groups that operate from Afghanistan and Pakistan and their activities in India.'<sup>56</sup> India intends to limit and

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<sup>51</sup> Trigunayat, 'India and the SAARC: Implications for the neighbourhood.'

<sup>52</sup> Dixit, *India's Foreign Policy and its Neighbours*, p.136; Vajpayee, 'Let us Celebrate and Strengthen our Indianness'; Dubey, *India's Foreign Policy*, p.53; Mukherjee, 'Speech of Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C. on "India's Strategic Perspectives"'; Singh, 'PM's Statement in Lok Sabha 'on the Debate on the PM's Recent Visit's Abroad'; Subrahmanyam, 'Grand Strategy for the First Half of the 21st Century', p.19; Tharoor, *Pax Indica*, p.27.

<sup>53</sup> Menon, *Choices*, p.108; Personal interview with Mr. K.K. Ganguly, Major General(Retired) Indian Army, Kolkata, 24 August 2015.

<sup>54</sup> P.Patil, 'Address by President Shrimati Pratibha Devisingh Patil at the inauguration of the Manekshaw Centre and Seminar on the "Role of Force in the Strategic Affairs" on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the National Defence College, New Delhi, 21 October 2010, in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations-2010 Documents*, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2011, p.80

<sup>55</sup> Talbott, *Engaging India*.

<sup>56</sup> Rao, 'Address by Foreign Secretary at Harvard on "India's Global Role."'

corrode Islamabad's influence on Afghanistan's affairs, as an increased Pakistani influence in Afghanistan may not only lead to a reduced Indian presence but will also make India more susceptible to Pakistani-sponsored terrorism. Strengthening India-Afghanistan relations have been pursued under both UPA and NDA-II governments. Modi visited Afghanistan in 2015 and 2016, during which he inaugurated the Afghan Parliament building that has been constructed with Indian assistance and Salma Dam in Herat.<sup>57</sup> India's assistance for reconstruction and infrastructure development stands at US \$3 billion, making New Delhi the biggest donor among regional countries. India has helped to build vital civil infrastructure, develop human resources and capacity in the areas of education, health, agriculture and rural development thereby making major progress in supporting inclusive development. India is also actively involved in training of Afghan police, army, and intelligence officers, and expanding its consular presence there, has gifted military vehicles for the Afghan National Army, supplied Mi-25 and Mi-35 choppers for the air force and given ambulances for public hospitals in five cities. India values its role as a constructive regional player in Afghan state-building in economic, political and military terms. In order to reduce landlocked Afghanistan's reliance on Pakistani territory for trade, it has focussed on construction in areas of transport connectivity through Iran's strategically located Chabahar port in order to boost the trade between India, Afghanistan and Iran. The Zaranj-Delaram road will become a part of a developed infrastructure chain that will reach from Iran's Chabahar port to Delaram bypassing Pakistan and this has been financed, completed, and is partially protected by the Indian institutions. Similarly, the India-supported Shahtoot dam project, if realized, may result in stopping more Kabul river waters in Afghanistan, reducing the amount flowing downstream to Pakistan.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2014-15*, p.i.

<sup>58</sup> K. Iwanek, '36 Things India Has Done for Afghanistan', *The Diplomat*, 8 January 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/01/36-things-india-has-done-for-afghanistan/>, (accessed 10 March 2019); Ministry of External Affairs, 'India-Afghanistan Relations', Government of India, December 2016, [http://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Afghanistan\\_Dec\\_2016.pdf](http://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Afghanistan_Dec_2016.pdf), (accessed 10 February 2019); Indian Embassy (Kabul), 'India-Afghanistan Relations', Kabul, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, October 2017, [https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/1Afghanistan\\_October\\_2017.pdf](https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/1Afghanistan_October_2017.pdf), (accessed 10 February 2019); Indian Embassy (Kabul), 'Bilateral Brief On Afghanistan', Kabul, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 31 December 2018, [https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Bilateral\\_Brief\\_on\\_Afghanistan\\_December\\_31\\_2018.pdf](https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Bilateral_Brief_on_Afghanistan_December_31_2018.pdf), (accessed 11 February 2019); N. Shant, 'India-Afghanistan Relations: Gaining Strategic Bonding', *The Economic Times*, 6 February 2019, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/blogs/et-commentary/india-afghanistan-relations-gaining-strategic-bonding/>, (accessed 5 June 2019).

**Thirdly**, India's stable political system with parliamentary democratic traditions, responsible and accountable political leadership and civilian control over armed forces is seen to act with utmost restraint which is in sharp contrast to the firm military control in Pakistan.<sup>59</sup> Yet, both Vajpayee and Singh government did not support 'democracy promotion' as a part of India's foreign policy agenda but as a common link with other liberal democracies to tackle global terrorism.<sup>60</sup> Further democracy is interlinked to development prospects as 'open society' and 'open economy' are the two fundamental aspects of Indian nationhood in the Post-Nehruvian discourse. India's economic growth model that has taken place within the pluralist democratic framework unlike its neighbours is viewed as exemplary. According to former PM Manmohan Singh:

If there is an 'idea of India' by which India should be defined, it is the idea of an inclusive, open, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual society...this is the dominant trend of political evolution of all societies in the 21st century. Therefore, we have an obligation to history and mankind to show that pluralism works. India must show that democracy can deliver development and empower the marginalized. Liberal democracy is the natural order of political organization in today's world. All alternate system, authoritarian and majoritarian in varying degrees, are an aberration.<sup>61</sup>

Singh noted that the Indian experience has proven that 'democratic methods yield the most enduring solutions to the most intractable problems' whereas the authoritarian responses can at best contain the fall-out for short periods and can even 'make the remedy worse than the disease'.<sup>62</sup> The Post-Nehruvian discourse therefore sees a special responsibility bestowed upon India to promote its ethos of democracy in Asia

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<sup>59</sup> J.N. Dixit, *Across Borders: Fifty Years of India's Foreign Policy*, New Delhi, Picus Books, 1998, p.217; Baru, *Strategic Consequences of India's Economic Performance*, p.25; S. Menon, 'Address by NSA at the Cariappa Memorial Lecture on 'The Role of Militaries in International Relations'', 5 October 2011, <http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-State-ments.htm?dtl/412/Address+by+NSA+at+the+Cariappa+Memorial+Lecture+on+The+Role+of+Militaries+in+International+Relations>, (accessed 14 April 2016).

<sup>60</sup> M. Singh, 'Speech by Prime Minister Dr.Manmohan Singh at India Today Conclave', New Delhi, 25 February 2005, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, <https://www.mea.gov.in/speeches-statements.htm?dtl/2464/>, (accessed 20 April 2016); H.V. Pant and A. Pailwal, 'India's Afghan Dilemma Is Tougher Than Ever', *Foreign Policy*, 19 February 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/02/19/indias-afghan-dilemma-is-tougher-than-ever/>, (accessed 19 May 2019); A.B. Vajpayee, 'Address by Shri A.B. Vajpayee Prime Minister of India, New York, 7 September, 2000, Asia Society Annual Dinner on "India, USA and the World"', <https://asiasociety.org/address-shri-atal-bihari-vajpayee> (accessed 28 May 2016).

<sup>61</sup> Singh, 'Speech by Prime Minister Dr.Manmohan Singh at India Today Conclave.'

<sup>62</sup> Singh, 'Speech by Prime Minister Dr.Manmohan Singh at India Today Conclave.'

in general, and in South Asia in particular, without making it an act of imposition but rather helping in their transition.<sup>63</sup> Indian government has extended support to the people of Nepal in their political transition to a new democratic order, supported the restoration of full democracy in Bangladesh, has been working towards Bhutan's economic development and political stability and continues to help Afghanistan's reconstruction.<sup>64</sup> The cultural-nationalism discourse also believes that Asian stability would support India's economic progress and its ability to nurture and strengthen India's plural democracy. Former PM Vajpayee in the NDA government said, 'India's security, stability and prosperity are central to security, stability, democracy and prosperity in Asia... the initiatives we take to uphold all that India values and symbolises will not threaten, but strengthen, the future of others.'<sup>65</sup>

**Fourthly**, India is projected as a secular, diverse, tolerant, benign and democratic nation that 'has always believed in peaceful coexistence of all countries and in non-violence'<sup>66</sup> with an inclusive society where all different religious communities are respected and enjoy equal rights. Pakistan, a theocratic, authoritarian, aggressive and an intolerant state suppresses religious freedom, discriminates and persecutes minorities under strong military control and justifies the use of violence in the name of Allah and jihad.<sup>67</sup> Hence, India refuses to be treated under the same bracket with

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<sup>63</sup> Sinha, 'Speech by External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha at Harvard University on: "Resurgent India in Asia"', p.180.

<sup>64</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2007-2008*, p.1.

<sup>65</sup> Vajpayee, 'Address by Shri A.B. Vajpayee Prime Minister of India, New York, 7 September, 2000, Asia Society Annual Dinner on "India, USA and the World."'

<sup>66</sup> Personal interview with senior Congress leader, Member of Parliament and former Union Minister of Railways (2012-2014) and President of West Bengal Pradesh Congress, Mr. Adhir Choudhury, New Delhi, 22 December 2015; Mukherjee, 'Speech of Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C. on "India's Strategic Perspectives."'

<sup>67</sup> M.S. Aiyar, *Confessions of a Secular Fundamentalist*, New Delhi, Penguin, 2004; Y. Sinha, 'What it Takes to be a World Power', *The Hindu*, 16 March 2004; H. Ansari, 'Vice President's Speech at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies on 'Identity and Citizenship: An Indian Perspective'', 1 November 2013, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India', in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations-2013 Documents*, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2014, pp.222-230; M. Singh, 'PM at the Council on Foreign Relations', 2009, <http://www.pmindia.nic.in/press-details.php?nodeid=1029>, (accessed 10 May 2016); Tharoor, *PaxIndica*, p.28, p.32; Advani, 'Statement by Minister: Attack on Parliament House'; V. Sood, 'India in the Neighbourhood', 2007, <http://soodvikram.blogspot.de/2007/06/india-in-neighbourhood.htm>, (accessed 25 June 2016); B. Chellaney, 'Incredible India turns 59', 2009, <http://chellaney.net/2009/01/26/incredible-india-turns-59/>, (accessed 25 June 2016); B. Chellaney, 'Renewed controversy: India's thermonuclear test', *The Economic Times*, 28 August 2009; A. Athale, 'Why peace with Pakistan is difficult, if not impossible', *Rediff*, 16 July 2015. <https://www.rediff.com/news/column/anil-a-athale-why-peace-with-pakistan-is-difficult-if-not-impossible/20150716.htm>, (accessed 28 June 2016).

Pakistan by the West which undermines India's rising stature and its credibility as a responsible power against Pakistan's reckless behaviour.

The hyperrealist-cultural nationalism discourse presents a more antagonistic and less reconciliatory view of Pakistan as an Other and instead suggests a tougher stance towards Pakistan. The cultural nationalists believe that the biggest challenge is to work towards the emergence of Pakistan, as a moderate Islamic State as former Foreign Secretary (2001-2002), Sibal who was appointed under the NDA government said:

The military, which has ruled Pakistan for large periods of its existence, has become the custodian of Pakistan's Islamic hostility towards India, not the least because under that cover it can continue to preserve its enormous privileges within the system... The military leader of Pakistan has been allowed to manipulate the political system by weakening mainstream political parties and creating space for fundamentalists. From the margins these fundamentalists have moved into the mainstream. While deep concerns are mounting about the nexus between fundamentalism, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, the spotlight is not on Pakistan which has all the three ingredients of concern, plus the additional one of fears of it becoming a 'failed State'.<sup>68</sup>

The cultural nationalism discourse similar to the Post Nehruvian discourse also asserts India's encompassing and absorbing character as Vajpayee said that 'we must accept multiculturalism and diversities as a way of life' and 'democracy is the natural and the only acceptable form of governance.'<sup>69</sup> He further said while drawing similarities with USA, 'we have come to the same conclusions: that freedom and democracy are the strongest bases for both peace and prosperity, and that they are universal aspirations, constrained neither by culture nor levels of economic development.'<sup>70</sup> But Pakistan fails to recognise these values and therefore becomes an anti-thesis to India and is a major source of violence and strife. By rejecting such values and pluralism, Pakistan is seen incapable of adjusting to globalisation and integration. Vajpayee noted:

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<sup>68</sup> Sibal, 'Speech of Foreign Secretary Kanwal Sibal at the Geneva Forum on "Challenges and Prospects"', pp.75-76.

<sup>69</sup> Vajpayee, 'PM's Address at the Asia Society on "India, USA and the World."'

<sup>70</sup> Vajpayee, 'Address by Shri A.B. Vajpayee Prime Minister of India, New York, 7 September, 2000, Asia Society Annual Dinner on "India, USA and the World."'

But in the age of globalisation, when interaction and interdependence is a law rather than an exception, acceptance of the truth of 'Unity in Diversity' and 'Diversity in Unity' is not just an option. It is an inescapable necessity. Sadly, unwillingness to accept this truth is at the root of much violence and strife in many parts of the world today. When such exclusivism and intolerance are wedded to narrow political goals, they even give rise to terrorism...terrorism has become one of the gravest threats to civil society, and national security. Here again, both India and the USA have been its victims....The threads lead back to one and the same source. It is contemptible that this is being sponsored and abetted from across our borders. One country in our region has already fallen into obscurantism. The international community must act determinedly to prevent the contagion from spreading.<sup>71</sup>

The Hindu nationalist discourse emphasized the need for 'the Judeo-Christian West, secular India and the moderate Islamic states' to stand against, what former EAM Singh described as, 'a single evil of global reach, rooted in the radical regimes like Pakistan's and radical groups like Al Qaeda'<sup>72</sup> as a result of which 'Violence, aggression, terrorism-these were all part of 'a terrible evil' visited upon our region.'<sup>73</sup> USA was seen partly responsible for this, but this convergence in acceptance of multiculturalism and respect for diversities made India and the United States 'natural allies in the quest for a better future for the world in the 21st century.'<sup>74</sup> Making a case for relaxation of non-proliferation benchmarks such as to sign the CTBT within a definite time period, it was argued that 'unlike Pakistan, a democratic, socially cohesive, politically confident India could be trusted with the bomb.'<sup>75</sup>

**Fifthly**, India is seen to have managed to sustain a steady economic growth amidst the global financial crisis.<sup>76</sup> The Indian economy with its rapid growth is seen as becoming 'an anchoring element in the region' with its renewed focus on 'building networks of inter-connectivity, trade, and investment so that prosperity can be shared

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<sup>71</sup> Vajpayee, 'PM's Address at the Asia Society on 'India, USA and the World.'"

<sup>72</sup> S.Talbott, *Engaging India*, p.119.

<sup>73</sup> Talbott, *Engaging India*, p.120.

<sup>74</sup> Vajpayee, 'PM's Address at the Asia Society on 'India, USA and the World.'"

<sup>75</sup> Talbott, *Engaging India*, p.121.

<sup>76</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, 'Third Conference of Indian Heads of Missions in New Delhi', 26 August 2010, Government of India, <https://mea.gov.in/outgoing-visit-detail.htm?893/Third+Conference+of+Indian+Heads+of+Missions+in+New+Delhi>, (accessed 10 January 2017).



and that the region can benefit from India's rapid economic growth and rising prosperity.<sup>77</sup> New Delhi sees itself taking 'the initiative to accelerate regional economic and political development'<sup>78</sup> and 'in this process an economically vibrant India is an asset and opportunity for all the members.'<sup>79</sup> This has manifested itself in expanding India's footprint through intensive diplomatic engagement in new regions and countries including the Indian Ocean littoral countries of Mauritius, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Maldives and even Pacific island countries and revitalising relations with the neighbours under the NDA-II government. Modi's vision of 'cooperation with and development and prosperity for all' is intended towards ensuring welfare through domestic governance, strengthening regionalism and positing India as a 'leading power' in a 'multipolar world' under the '3C Mantra' of 'commerce, culture and connectivity' to take forward whatever has been achieved under the UPA government.<sup>80</sup> With less conventional and economic capabilities, Pakistan instead has always taken recourse to aggression and violence to settle its disputes with India. Pakistan believes that India lacks the willingness or the capability to retaliate which according to the hyperrealists could only be handled if India begins to talk 'from a position of strength' while exhibiting 'a punitive capability' to deter Pakistan from continuing its support to militancy and terrorism and is evident under the Modi government's shift to use of surgical strikes.

**Finally**, the major concern is the continued relationship between Pakistan and China as Pakistan remains central to China's containment strategy. China's assistance in Pakistan's conventional and the nuclear build up<sup>81</sup> is seen as an attempt to keep India

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<sup>77</sup> N. Rao and S.M. Krishna, 'Asia Society on 'India in the 21st century: Strategic Imperatives', New York, 28 September, 2010, in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations-2010 Documents*, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2011, p.64; N. Rao, 'Address by Foreign Secretary Mrs. Nirupama Rao on "Key Priorities for India's Foreign Policy" at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 27 June 2011, in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations-2011 Documents*, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2012, p.56.

<sup>78</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2006-2007*, p.i.

<sup>79</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2005-2006*, p.ii.

<sup>80</sup> N. Modi, 'My Vision for South Asia Is Same as My Vision for India—Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas: PM', 2016, <https://www.narendramodi.in/text-of-pm-s-address-at-the-inaugural-ceremony-of-12th-south-asian-games-at-guwahati-412744>, (accessed 12 January 2019).

<sup>81</sup> A. Mattoo, 'India's Nuclear Policy in an Anarchic World', in A. Mattoo (ed.), *India's Nuclear Deterrent: Pokhran II and beyond*, New Delhi, Har-Anand Publications, 1999, p.22; Singh, *A Call to Honour*, p.115, p.185; K. Kak, 'Comprehensive Security for an Emerging India', in K. Kak (ed.), *Comprehensive Security for an Emerging India*, New Delhi, K.W. Publishers, 2010, p.373; S. Saran, 'A Different Dialogue this Time Round?', *Business Standard*, 16 February 2011, [http://www.business-standard.com/article/printer-friendly-version?article\\_id=111021600074\\_1](http://www.business-standard.com/article/printer-friendly-version?article_id=111021600074_1), (accessed 25 September 2017).

'engaged in low-intensity conflict with some of our neighbours as a means of getting India bogged down in a low equilibrium'<sup>82</sup> and thereby limit India's ability to compete with China at the pan-Asian level. Though the Post-Nehruvian discourse rhetorically remains less skeptical of Chinese 'encirclement' theories but Congress Parliamentarian Mr. Adhir Chowdhury expressed caution on China's use of Pakistan for strategic purposes. He said in a personal interview:

Pakistan is our hostile neighbour and China is also considering India as a major challenge, especially in the Asian continent, so naturally China wants to play the Pakistani card against India and this is the policy that has been played by China for long. China wants to see India to remain Pakistan-centric so that China could spread its wings or tentacles in the Asian continent, because no country on the Chinese border can pose any threat to its security unlike India. We have already fought four wars with Pakistan and the more India will be stuck with its neighbour Pakistan, more China will be the beneficiary. China wants to bind our country in the Indian subcontinent.

The hyperrealist-cultural nationalism discourse believes that China wants to remain the uncontested power in Asia and therefore resorts to restrict India at the sub-continental level through indirect strategic moves. As strategic expert Bharat Verma referring to China's strategic foresight and its greater understanding and appreciation of 'power politics' in statecraft writes:

Chinese realized two facts early in the game. First, India is the sole Asian power that can frustrate Chinese design of unrivalled supremacy in Asia. To nullify this peer competition in Asia, it is imperative that India be tied down to sub-serve long-term Chinese policy objectives. Second, to effectively constrain India, raising indirect threats through neighbors was considered a far superior strategy and cost-effective method than a direct confrontation. Thus there exists a natural synergy between the Chinese aim to tie down a definite rival in Asia and Pakistani objective to balkanize India.<sup>83</sup>

Chinese territorial and expansionist ambitions were clearly evident from Mao's claims based on 1946 Chinese map that saw Tibet and Ladakh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sikkim and

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<sup>82</sup> M. Singh, 'PM's Address at the Combined Commanders Conference', New Delhi, 2004, <http://pmindia.nic.in/speech/content.asp?id=37>, (accessed 5 January, 2019).

<sup>83</sup> B.Verma, 'China will fight India to the last Pakistani', *Indian Defence Review*, vol.15. no.4, October-December 2000, <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/spotlights/china-will-fight-india-to-the-last-pakistani/>, (accessed 14 December 2016).

NEFA as Chinese territories that needed to be liberated or PLA's forcible occupation of Tibet and the 1962 war. The Chinese leadership is therefore perceived as someone that cannot be trusted. Verma warns, 'This trait of deception and falsehood is unusually high amongst the Chinese and Pakistani leadership.'<sup>84</sup> New Delhi realizes that China sees in Pakistan both a commercial opportunity and a strategic advantage in keeping India perennially occupied at its western border with Pakistan and therefore giving less attention towards its border with China. This 'all weather friendship' between China and Pakistan has evolved over the years with China's two pronged approach – alongside continued transfer of military equipment, China is now investing in developing infrastructure facilities in Pakistan.<sup>85</sup> For instance, Pakistan and China are intertwined in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), of which the \$62 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is the most important connectivity link that passes through the disputed territory of Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK). India has refused to endorse any mega connectivity project that violates India's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Therefore, there is more emphasis on strengthening India's indigenous hard power capabilities for self-defence as former BJP parliamentarian Dr. Chandan Mitra in a personal interview remarked:

India has learnt from the failures of the Nehruvian state, CPEC runs through a part of India (PoK). We lost to China which was a big blow to our self-esteem and prestige. BJP learned from the mistakes and realised that it is important to carry a stick on the behind. One can pursue pacifism, but not empty pacifism, not without self-protection but backed by strength. BJP has been in the favour muscular nationalism and applauded Indira Gandhi's decision in 1971 Bangladesh war. India has to regain the top position in the world economically, politically and militarily.<sup>86</sup>

China has invested heavily in infrastructure projects in PoK even before the BRI was launched much to the discomfort of India, along with China and Pakistan posting troops

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<sup>84</sup> B.Verma, '1962: The Nehruvian Blunder', *Indian Defence Review*, vol. 27, no.4, October-December 2012, <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/news/1962-the-nehruvian-blunder/>, (accessed 10 September 2018).

<sup>85</sup> A. Small, *The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics*, London, C. Hurst and Co. Publishers Ltd., 2015, pp.169-171, pp.180-181; Personal interview with Mr. K.K. Ganguly, Major General(Retired) Indian Army, Kolkata, 24 August 2015.

<sup>86</sup> Personal interview with Dr. Chandan Mitra, former senior leader of the BJP and former Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha, 2010-2016) and Chief Editor and Director of *Pioneer*, an English national newspaper daily in India based in New Delhi, 22 August 2017.

in Pok to protect the investments. The development of the Gwadar port is an integral part of the CPEC to access the Gulf region. New Delhi believes that China is unlikely to remain a neutral party in the India-Pakistan dispute on Kashmir despite being repeatedly informed that Kashmir was the 'core' issue for India.

### **6.2.1. Muslim as the Other under Modi's Homogenisation Drive**

The cultural-nationalism discourse undertakes an internal Othering of the 'Muslim' as an object to be feared, hated and to be protected against and the Muslims within India were seen as an extension of Islamist Pakistan<sup>87</sup> (though a few might suggest it is mostly confined to the upper caste Hindus) that draws heavily on the orientalist and imperialist writings of the West.<sup>88</sup> Muslim male and his masculinity are represented as a danger to the body of Hindu women and through her to the purity of the Hindu nation and henceforth the Hindu nation and the Hindu men were called upon to 'reawaken and militarize the hindudom' against such acts of Muslim men and nation intended towards 'polluting, converting and oppressing [innocent] Hindu women'.<sup>89</sup> Former military person, Col. Athale (Retd.) notes that, 'It is indeed an irony that Islam that expressly forbids idolatry in order to keep itself away from the ills of ritualism and domination by the priesthood today has the strongest and most influential priesthood in the shape of mullahs and Maulavis.'<sup>90</sup> Hinduism instead as the most polytheistic of the world's

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<sup>87</sup> See D. Anand, 'The Violence of Security: Hindu Nationalism and the Politics of Representing "the Muslim" as a Danger', *The Roundtable: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 94, no. 379, 2005, pp. 201-213; P. Brass, *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2003; M.G. Chitkara, *Hindutva Parivar*, New Delhi, APH Publishing, 2003; P.K. Datta, 'Dying Hindus': production of Hindu communal common sense in early 20th century Bengal, *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.28, issue no.25, 19 June 1993, pp.1305-1319; S. Kakar, *Colors of Violence: Cultural Identities, Religion, and Conflict*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1996; D. Ludden (ed.), *Making India Hindu: Religion, Community, and the Politics of Democracy in India*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1996; G. Pandey (ed.), *Hindus and Others: The Question of Identity in India Today*, New Delhi, Viking, 1993; T. Sarkar and U. Butalia (eds), *Women and Right-Wing Movements: Indian Experiences*, London, Zed Books, 1995.

<sup>88</sup> See R. Kabbani, *Imperial Fictions: Europe's Myths of Orient*, London, Pandora, 1986; R. Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity and Representation*, London, Routledge, 1996; E. Said, 'Islam Through Western Eyes', *The Nation*, 2 January 1998, <https://www.thenation.com/article/islam-through-western-eyes/?page=full>, (accessed on 22 May 2016); E. Said, *Orientalism*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1978.

<sup>89</sup> D. Anand, 'China and India: Postcolonial Informal Empires in the Emerging Global Order', in *Rethinking Marxism: A Journal of Economics, Culture & Society*, vol.24, no.1, 2012, pp.68-86; R. Gupta, 'India's "Look East" Policy', in A. Sinha and M. Mohta (eds.), *Indian Foreign Policy: Challenges and Opportunities*, New Delhi, Academic Foundation, 2007, pp.351-382.

<sup>90</sup> Athale, 'Why peace with Pakistan is difficult, if not impossible', 16 July 2015.

great religions is much more egalitarian with a 'dizzying array of female goddesses' such as Durga or Kali<sup>91</sup> in contrast to the Muslim society, which has a proclivity towards 'male chauvinism and misogyny'.<sup>92</sup> Hinduism celebrates 'Narishakti' (the feminine strength)<sup>93</sup> as was exemplified when Vajpayee hailed PM Indira Gandhi as 'the Durga of India' for the military success in 1971 Bangladesh war.<sup>94</sup> Narratives of conquest of Islamic invasions on the Indian subcontinent, rape and abduction of Hindu women, lack of democracy in the Muslim world, rising Islamic fundamentalism, changing demography in India with Muslim men overpopulating and the international war on terror have reinforced the association of Islam with terrorism and violence and reproduced the barbaric and inhuman character of Muslim men.<sup>95</sup> This stood in direct contradiction to Hindu India's civilizational ethos and its influence through 'religious, cultural and trade links extending from Persian Gulf to the Far East' and the success story of India's soft power.<sup>96</sup>

The NDA-II government has been criticised for its exclusionary politics of Muslim and Dalit minorities through its policies such as the beef ban, non-admittance of Muslim refugees from Myanmar that assumes significance in context of the proposed 2016 Citizenship Amendment Bill that recognises 'non-Muslim refugees' in India as 'citizens' of the country, increasing episodes of hate crimes against the minorities such as mob lynching and the government's slow response to take preventive measures against violence towards Kashmiris post Pulwama attacks. In India, killing cows and the consumption of beef have been banned in most states and since the BJP under Modi's leadership assumed power in 2014, this beef ban has been used by Hindu nationalists to justify attacks on Muslims, for instance the Dadri mob lynching case in Uttar Pradesh in 2015 in the name of protection of *Hindutva* and *gauraksha* (protection of holy cow).<sup>97</sup> Such attacks have been later justified as CP Singh, a Minister from the

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<sup>91</sup> In Hindu mythology Durga and Kali are Hindu female goddesses representing the supreme symbol of power and strength (Shakti) who are skilled warriors and destroyer of the asuras and rakhshas (demons) for the victory of good over the evil.

<sup>92</sup> Talbott, *Engaging India*, p.134

<sup>93</sup> UNICEF, 'MENA Gender Equality Profile - Status of Girls and Women in the Middle East and North Africa, UNICEF', October 2011, unicef.org.

<sup>94</sup> Lok Sabha, 'Discussion under Rule 193: Recent Nuclear Test in Pokhran', *Lok Sabha Debates*, 29 May 1998, New Delhi, Lok Sabha Secretariat, Col.321.

<sup>95</sup> Anand, 'The Violence of Security.'

<sup>96</sup> Gupta, 'India's "Look East" Policy.'

