

EDITED BY

DAVID M.  
**MALONE**

C. RAJA  
**MOHAN**

SRINATH  
**RAGHAVAN**



≡ The Oxford Handbook of  
**INDIAN FOREIGN  
POLICY**

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF

INDIAN  
FOREIGN  
POLICY



The Centre for International Governance Innovation is an independent, non-partisan think tank on international governance; for more information, visit [www.cigionline.org](http://www.cigionline.org).



The Centre for Policy Research (CPR) has been one of India's leading public policy think tanks since 1973. The Centre is a nonprofit, independent institution dedicated to conducting research that contributes to a more robust public discourse about the structures and processes that shape life in India.



**IDRC | CRDI**

International Development Research Centre

Centre de recherches pour le développement international

**Canada**

Knowledge, innovation, and solutions to improve the lives of people in the developing world.



Observer Research Foundation, headquartered in Delhi, is a not-for-profit, multidisciplinary think tank that has actively contributed to public policy debates in India since its founding in 1990.

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF

---

INDIAN  
FOREIGN  
POLICY

---

*Edited by*

DAVID M. MALONE, C. RAJA MOHAN,

*and*

SRINATH RAGHAVAN

OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, OX2 6DP,  
United Kingdom

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.  
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,  
and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of  
Oxford University Press in the UK and in certain other countries

© Oxford University Press 2015

The moral rights of the authors have been asserted

First Edition published in 2015

Impression: 1

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in  
a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the  
prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted  
by law, by licence or under terms agreed with the appropriate reprographics  
rights organization. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the  
above should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the  
address above

You must not circulate this work in any other form  
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press  
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
Data available

Library of Congress Control Number: 2015937039

ISBN 978-0-19-874353-8

Printed and bound by  
CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

Links to third party websites are provided by Oxford in good faith and  
for information only. Oxford disclaims any responsibility for the materials  
contained in any third party website referenced in this work.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

THE Editors would like to thank Dominic Byatt, Commissioning Editor for Humanities and Social Sciences at Oxford University Press whose idea this volume was and who has been unfailingly supportive of it and of them. We are also very grateful to his associates Olivia Wells, Sudhakar Sandacoumar, Jo North, and Joy Mellor all of whom managed challenging aspects of production superbly.

This project would never have been possible without the active encouragement and generous funding of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada and the Centre on Global Governance Innovation (CIGI), both with deep links to India. In particular, we would like to thank Bruce Currie Alder and Anindya Chatterjee of IDRC and Rohinton Medhora, the President of CIGI, for taking such a strong interest in the project.

We are very grateful to the Centre for Policy Research (CPR) in New Delhi, its President, Pratap Bhanu Mehta, and its Board, for agreeing to host this project, no small undertaking. The Observer Research Foundation (ORF), also of New Delhi, was also consistently supportive. Within CPR, Dr Pallavi Raghavan (also an author in the volume) with great dedication took on the task of project coordination. She was ably assisted at various times by Sandeep Bhardwaj (CPR), Swetha Murali (CPR), Kalathmika Natarajan (CPR), Saawani Rajee (CPR), Rishika Chauhan (ORF), and Ritika Passi (ORF).

We thank the ORF for hosting a very pleasant and productive interaction over dinner between the authors who attended the project workshop in January 2014 and the leading lights of the foreign policy community in the capital. We are especially grateful to the then National Security Adviser, Shivshankar Menon, who joined the dinner conversation on India's foreign policy with remarks and an extended response to a wide range of questions and comments.

David Malone is very grateful to the Council of the United Nations University (UNU) and, in particular, to its Chairman, Dr Mohamed Hassan, for encouraging and supporting him to pursue independent research and writing during his tenure at UNU. He is also much indebted to Alexandra Ivanovic, Nancy Roberts, Lee Schrader, and Anthony Yazaki for their assistance with proofs and copy edits of the volume under considerable time pressures.

Above all, we are grateful to our generally very busy authors who humoured us through several drafts of their excellent contributions.

D.M.M., C.R.M., S.R.  
January 2015



# CONTENTS

---

<i>List of Figures</i>	xiii
<i>List of Tables</i>	xv
<i>List of Contributors</i>	xvii

## PART I INTRODUCTION

1. India and the World	3
DAVID M. MALONE, C. RAJA MOHAN, AND SRINATH RAGHAVAN	
2. Five Approaches to the Study of Indian Foreign Policy	21
KANTI BAJPAI	
3. Theorizing India's Foreign Relations	35
SIDDHARTH MALLAVARAPU	