<sup>97</sup> The Dadri mob lynching in 2015 is one such instance in which a mob of Hindu villagers attacked and killed a 50 year old Muslim man on suspicions of cow slaughter and beef consumption in the state of

same BJP ruled state referring to the assaulted said, 'He talks against Hindus,' and 'makes anti-national comments, supports Kashmiri separatists and Naxals.'<sup>98</sup> There have been increasing reports of mob lynching since 2014 that further triggered the 'intolerance' debate in the country such as incidents of violence allegedly by members of the youth wing of the ruling BJP while chanting 'Jai shree Ram'(victory to Lord Ram).<sup>99</sup> There exists fears of the growing tide of majoritarianism based on the contention that Muslims would one day overwhelm Hindus (or atleast they are growing in large numbers) within the Hindu section, though this is not supported by statistics. Shiv Sena (an ally of BJP) president, Udhav Thackrey said in an editorial in party mouthpiece, *Saamna*: 'In the near future, the Muslim population of India will exceed the number of Muslims in Indonesia and Pakistan, which will result in a cultural and social imbalance of the Hindu nation.'<sup>100</sup> Shiv Sena had also demanded that the voting rights of Muslims be revoked. Post the Pulwama terror attack in Kashmir in February 2019 that killed 40 army jawans(soldiers) and the accused being a Kashmiri militant, there were attacks on Kashmiris across India by Hindu activists after branding them as 'stone-throwers' and 'terrorists'. Though Modi announced, 'Our fight is for Kashmir, not against Kashmiris,'<sup>101</sup> but there were delays in taking preventive measures to stop such attacks and there were no major condemnation of the perpetrators of these attacks. Tathagata Roy, the Meghalaya governor who was for long associated with the BJP had tweeted in response to the Pulwama attack calling upon the citizens of India 'not to visit

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Uttar Pradesh where consumption of beef is banned. This incident forced out the only Muslim family out of the village. The government's inquiry concluded that he was not storing beef for consumption. One of the 17 accused, Hariom Sisodia is gearing up to contest the Lok Sabha general elections in 2019 in Noida in Uttar Pradesh and claims to prevent even a single slaughter of cow after winning the elections. However there is also resentment against the BJP leadership who had promised the assailants financial and legal help through provisions of jobs and withdrawal of case from judiciary which have not happened. See 'Three Years after Dadri, The Man accused of Lynching Mohammad Akhlaq is Free and Running for Lok Sabha', *Huffpost*, 26 September 2018, [https://www.google.co.in/amp/s/m.huffingtonpost.in/amp/2018/09/26/three-years-on-accused-in-mohammad-akhlaq-lynching-is-free-and-ready-to-fight-the-lok-sabha-election\\_a\\_235542377/](https://www.google.co.in/amp/s/m.huffingtonpost.in/amp/2018/09/26/three-years-on-accused-in-mohammad-akhlaq-lynching-is-free-and-ready-to-fight-the-lok-sabha-election_a_235542377/), (accessed 15 March 2019).

<sup>98</sup> R. Ayub, 'Mobs are killing Muslims in India. Why is no one stopping them?', *The Guardian*, 20 July 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jul/20/mobs-killing-muslims-india-narendra-modi-bjp>, (accessed 2 February 2019).

<sup>99</sup> In Hindu Mythology Ram has been depicted as the incarnation of Lord Vishnu (one of the Gods of the Hindu trident-shiva, Vishnu and Brahma) on Earth who ruled as the just ruler and is represented as the supreme upholder of *dharma* (moral conduct) in statecraft and the arbiter of justice in his kingdom or 'Ramrajya'.

<sup>100</sup> 'Here's what the intolerance debate in India in 2015 was all about', *Firstpost*, 28 December 2015, <https://www.google.co.in/amp/s/www.firstpost.com/india/heres-what-the-intolerance-debate-in-india-in-2015-was-all-about-2561550.html/amp>, (accessed 15 July 2016).

<sup>101</sup> '2 Kashmiris thrashed in Lucknow', *The Telegraph*, 8 March 2019.

Kashmir or buy Kashmir products' whereas a few BJP leaders, like party spokesperson Sambit Patra came out in support of the Kashmiris.<sup>102</sup>

In the party manifesto for the general elections in 2014, the BJP declared India as a 'natural home for persecuted Hindus' in the region and worldwide.<sup>103</sup> During the 2016 Assam state assembly elections, the BJP leaders campaigned on the agenda to get the border state rid of Bangladeshis (Muslims who came after 1971 war) while protecting the Hindus who had fled religious persecution in Bangladesh.<sup>104</sup> To this regard, the BJP government introduced a bill to amend the citizenship law in 2016 for 'certain illegal migrants' (the non-Muslim migrants from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh) and made them eligible for Indian citizenship. The NDA-II government adopted the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) in 2019 that recognises Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, Sikh, Parsis and Jain refugees, who have fled persecution from neighbouring countries before December 2014 as citizens of India while excluding the Muslim refugees.<sup>105</sup> After the election victory with a larger mandate in 2019 the BJP has taken initiatives to implement the pan-India National Register of Citizens in 2020, which has led to widespread protests across India and has left 1.9 million people in Assam almost 'stateless'.<sup>106</sup> Additionally, New Delhi's refusal to allow the Rohingya Muslim refugees to enter and settle in India from Myanmar further shows the Othering of Muslims in the domestic context. The Modi government said that the Rohingya (40,000) in India are 'illegal immigrants' and 'a security threat' to India which have aggravated fears in them of being deported back.<sup>107</sup> The Office of the UN High

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<sup>102</sup> 'BJP mum, allies slam attacks on Kashmiris', *The Telegraph*, 23 February 2019.

<sup>103</sup> P. Jha, 'BJP offer of 'natural home' for Hindu refugees triggers debate', *The Hindustan Times*, 9 April 2014, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india/bjp-offer-of-natural-home-for-hindu-refugees-triggers-debate/story-aU5sVqOSrWCpcIE29qMKXJ.html>, (accessed 11 November 2019).

<sup>104</sup> A. Roy, 'The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 and the Aporia of Citizenship', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.54, issue no. 49, 14 December 2019, p.28.

<sup>105</sup> 'Lok Sabha passes Citizenship Bill amid protests, seeks to give citizenship to non-Muslims from 3 countries', *India Today*, 8 January 2019 (updated 9 January 2019), <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/citizenship-amendment-bill-passed-lok-sabha-assam-protests-1426345-2019-01-08>, (accessed 26 March 2019); Ministry of Home Affairs, 'The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019: Highlights, Issues and Summary', *PRS Legislative Research*, Government of India, December 2019, <https://www.prsindia.org/billtrack/citizenship-amendment-bill-2019>, (accessed 11 January 2020).

<sup>106</sup> 'Assam NRC: What next for 1.9 million 'stateless' Indians?', *BBC News*, 31 August 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-49520593>, (2 March 2020).

<sup>107</sup> 'Why India is refusing refuge to Rohingyas', *Times of India*, 6 September 2017, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/why-india-is-refusing-refuge-to-rohingyas/articleshow/60386974.cms>, (accessed 1 March 2020); Z. Siddiqui, 'As India eases citizenship path for Hindus, Rohingya Muslims fear expulsion', *World News, Reuters*, 15 November 2018,

Commissioner for Human Rights Protection of Kashmiris in its report had called for an international enquiry into 'multiple violations' in Kashmir and advocated the right of self-determination for Kashmiris. The report 'documenting alleged violations committed by security forces from June 2016 to April 2018' estimated 130 to 145 civilian deaths by security forces and between 16 and 20 killings by armed groups. The UN report, on the subject National Register of citizens also includes BJP President Amit Shah's reference to Bangladeshis (Muslims) in Assam as 'termites'. New Delhi had described the report as 'a violation of India's sovereignty and territorial integrity' and rejected it as 'fallacious, tendentious and motivated'.<sup>108</sup> The Amnesty International criticised CAA as it 'legitimises discrimination' on the basis of religion which the Modi government refuses to accept.<sup>109</sup> Nevertheless, a report by the data-based news organisation *India Spend* found that, 'Muslims were the target of 51% of violence centred on bovine issues over nearly eight years (2010 to 2017)' and most of these attacks (97%) were reported under the NDA-II government.<sup>110</sup> The Indian Army also sent a blunt take-no-prisoner message against the 'Kashmiri youth' with senior politicians like F. Abdullah saying, 'we don't believe in filling the jails with militants.'<sup>111</sup>

The Post-Nehruvian discourse rejected such policies for homogenisation under the RSS and BJP activists as they have challenged the 'idea of India' that espouses secular-pluralist ethos and termed the Citizenship Act as 'discriminatory' and against the basic ideals of the Indian Constitution. A. Singhvi, the Congress spokesperson said, 'The threat from within is always greater than the threat from without... The threat of

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<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-myanmar-rohingya-india-insight-idUSKCN1NK0VH>, (accessed 2 March 2020); Press Trust of India, 'Rohingya wary of future after CAA, don't want to return to Myanmar', National, *The Hindu*, New Delhi, 22 December 2019, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/rohingya-wary-of-future-after-cao-dont-want-to-return-to-myanmar/article30372210.ece>, (accessed 3 March 2020).

<sup>108</sup> 'State Department Mentions Curbs on Freedom of Speech: US notes UN body's Kashmir report', *The Telegraph*, 20 March 2019.

<sup>109</sup> Press Trust of India, 'CAA a 'clear violation' of Indian Constitution: Amnesty', National, *The Hindu*, Washington, 1 February 2020 (updated 2 February 2020), <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/cao-a-clear-violation-of-indian-constitution-amnesty/article30714569.ece>, (accessed 10 February 2020).

<sup>110</sup> Ayub, 'Mobs are killing Muslims in India.'

<sup>111</sup> M. Raina, 'Message to Moms: Sons with guns will be killed', *The Telegraph*, 20 February 2019.



homogenisation under Modi is the antithesis of our pluralism, the colours of our rainbow cannot be contained in these binaries of with us or against us.<sup>112</sup>

### **6.3. Responding to Pakistan-Terrorism nexus under Vajpayee and Singh**

The hyperrealist-cultural nationalists favoured a more pro-active and assertive policy towards Pakistan as they believed that Pakistan's intrinsic anti-Indian and belligerent mind set was not expected to change in the near future. However, under Vajpayee the NDA government pursued a reconciliatory approach towards Pakistan post the nuclear test and launched a peace initiative with the Lahore bus diplomacy and held the Lahore Summit in 1999 to meet his counterpart Nawaz Sharif in Pakistan. The 'bilateral composite dialogue' process<sup>113</sup> included consultations on cross border terrorism, the nuclear issue, CBMs, Kashmir and economic and commercial cooperation. Refuting allegations of weakness,<sup>114</sup> he called for developing mutually beneficial relationship as 'a secure and prosperous Pakistan is in India's interest.'<sup>115</sup> The Pakistan militants' intrusion into the Indian controlled part of Kashmir just after few months of the Lahore Visit were seen as 'betrayal of trust' and 'cowardly acts' in return of the extended 'hand of friendship' by the Indian government. Moreover on the economic front such as the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status, Pakistan has refused to reciprocate back by extending the same to India.<sup>116</sup> Nevertheless Indian armed forces did not cross the LoC and restricted its retaliatory operations in the Kashmir.<sup>117</sup> The hyperrealists saw Kargil as a national embarrassment and a lost opportunity to recapture Kashmir by asserting itself strongly against Pakistan and criticised India's initiatives for multilateral efforts to combat terrorism globally and regionally.<sup>118</sup> Indian foreign ministry spokesperson

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<sup>112</sup> S. Thakur, 'Bludgeoned, Idea of India needs rescuing', *The Telegraph*, 18 February 2019.

<sup>113</sup> Originally devised by the former Indian Prime Minister I.K. Gujral and Nawaz Sharif in 1997.

<sup>114</sup> Vajpayee, 'Address of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to the nation on Independence Day-2003. (Extracts)', p.154.

<sup>115</sup> Lok Sabha, 'Statement by Prime Minister: UN Security Council Resolution', *Lok Sabha Debates*, 8 June 1998, New Delhi, Lok Sabha Secretariat, cols.478-479.

<sup>116</sup> Y. Sinha, 'Interview of External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha with the Financial Times', 25 May 2003 in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign relations-2003 Documents*, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2004, p.143.

<sup>117</sup> K. Subrahmanyam, 'Challenges to Indian Security', *Strategic Analysis*, vol.24, no.9, 2000, p.1159, pp.1557-1575; Saran, 'A Different Dialogue this Time Round?'; Singh, *Defending India*, p.227.

<sup>118</sup> Roy Chowdhury, 'India's Nuclear Doctrine: A Critical Analysis', p.406; See R. Roy-Chaudhury, 'Nuclear Doctrine, Declaratory Policy, and Escalation Control', in M.I. Krepon, R.W. Jones, and Z. Haider (eds.), *Escalation Control and the Nuclear Option in South Asia*, The Henry L. Stimson Centre,

Nirupama Rao in relations to the Kashmir crisis remarked that, '...continued manifestations of Pakistani irresponsibility, loose talk, and undiluted hostility towards India and ...Pakistan's use of nuclear blackmail'<sup>119</sup> needs to be internationally condemned. Congress Parliamentarian Mr. Adhir Chowdhury revisiting the betrayal remarked, 'The Kargil fiasco had given an eloquent testimony of our generous attitude to our hostile neighbour. In diplomacy generosity is simply a misnomer, rather we should be pragmatic. We may trust, but that trust must be verified.'<sup>120</sup>

Apart from armed hostilities, terrorist attacks on Indian Parliament in 2001 jointly undertaken by the LeT and JeM jointly who are known to derive their support and patronage from Pak ISI<sup>121</sup> and the hijacking of IC-814 broke down the peace talks until January 2004. Referring to the Parliament attacks Advani, the BJP President said, 'The terrorist assault on the very bastion of our democracy was clearly aimed at wiping out the country's top political leadership.'<sup>122</sup> New Delhi militarily responded to the terror attacks by mobilising 800,000 troops along the LoC, codenamed as *Operation Parakram* (valour) which was the largest and longest mobilisation of Indian armed forces since 1947 but still refrained from crossing the LoC as it was felt that such 'coercive diplomacy' through troop deployment had already achieved the desired objectives. The secular nationalist discourse remained critical of such military mobilisation as Congress Parliamentarian Mr. Adhir Chowdhury critiquing such assertive military response in a personal interview said:

Operation Parakram was a knee jerk reaction, and it was estimated later that crores of rupees were wasted in addition to precious lives of army jawans. It

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Washington, D.C., 2004, pp.101–118 for further details on the nuclear signalling during this period; H.V. Pant, 'India's Nuclear Doctrine and Command Structure: Implications for India and the World', *Comparative Strategy*, vol.24, no.3, 2005, pp.277-293 for discussion on the challenges faced at the operational level by India to emerge as a nuclear weapon state.

<sup>119</sup> 'India accuses Musharraf of nuclear blackmail', *CNN*, 19 June 2002, <https://edition.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/asiapcf/south/06/19/india.pakistan/index.html>, (accessed 6 July 2016).

<sup>120</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Adhir Chowdhury, Member of Parliament (INC), former Union Minister for Railways under the UPA-II government (2012-2014) and President of West Bengal Pradesh Congress, New Delhi, 22 December 2015.

<sup>121</sup> L.K. Advani, 'Statement made by Union Home Minister in Lok Sabha in Connection with the terrorist attack on Parliament House', New Delhi, 18 December 2001, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, <https://www.mea.gov.in/articles-in-indian-media.htm?dtl/16856/Statement+made+by+Shri+LK+Advani+Union+Home+Minister+on+Tuesday+the+18th+December+2001+In+Lok+Sabha+in+Connection+with+the+terrorist+attack+on+Parliament+House>, (accessed 9 September 2017).

<sup>122</sup> Advani, 'Statement made by Union Home Minister in Lok Sabha in Connection with the terrorist attack on Parliament House.'

cannot be called coercive diplomacy as it did not yield any tangible results or the desired results. No such kind of diplomacy can be called successful. We believe in neither coercive nor persuasive diplomacy. Foreign policy should be perpetual in manner. There is no static foreign policy as we cannot entertain rigidity and inflexibility. We should respond according to the need of the situation but our response should be more balanced, assertive and mature.<sup>123</sup>

Besides border infiltrations there were further terrorist intrusion into the Red Fort and attack on J&K Legislative Assembly complex at Srinagar, irrespective of which Vajpayee government resumed peace talks with Pakistan and reaffirmed its image as a 'responsible power'.<sup>124</sup> The composite bilateral dialogue initiated in 2004 was temporarily disrupted in July after the Mumbai trains bomb blasts.

The Post-Nehruvian discourse under the INC primarily stressed on suspension of talks until effective countermeasures were implemented by Pakistani state agencies to stop cross border infiltration. Several attempts were made to renew and carry forward the dialogue process and to institutionalise India-Pakistan antiterrorism mechanism through Foreign Secretary-level talks in 2005 but nothing much was gained. The focus under the UPA shifted on improving bilateral trade to strengthen 'the basis for enduring peace and prosperity in the region'<sup>125</sup> but the Mumbai terror attacks in 2008 disrupted the process. India called for strengthening collaborative efforts against the threat of terrorism as NSA Menon said, 'The 26/11 attacks on India were planned and organised in one country, where the attackers were trained, the logistics and communications support chain extended over at least seven countries ... Located as we are in India beside the epicentre of global terrorism, we are acutely aware of the value of collaborative counter-terrorism efforts.'<sup>126</sup> Despite Indian government's dossiers to Pakistan, the trial

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<sup>123</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Adhir Chowdhury, Member of Parliament (INC), former Union Minister for Railways (2012-2014) and President of West Bengal Pradesh Congress, New Delhi, 22 December 2015.

<sup>124</sup> A.B. Vajpayee, 'Address by the Prime Minister at the inaugural Session of the 10<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit, Colombo', 29 July 1998, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/097152319800500211>, (accessed 30 March 2015).

<sup>125</sup> A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations-2008 Documents*, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2009, p.19, [https://mea.gov.in/images/pdf/main\\_2008.pdf](https://mea.gov.in/images/pdf/main_2008.pdf) (accessed 10 January 2015).

<sup>126</sup> S. Menon, Address by National Security Advisor Shivshankar Menon at the 9<sup>th</sup> IISA Asia Security Summit, Singapore, 5 June 2010, in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations-2010 Documents*, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2011, p.31.

of the suspects for the Mumbai terror attacks till date remains incomplete.<sup>127</sup> There was also growing discontent with Pakistan's illtreatment of Indian soldiers as prisoners of wars, whose bodies were found mutilated. The Singh government resumed talks with Pakistan in 2011 reaffirming the above noting, 'it has always been India's policy to develop peaceful and cooperative relations with Pakistan. Naturally this presupposes an environment free of violence of terror...we strongly condemn any treatment of our soldiers that is not in line with the Geneva Conventions.'<sup>128</sup>

Although New Delhi had kept a reconciliatory approach open in intervals, there has been a growing scepticism towards using 'suspension of talks' with Pakistan as a sustainable policy<sup>129</sup> although this option can never be completely discarded. The hyperrealists/cultural nationalists have been mostly critical of the efficacy of dialogue in the recent years, such as former defence members like General G.D.Bakshi and Retd. Colonel Athale. Athale remarked, 'Indians have seen this drama of talks alternated by tensions or a terrorist attack in India so many times that it is difficult to be optimistic.'<sup>130</sup> The challenge however has been to develop a military response to Pakistan's sub-conventional war without avoiding the risks of nuclear escalation. India, after Operation Parakram, started planning a doctrine of waging a low- scale and swift conventional attack, known as the 'Cold Start' doctrine in 2004 which the civilian government has not officially recognised and there have been doubts regarding India's wherewithal to implement such a doctrine.<sup>131</sup> Whereas, Pakistan in counter response has tried to prevent its implementation by lowering its nuclear threshold and introducing tactical nuclear weapons.

The hyperrealists with narratives of a more hardened approach towards Pakistan had nonetheless, refrained from taking any military action inside the Pakistan's territory

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<sup>127</sup> N. Rao, 'Interview of Foreign Secretary Mrs.Nirupama Rao with Kalyani Shankar for the All India Radio'. New Delhi, 12 August 2010, in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations-2010 Documents*, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2011, p.38.

<sup>128</sup> S. Singh, 'First Media interaction with Foreign Secretary after taking over charge of the office of Foreign Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs', New Delhi, 1 August 2013, in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations- 2013 Documents*, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2014, pp.202-203.

<sup>129</sup> Personal interview with retired diplomat, former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs and presently a Distinguished Research Fellow at Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, Mr. Pinak Ranjan Chakraborty, New Delhi, 16 December 2015.

<sup>130</sup> Athale, 'Why peace with Pakistan is difficult, if not impossible.'

<sup>131</sup> Kapila, 'India's New 'Cold Start' War Doctrine Strategically Reviewed.'

or from implementing the 'Cold Start' doctrine. Rather there have been efforts for reconciliation in inter-state relations. There has been a continuation in India's approach to dealing with Pakistan and even Modi who was expected to take a harder stance which he did as would be discussed in the next section, also continued an element of reconciliation with the Pakistan as was evident in inviting Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in his swearing in ceremony.

#### **6.4. The Shift to 'Surgical Strikes' under Modi's 'Naya Bharat'**

India is following a two pronged approach- firstly, India has retaliated by taking military action in response to terrorist attacks by Pakistan within Pakistan territory which is a major shift under the Modi government; and second, it is making efforts to isolate Pakistan internationally through condemnation at various global platforms and calling for collaborative measures. This is in continuation with the previous governments but is becoming more effective as evident in India's closer ties with the Islamic world and making use of platforms of Islamic nations' groupings such as Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and Organisation of Islamic countries (OIC) to condemn terrorist attacks by Pakistan.

The Modi government has moved towards a tougher stance by taking retaliatory military action as the Indian army conducted retaliatory 'surgical strikes' on terror launch pads in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) on 29th September 2016 in response to the Uri attacks and the Pathankot air base attacks by Pakistan. Indian armed forces had crossed the LoC for launching attacks only on terrorist camps and oofficially publicised this in the Indian media for the first time. The September surgical strikes intended to prove that India is willing to take military actions and can show strength when needed without nuclear escalation which previous governments have so far desisted from, instead of just suspending talks that failed to discourage Pakistan from continuing terror attacks. However, the recent sixteenth Committee Report published by the MEA, on whether the surgical strikes mark a shift in India's defence strategy from 'strategic restraint' to 'strategic attack' (citing the oral statement from the MoD) clearly stated that:

The surgical strikes have demonstrated our resolve to pursue the perpetrators of dastardly terrorist attacks on Indian Territory, even across the borders. The

execution of surgical strikes, however, does not indicate our change of policy from strategic restraint to strategic attack... The surgical strikes were preemptive measures to prevent such attacks. The surgical strikes have forcefully conveyed to Pakistan our intention of punitive punishment to the State/Non-State actor who aid, abet or execute actions detrimental to our national interests. It has ensured that a caution is imposed on Pakistan, on supporting or abetting inimical interests from its territory or territory under its control.<sup>132</sup>

Re-iterating this the Foreign Secretary during oral evidence before the Committee said and reaffirmed that ‘surgical strike’ as the term suggests does not count as abandonment of ‘strategic restraint’. He noted:

The fact that we only hit the launching pads, the fact that we completed the operations and we said that we had completed the operation shows that strategic restraint is very much in operation except that strategic restraint is operating somewhat differently than it used to operate before. But it is still a very restrained policy.<sup>133</sup>

To the Committees on the objectives of this surgical strike, Lieutenant General Rawat, Vice Chief of the Army Staff (VCOAS) during oral evidence said that the purpose of these operations was to strike at those terrorists about whom they [Indian intelligence and army] had definitive information. They had in the past caused damage to Indian civilians and the military establishments and would have caused further damage had they successfully infiltrated into Indian Territory, if not eliminated at their forward bases. Enumerating the objectives behind the surgical strikes, the Foreign Secretary further said that India wanted to give a clear ‘politico-military’ message publicly to Pakistan that they don’t have the freedom to cross the Line, inflict damage, and return safely.<sup>134</sup> Whether this would become an established practise under the Modi led BJP government in response to terrorist acts or not was unclear until the ‘surgical strikes 2.0’ were conducted by the Indian army in response to the Pulwama (South Kashmir) tragedy where 40 paramilitary personnel were killed on the most protected highway (Srinagar-Jammu highway) by a Kashmiri suicide car bomber who rammed a convoy

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<sup>132</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, ‘Indo-Pak Relations’, *Sixteenth Report*, Committee on External Affairs, 2016- 17, Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi, August 2017, [http://164.100.47.193/lsscommittee/External%20Affairs/16\\_External\\_Affairs\\_16.pdf](http://164.100.47.193/lsscommittee/External%20Affairs/16_External_Affairs_16.pdf), (accessed 5 February 2018).

<sup>133</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, ‘Indo-Pak Relations.’

<sup>134</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, , ‘Indo-Pak Relations.’

of 2,500 troopers.<sup>135</sup> This time India penetrated deeper in the Pakistan territory and the scale of operations was larger than before as it included aerial military operations. It reaffirmed India’s lack of hesitancy in use of military force to deal with Pakistan’s terrorism nexus or with insurgency in the North Eastern states and have resulted in the re-invention of India’s policy of ‘strategic restraint’.

Many senior BJP and RSS leaders warned of a retaliatory action and it should be noted this was just three months before the national elections. Mohan Bhagwat said that it was ‘everybody’s expectation’ in the country to give ‘a befitting reply’<sup>136</sup> while Amit Shah, the BJP party President declared that the BJP was the only party with ‘zero-tolerance’ against terrorism and hailed Modi as the most strong political willed leader in the world in combating terrorism. Shah said, ‘A befitting reply will be given by the army.’<sup>137</sup> And Modi. The Indian security forces also retaliated with a gunfight in South Kashmir and killed three militants including the suspected chief of JeM.<sup>138</sup> Congress Parliamentarian Mr. Adhir Chowdhury in a personal interview critiquing India’s approach under the NDA-II government of being populist in nature said:

Congress always maintained its persistent approach to Pakistan, it does not vary with election or phenomenon. BJP party used to display its sturdiness towards Pakistan while BJP campaigned for power. Once election is over the BJP government does not dither to invite the Pakistani Prime Minister. So the flip flop of BJP’s attitude towards Pakistan cannot be the persistent policy of INC towards Pakistan. The interest of our country should be given precedence. Our stand towards Pakistan does not alter with electoral verdict. In India’s approach to its neighbours, we don’t believe in knee jerk reactions or in generosity that is to be retreated a few days later. It does not reflect maturity and wisdom in foreign policy. We should not be tempted for capturing

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<sup>135</sup> ‘Car bomber kills 37 troopers’, *The Telegraph*, 15 February 2019.

<sup>136</sup> J.P. Yadav, ‘Sangh demands retaliatory action’, *The Telegraph*, 15 February 2019; ‘Shock: How is it possible? Rare car bomb brings SOP under scanner’, *The Telegraph*, 15 February 2019; M. Raina, ‘Local Adil was in C category, say police’, *The Telegraph*, 15 February 2019; ‘Can hit back again: Doval’, *The Telegraph*, 20 March 2019.

<sup>137</sup> ‘Diversion spells breather for Modi: BJP raises terror pitch’, *The Telegraph*, 19 February 2019.

<sup>138</sup> ‘Jaish trio killed at heavy price’, *The Telegraph*, 19 February 2019.

headlines of newspapers after a long spell that India is going to score a diplomatic brownie point.<sup>139</sup>

Modi's foreign policy did usurp the nationalist sentiment to further intensify India's tougher stance towards Pakistan which eventually resulted in electoral wins for the BJP. New Delhi mobilised additional troops across the border as the centre flew 10,000 additional troops to Kashmir and picked up at least 150 separatists.<sup>140</sup> Soon after Indian airforce undertook military operations and precised targeting on JeM terrorist training camps in Balakot, Khyber Phaktunkhwa located well inside Pakistan territory in POK. The MEA stated claimed that India had credible intelligence that JeM was attempting further suicide terror attack in various parts of the country.<sup>141</sup> India's Foreign Secretary Gokhale said,

In the face of imminent danger, a pre-emptive strike became absolutely necessary. In an intelligence led operation in the early hours of today, India struck the biggest training camp of JeM in Balakot. In this operation, a very large number of JeM terrorists, trainers, senior commanders and groups of jihadis who were being trained for fidayeen action were eliminated...The Government of India is firmly and resolutely committed to taking all necessary measures to fight the menace of terrorism.Hence this non-military preemptive action was specifically targeted at the JeM camp.The selection of the target was also conditioned by our desire to avoid civilian casualties. The facility is located in thick forest on a hilltop far away from any civilian presence.<sup>142</sup>

It has been argued that Indian government did not intend the operation to escalate into a full spectrum war but framed it as the cleansing process done by Indian defence forces amidst Pakistan's continued inaction to dismantle terrorism infrastructure by precisely

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<sup>139</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Adhir Chowdhury, Member of Parliament (INC), former Union Minister for Railways under the UPA-II government (2012-2014) and President of West Bengal Pradesh Congress, New Delhi, 22 December 2015.

<sup>140</sup> M. Raina and I.A. Siddiqui, 'Central Forces land, Kashmir on edge', *The Telegraph*, 24 February, 2019.

<sup>141</sup> PressTrust of India, 'Text of Foreign Secretary's statement on air strike', *The Hindu-Business Line*, New Delhi, 26 February 2019, <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/text-of-foreign-secretarys-statement-on-air-strike/article26372848.ece>, (accessed on 13 June 2019); V.K. Gokhale, 'Statement by Foreign Secretary on 26 February 2019 on the Strike on JeM training camp at Balakot', New Delhi, 26 February 2019, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, <https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/31089/Statement+by+Foreign+Secretary+on+26+February+2019+on+the+Strike+on+JeM+training+camp+at+Balakot>, (accessed on 13 June 2019).

<sup>142</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, 'Statement by Foreign Secretary on 26 February 2019 on the Strike on JeM training camp at Balakot.'



targeting the terrorist camps. It is a contradiction that the Foreign secretary chose the term 'non-military' preemptive strike even though India Airforce conducted aerial strikes<sup>143</sup> in which around 200-300 militants were speculated to be killed along with key 25 JeM leaders (although this figure has not been confirmed by official sources by the Indian army or the MEA and remains a matter of dispute). Under Modi it can be concluded that a fresh chapter in the war on terrorism has begun, while the efficacy of such operations needs to be reviewed. Pakistan soon after conducted aerial military operations in Indian Territory and engaged in an aerial confrontation with Indian fighter aircrafts. New Delhi framed the 'surgical strikes' as its 'right to take firm and decisive action to protect its national security, sovereignty and territorial integrity against any act of aggression or cross border terrorism'.<sup>144</sup> It also pointed out that Pakistan had targeted military installations on the Indian side whereas India targeted terrorist camps on which Indian intelligence had prior information. Pakistan's military air action was therefore an 'unprovoked act of aggression' and not comparable to India's 'pre-emptive' strike which was a 'counter terrorism action,'<sup>145</sup> whereas Pakistan decried the operations as the demonstration of Pakistan's capability to enter Indian airspace.

Pakistan's PM Imran Khan under 'naya [new] Pakistan' narrative offered to discuss terrorism with India its resolve to take pertinent action but had warned against any 'revenge' military retaliation owing to ensuing electoral compulsions in India. Khan remarked, 'If India thinks they will attack Pakistan, then we will not just think but retaliate' as, 'there will be no other option left than to retaliate'.<sup>146</sup> Khan calling for 'stability in the region' instead suggested internal measures by India to redress domestic grievances of Kashmir youth. Yet, New Delhi remains unconvinced as the MEA said,

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<sup>143</sup> Aerial operation in Pakistan territory have been conducted for the first time since 1971 Bangladesh war.

<sup>144</sup> M. Pubby, 'Reserve right to respond to Pakistan's aggression: India', *The Economic Times*, 28 February 2019, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/reserve-right-to-respond-to-pakistans-aggression-india/articleshow/68193543.cms?from=mdr>, (accessed on 13 June 2019).

<sup>145</sup> But the building site that matched with the satellite coordinates appears undamaged and deserted. Local villager claimed, 'that used to be the madarsa but it is no longer active'. There were madaras in the area that opened during the 1978-88 rule of General Zia-ul-Haq but no longer operational. Military officials stationed near the site had also claimed the same of no damage being caused to any buildings.

<sup>146</sup> N. Jaffrey, 'Imran plays global pressure card', Delhi bureau, *The Telegraph*, 20 February 2019; 'If India attacks Pakistan, we will retaliate: Imran Khan', *Business Line-The Hindu*, 19 February 2019, <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/world/if-india-thinks-it-will-attack-pakistan-then-we-will-retaliate-pakistan-pm-imran-khan-on-pulwama-terror-attack/article26313086.ece>, (accessed 12 April 2019).

'Promises of 'guaranteed action' ring hollow given the track record of Pakistan,' and the entire international community recognises that Pakistan is the 'the nerve centre of terrorism'.<sup>147</sup> The MEA stated that India is ready to engage in 'comprehensive bilateral dialogue in an atmosphere free from terror and violence' and not while terrorist attacks like Pathankot in 2016 or Pulwama attack in 2019 are continuing.<sup>148</sup> Refuting Pakistan's allegations regarding links between India's response and electoral compulsions, New Delhi said 'India's democracy is a model for the world which Pakistan would never understand' and insisted on 'credible and visible action against the perpetrators of (the) Pulwama terrorist attack' and other terrorist groups operating within Pakistan.<sup>149</sup>

Finally, PM Modi and several other cabinet ministers have been very vocal about condemning Pakistan's continued use of terrorism as a state policy and have raised it on various platforms such as OIC<sup>150</sup> and the BRICS to garner collaborative support in taking strict position against Pakistan. For instance, Modi at a gathering of the heads of governments of the BRICS countries said, 'Tragically the mothership of terrorism is a country in India's neighbourhood. Terror modules around the world are linked to this mothership', and called on the BRICS to stand against it. This has not been echoed by China which has further increased wariness about Chinese intentions to keep India entangled in the sub-regional conflict with Pakistan and therefore prevent India's rise.<sup>151</sup> The US State Department mounted pressure on Pakistan by designating Hafiz Saeed's party as a 'foreign terrorist organisation' and called it a front for the LeT that is accused of orchestrating attacks in India.<sup>152</sup> India also withdrew the MFN status to Pakistan and threatened to block the flow of water supply of Indus waters to Pakistan. There have been other pressure building tactics that India adopted such as two Pakistani shooters were denied visa to compete in the ongoing world cup in New Delhi though

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<sup>147</sup> 'If India attacks Pakistan, we will retaliate: Imran Khan.'

<sup>148</sup> A. Joshua and J.P. Yadav, 'India silent on Imran retaliation remark', *The Telegraph*, 20 February 2019.

<sup>149</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, 'India's response to remarks by Prime Minister of Pakistan on the Pulwama Terrorist Attack', 19 February 2019, Government of India,

[https://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/31069/Indias\\_response\\_to\\_remarks\\_by\\_Prime\\_Minister\\_of\\_Pakistan\\_on\\_the\\_Pulwama\\_TerroristAttack](https://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/31069/Indias_response_to_remarks_by_Prime_Minister_of_Pakistan_on_the_Pulwama_TerroristAttack), (accessed on 10 April 2019).

<sup>150</sup> 'India content to be a guest at OIC meet', *The Telegraph*, 24 February 2019.

<sup>151</sup> It has to be noted that this invite stood crucial given that UAE had just signed a 3 billion dollar bailout package with Pakistan to provide financial assistance to help Islamabad overcome international payment crisis. See 'UAE signs \$3 billion bailout package', Moneycontrol-CNBC, 23 January 2019, <https://www.moneycontrol.com> (accessed 2 April 2019).

<sup>152</sup> 'Conference adopted two resolutions related to Kashmir: Pak elected to OIC post', *The Telegraph*, 13 March, 2019; 'Pak govt seizes Saeed seat of power', *The Telegraph*, 8 March 2019.

the Olympic charter states that no athlete can be denied visa by host nation on political grounds.<sup>153</sup>

### **6.5. Summary**

The chapter therefore briefly summarises that how the Indian security elite visualises India's role in the region under the 'neighbourhood first' policy that has evolved over the years with elements being drawn from both the Manmohan and Modi's *Panchamrit* doctrines as enunciated in chapter 4. The prime focus under both the NDA and UPA-I and II governments have been sustaining and boosting the 'economic growth engine' to pursue India's developmental priorities. The NDA-II government focussed on developing social and physical infrastructure, boosting intra-regional trade, enhancing security cooperation with the neighbours, providing humanitarian assistance and strengthening contacts and ties through conscious use of India's cultural soft power and 'civilizational exceptionalism' rooted in Hinduism to enhance India's global presence and regional influence. The chapter explored the key priority areas and initiatives that have been added in India's neighbourhood policy primarily through the re-imagination of India as a Hindu nation offering shelter and protection to all Hindus against the Muslim Other both in the domestic context, in the region and worldwide. Under 'Moditva' South Asia is envisioned as a Hindu space re-integrated under the 3C matra of 'connectivity, commerce and culture' and the security elites re-construct India's regional pre-eminence in South Asia and the IOR as a facilitator of stability and prosperity.

There are both continuities and shifts in how India reproduces Pakistan as a spatial political Other and in its dealing with the Pakistan-terrorism nexus. The NDA-I government despite of a hard rhetoric refrained from military action in response to the terrorist attacks and followed a reconciliatory approach which was pursued under UPA-I and II besides suspension of talks. The Modi government has been less hesitant to use force and conducted surgical strikes on one hand but has also continued a reconciliatory approach on the other. Post the surgical strikes, New Delhi has nonetheless re-affirmed its commitment to 'strategic restraint', albeit with a renewed interpretation.

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<sup>153</sup> J. Basu, 'Olympic crackdown on India over Pakistan snubs', *The Telegraph*, 23 February 2019.

## Chapter 7

### The 'Rise of China' and India's Ocean Policy: Revamping 'Indian-ness' in the 'Indo-Pacific'

*To me the Blue Chakra or wheel in India's national flag represents the potential of Blue Revolution or the Ocean Economy. That is how central the ocean economy is to us.*

-Narendra Modi<sup>1</sup>

#### 7.1. Introduction: The Limitations of Realist Explanations

India has shown the willingness to extend its maritime presence and reach under the 'Indo-Pacific' spatial construct<sup>2</sup> and the 'Act East policy' has become the cornerstone of India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region.<sup>3</sup> The term 'Indo-Pacific' connects both Indian and Pacific Ocean together and the 'Indo' bit not only refers to Indian Ocean but also India indicating the important role India can play and is expected to play in the region. Former Indian Ambassador to USA, Nirupama Rao said that 'the earlier concept of Asia-Pacific had sought to exclude India'; and in contrast, 'today the Indo-Pacific encompasses the subcontinent as an integral part of this eastern world.'<sup>4</sup> This idea of regional construction based on the confluence of the Indian and Pacific Ocean has been initially promoted by strategic analysts associated with Indian think tanks

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<sup>1</sup> BJP, 'Resolution on Foreign Policy passed in BJP National Executive Meeting at Bengaluru (Karnataka)'; Chand, 'Colour Code Blue: Sagar Yatra', p.8.

<sup>2</sup> K.V. Bhagirath, 'Indo-Pacific Region as a Spatial Concept', in R. K Bhatia and V. Sakhuja (ed.), *Indo-Pacific Region: Political and Strategic Prospects*, New Delhi, Indian Council of World Affairs, 2014, pp.1-4; H. Singh, 'India and the Indo-Pacific Region' in R. K Bhatia and V. Sakhuja (ed.), *Indo-Pacific Region: Political and Strategic Prospects*, New Delhi, Indian Council of World Affairs, 2014, pp.110-114; Chacko, 'The Rise of the Indo-Pacific'; S. Dewan (ed.), *Perspectives of the Indo-pacific Region: Aspirations, Challenges and Strategy*, United Service Institution of India, New Delhi, Vij Books India Pvt Ltd, 2014; A. Prakash, 'Maritime dynamics in the Indo-pacific: Setting The Scene in Maritime Dyanamics', in V. Sakhuja and K. Narula (ed.), *The Indo-Pacific*, National Maritime Foundation, New Delhi, Vij Books India Pvt. Ltd., 2016, pp.1-10; S. Sundararaman, 'India and the Indo-Pacific, Semantic Change or Strategic Shift' in G. Khandekar (ed.), *EU-India Strategic Partnership: Facing the Foreign Policy Divide*, New Delhi, Lenin Media Pvt. Ltd, 2015, pp.127-140.

<sup>3</sup> Rajendram, 'India's new Asia Pacific Strategy'; S. Sundararaman, 'India's Act East Policy: Adding Substance to Strategic Partnerships', in V.Sakhuja and K.Narula (eds.), *Maritime Dyanamics in the Indo-Pacific*, National Maritime Foundation, New Delhi, Vij Books India Pvt. Limited, 2016, pp.151-167.

<sup>4</sup> N. Rao, 'Lecture by the Honorable Nirupama Rao, India's Ambassador to the United States on America's "Asian Pivot": The View from India', Brown University, 4 February 2013, India Initiative, <http://brown.edu/initiatives/india/sites/brown.edu/initiatives.india/files/uploads/NirupamaRao-America'sAsianPivotTheViewfromIndia-Brown-IndiaInitiativeSeminar2.4.2013.pdf>, (accessed 10 March 2016).

related to India's Ministry of Defense and External Affairs and gradually has been welcomed and embraced by the political leadership since 2011.<sup>5</sup> The framing of the Indo-Pacific concept apparently supports 'realist' understandings that see India as abandoning its traditional non-aligned stance and align more closely with 'like-minded democratic states' in the region such as the USA, Australia and Japan through new and deeper integrated military partnerships and regional architecture building. It is true that under Modi India is moving away from its traditional reservations by expanding its influence beyond South Asia, actively engaging globally in defence diplomacy, conducting joint maritime exercises and undertaking disaster relief and counter-piracy operations and deeply engaging with regional partners and participating in regional mechanisms. Yet, India's motivation for engaging with the region exists independently of its relationship with China. India has increasingly shown a desire for a greater role in Asia, including its willingness to become the 'net security provider' and the 'first – responder' during any emergency crisis in the IOR and also seeks to re-establish itself as a 'normative actor' in the Indo-Pacific region.

In recent years there has been increasing scholarly attention on India's foreign and maritime policies. It has been recognised that Narendra Modi's government is serious about India's military and geopolitical ambitions in the region that is likely to emerge as the 'centre stage for the 21<sup>st</sup> century' where 'the new Great Game in geopolitics' will take place.<sup>6</sup> The Act East policy (AEP) which is referred to as the upgraded or revamped version of the Look East (LEP) has signalled an important shift away from the focus on land borders that has inflicted the previous governments.<sup>7</sup> It is increasingly being recognised that 'a blue-water navy that can project power over long distances is a necessity for any major power, especially one with global ambitions... to deter other powers from doing things that would hurt it geopolitically.'<sup>8</sup> But the studies on India's maritime interests and policies have predominantly focussed on a realist

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<sup>5</sup> Chacko, 'The rise of the Indo-Pacific.'

<sup>6</sup> R. Kaplan, 'Center Stage for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Power Plays in the Indian Ocean', *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2009; R. Kaplan, *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of the American Power*, New York, Random House, 2011, p.13.

<sup>7</sup> A. Bachhawat, 'Indian Foreign Policy and the Second International Fleet Review', *Australian Institute of International Affairs*, 11 February 2016, <http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/indian-foreign-policy-and-the-second-international-fleet-review/>, (accessed 7 March 2019).

<sup>8</sup> R. Srinivasan, 'Modi's Overseas Ambitions: Vietnam and the Reverse 'String-of –Pearls' to Contain China', *Firstpost*, 31 October 2014, <https://www.firstpost.com/world/modis-overseas-ambitions-vietnam-and-the-reverse-string-of-pearls-to-contain-china-1781389.html>, (accessed 4 April 2018).

assessment of the (in)security threats with China's overtures in Indian Ocean region through the development of ports and maritime infrastructure in the littoral states surrounding India which has been referred to as the 'string of pearls'<sup>9</sup> and its implications on India's security interests, or analysing India's maritime engagement through development of defence partnerships with Vietnam, Japan, Australia and Russia as 'an emerging 'reverse string-of-pearls' strategy'<sup>10</sup> under its LEP and regional engagement with the ASEAN.<sup>11</sup> Such explanations view India's defence partnerships, conduct of multilateral or bilateral exercises and engagement in the East as a 'balancing act' against and reaction to, an increasing Chinese maritime presence in the Indian Ocean region.<sup>12</sup> The growing Chinese prowess at sea as the 'key strategic challenge'<sup>13</sup> is described as a major driving force behind India's naval modernisation and expansion for maintaining its regional pre-eminence and re-engaging with the East. It is not to negate that India remains wary of Chinese intentions in the IOR and South China sea and India's enhanced 'defence diplomacy' with East and South East Asian countries

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<sup>9</sup> D. Brewster, 'Beyond the String of Pearls: is there really a Sino-Indian security dilemma in the Indian Ocean?', *Journal of Indian Ocean Region*, 2014, vol.10, no.2, pp.133-149; T. Chakraborti, 'China's growing strategic influence in South Asia: The impact on national securities and insecurities – A comment', in S. Dutt and A. Bansal, (eds.), *South Asian Security: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Discourses*, Contemporary South Asia Series, Routledge (Taylor and Francis Group), London and New York, 2012, p.88 ; M. J. Gabrielson and J.J. Freese, 'The 'Tamil Nadu Factor' in China's Naval Basing Ambitions in Srilanka', *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, E notes, December 2012, [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/162030/Gabrielson\\_Johnson-Freese\\_-\\_China\\_in\\_Sri\\_Lanka.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/162030/Gabrielson_Johnson-Freese_-_China_in_Sri_Lanka.pdf), (accessed 2 Novemembr 2017); G.S. Khurana, 'China's String of Pearls in the Indian Ocean and its Security Implications', *Strategic Analysis*, vol.32, no.1, 2008, pp.1-39; J. P. Panda, 'China's Tryst with the IORA: Factoring India and the Indian Ocean', *Strategic Analysis*, vol.38, no.5, pp.668-687; J. H. Ping, 'China's Relations with India's Neighbours: From threat avoidance to Alternative Development Opportunity', *Asian Journal of Political Science*, vol.21, no.1, 2013, pp.21-40; S. Singh, 'China's Forays into the Indian Ocean: Strategic Implications for India', *Journal of the Indian Ocean region*, vol.7, no.2, 2011, pp.235-248; A. Singh, 'China's Maritime Bases in the Indian Ocean Region: A Chronicle of dominance foretold', *Strategic Analysis*, vol.39, no.3, 2015, pp.293-297; T. Yoshihara, *Chinese views of India in the Indian Ocean: A geopolitical perspective*, *Strategic Analysis*, vol.36, no.3, 2012, pp.489-500.

<sup>10</sup> Srinivasan, 'Modi's Overseas Ambitions.'

<sup>11</sup> D. Brewster, 'India's Defence strategy and the Indian-ASEAN Relationship', *India Review*, vol.12, no.3, 2013, pp.151-164; W.C. Ladwig III, 'Delhi's Pacific Ambition: Naval Power, 'Look East' and India's Emerging Influence in the Asia Pacific', *Asian Security*, vol.5, no.2, 2009, pp.87-113.

<sup>12</sup> A. Batyabal, 'Balancing China in Asia: A realist Assessment of India's Look East Strategy', *China Report*, February 2006, vol.42, no.2, pp.179-197.

<sup>13</sup> R. Roy-Chaudhury, 'Maritime Ambitions and Maritime Security', Presentation delivered to the 5<sup>th</sup> Berlin Conference on Asian Security, 30 September 2010, [www.Swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/project\\_papiere/Roy-Caudhury\\_BCAS2010\\_web\\_ks.pdf](http://www.Swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/project_papiere/Roy-Caudhury_BCAS2010_web_ks.pdf), (accessed 20 February 2018); H.V. Pant, 'A New Maritime Balance in the Indo-Pacific region: Think Tank', *The Japan Times*, 4 March 2016; H.V. Pant and P. Das, 'China's military rise and the Indian challenge', H.V. Pant and P. Das, 'China's Military rise and the indian Challenge', in P. Das and H.V. Pant (eds.), *Defence Primer: An Indian Military in Transformation?*, Observer Research Foundation, 19 April 2018, <https://www.orfonline.org/research/defence-primer-2018-indian-military-transformation/>, (accessed 20 January 2020).

and 'economic diploimacy' in the neighbourhood can be seen an external balancing strategy in response to Chinese 'strategic encirclement theories in the Indian Ocean region'. Yet such explanations cannot sufficiently explain India's self-perception as a key player in the region and how it assists aspirations for the kind of 'great power' India wants to be and be recognised as by others. It also has to be kept in mind that India has in the past exercised caution and avoided such perception that it is attempting to contain China or intrude on China's strategic space, and this was evident from the swift demise of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue(Quad) and India's reluctance to engage in defence diplomacy particularly under the Singh-UPA government. It also has to be kept in mind that though Modi government has been criticising Chinese aggressiveness, it has also showed willingness to enhance its economic engagement with China and is engaging in bilateral military exercises with China.

As stated before, the study does not undermine the importance of material factors and the rise of 'China challenge' but instead of viewing these security threats as something out there or given, it looks at the [re]construction of China as a spatial-political Other and those self-representational practices by the Indian security elites juxtaposes India as a positive force to ensure 'prosperity and stability' in the region. The existing studies view the India-China rivalry in Indo-Pacific as something given but do not adequately examine how the security elites in India reinterpret the China challenge to legitimise a bigger role for the Indian navy, and re-produces itself as a 'responsible' maritime power in the IOR and in the 'extended neighbourhood'.<sup>14</sup> Successive Indian governments have re-produced ideas of 'Indian exceptionalism' or difference through discursive practices that re-position India's centrality in the Indo-Pacific region and India has also been called upon to play a larger role by other regional players by drawing upon such ideas which fit their own normative agenda and strengthen the neo-liberal order. There is a need therefore to look at how Indian elites look at Chinese presence in the IOR, its evolving strategy in the IOR and the AEP in the Indo-Pacific region.

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<sup>14</sup> C.R. Mohan, India and its extended neighbourhood, <http://www.thehindu.com/2000/06/08/stories/05082523.htm>, (accessed 20 February 2018).

## **7.2. The China Challenge: A Revisionist-Aggressive Other**

India views China as an Other in more ambiguous ways than it looks at the inferior Other, Pakistan which is seen in more antagonistic ways. China poses a serious and pressing security challenge for India and India's response to deal with the China challenge can largely be characterised as ambivalent. The 'China Dream' as outlined by President XI Jinping in the Congress indicates China's increasing assertiveness to emerge as a 'fully developed nation' by 2049 through China's domestic transformation in the first stage by realising the 'socialist modernisation' that would be 'modelled on socialism with Chinese characteristics' and the Communist Party of China having the central role. The second stage aims at a more global agenda to become 'a global leader in terms of comprehensive national power and international influence' with an emphatic focus on military modernisation. He called for a significant role of Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) for devising new military strategies, undertaking ambitious build-up plan to make it 'fully transformed into a first-tier force'.<sup>15</sup>

India's former Foreign Secretary talking about a global role for India said, 'China's growing ability to project its military strength, its rapid military modernization, and its very visible economic capabilities, introduce a new calculus in the security situation in our region. We are also alert to the continuing and close security relationship between China and Pakistan.'<sup>16</sup> The *Nonalignment 2.0* document describes China as 'the one power which impinges directly on India's geopolitical space' with uncertain intentions towards India and who competes with India in its own 'backyard' and even in the wider Indo-Pacific for accessing energy markets in Central Asia, Africa or in South East Asia or for ensuring sea control for the safe transit of energy resources to China.<sup>17</sup> The Post-Nehruvian discourse (especially within the Congress Party and its supporters within academia and thinktanks) also see China as a partner in pursuit of common goals under the concepts like 'Chindia'<sup>18</sup> to strengthen Asian integrity, to refashion architecture of global governance and voice concerns of the developing world on climate change or within multilateral trade regimes. India had sided with China in December 2009 in Copenhagen against a climate deal brokered by Obama. But the

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<sup>15</sup> Pant and Das, 'China's Military rise and the Indian Challenge', pp. 4-5.

<sup>16</sup> Rao, 'Address by Foreign Secretary at Harvard on "India's Global Role."'

<sup>17</sup> Khilnani et.al, *Non-alignmnet 2.0*, p.13.

<sup>18</sup> J. Ramesh, *Making Sense of Chindia: Reflections on China and India*, New Delhi, India Research Press, 2005.



present BJP government is believed to have less optimistic views on China. The USA toppled China in 2019 to emerge as the largest trading partner in goods and merchandise for India amidst US-China trade war,<sup>19</sup> but China continues to remain a major trading partner of India.<sup>20</sup> Modi has also showed willingness to reset Indo-China relations and to establish a personal rapport with the Chinese leader by attending bilateral summits, a number of ministerial meetings such as at the BRICS summit and through diplomatic visits like sending the then EAM Mrs. Sushma Swaraj in February 2019 post the Pulwama attacks wherein one of the priority areas was to convince China not to side with Pakistan on terrorism<sup>21</sup> besides attracting more inward investments. However, Modi has been clear to send out a message since the beginning of his first term to Beijing that if India's interests were threatened, it would not hesitate to act alone or in conjunction with others during his visit to Japan, when he called upon those states who believed in what he described as 'expansionist policies' to abandon it and return to 'the path of development'.<sup>22</sup>

**First**, there is both a sense of equivalence and a difference in how India sees itself in relation to China. In the Post-Nehruvian discourse, owing to China's continental size, its status as an ancient civilization, a post-colonial state that became the fastest growing major economy in the world and remained so for 30 years (until 2015) and currently is the second largest economy in the world, it is represented as similar to India in many ways.<sup>23</sup> It can be traced back to Nehru's vision of 'Asianism' when he proclaimed India-China brotherhood (Hindi-Chin bhaibhai) as working together to enhance pan-Asian security and economic cooperation to create a fair,

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<sup>19</sup> S. Nandi, 'US topples China as India's largest merchandise trade partner', *Livemint*, 19 June 2019, <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/us-topples-china-as-india-s-largest-merchandise-trade-partner-1560939967576.html>, (accessed 13 March 2020).

<sup>20</sup> 'Major Trading Partners of India', SEAIR-Exim Solutions, 22 October 2019, <https://www.seair.co.in/blog/major-trading-partners-of-india.aspx>, (accessed 14 March 2020).

<sup>21</sup> 'The China challenge before Sushma Swaraj', Opinion, *Livemint*, 26 February 2019, <https://www.livemint.com/opinion/online-views/opinion-the-china-challenge-before-sushma-swaraj-1551120282944.html>, (accessed on 20 February 2020).

<sup>22</sup> N. Gokhale, *Securing India the Modi Way: Pathankot, Surgical Strikes and More*, New Delhi, Bloomsbury, 2017, p.120.

<sup>23</sup> See A.B. Vajpayee, 'Speech by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee at Peking University', Beijing, 23 June 2003, in AS.Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations-2003 Documents*, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2004, pp.732-736; S. Gandhi, 'Walking the Tightrope of Economic Growth and Social Justice', in N. Bhandare (ed.), *India: The Next Global Superpower*, New Delhi, Roli Books, 2007, pp.32-45; Mukherjee, 'External Affairs Minister's Speech on "India's Foreign Policy Today" at Peking University'; M. Singh, 'Prime Minister Calls for Increased Economic Engagement between India and China', *Press Information Bureau*, Government of India, 2008, <http://pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?relid=34583/Singh>, (accessed 11 September 2017).

equitable and multipolar world order. The 1962 India-China war that caught India completely unprepared dispelled the myths and made Indian leadership wary of China's long term intentions and a feeling of mistrust. However former PM Singh of the UPA-I and II governments remarked that there is a 'growing congruence of regional, global and economic interests, driven by our respective developmental aspirations and shaped by the evolving strategic environment'<sup>24</sup> between the two most populous countries and fastest growing economies in the world.

Indo-China partnership is seen relevant for bringing about a successful conclusion of the Doha Development Round of the WTO negotiations with priority on development dimension, to intensify efforts to democratise the institution of UN Security Council, for supporting India's entry in the NSG which China has blocked or to strengthen the South-South Cooperation by forming alternative regional groupings of emerging powers as the BRICs, RIC, BASIC and actively participating in the Chinese led initiatives such as the AIIB and ADB that places them together against the hegemonistic 'western' dominated world order. Former PM Singh said, 'At the global level, our two countries should be at the forefront of the emergence of a more democratic global order and of multilateral approaches to resolving global issues'<sup>25</sup> Over the years the Indian governments have prioritised on economic engagement with China keeping the far more contentious issues (including the border issue) to be dealt with later. The Post-Nehruvian discourse looks at the Sino-Indian relations that could emerge as an example of peaceful coexistence of two rising powers uniquely positioned in contiguous geographies working for a multipolar order and greater economic engagement as former PM Singh said, 'we should harness our complementarities and synergies in the areas of trade and business. India's growing consumer market, skilled human resources, and software excellence together with China's own large market, its manufacturing prowess and cost competitiveness provide the platform for exponential growth in our economic ties.'<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> M. Singh, 'PM's Speech at the Central Party School in Beijing –“India and China in the New Era”', Beijing, 2013, <http://pmindia.nic.in/speechdetails.php?nodeid=138>, (accessed on 15 February 2018).

<sup>25</sup> M. Singh, 'Speech by Prime Minister Dr.Manmohan Singh at the Chinese Academy of Social Science', Beijing, 15 January 2008, <https://www.mea.gov.in/outgoing-visit-detail.htm?1445/Speech+by+Prime+Minister+Dr+Manmohan+Singh+at+the+Chinese+Academy+of+Social+Sciences+Beijing>, (accessed on 1 February 2018).

<sup>26</sup> Singh, 'Speech by Prime Minister Dr.Manmohan Singh at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.'