## PART II EVOLUTION OF INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY

4. The Foreign Policy of the Raj and Its Legacy	51
SNEH MAHAJAN	
5. Before Midnight: Views on International Relations, 1857–1947	65
RAHUL SAGAR	
6. Establishing the Ministry of External Affairs	80
PALLAVI RAGHAVAN	
7. Nehru's Foreign Policy: Realism and Idealism Conjoined	92
ANDREW B. KENNEDY	
8. Indira Gandhi's Foreign Policy: Hard Realism?	104
SURJIT MANSINGH	

9. At the Cusp of Transformation: The Rajiv Gandhi Years, 1984–1989 117  
SRINATH RAGHAVAN
10. Foreign Policy after 1990: Transformation through  
Incremental Adaptation 131  
C. RAJA MOHAN
11. India's National Security 145  
SUMIT GANGULY
12. Resources 160  
LIGIA NORONHA
13. India's International Development Program 173  
ROHAN MUKHERJEE
14. India's Soft Power 188  
RANI D. MULLEN

### PART III INSTITUTIONS AND ACTORS

15. State and Politics 205  
PAUL STANILAND AND VIPIN NARANG
16. The Parliament 219  
RUDRA CHAUDHURI
17. Officialdom: South Block and Beyond 232  
TANVI MADAN
18. The Private Sector 247  
RAJIV KUMAR
19. The Media in the Making of Indian Foreign Policy 259  
MANOJ JOSHI
20. Think-Tanks and Universities 271  
AMITABH MATTOO AND RORY MEDCALF
21. Mother India and Her Children Abroad: The Role of the  
Diaspora in India's Foreign Policy 285  
LATHA VARADARAJAN

22. Public Opinion	298
DEVESH KAPUR	
23. Indian Scientists in Defence and Foreign Policy	312
JAIDEEP A. PRABHU	
24. The Economic Imperatives Shaping Indian Foreign Policy	326
SANJAYA BARU	

## PART IV GEOGRAPHY

25. India and the Region	341
STEPHEN P. COHEN	
26. China	356
ALKA ACHARYA	
27. India's Policy Toward Pakistan	370
RAJESH BASRUR	
28. Bangladesh	384
SREERADHA DATTA AND KRISHNAN SRINIVASAN	
29. India's Nepal Policy	398
S. D. MUNI	
30. India–Sri Lanka Equation: Geography as Opportunity	412
V. SURYANARAYAN	
31. India's Bifurcated Look to 'Central Eurasia': The Central Asian Republics and Afghanistan	424
EMILIAN KAVALSKI	
32. The Gulf Region	437
TALMIZ AHMAD	
33. India's 'Look East' Policy	452
AMITAV ACHARYA	
34. The Indian Ocean as India's Ocean	466
DAVID SCOTT	

## PART V KEY PARTNERSHIPS

35. US–India Relations: The Struggle for an Enduring Partnership 481  
ASHLEY J. TELLIS
36. Western Europe 495  
CHRISTIAN WAGNER
37. India and Russia: The Anatomy and Evolution of a Relationship 509  
RAJAN MENON
38. Brazil: Fellow Traveler on the Long and Winding Road to *Grandeza* 524  
VARUN SAHNI
39. Israel: A Maturing Relationship 539  
P. R. KUMARASWAMY
40. India and South Africa 552  
KUDRAT VIRK
41. Unbreakable Bond: Africa in India's Foreign Policy 566  
CONSTANTINO XAVIER

## PART VI MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY

42. India and Global Governance 581  
POORVI CHITALKAR AND DAVID M. MALONE
43. India and the United Nations: Or Things Fall Apart 596  
MANU BHAGAVAN
44. India and the International Financial Institutions 609  
JASON A. KIRK
45. India's Contemporary Plurilateralism 623  
SAMIR SARAN
46. India in the International Trading System 636  
PRADEEP S. MEHTA AND BIPUL CHATTERJEE

47. Multilateralism in India's Nuclear Policy: A Questionable Default Option 650  
RAJESH RAJAGOPALAN
48. Multilateral Diplomacy on Climate Change 663  
NAVROZ K. DUBASH AND LAVANYA RAJAMANI

## PART VII LOOKING AHEAD

49. India's Rise: The Search for Wealth and Power in the Twenty-First Century 681  
SUNIL KHILNANI
50. Rising or Constrained Power? 699  
E. SRIDHARAN
- Index* 713



## LIST OF FIGURES

---

13.1	Aid budget of India's Ministry of External Affairs, 1966–2010	175
13.2	Development Assistance Committee (DAC) aid to India, 1960–2012	176
13.3	World Bank aid to India, 1972–2012	176
22.1	US public favorability ratings on India, 1999–2012	308
37.1	India imports from Russia	519
37.2	India exports to Russia	519
46.1	Foreign trade, 1950–2012	645



## LIST OF TABLES

---

2.1	Publications on Indian foreign policy in <i>India Quarterly</i> , <i>International Studies</i> , and <i>Strategic Analysis</i>	22
37.1	India's arms imports, 2000–2012	517
37.2	India's top ten sources for imports	518
37.3	India's top ten exports markets	519



## LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

---

**Alka Acharya** is Professor of Chinese Studies at the Centre for East Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Since 2012, she has taken charge as Director, Institute of Chinese Studies, Delhi, for a five-year period.