This has also been supported by the hyper-nationalist/cultural-nationalist discourse as Mrs. Sushma Swaraj, India's former EAM (2014-2019) under the BJP government noted, 'As our relations are deepening and our regional and international role evolving, there are expectations from our two countries to lead Asia and usher in an 'Asian Century'.<sup>27</sup> Also creating a 'multi-polar Asia' is seen as the first step to build a multipolar world which requires both China and India cooperating on global issues.<sup>28</sup> The cultural nationalist discourse drawing synergies between 'India as a Leading Power' and the 'China Dream' argues that, 'We are both old civilizations and proud countries that are retaking our positions in the global order'<sup>29</sup> while respecting one another's strong sense of independence and legitimate aspirations in the course of seeking accommodation and building trust.

The territorial disputes between the two countries remain unresolved but there has been substantial improvement in achieving peace and tranquillity across the LAC with both sides seeking peaceful resolution. Modi had warned China to abandon its 'mindset of expansion' and asserted that Arunachal Pradesh (the 'land of rising sun') an integral part of India.<sup>30</sup> It was expected that the NDA-II government will take a tougher stance on defence issues relating to China but India has maintained a cautious approach similar to the previous UPA governments, however showing slightly more assertiveness. Major border incursions by PLA troops across the LAC led Modi to change his stance and publicly criticise Chinese actions. The Modi government has tried to stand strong against Chinese pressure tactics that pushed and probed India on the border issue, stepped up its support for the CPEC which was announced during Xi's visit to Islamabad in April 2015, blocked India's moves in multilateral forums such as its efforts to become a member of the NSG or prevent listing of Pakistan based alleged terrorists with the UN. The most serious crisis in India-China bilateral relations

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<sup>27</sup> S. Swaraj, 'Message from the External Affairs Minister to the 3rd India-China Think-Tank Forum.'

<sup>28</sup> S. Jaishankar, 'Speech by Foreign Secretary at Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi, Indian Ministry of External Affairs', New Delhi, 2 March 2015, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, [http://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/26433/Speech\\_by\\_Foreign\\_Secretary\\_at\\_Raisina\\_Dialogue\\_in\\_New\\_Delhi\\_Marh-2\\_2015#](http://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/26433/Speech_by_Foreign_Secretary_at_Raisina_Dialogue_in_New_Delhi_Marh-2_2015#), (accessed 10 May 2019).

<sup>29</sup> S. Jaishankar, 'Address by Foreign Secretary at India China Think-Tanks Forum', 9 December, 2016, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, [https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/27798/Address\\_by\\_Foreign\\_Secretary\\_at\\_India\\_China\\_ThinkTanks\\_Forum\\_December\\_09\\_2016](https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/27798/Address_by_Foreign_Secretary_at_India_China_ThinkTanks_Forum_December_09_2016), (accessed 10 May 2019).

<sup>30</sup> S. Gotipatti, 'Modi says China must drop 'mindset of expansion'' over Arunachal Pradesh', *Reuters*, 22 February 2014, <http://in.reuters.com/article/india-modi-china-arunachal-idINDEAAA1L03V2014022>, (accessed 22 April, 2019).

developed in mid 2017 when the Indian Army confronted the PLA units building a road through the territory contested by China and Bhutan, with whom New Delhi has special friendship treaty obligations. Apart from public criticism, Modi on one hand reinforced the troops on the ground and deployed other significant military assets, but on the other travelled to Wuhan to meet President Xi to broker a deal to reduce the tensions in the region provided it implicitly recognises and respects India's status, concerns and interests. Eventually both sides agreed to temporarily suspend their activities.<sup>31</sup> RSS head Bhagwat noted that the world now recognises India's 'strength' to stand firm and the 'international standing' of Bharat.<sup>32</sup>

**Second**, both the Post-Nehruvian and the hyperrealist-cultural nationalism discourse share scepticism about Beijing's willingness to accept India as an equal player in Asia.<sup>33</sup> It is argued that China does not see India as an equal partner or a peer in Asia as for China India should restrict itself to South Asia<sup>34</sup> and 'should not aspire to be an influential Asian, much less a global player.'<sup>35</sup> Bharat Verma writes that, 'India views China as a long-term security challenge. The Chinese reference point is targeted to achieve the status of a super power...To China any equation with India appears derogatory as an emerging world power. Beijing therefore devised methods to tie down New Delhi in strategic knots south of the Himalayas. New Delhi unwittingly walked into this trap.'<sup>36</sup> For keeping India invested in regional conflicts, China has been aiding Pakistan with military technology, developing physical infrastructure and connectivity projects such as the Gwadar port and the CPEC in the BRI initiative in PoK.<sup>37</sup> The Chinese economy has grown at an average of 10% per year, raising per capita GDP

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<sup>31</sup> K. Bajpai, 'Narendra Modi's Pakistan and China Policy: Assertive bilateral diplomacy, active coalition diplomacy', *International Affairs*, 2017, vol.93, no.1, p.81; A. Small, 'First Movement: Pakistan and the Belt and Road Initiative', *Asia Policy*, vol.24, 2017, pp.80-87; Gokhale, *Securing India the Modi Way*, pp.111-140.

<sup>32</sup> M. Bhagwat, 'Summary of the Vijayadashami 2017 address of Sarsanghchalak Dr. Mohan ji Bhagwat', *Rashtriya Swamsevak Sangh*, 30 September 2017, <http://rss.org/Encyc/2017/9/30/mohan-bhagwat-vijayadashami-speech-2017.html>, (accessed 21 February 2020).

<sup>33</sup> Mohan, *Crossing the Rubicon*, p.155; Dixit, *Across Borders*, p.55, p.63; M. Madhup, 'An Inquiry into India's International Identity: The Next Great Power?' in A. Sinha and M. Mohta (eds.), *Indian Foreign Policy: Challenges and Opportunities*, New Delhi, Academic Foundation Motha, 2007, p.51.

<sup>34</sup> K. Bajpai, 'Engaging with the World', in A. Sinha and M. Mohta (eds.), *Indian Foreign Policy: Challenges and Opportunities*, New Delhi, Academic Foundation, 2007, p.87; Dubey, *India's Foreign Policy*, p.200.

<sup>35</sup> Sikri, *Challenge and Strategy*, pp.103-104.

<sup>36</sup> Verma, 'China will fight India to the last Pakistani.'

<sup>37</sup> Also see Chapter 6 on India-Pakistan relations for a discussion on China-Pakistan friendship and cooperation in the South Asian region.

almost 50-fold, from \$155 to nearly \$8,000 since 1978 and has become the biggest trading partner of the world's major economies, including the U.S.A, Germany, Japan, South Korea and the largest investor in most Asian, Arab, African and Latin American countries. Former Ambassador Deo reaffirming Chinese ambitions said:

Clearly, the Chinese have judged that their moment has arrived. President Xi Jinping said at the 19th Communist Party Congress in October 2017, 'The Chinese nation, with an entirely new posture, now stands tall and firm in the East.' ...China's Belt and Road Initiative is the most ambitious, but also probably the most rapacious, connectivity project in history. And it surrounds India through the China Pakistan Economic Corridor in Pakistan; the indebtedness of Sri Lanka, symbolised by the handover of the Hambantota port to China for 99 years; the defiance shown by the Maldives in making whole islands available to China; and Nepal talking about 'balancing' relations with India and China. Already dominant in Asia, China now seeks parity with the U.S.A., calling it 'a new type of Great Power Relations.'<sup>38</sup>

New Delhi clearly recognises that China's OBOR, later rebranded as BRI initiative poses a major challenge to India in the region as it seeks to bind much of the South Asian and Indian Ocean states as well as West, Central and South-east Asia into a China-centric economic system that 'rested on Chinese capital, access to China's market, and Chinese-set standards and regulations'.<sup>39</sup> New Delhi is worried that it would draw these states into a debt trap, make them economically dependant on China which would enable China to exercise diplomatic influence over them to be used against Indian interests. Tharoor describes this as, 'Through debt, coercion, force and bondage, Pax Sinica will be defined by the submissiveness of its beneficiaries and subjects to Middle Kingdom.'<sup>40</sup> Even the UN has recorded hesitations over BRI due to limited environment and labour protection standards in the project. Additionally, unlike the AIIB and ADB that have been created through multilateral consultations and are governed multilaterally, BRI is seen by New Delhi as a unilateral 'national Chinese initiative' aimed towards advancing its own national interest with an integrated 'soft and hard power approach'.<sup>41</sup> Rejecting such initiatives that are seen to limit the

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<sup>38</sup> Deo, 'India in a changing global order.'

<sup>39</sup> Hall, *Modi and Re-invention of Indian Foreign Policy*, p.118.

<sup>40</sup> Tharoor and Saran, *The New World Disorder and Indian Imperative*, p.229.

<sup>41</sup> Pant and Das, 'China's Military rise and the indian Challenge', p.4.

autonomy of these states, India chose to remain absent at the Belt and Road Forum as it would also undermine India's position on the Kashmir issue. Responding to media queries on whether India was invited to attend the forum, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) noted that:

we are of firm belief that connectivity initiatives must be based on universally recognized international norms, good governance, rule of law, openness, transparency and equality. Connectivity initiatives must follow principles of financial responsibility to avoid projects that would create unsustainable debt burden for communities; balanced ecological and environmental protection and preservation standards; transparent assessment of project costs; and skill and technology transfer to help long term running and maintenance of the assets created by local communities. Connectivity projects must be pursued in a manner that respects sovereignty and territorial integrity.<sup>42</sup>

India is increasingly concerned about China's use of regional connectivity projects to alter the narratives surrounding disputed territories in its favour, for instance the CPEC which runs through the disputed territory of Kashmir is seen as a violation of India's sovereignty and Chinese disregard for India's concerns in the region as Beijing supports Islamabad's view of the dispute. India continues to remain sceptical of Chinese investments for building infrastructure projects in the neighbouring border regions.<sup>43</sup> The opaque, tightly run communist one-party system that remains a 'ruthless practitioner of classical balance of power politics' is seen as prone to using of force and deceit as evident in its border activities across the LAC since 2009 onwards. Apart from Pakistan, China had also entrenched its presence in Bangladesh, Srilanka, Nepal, Maldives and Myanmar to undermine India's regional pre-eminence in South Asia by providing military assistance, development aid and infrastructure development. China has developed strategic ports in India's periphery that could be converted into potential

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<sup>42</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, 'Official Spokesperson's Response to a Query on Participation of India in OBOR/BRI Forum', Indian Ministry of External Affairs, 13 May 2017, Government of India, <https://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/28463/official+spokespersons+response+to+a+query+on+participation+of+india+in+oborbri+forum>, (accessed 25 February 2018).

<sup>43</sup> D.M. Baruah, 'India's Answer to the Belt and Road: A Road Map for South Asia', Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, Washinton, D.C., August 2018, pp.14-15, [https://carnegieendowment.org/files/WP\\_Darshana\\_Baruah\\_Belt\\_Road\\_FINAL.pdf](https://carnegieendowment.org/files/WP_Darshana_Baruah_Belt_Road_FINAL.pdf), (accessed 10 February 2020); S. Kondapalli, 'Why India Is Not Part of the Belt and Road Initiative Summit', *Indian Express*, 15 May 2017, <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/why-india-is-not-part-of-the-belt-and-road-initiative-summit-4656150/>, (accessed 17 July 2018).

military bases if desired and needed. China has developed strategic ports such as the Gwadar in Pakistan, Cox Bazaar in Bangladesh and Hambantota in Srilanka with Chinese submarines being docked in the Colombo harbour and deepening Chinese economic investments in these countries. This has been referred to by certain Indian scholars and political leadership as China's 'String of pearls' encirclement strategy. Sibal has noted that, 'these countries play the Chinese card against us in varying degrees. They continue to be wooed by the Chinese politically, economically and even militarily at the cost of our interest.'<sup>44</sup> China has provided the Srilankan government with arms to defeat the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) and has also made inroads into Nepal and Maldives, both of which have endorsed the BRI. Though the Maldives government has assured that it would not allow the island state to be militarised, Chinese Air force and Navy vessels have been invited to deliver humanitarian assistance.

Modi has been cautious of the growing Chinese presence in India's 'backyard' and therefore has focussed on building friendly relations through increasing-commerce, connectivity and cultural ties with the states to regain its leverage in the South Asian and IOR with a special attention on strengthening its relations with the island states in the IOR with Modi emphasizing democratic and civilizational ties with Srilanka while referring to Maritius as 'Chota Bharat' (Smaller India').<sup>45</sup> Former foreign secretary under BJP led NDA, Kanwal Sibal and member of National Security Advisory Board (2008-2010) writes that, 'It is the only other large country in Asia that can genuinely balance China in the Asian political and security structures. Emperically India's rise, even if delayed will counter Chinese hegemony in Asia.'<sup>46</sup> In a personal interview, former BJP parliamentarian Dr.Chandan Mitra (2010-2016) convinced on the need for India to act urgently said:

China is determined to prevent India from taking a larger role in Asia, Indian Ocean region and Horn of Africa, where China had made much investments in these regions and India has not been able to do so. PM Modi's priority would be to increase more investments in IOR, south East Asia and Central Asia to combat China in these regions where China had already moved in and enjoys

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<sup>44</sup> K. Sibal, 'Managing External Threats' in G.Kanwal (ed.), *The New Arthashastra: A Security Strategy for India*, New Delhi, Harper Collins Publishers, 2016, pp.154-155.

<sup>45</sup> Government of India, *Sagar Yatra: The Ocean Voyage*, New Delhi, Government of India, 12 August 2015, <https://www.narendramodi.in/ebooks/sagar-yatra-the-ocean-voyage>, (accessed 10 February 2018).

<sup>46</sup> Sibal, 'Managing External Threats', p.150.

the 'first mover advantage'. India has to catch up and it is expected that Modi would be more proactive and aggressive in strengthening cooperative relations and engagement in these regions.<sup>47</sup>

New Delhi's approach has often been reactionary in nature to the latest development of Beijing's connectivity projects in the region and has lacked coherence at times while China is moving steadfastly in a planned way toward establishing itself as a pre-eminent player in the IOR. At the same time New Delhi also remains cautious that a more muscular approach by India might be counterproductive and raise scepticism amongst these neighbouring countries of 'hegemonic behaviour' on the part of India and could possibly push them further in the Chinese arms. China's proposal like the BCIM corridor has also raised growing concerns within the elites' regarding Chinese intentions to bring the areas bordering Yunnan into China's economic orbit and thereby increase its political influence in the region. The risk of flow of arms from China to the insurgents in the north-east of India and the revival of violence by the Naga groups have further raised eyebrows about China's malpractices to disrupt India's internal security and integrity as the north-east remains underdeveloped and inadequately integrated to the rest of India and thereby exploit India's fault lines and weaknesses.<sup>48</sup> China's recent attempt to build roads and infrastructure development in Bhutan, the only neighbourhood country that harbours friendly attitude towards India resulted in the India-China Doklam stand-off.

One of the key South Asian Sub-regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) initiatives important for India is the 1360km India –Myanmar-Thailand trilateral Highway to create new opportunities for more overland trade with South East Asia, which is also expected to boost business and infrastructure development in the lesser developed North-Eastern part (from Moreh in Manipur to Mae Sot in Thailand) of India

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<sup>47</sup> Personal interview with Dr. Chandan Mitra, former BJP Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha, 2010-2016) and Chief Editor and director of *Pioneer*, an English national newspaper daily in India based in New Delhi, 22 August 2017.

<sup>48</sup> R.S. Prasad, 'Statement of Ravi Shankar Prasad: "BJP Demands White Paper On The Entire Ramifications of India China Relationship"', Bharatiya Janata Party, 2009, <http://www.bjp.org/en/media-resources/press-releases/statement-of-ravi-shankar-prasadmp-national-spokesperson>, (accessed 20 February 2016); P.C. Katoch, 'China: A Threat or Challenge?', *Claws Journal*, summer 2010, pp.84-85; A. Doval, 'China Factor in North East Insurgency – Alarming Signals', Vivekananda International Foundations, New Delhi, 2011, <http://www.vifindia.org/article/2011/january/31/China-Factor-in-North-East-Insurgency-Alarming-Signals>, (accessed 9 September 2017); D. Kapoor. India's China Concern, *Strategic Analysis*, vol.36, no.4, 2012, p.667; Sibal, 'Managing External Threats', p.155.



and would also reduce its dependence on shipping routes through the Straits of Malacca and South China Sea for moving goods into mainland Southeast Asia. This is being partly funded by ADB as part of the broader 'Asian Highway network' and in August 2017 Modi government approved 250 million US\$ in additional finance for the scheme in response to competing Chinese land connectivity projects and initiatives. Modi has stepped up building rail and road links to further widen this project by improving highway connections between the capital town of Manipur, Imphal and Moreh in collaboration with the ADB.<sup>49</sup> This shows that Modi is unlikely to take a timid approach towards dealing with China for gaining economic and strategic influence in the region. In context the growing nexus between China and Muslim majority countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh or Myanmar, Dr. Chandan Mitra, Member of Parliament from the BJP on whether China could be playing the 'Islamic card' by strengthening its bilateral ties with Islamic countries neighbouring India either through financial assistance, or investing in physical infrastructure facilities or transfer of arms replied in a personal interview that:

China could be using the pro-Islamic card. However China is itself troubled by Islamic extremism in Xinjiang and has taken a high handed approach against Xinjiang rebels and would not blindly follow a pro-Islamic card just for the disadvantage of India. But disadvantaging India is also one of the cornerstones of China's policy anyway and whatever instruments China can use, it will use to its benefit even if it means temporarily using the pro-Islam card. China attempts to isolate India. Pakistan is not only a failed state but potentially rogue state. Yet China is also preventing from certain terrorists being declared as international terrorists. It is surprising and shocking given that China is not outside the ambit of Islamic terrorism.<sup>50</sup>

The hyperrealist- cultural nationalism discourse however appreciates China's proclivity towards strategic planning that has resulted in China's rising stature and influence whereas India has not formulated 'long-term military and strategic planning' to deal

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<sup>49</sup> A. Chaudhury and D. Pandya, 'India builds highway to Thailand to counter China's Silk Road', *Bloomberg*, 9 August 2017, [www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-08/china-s-silk-road-lends-urgency-to-india-s-regional-ambitions](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-08/china-s-silk-road-lends-urgency-to-india-s-regional-ambitions), (accessed 25 February 2018); D.K. Dashi, 'Imphal-Moreh Highway expansion likely to get cabinet nod', *Times of India*, 11 July 2017; Hall, *Modi and Re-Invention of Indian Foreign Policy*, p.118.

<sup>50</sup> Personal interview with Dr. Chandan Mitra, former BJP Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha, 2010-2016) and Chief Editor and director of *Pioneer*, an English national newspaper daily in India based in New Delhi, 22 August 2017.

with the main security challenge on the northern border.<sup>51</sup> Security expert S.Kalyanaraman, IDSA under MoD re-affirming the same said in a personal interview:

China has a forex reserve of almost 3.5 trillion US\$ [in 2015] and is a 14 trillion US\$ dollar economy whereas India is a 3 trillion US\$ economy. We do not have militarily whewithal and economic resources as China. This is because we have not been able to deal with Pakistan which is the imminent threat on an everyday basis and consequently all our energies have been focused on the Pakistan challenge. The importance of the conomic developmental partnership and investment in different sectors cannot be undermined and under Modi India-China relationship is likely to be stable. Our doctrines towards China are non-provocative, more defensive and we are developing defensive capabilities.<sup>52</sup>

India had suffered from the absence of a foreign policy doctrine, whereas China had adopted a concerted grand strategy since the 1990s to increase its 'international clout without triggering a counterbalancing reaction'<sup>53</sup> to create a Sino-centric world order and counter American hegemony by accumulating economic and military power. Dr.Mitra, Member of the Parliament (BJP) in this regard further added:

India-China relations under Vajpayee were improving. India so far had not worked out a proper China strategy till date which I believe Modi is trying to do now. In the long run China wants to replace the US as the sole superpower. That is their ambition and it is trying to achieve this objective. China wants to become the world's largest economy but it cannot undermine India's potential and is aware that we [India] are growing fast. Under Modi India is moving

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<sup>51</sup> B. Karnad, 'An Elephant with a Small Footprint: The Realist Roots of India's Strategic Thought and Policies', in K. Bajpai et al (eds.), *India's Grand Strategy: History, Theory, Cases*, New Delhi, Routledge, 2014,

[https://books.google.co.in/books?id=R3k9BAAQBAJ&pg=PT8&lpg=PT8&dq=india%27s+grand+strategy+an+elephant+with+a+small+footprint&source=bl&ots=h9LBWONTxF&sig=ACfU3U3X\\_Aa8zLBvOecjQPajZ5VPKkEzOQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewiLzbPI9e\\_iAhVGN48KHb7-AtgQ6AEwBHoECAkQAQ#v=onepage&q=india's%20grand%20strategy%20an%20elephant%20with%20a%20small%20footprint&f=false](https://books.google.co.in/books?id=R3k9BAAQBAJ&pg=PT8&lpg=PT8&dq=india%27s+grand+strategy+an+elephant+with+a+small+footprint&source=bl&ots=h9LBWONTxF&sig=ACfU3U3X_Aa8zLBvOecjQPajZ5VPKkEzOQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewiLzbPI9e_iAhVGN48KHb7-AtgQ6AEwBHoECAkQAQ#v=onepage&q=india's%20grand%20strategy%20an%20elephant%20with%20a%20small%20footprint&f=false), (accessed 5 April 2019).

<sup>52</sup> Personal interview with Dr. S. Kalyanaraman, Security Expert, IDSA, Ministry of Defence, New Delhi, 17 December 2015.

<sup>53</sup> A. Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge: China's Grand Strategy and International Security*, Palo Alto, Stanford University Press, 2005 p.12; M. Pillsbury, *The Hundred-Year Marathon: China's Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower*, New York, Henry Holt and Co., 2015.

ahead economically, militarily and politically. It might not catch up but it will reduce the gap with China in terms of material capabilities.<sup>54</sup>

China has disapproved and often challenged the 'western models of liberal democracy' but it was now intending to provide an alternative of 'Chinese model of governance' and importing it to other developing countries.<sup>55</sup> It is felt that India needs to learn from China's tendency to think ahead and articulate a clear and coherent world view, correct the aimlessness in its foreign policy framework, emphasize key guiding principles and beliefs in its interaction with the world and enunciate a set of defined methods and means to achieve the long term objectives as reflected in Modi's initiatives.<sup>56</sup> Chaulia argues that under Modi 'circumspect and reactive thinking, which were the hallmarks of India's foreign policy in recent decades, are being replaced with a more proactive and engaged 'big picture' diplomacy that aims to situate India as a power centre or pole in the international system which is actively involved in reordering global institutions and solving global problems.'<sup>57</sup>

**Third**, both China and India have started competing for influence in South Asia, in the Indian Ocean region and East and South East Asia. China's growing foothold is seen as posing a huge challenge to India's geo-strategic advantage in South Asia and IOR. As a result of its dramatic rise, an 'assertive' China with its aggressive, expansionist tendencies and ambitions backed by its all-round development in military and economic strength, it is seen as strategically engaged in concerted efforts to undermine India's regional influence in the region and to prevent her to expand its presence in the Indo-Pacific region. The hyperrealist-cultural nationalist discourse promotes the narrative of 'strategic encirclement' by China. A senior BJP leader and Union Minister Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi criticised the UPA government for its inability to provide strong logistics for securing the frontiers by further improving defence programmes and infrastructures especially in the north-east. He said:

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<sup>54</sup> Personal interview with Dr. Chandan Mitra, former BJP Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha, 2010-2016) and Chief Editor and Director of *Pioneer*, an English national newspaper daily in India based in New Delhi, 22 August 2017.

<sup>55</sup> Pant and Das, 'China's Military rise and the Indian Challenge', p.5; Tharoor and Saran, *The New World Disorder and Indian Imperative*.

<sup>56</sup> H.V. Pant, 'India's Search for A Foreign Policy', *Yaleglobal*, 26 June 2008, <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/india%E2%80%99s-search-foreign-policy>, (accessed 17 January 2016).

<sup>57</sup> S. Chaulia, *Modi Doctrine: The Foreign Policy of India's Prime Minister*, New Delhi, Bloomsbury, 2016, p.13.

The Chinese preparation in other side of the border throw a challenge to Indian development efforts in these areas. China has surrounded India from all three sides. All along the northern border, the Chinese forces; both army and air force, are well-equipped with modern hardware and are capable of even launching nuclear missiles. China has already occupied large parts in Siachen. The Chinese forces make their presence felt in Ladakh and Pakistan occupied Kashmir. This is a serious threat on our northern border. China has been able to obtain right to use Gwadar sea-port in Pakistan and thereby access through Pakistan to the Arabina sea. China has invested a lot to make a sea port in South Sri Lanka, and so wants to make its presence felt in Indian Ocean.<sup>58</sup>

China's closer military relations and economic engagement with the Indian Ocean rim countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Srilanka further adds to India's concerns of being strategically and militarily 'encircled, contained and eventually weakened' though many within and outside India had shared their misgivings as the concerns being overhyped. China had also officially stated that it did not want to upgrade the strategic port of Gwadar as a naval base but to use it as a facility for access of Chinese ships when needed and the purpose is purely economic. But the lines are blurred as the potential to transform it to a naval base is always there. Small noted, that a Chinese official had confirmed that, 'They [Pakistan] want us to upgrade it to a naval basethat can be used by both Pakistan and Chinese ships.The main reason? India.'<sup>59</sup> New Delhi believes BRI to be a part of the same strategic encirclement as in Pakistan alone, China plans to invest over US\$ 46 billion in development projects.<sup>60</sup> In Srilanka China had usurped India and Srilanka's domestic politics in its own advantage to gain an upper hand. Further Bangladesh and Myanmar have become the second and third largest export destinations for military hardware after Pakistan that fuels additional fears. India therefore attaches the highest importance to develop closer political, economic and diplomatic relations with all its neighbours and building strong and enduring partnerships and cooperation on the basis of sovereign equality and mutual

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<sup>58</sup> 'China has surrounded India from all three sides: M.M. Joshi', *Rediff*, 10 November 2011, <https://www.rediff.com/news/report/china-has-surrounded-india-from-all-three-sides-m-m-joshi/20111110.htm>, (accessed 12 November 2017).

<sup>59</sup> Small, *The China-Pakistan Axis*, p.105.

<sup>60</sup> J. Page, 'China Readies \$46 Billion for Pakistan Trade Route', *The Wall Street Journal*, 16 April 2015, [www.wsj.com/articles/china-to-unveil-billions-of-dollars-in-pakistan-investment-1429214705](http://www.wsj.com/articles/china-to-unveil-billions-of-dollars-in-pakistan-investment-1429214705), (accessed 17 April 2019).

respect.<sup>61</sup> Chief Editor, *The Statesman*, Kolkata and a commentator on strategic policies in India, Manash Ghosh also reaffirmed this in a personal interview as he noted:

China is trying to encircle India with a string of pearls. It has got arrangement with Gwadar port in agreement with Srilanka where its navy vessels will call and replenish its stocks at Colombo fuel, Chinese naval vessels are already calling at Burmese ports and they are also trying to cajole Bangladesh to provide similar facilities in Chittagong, They have plans to develop big sea port in Myanmar Sittwe port.<sup>62</sup>

Emphasizing on the Chinese trait of duplicity and deception that has created a mistrust on China, Dr Mitra said that Chinese bases around the neighbouring countries do have the potential to be converted into military assets and reaffirms the Chinese 'containment' narrative towards India. In order to counter Chinese efforts to seek hegemony in South Asia, IOR and Central Asia, there is more emphasis on development of infrastructure capabilities which are both defence related and physical infrastructure projects to enhance connectivity with various regions to limit the Chinese pressures. Remarking on the Chinese bases in IOR Dr. Mitra said:

It is perceived as a military threat. It is very difficult for India to believe a country like China and nor any other country does. Recently we saw two Chinese warships visiting Gwadar. India is also building the Chabahar port close to Gwadar port but in the Iranian territory with whom India has good relations. India will take steps to counter china's presence in the region as this is crucial to India. India wants to do things quickly in this area because India wants to combat Chinese aggressive pursuit of OBOR in which India is not going to participate. China is using this OBOR to subjugate the entire region right upto east African coast. If India has to be a player India needs to have the necessary infrastructural backing which India is on the way of building.<sup>63</sup>

India owing to its size, resources, demography and other capabilities is the only Asian country that can pose a challenge to China's growing presence and dominance in Asia

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<sup>61</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report, 2007-08*, p.i; Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2008-2009*, p.i.

<sup>62</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Manas Ghosh, the Chief Editor, *The Statesman*, English daily newspaper Kolkata in Kolkata, 26 July 2015.

<sup>63</sup> Personal interview with Dr. Chandan Mitra, former BJP Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha, 2010-2016) and Chief Editor and director of *Pioneer*, an English national newspaper daily in India based in New Delhi, 22 August 2017.

in the long term. Although the Post-Nehruvian discourse does not accept the strategic encirclement theory as emphasized by the hyperrealists- cultural nationalists but do acknowledges the strategic implications arising out of the competition between India and China to seek regional influence while insisting on an accommodative and a non-provocative approach.<sup>64</sup> Former EAM Salman Khurshid in the UPA-II government noted that:

China is aggressive. China is a partner for us, China is a neighbour for us, China is a dialogue partner... we will have to accept the new reality of China's presence in many areas that we consider an exclusive playground for India [...]. The rules of the game will change. China will come in and add to the richness of the participation, but will also then provide greater competition. There are strengths as far as economic and political issues are concerned. There are strengths that China has vis-a-vis India, and there are strengths that India has vis-a-vis China. A combination of these strengths is what is called for.<sup>65</sup>

S.Jaishankar, India's foreign secretary (2015-2018) and former ambassador to China (2009-2013) also raised concerns over the inevitable overlapping areas of operation. He said:

Till recently, our interests and influence were largely confined to our own immediate region. As our capacities grow, they have started to intersect more, including in comparatively distant areas. We encounter each other more often and in different ways in other places. At the very least, it is important that we develop an understanding of each other's presence and activities.<sup>66</sup>

The 'strategic communication' between the two neighbours remains vital to avoid misunderstanding and promote trust and cooperation.<sup>67</sup> However there were major

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<sup>64</sup> S. Saran, 'Present Dimensions of the Indian Foreign Policy, Shanghai', Indian Embassy, 11 January, 2006, [http://www.indianembassy.org/newsite/press\\_release/2006/Jan/2.asp](http://www.indianembassy.org/newsite/press_release/2006/Jan/2.asp), (accessed 4 February 2017); M. Gurumswamy and Z.D. Singh, *India-China Relations: The Border Issue and beyond*, New Delhi, Viva Books. 2009, pp.128-130; M. Singh, 'PM's Speech at the Central Party School in Beijing – 'India and China in the New Era'', <http://pmindia.nic.in/speech-details.php?nodeid=1381>, (accessed 4 February 2017).

<sup>65</sup> S. Khurshid, 'Inaugural Address by External Affairs Minister at Annual Convention of Indian Association of International Studies', 10 December 2012, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, <http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/21433/Inaugural+Address+by+External+Affairs+Minister+at+Annual+Convention+of+Indian+Association+of+International+Studies>, (accessed 10 May 2019).

<sup>66</sup> Jaishankar, 'Address by Foreign Secretary at India China Think-Tanks Forum.'

<sup>67</sup> A.K. Antony, 'Press Release issued by the Ministry of Defence on the talks between Defence Minister A. K. Antony and the Chinese leaders in Beijing', Beijing, 5 July 2013, in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations-2013 Documents*, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2014, p.1033.

strides made in India-China relations to maintain peace, tranquility and stability on the LAC, enhancing air force capabilities, taking part in rescue and counter piracy operations, counter-terrorist operations which were held in 2013. Former Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao in the UPA-II emphasized:

Peace and tranquility have prevailed in the India-China border areas, despite the unsettled boundary question. Our trade with China is growing faster than that with any other country. Therefore, we need not see our relations with China as being only competitive...As our Prime Minister has said, India and China will continue to grow, simultaneously, and our policies will have to cater to this emerging reality.<sup>68</sup>

New Delhi realises that India cannot match the 'fat checkbook diplomacy'<sup>69</sup> of China around the word but it is also argued that China owing to its pragmatic approach, is also not in 'the business of handouts' and therefore the loans that it gives come with stringent terms.

In response to China's assertiveness in South Asia, New Delhi recognises the urgency to improve India's readability and defence preparedness along the LAC through infrastructure development such as rails, roads, air strips or opening of air base in Ladakh, deployment of additional troops, and acquiring modern equipment for continued patrolling. India has recently deployed 120 tanks in Ladakh, cleared deployment of around 100 supersonic BrahMos Missiles in Arunachal Pradesh and five mobile autonomous launchers on 12x12 heavy-duty trucks and a mobile command post, among other hardware and software and advanced landing grounds<sup>70</sup> in response to what has been referred in Chinese media as China's engagement 'in upgrading non-military transportation infrastructure in border provinces'.<sup>71</sup> This is not believed in New Delhi as the future possibilities to convert these into military facilities or use them for

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<sup>68</sup> Rao, 'Address by Foreign Secretary Smt. Nirupama Rao at Harvard University on "India's Global Role."'

<sup>69</sup> Chaulia, *Modi Doctrine*.

<sup>70</sup> 'How India is getting into high gears to deter China', *The Economic Times*, 17 August 2016, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/infrastructure/how-india-is-getting-into-high-gears-to-deter-china/brahmos/slideshow/53740009.cms>, (accessed 14 March 2020).

<sup>71</sup> K. Xue, 'Can Modinomics help India pip China? Probably not, according to this theory', *The Economic Times*, 18 October 2016, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/can-modinomics-help-india-pip-china-probably-not-according-to-this-theory/articleshow/54911250.cms?from=mdr>, (accessed 10 February 2019); See T. Wojczewski, 'China's rise as a strategic challenge and opportunity: India's China discourse and strategy', *India Review*, vol.15, no.1, 2016, pp.22-60 for a detailed discussion during the UPA administrations.

naval and military operations cannot be ruled out. India is also developing its ICBM missile programme including the Agni V. The Indian Army is in the process of deployment of six Akash surface-to-air missile squadrons in northeast to deter Chinese jets and thereby pushing India's defence modernisation.

Additionally, New Delhi believes that there are more creative ways to increase its presence regionally and globally. India is a young country whereas other major powers like China are ageing. NSA, Ajit Doval said that India can convert the demographic dividend (with 1.3 billion population with 50% population below 25 years of age) into an asset and India's human capital can counter China's 'rare mineral wealth'<sup>72</sup> as envisioned under Modi's 'Skill India' programme. The NDA-II government has not shied away from promoting and projecting India's democratic credentials and cultural-religious diplomacy as to seek a renewed leadership responsibility for securing regional stability by projecting its difference from China's authoritarian communist government. While addressing Bhutan's parliament Modi applauded India's democracy as a blessing for SAARC countries and remarked that, 'a strong and stable India is needed to make sure that we can help our neighbours with their problems.'<sup>73</sup> Moreover the hyperrealist-cultural nationalist discourse referring to the spread of the Buddhism across Asian countries in China, Japan and Korea has emphasized that 'Buddhism will be a further unifying and catalysing force among the Asian countries.'<sup>74</sup>

**Fourth**, the post Nehruvian discourse asserts that China is far ahead of India economically because of the nature of political leadership under a communist government as former EAM Salman Khurshid said:

Of course in many ways China is far ahead of us because despite having a strong socialist system, China went into the economic reform at least a decade before us. We came a decade later. And China is on a faster track of reform than we are. Our reform requires consensus building all the time. In China, you

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<sup>72</sup> 'India's 'human capital' can counter China's 'rare mineral wealth': NSA Ajit Doval, *The New Indian Express*, 3 November 2018, <https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2018/nov/03/indias-human-capital-can-counter-chinas-rare-mineral-wealth-nsa-ajit-doval-1893875.html>, (accessed 12 May 2019).

<sup>73</sup> 'PM Modi Addresses Joint Session of Bhutanese Parliament, says a Stronger India better for Bhutan Too', *India Today*, 16 June 2014.

<sup>74</sup> N. Modi, 'Keynote Address by Prime Minister at India-China Business Forum in Shanghai', 16 May 2015, [https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/25247/Keynote\\_Address\\_by\\_Prime\\_Minister\\_at\\_IndiaChina\\_Business\\_Forum\\_in\\_Shanghai\\_May\\_16\\_2015](https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/25247/Keynote_Address_by_Prime_Minister_at_IndiaChina_Business_Forum_in_Shanghai_May_16_2015), (accessed 20 March 2017).



are led from the front, you are led from the top and you are able to show the advantage of reform very quickly to the people, so get an endorsement from the people for reform. Because our reform goes slow, it takes much longer to show the advantage to the people.<sup>75</sup>

Indian leadership acknowledges that there are many things to learn from China and therefore China is looked upon as a source of admiration particularly for its economic success in the manufacturing sector (in which China has been ahead of India) that India wishes to replicate for itself. But, Indian elites take pride that India's economic pursuit has always happened within the framework of a pluralist liberal democracy and in this area India feels she has a leverage and China has to learn from India and therefore it's a two way process.<sup>76</sup> India's experience of pursuing economic growth within a democratic pluralist framework and an open society makes it superior in relation to China. Former PM Singh said:

The whole world has come to value the principles of a liberal, plural and secular democracy. This is the vision of India and our vision of the world that defines our place in the world today... we have despite all our trials and tribulations of managing a complex economy and a complex polity have stayed faithful to the idea of plural democracy.<sup>77</sup>

This model gives and maintains 'respect for fundamental human rights, the respect for the rule of law, the respect for multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious rights'<sup>78</sup> and does not curb human freedom which is seen as a unique positive strength in contrast to China's economic rise under an authoritarian rule and the stronghold of CPC. Although that slows the process of decision making, it creates more space for debate, consensus building and would eventually lead to more durable results. Former PM Singh added:

I believe that our great strength as a plural and liberal democracy is that public policy is shaped by a broad consensus, based on a rich and healthy tradition of

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<sup>75</sup> S. Khurshid, 'External Affairs Minister's interview to Chinese Media in India ahead of his visit to China from May 9-10, 2013', Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, <https://mea.gov.in/pressreleases.htm?dtl/21687/External+Affairs+Ministers+interview+to+Chinese+Media+in+India+ahead+of+his+visit+to+China+from+May+9+10+2013>, (accessed 23 September 2017).

<sup>76</sup> Singh, 'Speech by Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.'

<sup>77</sup> M. Singh, 'PM releases "India to be a Global Power", a book by Vasant Sathe, New Delhi, 15 February 2008, <https://archivepmo.nic.in/drmanmohansingh/speech-details.php?nodeid=636>, (accessed 18 February 2016).

<sup>78</sup> Singh, 'PM's IDSA Anniversary Speech'; M. Singh, 'PM's vision of how the World is Governed in the 21st Century', 2009, <http://www.pmindia.nic.in/press-details.php?nodeid=962>, (accessed 3 February 2018).

open debate and public discussion. This has lent a measure of predictability and resilience to our policies, both domestic and external.<sup>79</sup>

According to Singh India's democratic process is more stable while China's rush to get things done has temporarily paved over societal contradictions and that will eventually lead to instability and hinder growth, if not lead to collapse, allowing the 'steady tortoise' [India] to bypass the 'exhausted hare' [China]. Although not 'pro-American' Singh drew closer to US as he accepts in this century, 'India and the US are inseparables' –the main convergences being the economy and belief in democracy.<sup>80</sup> India economic growth is fuelled by high-tech services and thus USA as a partner remains critical to propel that further, whereas, 'the Chinese model, including its treatment of labour, is incompatible with democracy'.<sup>81</sup> While comparing India's economic growth story to China's economic success, the Post-Nehruvian discourse posits that the stability of India's political process and democracy despite diversity and internal differences place India in a unique place in the comity of nations.

The hyperrealist- cultural nationalism discourse also seeks to engage with China economically as Modi said, 'As we helped each other growing spiritually, we have to help each other growing economically.'<sup>82</sup> In 2014 China committed to make investments worth US\$ 20 billion and signed 12 agreements covering industrial parks, railways, credit and leasing, with cumulative amount of investment of US\$ 13 billion. The BRICS business Council also focusses on trade & investment facilitation, promoting skills development, infrastructure development, Small-Medium Enterprises Development, e-commerce, to work towards establishment of a BRICS Rating Agency, energy cooperation, green finance and digital economy.<sup>83</sup> There remains concern on the issue of increasing trade deficit with China (US\$ 54 billion).<sup>84</sup> India's participation in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) further accentuates such

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<sup>79</sup> Singh, 'PM releases the Journal – "India & Global Affairs."'

<sup>80</sup> N.D. Batra, Partnership for Prosperity: cyber age, *The Statesman*, 27 July 2005.

<sup>81</sup> P.P. Chaudhuri, Manmohan Doctrine, *Hindusthan Times*, 5 March 2006, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india/manmohan-doctrine/story-cX0BbtaGuztZ0paALHkkqI.html>, (accessed 23 February 2019).

<sup>82</sup> Modi, 'Keynote Address by Prime Minister at India-China Business Forum in Shanghai.'

<sup>83</sup> Modi, 'Intervention by Prime Minister at the Dialogue with BRICS Business Council in Xiamen, China.'

<sup>84</sup> ET Bureau, 'India decides to opt out of RCEP, says key concerns not addressed', *Economic Times*, 5 November 2019, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-decides-to-opt-out-of-rcep-says-key-concerns-not-addressed/articleshow/71896848.cms?from=mdr>, (accessed 23 November 2019).

concerns on greater Chinese access to Indian market (65% of India's goods trade deficit in 2017 -2018 was with RCEP nations) and getting swamped by imports that can put domestic industry and agriculture at risk. As noted, '...economic differentials and systemic characteristics created over time some significant trade challenges. The growing deficit legitimately raised questions about the sustainability of the current way of commerce.'<sup>85</sup> India has decided to opt out from joining the RCEP, which is expected to boost 'Make in India', though there remains scope for further negotiations. Modi said, 'The present form of the RCEP Agreement does not fully reflect the basic spirit and the agreed guiding principles of RCEP. It also does not address satisfactorily India's outstanding issues and concerns.'<sup>86</sup>

Although India wants to pursue a different model of economic growth within the democratic framework, it wants to learn from the China model to develop those particular sectors in which China is stronger such as the development of labour-intensive industries, creating conditions for sustainable FDI, skill development, infrastructure creation and export-led development model.<sup>87</sup> In order to improve the 'Ease of doing Business' and to create a globally competitive business environment to attract further FDI capital flows, India has given priority to infrastructure related developments such as; developing smart cities and 'mega industrial' corridors, increasing generation of renewable energy (175 GW within next few years), modernising railway systems (including railway stations, planning metro rail in fifty cities and high speed trains in various corridors), building highways, developing new ports and modernizing existing ones through an ambitious plan called 'Sagarmala', upgrading existing airports and establishing regional airports to enhance connectivity. It also focusses on improving financial services, FDI in insurance sector and strengthening micro-credit sector by setting up MUDRA bank to fund micro business, improving social security schemes and by making the regulatory regime more transparent, responsive and stable. Finally, there is enhanced focus on innovation, R&D and entrepreneurship in the country by promoting manufacturing for generating

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<sup>85</sup> Jaishankar, 'Address by Foreign Secretary at India China Think-Tanks Forum.'

<sup>86</sup> ET Bureau, 'India decides to opt out of RCEP, says key concerns not addressed.'

<sup>87</sup> Modi, 'Keynote Address by Prime Minister at India-China Business Forum in Shanghai.'

employment for the youth (who form 65% of the population) through the 'Make in India' campaign and setting up some innovative institutional mechanisms.<sup>88</sup>

**Lastly**, one obstacle to developing greater common ground is 'an undue attachment to the concept of balance of power' despite similar challenges 'as diverse and pluralistic societies,' limits the possibility of an effective Indo-China cooperation in some critical international forums. For instance, on the issues of terrorism by blocking resolution to declare Masood Azhar as a terrorist, reforming the UN Security Council or supporting each other on implementation of Paris Agreement commitments. China had also not supported India's entry into the nuclear elite clubs. For India, access to civilian nuclear energy technology is key and India expects China's support to India's bid for NSG membership as, 'the broad basing of the nuclear technology control group is also helpful to a more representative international order.'<sup>89</sup> This also prevents India from realizing its full potential in the role it envisions for itself and hence India's identity as an Asian power and a great power.

India and China are among the societies and economies in the world that are transforming themselves most rapidly by building a strong domestic economic base and rapidly training scientific and technical manpower. They share 'a common geopolitical space' and have similar socio-economic aspirations for themselves. and alongside other big economies in Asia, have increased their ability to influence economic and political outcomes. They remain involved with each other in various multilateral forums like BRICS, the RIC (Russia, India and China) platform, BASIC to raise common concerns on issues like nuclear proliferation, economic order and climate change. Economic engagement remains strong but the factor of trade imbalance is a cause of concern. Nevertheless the two-way trade is targeted to touch '100 billion dollar mark', in the next few years which seems too ambitious. The people to people contacts are on the increase.

China will remain as both a partner and a competitor in the region and this compels India to stay cautious of China's assertiveness in South Asia and IOR. At the political level, boundary question defies easy solution, despite multiple rounds of talks between the designated Special Representatives besides various instruments in place to

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<sup>88</sup> Modi, 'Keynote Address by Prime Minister at India-China Business Forum in Shanghai.'

<sup>89</sup> Jaishankar, 'Address by Foreign Secretary at India China Think-Tanks Forum.'

resolve any misunderstanding that might arise from time to time on the boundary question, such as the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India – China Border in 2012. Additional agreements such as the Memorandum of Understanding in 2005 on provision of 'Hydrological Information on the Sutlej/LangqenZangbo River in Flood Season', by China to India to tackle floods and other natural disasters on the Indian side and the agreement on the Brahmaputra river water sharing dispute in 2013 are few hopeful developments.<sup>90</sup>

These are the major areas and themes that re-produces China as a spatial-political Other and a military threat to India and pushes India to pursue a larger role in the Indo-Pacific. As noted, this study does not negate the realist explanations of the China threat that drives India's naval expansion, but stand alone cannot explain the nature of role India seeks to play in the region. The following section looks at those discursive strategies that India employs to reproduce its centrality to the IOR and the wider 'Indo-Pacific' and reproduces itself as a 'normative actor' that upholds the 'international norms' and 'good governance' and is acting as a 'responsible power' in the region.

### **7.3. India's [Indian] Ocean and Maritime Thinking**

India has a vast coastline of nearly 4800 miles and a massive 2.54 million square miles Exclusive Economic Zone (equal to about 66% of landmass) that constitute nearly 10 percent of the Indian Ocean which has had a major influence on India's geo-strategic thinking to develop a larger maritime role in the IOR and beyond and the elites had realized its importance and sea control as directly related to maintaining India's sovereign status and key to emerge as a great power.<sup>91</sup> It is repeatedly noted by the

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<sup>90</sup> A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations-2012 documents*, New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, 2012, pp.xiv-xv, <https://www.mea.gov.in/Images/pdf/India-foreign-relation-2012.pdf>, (accessed 12 January 2016)

<sup>91</sup> K.M. Panikkar, *India and the Indian Ocean: An Essay on the Influence of Sea Power on Indian History*, London, UK, George Allen and Unwin, 1945, p.23; S.N. Kohli, *Sea Power and the Indian Ocean: With Special reference to India*, New Delhi, Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company Limited, 1978; L.N. Rangarajan, *Kautilya: The Arthashastra*, New Delhi, Penguin Books, 1992, pp. 343-346. See Chapter 3 for a discussion on Kautilya's Arthashastra; P.N. Kirpal, 'Speculation on the International Relations with Reference to the East and India', *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, vol.17, nos.1 and 2, July-December 1945, p.401; N.N. Vohra, 'Security in the Indian Ocean: An Overview', cited in Air Commodore J. Singh (ed.), *Bridges Across The Indian Ocean*, The Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, 1997.

political and military leadership that India is, and always has been a maritime nation<sup>92</sup> with a 'glorious maritime tradition' that can be dated back to the early beginnings of Indus Valley Civilization. Yet India since independence has predominantly been afflicted with 'seablindness' and the Indian Navy remained a 'Cinderella' service, surviving from one shoestring budget to the next, till the late 1960s when its fortunes, slowly began to change for the better.<sup>93</sup> As Minister of State (MoS) of External Affairs in the BJP government M.J. Akbar notes, 'Our land-centric approach also tends to blind us to the sea map. The sea map of India extends to the Malacca straits, and the Indo-Pacific waters are already one of the major arteries of world commerce.'<sup>94</sup>

In the pre-colonial times India exerted cultural influence both Buddhist and Brahmanical across the littoral states in the Indian Ocean region and there remains strong evidence that Hindu ruling kingdoms from Mauryan empire (321-185 BCE), Pandyas, Marathas<sup>95</sup> and Cholas in the peninsular south have all engaged in maritime trade with countries in distant lands, from Iran in the West to China, Japan and Malaya in the East<sup>96</sup> and consequently 'the resultant cultural and religious efflorescence gave a distinct Indian flavour to the region.'<sup>97</sup> Mrs. Swaraj, former EAM under Modi government said at the ninth edition of Delhi Dialogue, that India's age old ties with South-East Asia have been established through culture, trade and religion and not through 'conquest and colonization'.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> 'India will host first ever Global Maritime Summit in April: Modi', *Deccan Chronicle*, 7 February 2016, <https://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/current-affairs/070216/india-will-host-first-ever-global-maritime-summit-in-april-narendra-modi.html>, (accessed 4 April 2018).

<sup>93</sup> Prakash, *India's Maritime Growth*, p.3.

<sup>94</sup> M.J. Akbar, 'Address by M J Akbar, Minister of State for External Affairs at the INDIA-ASEAN Connectivity Summit in New Delhi', New Delhi, 11 December 2017, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, [https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/29169/Address\\_by\\_M\\_J\\_Akbar\\_Minister\\_of\\_State\\_for\\_External\\_Affairs\\_at\\_the\\_INDIAASEAN\\_Connectivity\\_Summit\\_in\\_New\\_Delhi\\_December](https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/29169/Address_by_M_J_Akbar_Minister_of_State_for_External_Affairs_at_the_INDIAASEAN_Connectivity_Summit_in_New_Delhi_December), (accessed 13 March 2020).

<sup>95</sup> Commander G.S. Khurana, *Maritime Forces in Pursuit of National Security: Policy Imperatives for India*, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, Shipra Publications, 2008, pp.1-2; Prakash, *India's Maritime Growth*, p.11, p.13; Admiral S.R. Singh., *Blueprint to Blue Water*, New Delhi, Lancer International, 1992, pp.343-346.

<sup>96</sup> Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p.85; R.K. Mookerji, *Indian Shipping- A History of the Sea-Borne Trade and Maritime Activity of the Indians from the Earliest Times*, Orient Longmans, Calcutta, 1957; H.J. Mackinder, *Democraic Ideals and Reality*, London, Constable Publishers, 1925 (republished by NDU Press, Washington, 1982), p.45.

<sup>97</sup> Integrated Headquarters, *Indian Maritime Doctrine 2009*, New Delhi, Indian Navy, Naval Strategic Publication 1.1, Ministry of Defence, 2009, p.1, <https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/sites/default/files/Indian-Maritime-Doctrine-2009-Updated-12Feb16.pdf>, (accessed 10 March 2020).

<sup>98</sup> Amb (Retd) A. Sajjanhar, 'From Look East to Act East: India's growing engagement with ASEAN and beyond', Tamil Nadu National Law School, Trichy, *MEA Distinguished Lectures*, Ministry of External

Curzon's 'Forward Policy' emphasized an active strategic role in the Indian Ocean, the need to control maritime routes and the use of buffer states that remained subordinated to British interests.<sup>99</sup> The security of the littoral was considered the 'white man's burden' and British imperial strategies had a strong influence on India's maritime thinking through the Indian Navy's cultural inheritance from the Royal Navy with priority being coastal defence.<sup>100</sup> K.M. Panikkar wrote that India had been the only power that had been able to control and exert influence in South-East Asia or what he referred to as 'Further India'.<sup>101</sup> According to Panikkar, 'The vital feature which differentiates the Indian Ocean from the Atlantic or the Pacific is the subcontinent of India...It is the geographical position of India that changes the character of Indian Ocean.'<sup>102</sup> He said that 'to India it is the vital sea...The Indian Ocean must therefore remain truly Indian....'<sup>103</sup> The Maritime doctrine, 2009 similarly noted that 'the lessons of ignoring the ability to control the seas around India are thus embedded in the colonisation of India and three centuries of European, mostly British rule'<sup>104</sup> as it is through control over maritime trade in the IOR, they subsequently came to dominate 'the sovereignty of India' by establishing a system of choke points in the Bay of Bengal.<sup>105</sup> Panikkar advocated development of an entire range of Indian naval bases all around the Indian Ocean rim. K.Vaidya, another noted early Indian naval thinker espoused the development of an 'invincible navy' to become the uncontested power over the waters of the Indian Ocean and 'to defend not only her coast but her distant oceanic frontiers with her own navy.'<sup>106</sup> Many espoused an integral and important role for India in defence based regional groupings, regional organizations or defence

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Affairs, Government of India, 26 April 2018, <https://www.mea.gov.in/distinguished-lectures-detail.htm?749>, (accessed 5 April 2019).

<sup>99</sup> Panikkar, *India and the Indian Ocean*.

<sup>100</sup> D. Brewster, 'Indian Strategic thinking About the Indian Ocean: Striving Towards Strategic Leadership', *India Review*, vol.14, issue no. 2, 2015, pp.221-237.

<sup>101</sup> K.M. Panikkar, *The Future of South East Asia: An Indian View*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1943, pp.1-3.

<sup>102</sup> Integrated Headquarters, *Indian Maritime Doctrine 2009*, p. 47.

<sup>103</sup> Panikkar, *India and the Indian Ocean*, p.20.

<sup>104</sup> Integrated Headquarters, *Indian Maritime Doctrine 2009*, p.3

<sup>105</sup> C.R. Mohan, 'India's Regional Security Cooperation: The Nehru Raj Legacy', Working Paper, no.168, Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), Singapore, National University of Singapore, 7 March 2013, <https://www.isas.nus.edu.sg/papers/168-indiacos-regional-security-cooperation-the-nehru-raj-legacy/>, (accessed 10 December 2017).

<sup>106</sup> K.B. Vaidya, *The Naval Defense of India*, Bombay, Thacker, 1949, p.9.

councils in South Asia, Middle East and South East Asia that had India at its core.<sup>107</sup> In the political realm, India's eminent political leader Sardar Patel said it was inevitable for India to have a strong navy. Nehru said, 'We cannot afford to be weak at sea... history has shown that whatever power controls the Indian Ocean has, in the first instance, India's sea-borne trade at her mercy, and in the second, India's very independence itself.'<sup>108</sup> Such understandings continue to resonate in India's strategic psyche which essentially links control over Indian Ocean as integral to India's notion of selfhood and constructs a 'natural inheritance' and entitlement of a set of rights and responsibilities to be exercised in the IOR which have led New Delhi to conclude the IOR as India's 'rightful and exclusive sphere of interest.'<sup>109</sup> It also not only constituted India's self identity as the pre-eminent power in the region but constructed the other existing powers having maritime presence as 'extra-regional' navies. New Delhi believes in the inseparability of India and Indian Ocean as former Foreign Secretary Menon remarked:

India and the Indian Ocean are inseparable. In the midst of the third largest ocean in the world, India's location is in many ways her destiny. That is not just a statement regarding a fact of geography but of deeper civilizational, historical, cultural, economic and political linkages that have been forged between India and the Ocean that bears its name. Throughout history, India's wellbeing and prosperity was linked to its access to the Indian Ocean region. It is no coincidence that the decolonization of the littoral countries of the Indian Ocean region was catalyzed by India's independence and emergence as a free nation. The Indian diaspora is a prominent presence in almost all countries of the region. Apart from the Monsoon, the India-link, in its broadest sense, is the single common thread that is visible in the Indian Ocean region.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> K.M. Panikkar, *Regionalism and Security*, New Delhi, Indian Council of World Affairs, 1948; I.Singh, *India's Foreign Policy*, Bombay, Hind Kitab Limited, 1946.

<sup>108</sup> Mukherjee, 'Speech of Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace on "India's Strategic Perspectives."'

<sup>109</sup> E. Margolis, 'India rules the Waves', *US Naval Institute Proceedings*, vol.13, no.3, March 2005, p.70, <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2005/march/india-rules-waves>, (accessed 15 March 2016).

<sup>110</sup> S. Menon, 'Speech by Foreign Secretary at National Maritime Foundation on "India as a Consensual Stakeholder in the Indian Ocean: Policy Contours"', 19 November 2010, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, [https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/816/Speech\\_by\\_Foreign\\_Secretary\\_at\\_National\\_Maritime\\_Foundation\\_on\\_India\\_as\\_a\\_Consensual\\_Stakeholder\\_in\\_the\\_Indian\\_Ocean\\_Policy\\_Contours](https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/816/Speech_by_Foreign_Secretary_at_National_Maritime_Foundation_on_India_as_a_Consensual_Stakeholder_in_the_Indian_Ocean_Policy_Contours), (accessed 11 March 2020); Also see G.V.C. Naidu, 'India and Southeast Asia', *World Focus*, vol.17, nos.10-12, October-December 1996, pp.82-84.



But India was constrained not only by limited resources that had to be invested for socio-economic development but it also faced overland military threats from Pakistan and China which resulted in a 'continental outlook'. With the 1970s and 1980s India floated the narrative of 'Indian Ocean as a 'zone of peace' suggesting the withdrawal of the 'extra-regional' navies from the IOR in the 'Indira Doctrine' which met with no success. For many years post-independence, the security elite did not look seawards and its naval build up was largely neglected. The advantage of India's vast coastline and its central location in the Indian Ocean region with its trade and cultural linkages could have boosted the process of India's economic development if it had been usurped to a greater extent for expanding commerce as the lofty mountain ranges stretching across India's northern frontiers had remained barrier to its land communication for trade. Ajay Ray, retired Commander from the Indian Navy on the lack of maritime doctrines in the early years after independence said in a personal interview:

Earlier we did not have that amount of ships. We were a defensive navy and only protecting our coast and controlling our pockets to defend against attacks. In 1971 we had missile boats (which was Russian technology) that we improvised on. We just towed them with nylon robes because engine hour was less (around 1000 engine hours) for going up to Pakistan and then started the engine, fired the missiles and returned. But now we are getting our blue water navy, and so we can venture into the Indian Ocean.<sup>111</sup>

As a result of liberalisation, open market and pro-business reforms alongside an outward outlook to enhance trade ties for boosting economic development, India's strategic horizons began to expand beyond its 'immediate neighbourhood' and led to re-imagining of India's neighbourhood and regional engagement by the security elites. The MEA's 1998-99 Annual report, stated that India's 'concerns and interactions go well beyond South Asia' to 'include other neighbours, and countries immediately adjoining this region- our "extended neighbourhood", as well as the wider world. Our geography, historical experience and civilizational character inspire a wider global outlook and vision. This applies not only in a geographical sense, but also in relation to the large issues of development, and security.'<sup>112</sup> The 'extended neighbourhood'

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<sup>111</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Ajay Kumar Ray, retired Commander, Indian Navy in Kolkata, 24 July 2017.

<sup>112</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 1998-1999*, Government of India, 1999, p.1, <https://eoi.gov.in/eoisearch/MyPrint.php?1562?000/0017>, (10 March 2020).

included countries in the ASEAN–Pacific region, Central Asia, the Gulf, West Asia and North Africa, and the Indian Ocean Rim. This was evidently a geopolitical shift towards an ‘omni-directional diplomacy’ with a 360 degree view that included India’s ‘Look West’ to the Middle East, a ‘Look North’ to Central Asia, ‘Look South’ to the Indian Ocean and a ‘Look East’ to the Asia-Pacific.

In the post-Cold war era, India’s primary objective is to ensure an ‘unhindered economic progress and socio-political development of the nation and its citizens’<sup>113</sup> in order to facilitate the transformation of India and its people so that India can ‘take its rightful place in the comity of nations and attain its manifest destiny.’<sup>114</sup> It remains a widely accepted belief amongst Indian policy makers, military officials and strategic experts that the twenty first century will be a ‘maritime century’ and India will need to develop maritime power projection capabilities to protect its core ‘national interests’. However the discursive construction of India’s vital ‘national interests’ and ‘national security’ is linked to maintaining India’s naval pre-eminence in the IOR as India’s dependence on the sea for commerce, trade, and energy resources is likely to grow over the years. Chacko describes this as the ‘geoeconomic recasting of geopolitics in the 1990s’ that led to ‘the respatialisation of India’s regional imaginary’ toward the ‘extended neighbourhood’ concept.<sup>115</sup>

The IOR is rich in minerals, natural and energy resources and rich in biodiversity.<sup>116</sup> 90% of India’s trade by volume and 77% by value are sea borne and 90% of India’s oil imports are being carried on the seas. The Maritime doctrine 2009 states that, ‘With its rapidly increasing dependence on the seas for her economic and social well-being, it is also laying adequate emphasis on developing commensurate maritime-military power.’<sup>117</sup> It is also taking initiative to strengthen regional initiatives to promote cooperation among the littoral states to maintain ‘stability, security and

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<sup>113</sup> Government of India, *Indian Maritime doctrine*, 2009, p.6; M. Singh, “‘India in the Changing World: Priorities and Principles’”, Excerpts of PM’s Address at the Annual Conclave of Indian Ambassadors/High Commissioners Abroad’, New Delhi, 4 November 2013, <http://pmindia.gov.in/speechdetails.php?nodeid=1387>, (accessed 12 April 2016).

<sup>114</sup> S. Mehta, ‘Foreword’, in *Freedom to Use the Seas: India’s Maritime Military Strategy*, Integrated Headquarters, Ministry of Defence (Indian Navy), Government of India, New Delhi, 28 May 2007, p.iii.

<sup>115</sup> P. Chacko, ‘India and the Indo-Pacific from Singh to Modi: Geopolitical and Geoeconomic Entanglements’, in P. Chacko (ed.), *New Regional Geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific: Drivers, Dynamics and Consequences*, London and New York, Routledge, 2016, pp.43-60.

<sup>116</sup> Integrated Headquarters, *Indian Maritime Doctrine 2009*, p.58.

<sup>117</sup> Integrated Headquarters, *Indian Maritime Doctrine 2009*, p.58.

safety at sea, particularly in the IOR' that would enable 'use of the seas to progress economic development, and provide the appropriate maritime environment for unfettered pursuit of national interests'<sup>118</sup> for all through engaging in maritime activities like maritime trade, shipping, fishing, extraction of natural and energy resources, security of sea borne, offshore and coastal assets.

As a result of the importance of the IOR in global trade and as transit routes for energy fuel, all major powers are expected to seek a toehold in the Indian Ocean and the Annual Reports of Defence Ministry, from 2004-2007 expressed concern over 'the activities of superpowers close to our[India's] shorelines'.<sup>119</sup> But apart from the presence of external powers, the 'rise of china' and 'terrorism' has been argued as the major concerns that call for greater maritime attention by India. It has been argued that India bore the brunt of the rise of international terrorism because of its 'geographical location' and it will also be 'frontally affected by the growing power of a next door... empire practicing classical balance of power politics.'<sup>120</sup> India has so far published two maritime doctrines and two strategy documents that can give some insights on how Indian Navy defines its maritime interests, identifies the threats and the security situation in the IOR against which it needs to secure itself and provide future directions for employment of India's maritime forces.

Indian Navy published its first maritime doctrine in 2004 that emphasized the central status of Indian Ocean in Indian strategic thought and on India's determination to exercise predominant influence in the region as a whole. It predicts that all 'major powers of this century will seek a toehold in [Indian Ocean Region].'<sup>121</sup> Indian Maritime strategy that was published in 2007 points out that the entire Indian Ocean is

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<sup>118</sup> Integrated Headquarters, *Indian Maritime Doctrine 2009*, p. 62.

<sup>119</sup> Ministry of Defence, *Annual Report, 2004-2005*, Government of India, 2004-2005, [https://mod.gov.in/sites/default/files/MOD-English2005\\_0.pdf](https://mod.gov.in/sites/default/files/MOD-English2005_0.pdf) (accessed 11 January 2018); Ministry of Defence, *Annual Report 2005-2006*, Government of India, 2005- 2006, <https://mod.gov.in/sites/default/files/MOD-English2006%20%281%29.pdf>, (accessed 11 January 2018); Ministry of Defence, *Annual Report, 2006-2007*, Government of India, 2006-2007, [https://mod.gov.in/sites/default/files/MOD-English2007\\_0.pdf](https://mod.gov.in/sites/default/files/MOD-English2007_0.pdf), (accessed 12 January 2018).

<sup>120</sup> B. Chellaney, 'Should India consider China a friend or rival?', *The Times Of India*, 21 August 2005.

<sup>121</sup> Integrated Headquarters, *Indian Maritime Doctrine*, Ministry of Defence (Navy), INBR-8, New Delhi Government of India, 2004, p.52 cited in H.V. Pant, *The Rise of the Indian Navy: Internal Vulnerabilities, External Challenges*, Surrey, Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2012; Ministry of External Affairs, 'India's new naval doctrine', Government of India, 29 April 2004, Government of India, <https://www.mea.gov.in/articles-in-indian-media.htm?dtl/15458/Indias+new+naval+doctrine>, (accessed 2 November 2019).

India's 'natural sphere of influence' and India can assert its regional pre-eminence and 'attain its manifest destiny' if it is able to 'provide insulation from external interference' in Indian Ocean.<sup>122</sup> Indian Maritime doctrine in 2009 notes the presence of the 'extra-regional powers' and places explicit attention to the Chinese navy's actions in the Indian Ocean.<sup>123</sup> The Modi government is aware that China's long term military modernisation programme is characterised as a move towards achieving 'great power status' with the PLA rapidly building a robust lethal force with advanced capabilities in the air, at sea, in space and in cyberspace 'to enable it to impose its will in the region and beyond.'<sup>124</sup> China has focussed on 'acquiring technology by any means available'<sup>125</sup> that has made it at the leading edge on a range of technologies including with its naval designs and missile systems that adds to New Delhi's concerns on Chinese assertiveness and expansionist ambitions.

The official discourse constructs the threat posed by Pakistan or broadly by Islam as a 'civilizational threat' as discussed earlier with India's naval chief noting that 'the epicentre of world terrorism lies in our [India's] immediate neighbourhood.'<sup>126</sup> The Maritime security strategy, 2015 under the NDA-II also reiterated India's increasing dependence on her 'maritime environment', but refrains from naming China or any other country as a military threat; while stating that, 'The likely sources of traditional threat would be from states with a history of aggression against India, and those with continuing disputes or maintaining adversarial postures to India's national interests.'<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Integrated Headquarters, *Freedom to Use the Seas: India's Maritime Military Strategy*.

<sup>123</sup> Integrated Headquarters, *Indian Maritime Doctrine 2009*; Government of India, 'Indian Maritime Doctrine 2009', Press Information Bureau, Government of India, p.1, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=52223>, (accessed 22 January 2018).

<sup>124</sup> 'US: China rapidly building robust forces', *The Telegraph*, 17 January 2019.

<sup>125</sup> Press Trust of India, 'China is rapidly building robust lethal force to impose its will in the region: US official', *Economic Times*, 16 January 2019, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/china-is-rapidly-building-robust-lethal-force-to-impose-its-will-in-the-region-us-official/articleshow/67550273.cms?from=mdr>, (accessed 29 January 2019).

<sup>126</sup> Admiral A. Prakash, 'Submarine building capability in a void, which we hope to address', 22 July 2005, *Force: The Complete News Magazine of National Security*, cited in D.L.Berlin, 'India in the Indian Ocean', *Naval War College Review*, vol.59, no.2, Newport, RI, Naval War College Press, Spring 2006, p.65, <https://books.google.co.in/books?id=DqYTAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>, (accessed 10 March 2019).

<sup>127</sup> Integrated Headquarters, *Ensuring Secure Sea: Indian Maritime Security Strategy*, Indian Navy, Naval Strategic Publication (NSP) 1.2, 10 October 2015 [25 January 2016], Ministry of Defence, Government of India, <http://www.ssri-j.com/MediaReport/Document/IndianMaritimeSecurityStrategyDocument25Jan16.pdf>, (accessed 20 December 2018).

It also categorizes India's 'maritime geography between 'primary' and 'secondary' areas of interest. The IOR including the island nations, Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman and East Coast of Africa and their littoral regions fall under the primary category, whereas South-East Indian Ocean, including sea routes to the Pacific Ocean and the South and East China Seas, Western Pacific Ocean and their littoral regions fall under the latter. There has been a special focus on the 'safety and security of Indian citizens in other countries' as India has the second-largest diaspora in the world spread across 206 nations/ territories.<sup>128</sup>

India's development is seen as predicated on ensuring a 'stable geo-strategic environment' in the region, Therefore, 'as a mature and responsible nation', it is in India's interest to play an active role in the shaping 'a favourable and positive maritime environment, for enhancing net security in India's areas of maritime interest'<sup>129</sup> and regional architecture building based on the twin principles of 'shared security and shared prosperity' where India is well positioned to play a leadership role, particularly in the IOR. India is reproduced as a 'factor of stability' and an 'engine of economic growth' owing to its economic successes and democratic credentials that stands out in an 'unstable' and troubled region with states seeking territorial expansion or exporting ideology.<sup>130</sup> Rather India's objective is to promote inter-dependence, create stakes in each other's stability and develop cross-border infrastructure and other links to integrate India with immediate and extended neighbourhood through developing connectivity projects or being actively involved in regional institutional mechanisms and forums for consensus building on maritime safety. Former Foreign Secretary, MEA, N.Rao under UPA-II noted:

The geopolitics of the Indian Ocean region is a microcosm of global geopolitical trends. There are countries which are developing rapidly; on the other hand, there are those which are on the brink of collapse [Pakistan]. In between there are those which are emerging from conflict and show promise of making rapid strides in the future. There are a large number of democracies in the region but it cannot be said that democracy is a universal norm for the

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<sup>128</sup> Integrated Headquarters, *Ensuring Secure Sea*, pp.30-32.

<sup>129</sup> Integrated Headquarters, *Ensuring Secure Sea*, p.10.

<sup>130</sup> Mukherjee, 'Address by External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee at the National Conference of Confederation of Indian Industry on India's Foreign Policy.'

region. A number of countries suffer from weak governance and regime instability, vulnerable to non-state actors driven by extremist ideologies...

But, the bright side is that parts of the Indian Ocean littoral are witnessing an unprecedented economic boom, driven by positive economic and demographic factors [i.e.India].... What is certain is that India stands out both in what it has achieved and the untapped potential that still lies ahead. In short, the future of the Indian Ocean region is unthinkable without India... Our 'soft power' gives us advantages that few other countries can match in this region. There is almost universal acceptance of India's credentials and recognition of the vital contribution that we can make for stability and prosperity of the entire region. Our economic growth acts as a driver for growth across the entire region. Our bilateral and multilateral assistance programmes are crucial for the security and development requirements of a number of countries.<sup>131</sup>

Not only as the largest economy in the region, access to India's market and resources is re-produced as an asset to the region. India's scientific expertise and human resources have enabled it to assist the littoral countries by using various instruments that India can deploy - diplomacy, trade and economics, culture and military assistance for maritime safety and cooperation. The Indian Navy's activities under UPA and NDA-II governments have expanded to include constabulary, diplomatic and benign exercises (besides military) which includes port visits, naval exercises, bilateral interactions, training initiatives and technical support arrangements to enhance mutual understanding 'in order to establish a cooperative framework that promotes mutual understanding and enhances security and stability in the region.'<sup>132</sup>

#### **7.4. India's Indian Ocean Strategy**

Indian elites have expanded India's geographical expanse, trade interests and its security environment 'from the Persian Gulf [Strait of Hormuz] in the west India to

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<sup>131</sup> N. Rao, 'Speech by Foreign Secretary at National Maritime Foundation on "India as a Consensual Stakeholder in the Indian Ocean: Policy Contours"', 19 November 2010, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, [https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/816/Speech\\_by\\_Foreign\\_Secretary\\_at\\_National\\_Maritime\\_Foundation\\_on\\_India\\_as\\_a\\_Consensual\\_Stakeholder\\_in\\_the\\_Indian\\_Ocean\\_Policy\\_Contours](https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/816/Speech_by_Foreign_Secretary_at_National_Maritime_Foundation_on_India_as_a_Consensual_Stakeholder_in_the_Indian_Ocean_Policy_Contours), (accessed 20 February 2018).

<sup>132</sup> Integrated Headquarters, *Ensuring Secure Sea*, p.vi.

Straits of Malacca in the East'<sup>133</sup> which has been described as India's '*sphere of influence*'<sup>134</sup> by senior BJP leader and former EAM, Yashwant Sinha in the NDA government, whereas the Singh-UPA government preferred the term *strategic footprint*. Further the post-Nehruvian discourse under Singh's government saw Asia-Pacific as 'arc of advantage' or the 'arc of prosperity' and sought greater integration. Under the Modi doctrine, India recognised the need to be physically grafted to the east, rather than just 'looking east' and the ASEAN-India relationship has been central to the LEP which was also recognised by the UPA government. The Maritime Geography Strategy 2015 document under the Modi government also asserts India's favourable maritime geography for playing an expansive maritime role as India's central position in the IOR, that accords her distinct advantages, thereby facilitating reach, sustenance and mobility of its maritime forces across the region.<sup>135</sup>

Modi made an explicit emphasis on the Indian Ocean region (IOR) as 'one of my foremost policy priorities'<sup>136</sup> because the 'extended neighbourhood is vital for India's security and progress.'<sup>137</sup> India's peninsular character and location create 'a natural and abiding stake in the safety and security of the sea-lanes of communication from the Malacca Straits to the Gulf.'<sup>138</sup> Modi's Indian Ocean policy has been outlined by the acronym 'SAGAR' [meaning Ocean] – Security and Growth for All in the Region' which outlines New Delhi's vision for the region – for advancing cooperation and using India's capabilities for the larger benefit. It has four key elements: **first**, to safeguard India's mainland and islands, defend India's interests, ensure a safe secure and stable Indian Ocean, and making available India's capabilities to others; **second**, to deepen economic and security cooperation with India's maritime neighbours and strengthen their capacities; **third**, to envisage collective action and cooperation to advance peace and security and respond to emergencies; and **finally**, seeking a more

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<sup>133</sup> Ministry of Defence, *Annual Report 2002-2003*, New Delhi, Government of India, 2002-2003, p.2, [https://mod.gov.in/sites/default/files/MOD-English2003\\_0.pdf](https://mod.gov.in/sites/default/files/MOD-English2003_0.pdf), (available 2 February 2018).

<sup>134</sup> H. Shiseng, 'India's Approach to ASEAN and its Regional Implications', in S. Swee-Hock, S. Lijun, C.K. Wah (eds.), *ASEAN-China Relations: Realities and Prospects*, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005, p.139.

<sup>135</sup> Integrated Headquarters, *Ensuring Secure Sea*.

<sup>136</sup> N. Modi, 'PM Modi at the International Fleet Review in the Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh', 7 February 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qUdTVaULIL>, (accessed 4 April 2018).

<sup>137</sup> Government of India, *Sagar Yatra*, p.1.

<sup>138</sup> Mukherjee, 'Address by External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee at the National Conference of Confederation of Indian Industry on India's Foreign Policy', pp.152-153.

integrated and cooperative future for the region that enhances sustainable development.<sup>139</sup> India had launched the Sagarmala Project whose prime objective is to promote port modernization, port connectivity improvement, port-led direct and indirect development, and coastal community development.<sup>140</sup> New Delhi is also committed to building maritime infrastructure in IOR littoral countries to boost connectivity with India and is strengthening its ties with the island territories to expand its 'arc of influence'. Modi has focussed on India's quest for economic prosperity through oceans as part of India's larger efforts to transform India. Modi had articulated India's Ocean economy as aimed to strengthen the Blue Ocean economy.<sup>141</sup> India is currently going through a phase of rapid transformation and it is increasingly promoted that this is an exciting time to partner with India. Make in India, Smart Cities, Clean India, Skill India- these are all initiatives that the NDA-II government believes can resonate and be replicated to varying degrees in the littoral countries.

India recognises the need 'to ensure free and full use of the seas, for trade, transportation and to meet resource needs' as 'critical to her robust economic growth.'<sup>142</sup> Additionally, Indian Navy is undertaking anti-piracy and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations to emerge as a 'net security provider'<sup>143</sup> in the maritime neighbourhood, with 'a growing cooperative framework' to expand its 'operational footprint' across the areas of maritime interest<sup>144</sup> by showing its willingness to work with all the littoral countries in the IOR. By undertaking evacuation operations such as in Lebanon or Yemen (Operation Rahat) or disaster relief operations in Srilanka or South-east Asia, India Navy projects its 'power-projection capabilities' by demonstrating its naval reach, mobility and sustenance of maritime forces in the region and beyond. Also, it makes continued assistance in terms of

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<sup>139</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, '2nd ASEAN-India Blue Economy Workshop Keynote Address by Secretary (East)', 18 July 2018, Government of India, [https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/30097/2nd\\_ASEANIndia\\_Blue\\_Economy\\_Workshop\\_Keynote\\_Address\\_by\\_Secretary\\_East](https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/30097/2nd_ASEANIndia_Blue_Economy_Workshop_Keynote_Address_by_Secretary_East), (accessed 8 December 2019).

<sup>140</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, 'Keynote Address by Secretary (East) at EAS Conference on maritime security and cooperation (November 09, 2015)', 9 November 2015, [https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/26006/Keynote\\_address\\_by\\_Secretary\\_East\\_at\\_EAS\\_Conference\\_on\\_maritime\\_security\\_and\\_cooperation\\_November\\_09\\_2015](https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/26006/Keynote_address_by_Secretary_East_at_EAS_Conference_on_maritime_security_and_cooperation_November_09_2015), (accessed 5 September 2017).

<sup>141</sup> BJP, 'Resolution on Foreign Policy passed in BJP National Executive Meeting at Bengaluru (Karnataka)'.

<sup>142</sup> Integrated Headquarters, *Indian Maritime Doctrine 2009*.

<sup>143</sup> 'India well positioned to become a net security provider in our Region and Beyond', *The Hindu*, 23 May 2013.

<sup>144</sup> Integrated Headquarters, *Ensuring Secure Sea*, p.8



hydrographic surveys, technical assistance and product support to the maritime neighbours. New Delhi has emphasized the three pillars of 'Culture, Commerce and Connectivity' under its 'neighbourhood first' policy for regional engagement with the littoral states and with the ASEAN countries<sup>145</sup> based on the Indic world view of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* that embraces diversity, pluralism and civilizational and cultural links through promoting trade, flow of investments, infrastructure development and enhancement of synergies. Indian government's Project Mausam is aimed at revisiting these ancient maritime routes and cultural links with other countries in the region.

India has developed 'friendly and productive bilateral relations with almost all the states in the Indian Ocean region' - Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Mauritius, Maldives, Seychelles, Oman, Madagascar, Kenya and others with a strong economic and socio-cultural dimension over the years. But it lacked a strategic and military dimension which has been emphasized under the 'Act East' in the Modi led NDA-II government in terms of developing security cooperation. To this effort India has been committed to building the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) under both UPA-II and NDA-II governments. Former EAM Khurshid noted:

The most critical conceptual idea for Asia I believe is in the Indian Ocean rim area. This is the only emerging regional organization and growing regional organization that is linked with water. Every other regional organization is largely linked with landmass. This is the only regional organization that is linked with the seas. And in that sense it is special, it is different. But it is also in a sense that gives India a point of a pivot.... China for instance would give a right arm to be in the Indian Ocean as comfortably as India is placed in the Indian Ocean.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> N. Gadkari, 'Text of Shri Nitin Gadkari's Address the Indian Ocean Conference in Singapore Today', Press Information Bureau, Government of India, Ministry of Shipping, 1 September 2016, <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/mbErel.aspx?relid=149454>, (accessed 20 February 2018); N. Gadkari, 'Statement by Shri Nitin Gadkari, Hon'ble Minister of Road Transport, Highways & Shipping, Govt. of India at "The Leaders Commitment Segment, Sustainable Blue Economy Conference", Nairobi, Kenya on 28 November', Nairobi, 28 November 2018, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, [https://mea.gov.in/Portal/CountryNews/10421\\_Minister\\_Statement\\_SBEC\\_nov28\\_12018.pdf](https://mea.gov.in/Portal/CountryNews/10421_Minister_Statement_SBEC_nov28_12018.pdf), (accessed 23 March 2019).

<sup>146</sup> S. Khurshid, 'Transcript of External Affairs Minister's Address at the Annual Convention of the Indian Association of International Studies on 'The Dawning of the Asian Century: Emerging Challenges before Theory and Practices of International Relations in India', 10 December 2012, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, <https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/20962/Transcript+of+External+Affairs+Ministers+Address+at+the+Annual+Conv>

India has supported a collective approach to 'maritime safety and security' in the IOR through instruments like IORA to promote a shared understanding of maritime issues, enhance regional maritime security, strengthen capabilities, establish cooperative mechanisms, develop inter-operability and provide speedy HADR responses. India remains committed to supporting the IORA activities to promote cooperation and collaborative action towards strengthening trade, tourism, infrastructure development, marine science and technology; sustainable fisheries, protection of marine environment and biodiversity, and blue economy, thereby calling upon all the Indian Ocean littoral states to take the responsibility as equal stakeholders to 'collectively secure and nurture our oceanic space.'<sup>147</sup> India is actively engaged with almost all regional bodies that are either based in or border the Indian Ocean region- ranging from SAARC, BIMSTEC, ASEAN, Asean Regional Forum (ARF), East Asia Summit (EAS), Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), South African Development Community (SADC) to the African Union (AU). New Delhi prefers a 'SAARC minus Pakistan' approach which would enable India to realize an India-led model of regionalism and is bolstering BIMSTEC (centred primarily on Bay of Bengal) as the alternative platform. This shows a shift in New Delhi's re-imagination of the South Asian neighbourhood from a continental frame towards an oceanic one that connects South and South-east Asia through the sea.<sup>148</sup> Former Foreign Secretary Jaishankar noted, 'As SAARC is constrained by differences on terrorism and connectivity', the attention is being diverted to the BIMSTEC grouping in the Bay of Bengal which is more united on the benefits of regionalism to take forward this agenda.'<sup>149</sup>

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ention+of+the+Indian+Association+of+International+Studies+on+The+Dawning+of+the+Asian+Century+Emerging+Challenges+before+Theory+and+Practices+of+International+Relations+in+India, (accessed 10 May 2019).

<sup>147</sup> S. Jaishankar, 'Foreign Secretary's Keynote Address at the Inaugural Session of Second IORA Meeting of Experts for Maritime Safety & Security, New Delhi (November 7, 2017)', 8 November 2017, [https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/29095/Foreign\\_Secretarys\\_Keynote\\_Address\\_at\\_the\\_Inaugural\\_Session\\_of\\_Second\\_IORA\\_Meeting\\_of\\_Experts\\_for\\_Maritime\\_Safety\\_amp\\_Security\\_New\\_Delhi\\_November\\_7\\_20](https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/29095/Foreign_Secretarys_Keynote_Address_at_the_Inaugural_Session_of_Second_IORA_Meeting_of_Experts_for_Maritime_Safety_amp_Security_New_Delhi_November_7_20), (accessed 19 April 2019); N. Modi, 'Text of PM'S Remarks on the Commissioning of Coast Ship, Barracuda', 12 March 2015, <https://www.narendramodi.in/ma/text-of-the-pms-remarks-on-the-commissioning-of-coast-ship-barracuda-2954>, (accessed 15 March 2019).

<sup>148</sup> U. Das, 'Assessing India's Shift from SAARC to BIMSTEC', *South Asian Voices*, 27 June 2019, <https://southasianvoices.org/assessing-indias-shift-from-saarc-to-bimstec/>, (accessed 10 January 2020).

<sup>149</sup> S. Jaishankar, 'Speech by Dr. S. Jaishankar, Foreign Secretary to mark 25 years of India-Singapore Partnership at Shangri La Hotel, Singapore (July 11, 2017)', Singapore, 11 July 2017, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, <https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/28609/Speech+by+Dr+S+Jaishankar+Foreign+Secretary+to+mark+25+years+of+India+Singapore+Partnership+at+Shangri+La+Hotel>, (4 March 2020).

India seeks to build 'a web of cooperative relations' that brings together all the stakeholders for mutual interests and benefit through a regional framework. India has not only developed robust bilateral economic and security relationships in the region, but also through initiatives like Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) and the IOR-ARC, intends to promote comprehensive economic cooperation.<sup>150</sup> This new policy thrust in India's maritime neighbourhood is critical to India's economy and security; and for ensuring stability and prosperity of Asia.<sup>151</sup>

### **7.5. India in 'Indo-Pacific': Acting East**

The LEP was launched in the 1990s to rebuild India's traditional cultural and trade ties with the South East and East Asia. India's Indo-Pacific pivot fuses its Look South and Look East policies<sup>152</sup> and demonstrates India's shift from a 'continental' mind-set to growing maritime concerns and ambitions.<sup>153</sup> The discourse around 'Indo-Pacific' spatial re-imagination is built upon India's self-[re]defined strategic interests that stretch from Indian Ocean, to increasing stakes in the South China Sea and eventually into the South/West Pacific.<sup>154</sup> Former EAM, S.M. Krishna in the UPA-II summarising the intended aim of India's Indo-Pacific engagement said:

A stable and secure Asia, Indian Ocean and the Pacific Region is a key requirement of India's own security and prosperity in the 21st century, and yet another key priority of our foreign policy... Asia's extraordinary accomplishments in the last few decades could be reversed if great power rivalry, national chauvinism and arms race take hold of the region. India is

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<sup>150</sup> A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations-2012 Documents*.

<sup>151</sup> BJP, 'Resolution on Foreign Policy passed in BJP National Executive Meeting at Bengaluru (Karnataka).'

<sup>152</sup> N. Gokhale, 'From Look East to Engage East: How India's Own Pivot Will Change Discourse in the Indo-Pacific Region', Vivekananda International Foundation, 12 March 2013, <https://www.vifindia.org/article/2013/march/12/from-look-east-to-engage-east-how-india-s-own-pivot-will-change-discourse-in-indo-pacific-region>, (accessed 3 February 2018); S. Kapila, 'India's Strategic Pivot to the Indo-Pacific', *Paper*, South Asia Analysis Group, no.5831, 27 November 2014, <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/node/1665>, (accessed 5 February 2016); H.V.Pant, 'Pivot to the Indo-Pacific', *The Hindu*, 12 April 2017.

<sup>153</sup> R. Mishra, 'India in the Indo-Pacific: Maritime Stakes and Challenges', in R.Bhatia and V. Sakhuja (eds.), *Indo-Pacific Region: Political and Strategic Prospects*, New Delhi, Indian Council of World Affairs, 2014, pp.138-163; A.Singh, 'Rebalancing India's Maritime Posture in the Indo-Pacific', *The Diplomat*, 5 September 2014.

<sup>154</sup> B. Chandramohan, 'India's Strategic Outreach in the Indo-Pacific Region', *Science Technology and Security Forum*, 20 January 2017, <http://stsfor.org/content/indias-strategic-outreach-indo-pacific-region> (accessed 10 March 2018).

determined to avoid such an outcome by contributing actively to the deeper economic integration of the region and construction of a stable and inclusive political and security order for Asia and the Pacific. We will work to build a regional architecture that promotes cooperation and reinforces convergence, reduces the risks of confrontation and conflicts, and draws all countries of the region into a common framework of norms and principles of engagement.<sup>155</sup>

Both the previous Vajpayee and Singh governments have maintained an 'economic focus' in India's global relations with the South East Asia and East Asian economies, to realize India's sustained economic and inclusive growth. Through the LEP,<sup>156</sup> New Delhi has sought an expansive partnership with 'the ASEAN and beyond'. Former PM Vajpayee said:

the 21st century is defined by knowledge and human capital. It is this that gives strength to the Asian identity. There is an emerging perception that this will be the century of Asia's pre-eminence... India, ASEAN and the countries of East Asia are a part of this trend... India is today a country on the move... in which a defensive, introverted approach has given way to an outward-looking, self-confident attitude, willing to accept challenges and take risks, rejecting fear and shunning fatalism.<sup>157</sup>

Such re-positioning of India as integral to realise Asian pre-eminence can be traced back to Nehru's vision of India as central to the Asian identity which was not predicated upon anti-China narratives. This is also reflected in the Post-Nehruvian discourse as China and India are seen as partners to work together in maintenance of peace and stability in Asia-Pacific, endorsing confidence building measures through port calls by naval ships of the two sides and supports conduct of joint maritime search and rescue

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<sup>155</sup> Krishna, 'Speech by External Affairs Minister on "India's Foreign Policy Priorities for the 21st Century" at launch of the "India Initiative" by the Brown University.'

<sup>156</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, 'ASEAN-India Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism', Bali (Indonesia), 8 October 2003, in A.S. Bhasin(ed.), *India's Foreign Relations -2003 documents*, New Delhi, External Publicity Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2004, pp.661-663; Ministry of External Affairs, 'Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of Australia on Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism', Adelaide, 28 August 2003, in A.S.Bhasin(ed.), *India's Foreign Relations -2003 documents*, New Delhi, External Publicity Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2004, pp.681-684.

<sup>157</sup> A.B. Vajpayee, Speech of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee at ASEAN Business and Investment Summit on 'The India-ASEAN Partnership and beyond', New Delhi, 7 October 2003, in A.S.Bhasin(ed.), *India's Foreign Relations -2003 documents*, New Delhi, External Publicity Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2004, p.656, p.658.

exercises and counter piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia to enhance cooperation.

The ASEAN region also became economically important to India and came to be viewed as a space of 'growing economic prosperity' and has become one of India's most important trading partners. The Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) with ASEAN became effective from 1 January 2010 and the bilateral trade between the two sides has surged from about US\$ 43 billion in 2009-10 to US\$ 97 billion in 2018-19. Nonetheless, there is also a significant increase in India's trade deficit with ASEAN from less than US\$8 billion in 2009-10 to about US\$ 22 billion in 2018-19.<sup>158</sup> India was accorded the CSCAP<sup>159</sup> membership in 2000 which is the forum for Track-II diplomacy and Indian policy and strategic experts have participated in periodic conferences to exchange views and often provided useful policy option inputs for Track I. India joined the EAS as a founding member in 2005. It has also signed an FTA with Japan in 2011 and is strengthening its multifaceted relationship with the U.S.A through bilateral and multilateral cooperation in maritime security in the region. The UPA government showed willingness to engage with the regional institutions but emphasized the need to 'strengthen the multilateral security architecture in the Asia-Pacific and to move at a pace comfortable to all countries concerned,' thereby expressing that New Delhi remains sensitive towards the sovereignty concerns of the ASEAN countries and supported the resolution of disputes in accordance to the 'ASEAN way.'<sup>160</sup>

Broadly, the shift from 'Looking East' to 'Acting East' is essentially seen as India seeking 'multiple balances in the Asia Pacific' but New Delhi refuses to see 'Act East' within the framework of 'a zero-sum balance of power policy' because 'it is not only about China' but is aimed at re-engaging with the East. This is reframed as a shift in India's geo-strategic vision towards South East Asia and East Asia that looks at the map differently to redefine the Asian space and India's position and its role within it. Minister of State (MoS) for External Affairs, Akbar noted, 'India and ASEAN are

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<sup>158</sup> D.K. Rai, 'India's trade with its FTA partners: experiences, challenges and way forward', *The Economic Times*, 7 October 2019, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/blogs/et-commentary/indias-trade-with-its-fta-partners-experiences-challenges-and-way-forward/>, (accessed 2 January 2020)

<sup>159</sup> CSCAP is the Track II organ of ASEAN's security-related bodies, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Defence Minister Plus Forum.

<sup>160</sup> M. Pubby, "US says India 'Lyncpin of Rebalancing Strategy' ", *Indian Express*, 7 June 2013.

neighbors in all senses of the word: distance, reach... cultural harmony ...If Asia is the east, then it is India that is the true middle of the east. All you have to do is look at the map. Geo-politically, and for many other reasons, India is the pivotal nation of Asia.'<sup>161</sup> In a personal interview with the General Secretary of the BJP, R. Madhav said, 'India has so far looked at the West, now it is looking at the East and when you look at the East, you automatically end up reaching West.'<sup>162</sup> The cultural nationalism discourse describes South East Asia as 'an "extension" of India' and the NDA-II government emphasized on the religious and civilizational contacts to re-produce a natural partnership and affinity between the two regions. Former foreign Secretary and EAM S.Jaishankar said, 'India's link with Asia is civilizational...No people are as close to the Hindus culturally as the Buddhists of the world.'<sup>163</sup> India's close relations with Vietnam, and of late with Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Myanmar under the Mekong-Ganga project builds on such Buddhist links.

This was further evident when the 10 ASEAN leaders were invited as the 'guests of honour' at India's 2018 Republic day celebrations, as 25 years of Indo-ASEAN engagement, and 15 years of summit-level meetings were completed in 2017. The Indian –ASEAN relationship as 'natural partners' has been framed by PM Modi under the framework of 'common values and shared destiny' emanating from the humanitarian philosophy as the source of 'peace, serenity and shared, sustainable prosperity'. Referring to these common shared values that 'put them in the forefront of modernity', MoS for External Affairs M.J. Akbar said:

ASEAN launched the process of redefinition by concentrating on the logic of regional groups. The most important aspect of ASEAN was that its focus was on the welfare of the people, which lay in trade, travel and economic growth...We believe that the principal mission of governance is the rising well-being of all citizens. We believe in pluralism, and equality of culture and faith; and we recognize that the existential threat comes from ideologues who believe in faith-supremacy with their evil, barbaric terrorist militias. We

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<sup>161</sup> M.J. Akbar, 'Address by M J Akbar, Minister of State for External Affairs at the INDIA-ASEAN Connectivity Summit in New Delhi', 11 December 2017, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, <https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/29169/address+by+m+j+akbar+minister+of+state+for+external+affairs+at+the+india+asean+connectivity+summit+in+new+delhi+december+11+2017>, (accessed 13 March 2020).

<sup>162</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Ram Madhav, senior politician and National General Secretary, Bharatiya Janata Party and Director, India Foundation, New Delhi in New Delhi, 24 August 2017.

<sup>163</sup> Menon, 'Our "look-East" Policy.'

believe in social justice, and in gender emancipation through economic empowerment. We believe in bridges, not barriers; in freedom of navigation in all waters.<sup>164</sup>

The 'Act East' policy, for instance, is a revamped version of the LEP that establishes the centrality of the Asia-Pacific in India's foreign policy priorities and resulted in several diplomatic visits even by PM Modi himself to the ASEAN countries, and placed a renewed focus on developing and improving maritime and land-based connectivity and infrastructure projects between India and Asia. India also remains engaged with the Asean Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Defence Minister's Meeting Plus (ADMM+), expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum and ReCAAP.<sup>165</sup> ASEAN-India mechanisms today include the ASEAN-India Summit and seven Meetings at the level of Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Trade, Agriculture, Tourism, Telecommunications, Environment and New and Renewable Energy.

### **7.5.1 Defence Modernisation and Defence Diplomacy**

India is also making plans for defence modernization through an emphatic focus on self-reliance and indigenisation and gives highest priority to 'developing, integrating, inducting and managing high-end future technologies indigenously'.<sup>166</sup> India has been indigenously building aircraft carriers which has gained added impetus under the 'Make in India' programme that strengthens scope for co- production and co-development, besides undertaking defence acquisitions such as fighter-jets and frigates. In 2009-10, the defence expenditure was 2.8% of GDP and 17.6% of the Central government expenditure, which has decreased to 2% and 15.5% respectively, in 2019-20.<sup>167</sup> The

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<sup>164</sup> Akbar, 'Address by M J Akbar, Minister of State for External Affairs at the INDIA-ASEAN Connectivity Summit in New Delhi.'

<sup>165</sup> Jaishankar, 'Foreign Secretary's Keynote Address at the Inaugural Session of Second IORA Meeting of Experts for Maritime Safety & Security, New Delhi (November 7, 2017)'; Scott, C.P., 'India's Maritime Acts in the East', *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 18 June 2015, <https://amti.csis.org/indias-maritime-acts-in-the-east/>, (accessed 14 February 2018).

<sup>166</sup> Integrated Headquarters, *Ensuring Secure Sea*, p.vi.; Press Trust of India, 'Navy working on mega plan to bolster operational capabilities', *Economic Times*, 25 April 2019, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/navy-working-on-mega-plan-to-bolster-operational-capabilities/articleshow/69044962.cms>, (accessed 10 May 2019).

<sup>167</sup> 'Demand for Grants 2019-20 Analysis Defence', *PRS Legislative Research*, p.1, <https://prsindia.org/parliamenttrack/budgets/demand-grants-analysis-defence>, (accessed 13 March 2020).

Standing Committee on Defence has recommended that defence expenditure should be 3% of GDP to ensure adequate preparedness of the armed forces. Increasing costs of personnel from 2010-2011 to 2018-2019 meant that there were lesser funds for capital outlays for defence acquisitions and induction of modern rifles, tanks, artillery, aircraft, ships, aircraft carriers and other equipments and also for repairing the present ones, even though many equipments were identified to be in the 'vintage category'.<sup>168</sup> In a personal interview India strategic expert at the ORF, New Delhi and former Advisory member in National Security Committee, Rajeshwari Rajagopalan noted:

India's submarines are not in adequate numbers, there have been accidents, and those submarines have not been replaced. Again the sea based nuclear missiles are of short range which is one area where India is lacking and India needs to pay attention, before it can actually play a role as a net security provider.<sup>169</sup>

In a personal interview remarking on India's relative strength in terms of defence capabilities, retired Indian naval officer Mr. Ajay Roy said:

the major challenges for India and for the Indian subcontinent are Pakistan and China. Pakistan in itself cannot fight with India atleast where maritime power is concerned because India's capabilities are bigger than Pakistan's maritime capabilities. In the IOR India is the pre-eminnet maritime power in region because India has got an aircraft carrier. Indian Navy plans to operate two carriers. The INS Viraat was decommissioned (in 2013) and the INS Vikramaditya is a modified Kiev-class Russian built aircraft carrier based in Karwar-South of Goa which was formally inducted in 2014. Another carrier is coming up in Kochin shipyard-INS Vikrant. Pakistan instead is not getting as much support as earlier from USA and Europe.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> M.M. Joshi, *Scrapping the Bottom of the Barrel: Budgets, Organisations and Leadership in the Indian Defence System*, ORF Special Report, no.74, New Delhi, Observer Research Foundation, August 2018, pp.1-2, [www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08\\_ORF\\_Special\\_Report\\_74\\_Defence\\_1.pdf](http://www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08_ORF_Special_Report_74_Defence_1.pdf), (accessed on 11 December 2018); M. Pubby, 'Pensions overtake modernisation, modest 7.8% hike in defence budget', *The Print*, 1 February 2018, <https://theprint.in/economy/pensions-overtake-modernisation-modest-7-8-hike-in-defence-budget/32880/>, (accessed on 10 December 2019).

<sup>169</sup> Personal interview with Dr. Rajeshwari P. Rajagopalan, Security Expert on nuclear and maritime affairs at Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi and former Advisory member in the National Security Committee, New Delhi, 18 December 2015.

<sup>170</sup> Personal interview with Commander (Retired), Mr. Ajay Ray, Indian Navy, Kolkata, 24 July 2017.



There has been a very marginal increase in the capital outlay for defence for 2020-21 as compared to the budget estimates and revised estimates for 2019-20, which will affect several big defence acquisition projects that are being done for building capabilities. In addition, the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman who was earlier the Defence Minister, did not mention the defence budget in the annual budget speech which indicates that the government has prioritised other sectors over defence. Without the pension, the defence budget is only 1.5 percent of the GDP.<sup>171</sup> Strategic expert Dr. S. Kalyanaraman, IDSA citing Modi's statement on India's decision to buy 36 Rafale-fighter jets in 2016 noted in a personal interview that, 'Modernization and force expansion cannot go hand in hand as they are not compatible. Given the limited resources, you cannot have the most mechanized high tech fighter aircrafts and also the same in more numbers.'<sup>172</sup>

There has been renewed emphasis on defence diplomacy under Modi's regime that has been hitherto neglected by the previous government. Modi has been keen to engage with USA, Japan, Australia (the Quad) and held bilateral joint military and naval exercises with Singapore (SIMBEX-2019) in the South China Sea,<sup>173</sup> Indonesia (Samudra Shakti in 2018), Vietnam and Myanmar (IMNEX in 2018) in the Indo-Pacific. Former BJP parliamentarian Dr. Chandan Mitra refuting claims of 'India being part of larger US led grand strategy or enterprise to contain China' emphasized instead on strengthening India's power projection capabilities through bilateral and regional cooperation. He said:

India has not joined the American camp, there is no American camp today  
India is trying to increase its own area of influence through strengthening  
regional cooperation with other regional countries in South, East and South  
East Asia.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> M. Pubby and S.K. Gurung, 'Marginal increase in defence budget could mar new acquisitions', *The Economic Times*, ET Bureau, 1 February 2020, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/marginal-increase-in-defence-budget-could-mar-new-acquisitions/articleshow/73839394.cms?from=mdr>, (accessed 13 February 2020).

<sup>172</sup> Personal interview with Security expert Dr. S. Kalyanaraman, IDSA, Ministry of Defence, New Delhi, 17 December 2015.

<sup>173</sup> Press Trust of India, 'India-Singapore Navies concluded maritime exercise', *Economic Times*, 22 May 2019, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-singapore-navies-concluded-maritime-exercise/articleshow/69442800.cms?from=mdr>, (accessed 7 March 2020).

<sup>174</sup> Personal interview with Dr. Chandan Mitra, former Member of Parliament(BJP) and the Chief Editor, *The Pioneer*, New Delhi, 22 August 2017.

India is conducting bilateral and multilateral exercises for better inter-operability, and taking up stands on the South China Sea. It is also strengthening the island territories such as Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the IOR such as by commissioning of new air base-INS Kohassa in January 2019. The Indian Navy has put forward 'new mission based deployment' in the Indian Ocean in July 2018, of ships and aircraft along critical sea-lanes of communication. The access given to the port of Sabang by Indonesia is further improving India's naval outreach.<sup>175</sup> India is investing in the development of physical infrastructure in the island nations of Mauritius, Seychelles and Maldives and developing Sittwe port in Myanmar. In a personal interview talking about the strategic advantage of port visits and maritime exercises, retired Indian naval officer Mr. Ajay Roy said:

China in order to get access to Indian Ocean has to cross many choke points and other regional states such as Phillipines, Japan, North Korea, Malaysia and Vietnam, all of whom have interests and stakes in South China Sea can monitor the activities of China alongside the US that maintains its presence in the region. China is also trying to have access to the Arabian Sea through Karakoram highway, the portion which has been conceded to Pakistan and China is developing roads over there for the access to oil and gas from Central Asia through Pakistan. Just west of Karachi there is a Makran coast, where China intends to develop a port. China will eventually make a pipeline through which it can have access to Middle Eastern oil and can bring it to China bypassing all the vulnerable sea lanes and areas. They are giving Pakistan grants, technological help and developing infrastructure there. China has made 2 artificial islands which are tactics to increase its maritime zone. China has been making artificial islands in the Exclusive economic zone (250 kms perpendicular to the coastline which is used for harnessing of the marine resources) that increases their area which has been opposed by the US and other regional states. India has to counteract these problems and therefore, India's policy is to be friendly with these countries in the adjacent region which China has to bypass to reach to Indian Ocean. When you conduct maritime exercises

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<sup>175</sup> A. Basu Ray Chaudhury and P. Saha, 'Indo-Pacific', in H.V. Pant and K. Taneja (eds.), *Looking Back, Looking Ahead: Foreign Policy in Transition under Modi*, ORF Special Report 93, New Delhi Observer Research Foundation, July 2019, p.50, [https://www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/ORF\\_SpecialReport\\_93\\_ForeignPolicy-Modi.pdf](https://www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/ORF_SpecialReport_93_ForeignPolicy-Modi.pdf), (accessed 12 December 2019).

one gets to know about the region, how many ships can one dock over there or what are the raw materials one can access and such knowledge gives a strategic advantage.<sup>176</sup>

India, in this regard, has enhanced its defence cooperation and remains involved in the discussions around establishing the Quad-that includes USA, Japan, Australia and India and is intended towards holding regular joint multilateral naval exercises. Former Defence Minister A.K. Antony in the UPA-II said, 'India has very wide ranging international defence and military cooperation. It has been used as an effective tool of foreign policy and forms one of the main forms of engagement with many countries such as Russia, Singapore, UK, USA, France, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Mauritius, Myanmar, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, South Africa, Tajikistan, Oman and Bhutan' to promote mutual understanding and trust on defence and security challenges, enhance transparency and openness and to imbibe 'best practices' in various military fields to enhance inter-operability with the militaries of more advanced countries and to access superior technology in weaponry and systems.<sup>177</sup> The UPA-II government showed hesitancy to follow up on such ideas and there was slow progress in building closer security and defence ties with Washington almost to the point of relative decline. New Delhi had been too cautious to antagonise China and have consciously averted being part of an 'anti-China containment' narratives as to avoid being perceived in Beijing as being too close to the USA as it might lead China in 'adopting overtly hostile and negative policies toward India.'<sup>178</sup>

### **7.5.2 Re-producing India as a 'Normative actor'**

The Singh government developed closer relations with USA that led to the Indo-US nuclear deal in 2008. India's strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific region, democratic character, opposition to Islamist terrorism and strong people-to-people ties with the United States makes New Delhi and Washington 'natural partners'. Under the UPA government, the *Non-alignment 2.0* document had prescribed that India should carry

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<sup>176</sup> Personal interview with Commander (Retired) Mr. Ajay Roy, Indian Navy, Kolkata, 24 July 2017.

<sup>177</sup> A.K. Antony, 'Keynote Address of Defence Minister A.K. Antony at the National Seminar on "Defence Cooperation as a tool for enhancing National Interest"', New Delhi, 18 February 2008, in A.S. Bhasin (ed.), *India's Foreign Relations-2008 Documents*, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, pp.84-85.

<sup>178</sup> Khilnani et.al., *Non-Alignment 2.0*, p.14

on building upon its strategic partnerships with the US and other regional powers. Former PM Singh was quick to clarify that, 'relations with the United States are of great importance ...in doing so, we must not compromise on our national honour, on our national interest... This is not an alliance; this is not a military alliance. This is not an alliance against any other country... We are not part of any military alliance and we are not ganging up against any other country, least of all against China.'<sup>179</sup>

The US has pushed for a larger role of India in the maintenance of the peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region under its 'Rebalance to Asia' (originally 'Pivot to Asia') strategy that involved a refocussing of US involvement and interest in the Asia-Pacific region. The then American Secretary Hilary Clinton recognising, 'India's leadership in the region to its east ...[and] India's historic role in the wider region' remarked that 'India's leadership will help to shape positively the future of Asia-Pacific' and that, '[T]he United States supports India's Look East policy...[W]e encourage India not just to look east, but to engage East and act East as well....'<sup>180</sup> U.S. Deputy Secretary of State William Burns also spoke in support of 'India's strong presence across the Indian and Pacific Oceans' as a 'source of comfort and affirms its potential as a net security provider in the maritime domain.'<sup>181</sup> But India under the Singh government presented an ambivalent response to the 'Pivot' and in its second term, the then Defence Minister A.K. Antony was extremely reluctant to actually engage in defence diplomacy though he supported broadening of defense partnerships on paper. Commenting on the US policy of 'Asia Pivot' and the reasons behind India's ambivalent response to it, Dr. Rajeswari Rajagopalan at Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in New Delhi in a personal interview said:

This has come from background issues. When Obama signed the joint statement in Beijing expressing the intent that they should jointly manage, it immediately brought back the memories of post 1998 Joint statement of Clinton and the then president of China. Then, Obama came to India and signed a joint statement to work together for East Asian security. So how does China

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<sup>179</sup> Singh, 'PM's reply to the Lok Sabha debate on his US visit.'

<sup>180</sup> H. Clinton, 'Remarks on India and the United States: A Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', Secretary of State, Anna Centenary Library, Chennai, India, 20 July 2011, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2011/07/168840.htm>, (accessed 15 February 2020).

<sup>181</sup> W.J. Burns, 'Deputy Secretary of State William J. Burns speaks on "US-India partnership in an Asia-Pacific Century"', University of Pune, Pune, 16 December 2011, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/s/d/former/burns/remarks/2011/178934.htm>, (accessed 16 February 2020).

figure in the game plan is not clear. How is India perceived by USA, whether India and US have perceived same kind of roles or have respective roles chalked needs further clarity. So India is kind of sitting on the fence because US has not not been categorically clear about how US wants India to respond to the US Policy. The growing US-China relations on the economic front also needs to be observed on how it translate in the future and affect US posture if there is a Sino-Indian conflict. This raises certain questions on whether US would pursue closer ties with India and come to its aid then and thereby suspicions in New Delhi about credibility of the US as the guarantor of security. Japan despite being an alliance partner always has raised concerns on the US credibility as a security guarantee. There were concerns about policy focus and attention of the US leadership in this part of the world, whereas China over the last 5 years has got increasingly involved in Asia-Pacific. The external powers focus in the region is likely to stay. The regional powers are welcoming back the presence of USA in region and US will continue to be the staying power in Asia-Pacific.<sup>182</sup>

The shift happened with Modi winning the national elections and he then invited President Obama to be the guest of honour in India's Republic Day Celebration in 2015. Delhi has arguably sought to consolidate its defense partnership with the US even as it has concurrently pursued better relations with Beijing. During Modi's maiden 2014 visit to the US, both sides agreed to extend the US-India defense cooperation agreement by another ten years.<sup>183</sup> During Obama's 2015 visit to Delhi, there was an upgrade of US-India defense collaboration focused on 'co-development and co-production of [joint] advanced defense projects'.<sup>184</sup> Both the sides signed the Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region, which affirms a shared vision for working together for prosperity and stability in the region and implicitly criticizes China. It recognized the 'importance of safeguarding maritime security and ensuring freedom of navigation ... especially in the South China Sea', and re-affirmed that India remains Washington's 'indispensable' partner in ensuring stability in the Indo-Pacific

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<sup>182</sup> Personal interview with Security expert and former member of National Security Advisory Board, Dr. Rajeswari P. Rajagopalan, Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, 18 December 2015.

<sup>183</sup> A. Shukla, 'Baby steps forward in US-India defense ties', *Business Standard*, 3 October 2014, [https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/baby-steps-forward-in-us-india-defence-ties-114100300041\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/baby-steps-forward-in-us-india-defence-ties-114100300041_1.html), (accessed 17 August 2015).

<sup>184</sup> 'India-US to enhance defense cooperation, says pm modi', *OneIndia*, 25 January 2015, <http://www.oneindia.com/india/india-us-enhance-defence-cooperation-says-pm-modi-1632097.html>, (accessed 17 Decemeber 2015).

region.<sup>185</sup> In 2016 based on 'shared interests and values', the U.S. declared India a 'major defense partner' which recognizes a similar level and speed of access for India to US military technology like any other US ally. In the consecutive years there were several explicit statements in strategy papers and defense documents released by the US government which pushed for India's enhanced role to 'help defend a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific'.<sup>186</sup> Both the parties have also signed a number of important agreements which included: the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement in 2016, the 2018 Communications, Compatibility and Security Agreement, and finally an Agreement to pursue four path finder projects under the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative. The 2017 National Security Strategy said that the U.S. welcomes 'India's emergence as a leading global power and stronger strategic and defense partner'<sup>187</sup> whereas US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson emphasized on Indo-US partnership 'to defend the rules-based global system' in Indo-Pacific.<sup>188</sup> Modi unlike the Singh government has not been hesitant to revive the Quad and also conducted the 'Tiger Triumph'-which is the first Indo-US military exercise to include all three of India's military services — Army, Navy and Air Force in 2019.

Presently, India –USA cooperation has become comprehensive over the past decade and includes partnership on wide-ranging issues; defense and security, energy, technology cooperation, global connectivity, trade relations and people to people relations. Indian forces are undertaking most training exercises today with the forces of USA which has resulted in increased inter-operability in the last decade. The major focus area of cooperation has been ensuring maritime safety and stability where both the countries hold common understandings for enhancing regional-economic connectivity based on a 'rule based international order, especially in Indo-Pacific and

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<sup>185</sup> The White House, 'US–india joint strategic vision for the Asia–Pacific and Indian Ocean region', 25 January 2015, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/01/25/us-india-joint-strategic-vision-asia-pacific-and-indian-ocean-region>, (accessed 11 Decemebr 2015).

<sup>186</sup> Department of Defense (DoP), 'The Indo-Pacific Strategy Report: Preparedness, Partnerships and Promoting a Networked Region', *National Security Strategy*, Washington D.C., DoP 1 June 2019, <https://media.defense.gov/2019/Jul/01/2002152311/-1/-1/1/DEPARTMENT-OF-DEFENSE-INDO-PACIFIC-STRATEGY-REPORT-2019.PDF>, (accessed 27 February 2020).

<sup>187</sup> The White House, 'National Security Strategy of the United States of America.'

<sup>188</sup> A. Singh et al., *The New India-US Partnership in the Indo-Pacific: Peace, Prosperity and Security*, The Heritage Foundation, Observer Reasearch Foundation and Hudson Institute, New Delhi, Observer Research Foundation, January 2018, p. 2, <https://www.orfonline.org/research/new-india-united-states-partnership-indo-pacific-peace-prosperity-security/>, (accessed 11 January 2019).

global commons' with both the sides agreeing on 'the importance of sustainable and transparent financing in the development of connectivity infrastructure in the world.'<sup>189</sup>

The Modi administration has showed greater enthusiasm to take up strong positions on Chinese aggressiveness in the South China Sea as 'if for China Indian Ocean is not an Indian lake', then India feels the imperative to contest China's impressions that 'the waters east of Malacca also falls under the latter's sphere of influence.'<sup>190</sup> New Delhi has been clearly reaffirming that, 'a free, open, prosperous and inclusive Indo -Pacific region serves the long-term interests of all countries in the region and of the world at large'.<sup>191</sup> The June 2017 India-U.S. joint statement stated that both sides agreed towards 'ensuring respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, the rule of law, and the environment; and call on other nations in the region to adhere to these principles.'<sup>192</sup> India is also now taking firmer stand against China's assertiveness in South China Sea. As former Foreign Secretary and the present EAM, Jaishankar remarked:

India supports freedom of navigation and over-flight, and unimpeded commerce, based on the principles of international law, particularly UNCLOS that serves as a constitution for the oceans. We also encourage resolution of territorial and maritime disputes through peaceful means in accordance with these universally recognized principles. We have always stood for exercising self-restraint in the conduct of activities that could complicate or escalate disputes affecting peace and stability. India's own record in this regard is well known.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Modi, 'Translation of Press statement by the Prime Minister on the State Visit of the President of the United States of America to India.'

<sup>190</sup> Pant, 'A New Maritime Balance in the Indo-Pacific region'; Press Trust of India, 'India's Act East Policy Balancing China in the Region: ThinkTank', *The Indian Express*, 24 July 2015, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/asean-summit-quadrilateral-narendra-modi-philippines-china-us-japan-4934360/lite>, (accessed 20 February 2018).

<sup>191</sup> S. Roy, 'ASEAN Summit: Eye on China as India joins quadrilateral with US, Australia and Japan', *The Indian Express*, 13 November 2017, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/asean-summit-quadrilateral-narendra-modi-philippines-china-us-japan-4934360/>, (accessed 8 October 2018).

<sup>192</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, 'Joint Statement - United States and India: Prosperity through Partnership', 27 June 2017, [https://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/28560/United\\_States\\_and\\_India\\_Prosperty\\_Through\\_Partnership](https://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/28560/United_States_and_India_Prosperty_Through_Partnership), (accessed 25 February 2018).

<sup>193</sup> Jaishankar, 'Foreign Secretary's Keynote Address at the Inaugural Session of Second IORA Meeting of Experts for Maritime Safety & Security, New Delhi (November 7, 2017).'

Modi sought to translate a hesitant LEP into a proactive 'Act East' Policy in the India's maritime neighbourhood keeping Chinese 'assertiveness' in mind. Commenting on the strategic shift under NDA-II to counter such Chinese responses security expert at ORF, Rajagopalan noted in a personal interview that:

Modi has been very active since 2015 such as taking a clear stand with Obama and welcomes the US policy. It has put out a joint statement with Obama to play a role in East Asia to jointly maintain sea lines of communication. India has brought in Japan and made it a regular feature in Malabar exercises. But India is also conducting 'Hand in Hand' exercises with China and is not openly embracing the Asia-pivot.<sup>194</sup> However, India in itself is becoming more proactive in Asian pacific security issues. Since 2010 we have been talking on Sea lanes of Communnication, on the ASEAN forum, taking up issues such as open seas, freedom of navigation, respect of international law and on multilateral platforms. Modi is talking in a more open fashion and India's stand is becoming very clear. India would be discussing these issues and is taking a clear position on South China Sea. How India and Japan posture on SCS will have repercussions on how China will posture itself in the IOR and on the Sino-India border issue. We should resist such Chinese pressures and stand up to it, and China needs to show consideration for other countries concerns. It has to respect and play by the rules, international laws, and agreements that are in place on these maritime disputes. Even on the Sino-Indian border issue there are certain rules and regulations and agreements in place which India follows.<sup>195</sup>

These have been the significant shifts in India's maritime discourse where Indian elites have repositioned India as a normative actor with stakes to create a 'free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific' in opposition to Chinese expansionsm. India has strengthened defence links with Vietnam 'to jointly work for an open, independent prosperous Indo-Pacific region where sovereignty and international laws are respected and where

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<sup>194</sup> Personal interview with Dr. Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan, Security expert, Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi and former Advisory member in the National Security Committee, Government of India, New Delhi, 18 December 2015.

<sup>195</sup> Personal interview with Dr. Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan, Security expert, Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi and former Advisory member in the National Security Committee, Government of India, New Delhi, 18 December 2015.



differences are resolved through talks.<sup>196</sup> Commander (Retired), Mr. Ajay Roy, Indian Navy said:

Vietnam has allowed Indian ships to patrol in their waters and Indian ships are also patrolling in the waters near Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia, who are not friendly with China and their ships also visit in the Indian Ocean. Diplomatic port visits not only enhance political cooperation but enables Indian ships for patrolling the waters there.<sup>197</sup>

Indo-Japan ties has also improved over the years under the framework of 'Special Strategic and Global Partnership'. Modi noted that, 'No partner has played such a decisive role in India's economic transformation as Japan, No friend will matter more in realising India's economic dreams than Japan. And, ... on shaping the course of Asia and our interlinked ocean regions.'<sup>198</sup> India and Japan has concluded a civilian nuclear cooperation deal for engaging in commerce and clean energy. Japan has increased bilateral assistance programme and showed public and private support and commitment for the 'Make in India' programme. Japan is also helping and investing in building the High Speed Rail on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad sector and Abe has assured an approximate 12 billion U.S. dollars investment package and technical assistance, on very easy terms, for this project which 'will become an engine of economic transformation in India'.

Nevertheless, it is unlikely for India to be drawn into any US led coalition or enterprise against China and to this regard India prefers bilateral partnerships driving the 'Act East' impetus in the region that is found in deepening security ties with Japan, Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand. It is argued that 'With India getting more sure-footed,' as put by retired diplomat Dr. Mishra, '... Modi's India wants to play a *leading* world role, rather than just a *balancing* role. Ties with South East Asia are part of this narrative.'<sup>199</sup> Modi has been less hesitant to hold multilateral exercises with India, Japan

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<sup>196</sup> Personal interview with Dr. Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan, Security expert, Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, and former Advisory member in the National Security Committee, Government of India, New Delhi, 18 December 2015.

<sup>197</sup> Personal interview with Commander (Retired) Mr. Ajay Roy, Indian Navy, Kolkata, 24 July 2017.

<sup>198</sup> N. Modi, 'Media Statement by Prime Minister with Japanese Prime Minister in New Delhi', 12 December 2015, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, [https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/26175/Media\\_Statement\\_by\\_Prime\\_Minister\\_with\\_Japanese\\_Prime\\_Minister\\_in\\_New\\_DelhiDecember\\_12\\_2015](https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/26175/Media_Statement_by_Prime_Minister_with_Japanese_Prime_Minister_in_New_DelhiDecember_12_2015), (accessed 14 March 2020).

<sup>199</sup> Amb. (Retd.) J.N. Mishra, 'From Looking East to Acting East', *MEA Distinguished Lectures* Nagaland University, Lumami, 22 November, 2018, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, <https://www.mea.gov.in/distinguished-lectures-detail.htm?805>, (accessed 10 July 2019).

and Australia, thus revamping the Quad-often referred to as the 'Concert of democracies'.

## **7.6 Summary**

India has always been a maritime nation and has held ambitions to develop naval power. The first half of the chapter therefore looks at India's reproduction of China as the Other in South Asia and the IOR where it is viewed as both an immediate and a long term challenge on economic and military front; and both as a partner and as a competitor. India seeks to economically engage with China and work together for Asian security and promoting multilateralism, but simultaneously remain cautious of Chinese military activities in the neighbouring regions and of Chinese intrusions in the Indian Ocean.

There has been a greater focus on Indian Ocean diplomacy based on the *Pachamrit* doctrine to strengthen 'commerce, connectivity and culture' under a cooperative regional framework. Under Modi, there is a significant shift and clarity in vision as to strengthen India's 'operational footprint' in the IOR and the other 'areas of maritime interest'. India has been developing both hard power and soft power capabilities to augment its relations with the IOR countries and South East Asia. Modi's India has been more open to hold joint multilateral exercises but it sees them as not a substitute to the bilateral relationships that drive the India-ASEAN relations. India is taking up firm positions against China on international law and South China Sea and has been augmenting its indigenous defence capabilities and relations with the island nations through development of maritime infrastructure and active engagement in various regional bodies. Modi also has outlined his vision for blue economy for sustainable development of biodiversity, marine environment, safety of sea lines and trade and cooperation, renewable energy, fisheries etc. There has been concentrated attention on religious-cultural diplomacy to develop closer engagement with the IOR littoral states and 'extended neighbourhood' by promoting greater dialogue at various levels such as diaspora engagements, visit to religious sites and conducting HADR operations and re-positioning India as a normative actor in the Indo-Pacific poised to play a leading role as a 'responsible' maritime nation.

## **Conclusion**

The doctoral thesis looks at the discursive construction of ‘Indianness’ by the Indian security elites as reproduced in the India’s foreign policy and how it has supported India’s rise to achieve its major power aspirations. It also adds to the literature on the state behavior of the emerging powers in the present international order, that are seen to have a reformist agenda towards global governance given their legacy of being historically associated with the Third World movements, with particular attention here being on India. India is seen as an important player in the Asian region with its growing economic and military capabilities that is now expanding its presence ‘beyond South Asia’ in the wider Indo-Pacific region and is re-engaging with the global order with the intent to play a role as a ‘norm shaper’ in the global governance processes or in managing the global commons. It has been argued that security elites in India have always hold on to ideas of ‘Indian exceptionalism’, i.e the Indian elites have differentiated India from other nations and civilizations since the nineteenth century and seen it as an unique state which continue to resonate in Indian elites’ understandings of the Indian Self.

The study is relevant on two accounts: firstly, with India’s rising capabilities and the willingness to shoulder greater responsibilities in order to emerge as a ‘great power’, the relevance of such ideas of ‘Indian exceptionalism’ have been contested and needs to be re-examined. The study explores and addresses the existing debates on whether India is behaving like any other state, or in other words is becoming more ‘normal’ by placing India’s national interests at the forefront. But as has been discussed the resilience of certain normative ideas and principles cannot be ignored even in the post-cold war period that are continuously re-produced in India’s foreign policy texts and debates. Secondly, the study explores the relation between India’s national identity constructions and its foreign policy practices particularly in the context of the rise of the Hindu nationalism under Narendra Modi. The study shows that the elites have sought to re-interpret its meanings in a ‘multi-aligned’ or an ‘un-aligned’ world to adapt to those changes and yet the foreign policy discourse displays certain significant continuities in objectives, principles and even practices alongside substantial shifts on certain policy areas.

The study is an interpretative and qualitative study that looks at the re-production of Indian identity or *Indian-ness* in its foreign policy discourse. The study draws on critical constructivist approaches and constructivist methodologies of discourse analysis and use of narratives to extensively study both primary and secondary documents and conducts elite interviews to understand how do the ‘security elites’ in India re-define and reproduce the idea of Indian-ness in their foreign policy discourse that informs their policy choices which in turn re-enforces such identity reproductions. This idea of *Indian-ness* or ‘Indian exceptionalism’ is integral to national identity construction that reproduces a positive Self vis-à-vis the Other(s). The study looks at the different degrees of Otherness that the Indian security elites re-construct through both temporal and spatial-political or internal/external Othering against which the Indian Self is defined.

The literature review on Indian identity and foreign policy identify that the study of ‘Indian exceptionalism’, its content and how it is reproduced and certain key themes are re-defined in India’s foreign policy discourse and practice in the post-Cold war period under the two most predominant national political parties- INC and BJP have not received much concentrated attention. Most of the studies have treated identity as something fixed and treated it as a variable for causal explanation on state behaviour. This study drawing from critical constructivist approaches adopts a relational concept of identity and redefines foreign policy as a discursive site for identity re-production and draws on the mutually constitutive and the performative nature of relationship between identity and foreign policy as elaborated in Chapter 2. It explores the Self/Other(s) representational practices and establish its links with the foreign policy practices to explain the shifts and continuities in Indian foreign policy which has received limited attention or have been restricted to certain time frames in the few existing studies. This study provides a comprehensive account by examining a comparative study of three Indian governments with extensive documentary analysis of both primary and secondary sources and semi-structured elite interviews across three different case studies that have emerged as the key priority areas in India’s foreign policy over the last three decades.

Chapter 3 looks at the writings on Indian strategic culture and examines the historical intellectual repertoire that has been central to the narratives of Indian exceptionalism which draws from India’s civilizational consciousness. It recognises,

the influence of Hinduism and the centrality of the idea of 'dharma' which is human centric and relative in terms of changing circumstances. It additionally identifies other key themes such as restraint, non-discrimination, justice and human welfare as relevant to Indian understandings of the Self and for its regional and international engagements. Indian elites re-construct India as internally exceptional by re-producing Indian Self as morally and spiritually distinctive and superior by drawing from philosophies and nationalist writings of Swami Vivekananda's - 'Service to man', Rabindranath Tagore's *internationalism* and Hindu cultural concepts of *Vasudhaivaikutmbakam* or Oneness as especially relevant for India's religious- cultural diplomacy under Modi, which is described as Hindu internationalism. Such cultural ideas are also reflected in India's notion of 'self-enlightened national interests' that aims to secure a country's national interest without harming the core national interests of others and also embraces a holistic view of national security issues, that includes environmental degradation, energy security, food security, water security, climate change which have been also recognised under Prime minister Modi's vision for 'Blue economy' and 'SAGAR' in India's ocean diplomacy and India's willingness to emerge as a 'net security provider' in the IOR. India has developed cultural diplomatic tools to seek India's regional pre-eminence in the IOR through technical and economic cooperation, is building infrastructure, engaging in regional bodies for ensuring maritime safety and providing HADR operations. It also elaborates on the realpolitik practices in India's ancient statecraft and colonial influences on Indian geo-political thinking to argue that India has also a rich tradition that has talked about territory, sovereignty, defence against external threats, use of covert means but remains under-examined and is ignored which needs to be revived, while distinguishing from other cultures like Chinese practices of realpolitik and Islamic and Western (Christian) practices of conquest.

The first half of the thesis makes a detailed elaboration of the broad themes of Indian-ness as discursively re-interpreted by the security elites. The study in Chapter 4 identifies two alternative discourses on post-colonial narratives that seek to re-produce the 'idea of India'- the Post-Nehruvian and the Hyperrealist-Cultural nationalism discourses and elaborates on the key themes as discursively articulated by the Indian security elites that binds these discourses together to re-produce an idea of the collective Self in opposition to the Other/multiple Others in the foreign policy discourse and practices. These discourses help to understand the how elites define

India's role in the region and the global order and its foreign policy priorities through which such ideas of Indian-ness are re-produced. Both these discourse emphasize certain key themes in India's self-representational practices in its pursuit of national interests namely the importance of economics, a cautious approach to globalisation, access to technology and energy, global and regional integration, centrality of Indian Ocean and an expanding maritime role for India's independence in foreign policy making, greater focus on indigenous defence capabilities, developmental priorities in the neighbourhood and soft power diplomacy. The Post-Nehruvian discourse have focussed on India's democratic credential and soft power skill and re-produces India's exceptionalism as an emulatory model for the rest of the world as a pluralistic and peaceful society. Modi has emphasized on civilizational exceptionalism or *Sabhyata* as drawn from Hindu traditions as enunciated in his Panchamrit doctrine to re-imagine India as a Hindu nation that aims to build India's national strength as to promote peace, welfare and stability for all in the region and worldwide. Modi's 'India first' doctrine places primary importance on building bridges with the 'immediate' and 'extended neighbourhood' with primary focus on connectivity, commerce and culture and has sought an expanding maritime role in the wider Indo-Pacific region. The study identifies these themes and employs these key themes as articulated by the security elites to establish its links with India's foreign policy practise in the empirical case study chapters. These chapters explore and understand how these themese based on India's self-understanding have been re-interpreted to reproduce ideas of exceptionalism in its engagement with the global nuclear order, as a South Asian power in its 'neighbourhood first' policy and in the Indo-Pacific.

The nationalist elites' have always believed that India's urge to act freely in order to protect and pursue her 'national interests' [based on its self-understanding] so as to realise India's destiny as a 'great power' cannot be curtailed. Such narratives of sovereignty were also evident in India's nuclear discourse that sought to reproduce the 'neo-colonial' non-proliferation global order as intended to keep India backward and underdeveloped. Indian elites [re]produce India's role as a 'different' great power even in its use of nuclear energy/technology through temporal Othering of the colonial West and spatial-political Othering of India's neighbours-China and Pakistan. India has always argued that India unlike the Others in its 'immediate neighbourhood' has always upheld non-proliferation norms and strengthened global disarmament objectives

despite remaining outside of the NPT regime and has thereby reproduced herself as a 'responsible power'. India's nuclear tests were also framed in opposition to the Western led 'neo-colonial', 'hegemonic' technological regimes and the hostile neighbours which had forced India to go nuclear. The security elites sought to discursively reproduce the Indian Self as a 'responsible,' 'restrained' and 'peace-oriented' nation which came under serious challenges after the Pokhran-II nuclear tests by a two pronged policy – first by adopting a nuclear doctrine with a 'No First Use' (NFU) policy and second by reaffirming India's role as a responsible partner and stakeholder through re-newed engagement with the non-proliferation regime to create a 'new global consensus' on non-proliferation and disarmament and taking national and international measures on non-proliferation and nuclear safety. This attachment to the 'restraint' and the 'responsible power' narrative have endured amongst security elites despite the debates on India's nuclear doctrine over the NFU policy under Modi government and the shift in India's interaction with the non-proliferation regime post the Indo –US nuclear deal. Both civilian leadership and scientific community in defence research has taken pride in India's practise of 'restraint' and continues to reproduce this as a positive and remarkable attribute that India upholds though being situated in a 'hostile neighbourhood' with states 'working in collusion' against India's interests, undermining her prosperity and having proclivity towards use of coercion, deceit, duplicity, provocation and intimidation.

Such ideas of 'exceptionalism' have been central within both both Post-Nehruvian and hyperrealist-cultural nationalism discourse that led to the signing of the Indo-US nuclear deal and the NSG waiver and accommodated India without having her to sign the NPT which is seen as a classic case of 'exceptionalism'. This further enables India to gain membership in the technology control regimes and engage in nuclear commerce. After India transformed itself into a nuclear weapon state and has been accommodated in the non-proliferation global order, India has shown willingness to emerge as a 'norm-shaper' which has been encapsulated in the concept of India's objective to emerge as a 'leading power'. However, the security elites have shown scepticism over how much of a large role will India be able to play and in the last 10 years there also has not been much advancement in terms of tangible results as no nuclear reactors have been built. The study recognises the re-production of the key themes articulated in the national identity discourses within the Indo-US nuclear

debates. The deal was legitimised to the domestic audience to facilitate India's domestic economic transformation, whereas the Indian elites reproduced India's difference as a 'responsible' nuclear power based on its non-proliferation records and its willingness to shoulder greater responsibilities towards transforming into a clean energy resource to the international community. It is evident that India aspires to remain actively engaged in shaping global governance agenda such as on climate change and non-proliferation and this has been further pushed by such US efforts. Additionally, India seeks an active role within the non-proliferation regime through membership in the MTCR and NSG groupings by emphasizing India's 'impeccable non-proliferation record' that is seen commensurate with India's increasing stature and influence.

The study identifies and explores the reproduction of India's two most significant external spatial political Others - China and Pakistan against which India defines itself and how it prevents India from realising its full potential and the role it espouses for itself in the South Asian region. Indian elites look and compare the Indian Self with China and draws both similarities and differences, both positive and negative. India's territorial sovereignty and regional pre-eminence are threatened through Chinese activities in India's periphery such as the building of infrastructural projects in South Asia where China-Pakistan acts in collusion against the interests of India. Chinese initiatives to block India's entry in the NSG or reluctance to cooperate on concerns of terrorism reproduces China as the Other in both the post-Nehruvian and Hindutva discourse. It identifies certain areas where China is framed as inferior to India and needs to draw lessons from India, whereas China's economic performance and the ability to have a long term strategic vision with a no-nonsensical approach to ensure national security and use of realpolitik have been a source of emulation. Yet, there is an inherent trait in Indian policy makers to not to follow any particular model (here China model) but to carve its own unique path. There is a continuation of a cautious approach in India's dealing with China as India cannot afford to antagonize China and seeks cooperation for mutual benefits, yet there is a greater awareness of the long term threat posed by Chinese ambitions and activities in the IOR and wider Indo-Pacific against which India under Modi is taking concrete steps primarily on the maritime front under its neighbourhood-first and Indian Ocean diplomacy to increase its regional presence and profile.



Pakistan has been the constant antagonistic spatial-political Other against which India reproduces a superior and progressive Self. Pakistan primarily emerges as an irritant whom India has sought to evolve its strategy to deal with the Pakistan-terrorism nexus from a 'position of strength'. The surgical strikes are not only targeted towards the international community to reproduce a strong India but given the timings of the strikes post Pulwama, it is a performative act to augment the Hindu nationalist sentiment amongst the domestic audience. Yet, India is still keen to represent itself as a restrained and responsible power in its use of force to reproduce the Indian uniqueness and it holds sway in the official narrative that the Indian elites project and promote. The section also looks at the boundary drawing practices by the hyperrealist/cultural nationalist discourse in the domestic context that led to an internal Othering of the Muslim minorities in India as evident in the exclusionary politics under the BJP government that is targeted towards Muslim minorities such as through beef ban, episodes of mob lynching and Citizenship Amendment Act which have challenged the identity of an inclusive, plural and secular India.

The study at length looks and compares the representational practices within both the Post-Nehruvian and hyperrealists/cultural nationalist discourses of the Indian Self vis-à-vis the two spatial-political Other-Pakistan and China and identifies the continuities and changes in representational practices and the policies towards these neighbouring countries. There are both convergence and divergence in the representational practices under both these discourses but necessarily do not completely correspond to the policies taken by the governments. For instance, the BJP led Vajpayee government despite of a hard rhetoric had not taken any military action in response of the terrorist attacks and followed a reconciliatory approach despite the narrative of securing the Hindu national identity. Instead the Modi government had been less hesitant to use force by resorting to surgical strikes on one hand but has also shown the continuation of the reconciliation approach by inviting the Pakistan Prime minister at his swearing in ceremony and promoted the narrative of India as the Hindu nation well poised to work for the welfare of mankind and world peace.

The chapter 6 and 7 elaborates on how the security elites under both UPA and NDA-II governments visualise its role in the region under the 'neighbourhood first' policy and the Indo-Pacific region. The prime focus under both the UPA and BJP government have been sustaining and boosting the 'economic growth engine' to pursue

India's developmental priorities. This vision had already been sown by the UPA regime by recognising the importance of expanding and strengthening India's connectivity and infrastructural capabilities, in the Indian ocean littoral states which have been taken forward by the Modi government, but Modi has been actively (re)engaging to re-establish India as a normative actor in the region by supporting a 'free, inclusive and open Indo-Pacific'. The Modi government has devised a certain set of strategies and tactics to implement and augment the process and expand its reach in the Indo-Pacific region. One of the major changes have been that the External Affairs department is increasing India's visibility and presence in the region through frequent visits in the neighbouring countries, appropriating and building upon India's cultural and religious links to bolster its influence in the region more actively and explicitly and maritime security cooperation with IOR littoral states and Far East. Modi aims to reposition India as a 'leading commercial player' in the region and to revive India's traditional glory as the Hindu trading nation with links from West Asia to Far East, emerge as the key 'service provider of public goods', promoter of regional stability and to play the leading role in strengthening regional cooperation in South Asia and Indo-Pacific through intensive engagement with countries and regional institution like IORA, IONS, BIMSTEC, ASEAN and ADMM+. Therefore the elites reproduce India as a strong and positive asset to enhance the development and prosperity of the region as a whole. Both the Singh and Modi governments have taken initiative to ensure that the neighbouring countries and IOR countries become stakeholders in India's benefit for their own progress but under NDA-II New Delhi aims to expand the influence of Hindu India through religious and cultural soft power diplomacy such as diaspora engagements, visit to religious sites and humanitarian assistance.

In the India's Indian Ocean diplomacy India has made major shifts to deepen its engagement through developing both hard power and soft power capabilities to augment its relations with the IOR countries and South East Asia. Unlike the Singh government Modi's India has been more open to held joint multilateral exercises but it sees them as not a substitute to the bilateral relationships that drive the India-ASEAN relations. Modi's India has been taking up firm positions against China on international law and South China Sea and has been augmenting its defence capabilities and relations with the island territories. India also has enunciated his vision for blue economy for

sustainable development of biodiversity, marine environment, safety of sea lines and trade and cooperation, renewable energy, fisheries etc.

Therefore, India continues to reproduce such claims of exceptionalism which is integral to its identity production and also allows it to remain unthreatening and benign to the others. India's exceptionalism has provided it with an opportunity to play an international role in global governance processes. Now that it is gaining power capabilities, it is still behind certain other major powers in its own neighbourhood and India's reproduction of Indianness allows it to reproduce itself as a positive force and gain leverage in the region and beyond so that a stake is created in India's rise rather than in containing it. Also the influence of India's civilizational ethos has reproduced such a strong sense of Self which has endured and is being further reasserted under Modi's Hindu nationalism and Hindu Internationalism. It is also used by India to support India's rise regionally and globally as it enabled India to gain advantages to engage in nuclear commerce in spite of staying outside of NPT or to gain leverage in ASEAN or with far-east countries like Japan to deepen defence and economic partnerships. India is also being pushed for a larger role in the Indo-Pacific and this enables her to re-position itself as a normative actor in the region by working together with 'like-minded' countries in the region through participating in bilateral and multilateral exercise and regional architecture building. However India's projection as reluctant to use of force has made India appear helpless to Pakistan's proxy war which has changed under Modi's assertive nationalism. The NDA-II government has taken a much stricter policy towards Pakistan and 'surgical strike' has become a key component in India's policy to tackle Pakistan-terrorism in the region and these strikes have been also publicised in the Indian media.

Finally, it can be concluded that Indian elites operate with a strong sense of identity that distinguishes itself in opposition to the Others in its foreign policy discourses that has informed its foreign policy practices. This idea of Self is continuously reproduced in the Manmohand doctrine and the Modi-doctrine which is based on five pillars of security, prosperity, dialogue, dignity and civilization. There is evidently an Indian way of doing things drawing on India's culture, civilizational consciousness and self-perceptions that is discursively articulated in opposition to Other to reproduce the Self as a force of stability and prosperity, where instead of being just reproducing itself a 'responsible' power, India is now showing increasing

willingness to shoulder greater responsibilities in the region and beyond and in the global order.

This research provides useful insights for examining the role of the emerging powers in the global order and how they would re-engage in the global order with rising capabilities. Most scholarship has focussed on a reformist agenda with the rise of China but as this study has shown that India has stakes in the neo-liberal order and rather than challenging, it seeks re-integration and wants to play a significant role in the shaping of the norms. Further such studies provide useful insights on the role of identity and the representational practices to understand the shift and continuities in foreign policies which are important additions to the constructivist research agenda. It also relates to the existing literature on state narratives of exceptionalism and the nature of Othering practices in a state's foreign policy discourse. Additionally, it provides scope for future research on the study of Hindu nationalism and its influence on Indian foreign policies which could be extended to analyse other case studies with focussed attention on bilateral relations or on other policy areas such as climate change or peace-keeping. Finally, it adds to the existing scholarship on the role of the emerging powers in the liberal world order, its implications for the global governance agenda and regional security architecture building in South Asia and in the Indo-Pacific region and the role of soft power.

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**Appendix – 1**  
**LIST OF INTERVIEWS**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Date</b>
1.	Dr. Parimal Banerjee, Awarded Visishto Seva Medal (VSM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scientist, DRDO (1987-2003)</li> <li>• Indian Air Force, Air Commodore (Retd.) (1966-2003)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scientist at Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)</li> <li>• Involved in the Pokhran –II nuclear testing of 1998 and Indian Missile Programme</li> </ul>	Kolkata	22.08.2015
2.	Pinak Ranjan Chakraborty	Indian Foreign Service (Retd.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Govt. of India</li> <li>• Former High Commissioner to Bangladesh and Ambassador to Thailand</li> <li>• Distinguished Fellow, Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi</li> </ul>	New Delhi	16.12.2015
3.	Adhir Chowdhury	Politician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indian National Congress (INC) Member of Parliament,</li> <li>• Former Union Minister 2012-2014</li> <li>• President of the West Bengal Pradesh Congress</li> </ul>	New Delhi	22.12.2015
4.	K.K. Ganguly	Indian Army	Major General (Retd.) Indian Army	Kolkata	24.08.2015
5.	Colonel Pradip Kumar Gautam	Indian Army	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retd. Colonel</li> <li>• Research Fellow, Institute for Defence Studies &amp; Analyses (IDSA), Ministry of Defence, Govt. of India</li> </ul>	New Delhi	17.12.2015
6.	Manas Ghosh	Journalist	Editor, The Statesman	Kolkata	26.07.2015

7.	Dr. S. Kalyanaraman	Security Expert	Research Fellow, Institute for Defence Studies & Analyses (IDSA), Ministry of Defence, Govt. of India	New Delhi	17.12.2015
8.	Dr. Reshmi Kazi	Expert in Nuclear Studies	Associate Fellow, Institute for Defence Studies & Analyses (IDSA), Ministry of Defence, Govt. of India	New Delhi	22.12.2015
9.	Ram Madhav	Politician, Bharatiya Janata Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National General Secretary, BJP</li> <li>• Director, India Foundation</li> </ul>	New Delhi	24.08.2017
10.	Dr. Chandan Mitra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journalist</li> <li>• Politician</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Editor, The Pioneer</li> <li>• Ex-Member of Parliament, Rajyasabha (BJP)</li> </ul>	New Delhi	22.08.2017
11.	Dr. C. Raja Mohan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journalist</li> <li>• Strategic Thinker, Security Expert</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinguished Fellow, Observer Research Foundation</li> <li>• Member of National Security Council</li> <li>• Former Editor of Indian Express (National Daily)</li> </ul>	New Delhi	22.12.2015
12.	Dr. Rajeswari P. Rajagopalan	Expert in Nuclear and Space Policy	Senior Fellow, Head, Nuclear Space Initiative, Observer Research Foundation	New Delhi	18.12.2015
13.	Ajay Kumar Ray	Indian Navy	Commander (Retd.)	Kolkata	24.07.2017
14.	Mohammed Salim	Politician, Communist Party of India (Marxist)	Member of Parliament, CPI(M)	New Delhi	21.12.2015