**Amitav Acharya** is Professor of International Relations and the UNESCO Chair in Transnational Challenges and Governance at the School of International Service, American University, Washington, DC.

**Talmiz Ahmad** is the former Indian ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Oman and the UAE. His latest book, *The Islamist Challenge in West Asia*, was published in September 2013.

**Kanti Bajpai** is the Wilmar Professor of Asian Studies, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore.

**Sanjaya Baru** is Director for Geo-economics and Strategy, International Institute of Strategic Studies, London; and Honorary Senior Fellow, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi.

**Rajesh Basrur** is Professor of International Relations at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. His work focuses on South Asian security, global nuclear politics, and international relations theory.

**Manu Bhagavan** is Professor of History at Hunter College and the Graduate Center, The City University of New York, and Chair of the Human Rights Program at the Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute.

**Bipul Chatterjee** is Deputy Executive Director of CUTS International, a non-governmental think-tank working in India, regionally and at the international level on Trade, Regulations, and Governance. He has more than 20 years of experience of working on economic and political economic aspects of trade liberalization and economic diplomacy. He has a Master's degree in Economics from Delhi School of Economics.

**Rudra Chaudhuri** is Senior Lecturer in Strategic Studies and South Asian Security at the Department of War Studies and the India Institute, King's College London.

**Poorvi Chitalkar** is a Program Officer with the Global Centre for Pluralism, Canada. She is a lawyer, with a keen interest in international law and global governance. She has

published on themes related to India's foreign policy and law and development issues including socio-economic rights in India. Poorvi holds an LLM from the University of Toronto.

**Stephen P. Cohen**, the author of many books on India, Pakistan, and their security conundrum, is Senior Fellow in the Foreign Policy Program at Brookings, and part of Brookings India Project. He was an academic for many years, and served in the US government, with various foundations, and with the National Academy of Science.

**Sreeradha Datta** is Director at the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute for Asian Studies. She is a regular participant in Indo-Bangladesh Track II dialogues and also has been working on climate change and water security issues in South Asia.

**Navroz K. Dubash** is Senior Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi, where he works on the multi-level governance of climate change, energy, and water politics and policy, and the politics of regulation.

**Sumit Ganguly** is Professor of Political Science, holds the Rabindranath Tagore Chair in Indian Cultures and Civilizations, and directs the Center on American and Global Security at Indiana University Bloomington.

**Manoj Joshi** is Distinguished Fellow at the ORF. He has been a journalist specializing on national and international politics and is a commentator and columnist on these issues. As a reporter, he has written extensively on issues relating to Siachen, Pakistan, China, Sri Lanka, and terrorism in Kashmir and Punjab.

**Devesh Kapur** is Madan Lal Sobti Associate Professor of Contemporary India and Director, Center for Advanced Study of India, University of Pennsylvania.

**Emilian Kavalski** is Associate Professor of Global Studies at the Institute for Social Justice, Australian Catholic University (Sydney). His research has focused on International Relations, Complexity Theory, Security Studies, and Asian Affairs. Emilian is the author of three books and editor/co-editor of eight volumes on these topics.

**Andrew B. Kennedy** is Senior Lecturer at the Crawford School of Public Policy at the Australian National University. He is the author of *The International Ambitions of Mao and Nehru: National Efficacy Beliefs and the Making of Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, 2012) and has published widely on the foreign relations of India and China.

**Sunil Khilnani** is Avantha Professor of Politics and Director, King's India Institute. He is completing a book on India's global role and prospects, while he continues to research studies of Jawaharlal Nehru and the history of democracy in India.

**Jason A. Kirk** is Associate Professor of Political Science at Elon University, North Carolina (US). He is the author of *India and the World Bank: The Politics of Aid and Influence* (Anthem Press, 2010).

**Rajiv Kumar** is Senior Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi; the Founder Director of Pahle India Foundation, Delhi; and Chancellor of the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune. He has a DPhil in Economics from Oxford University and a PhD from Lucknow University.

**P. R. Kumaraswamy** is Professor at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. His works include *India's Israel Policy* (Columbia University Press, 2010) and *A to Z of Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Scarecrow, 2009).

**Tanvi Madan** is Fellow in the Foreign Policy Program and Director of The India Project at The Brookings Institution. She is currently working on a book on India's relations with China and the United States.

**Sneh Mahajan** was Associate Professor at Indraprastha College, Delhi University. She was also the Senior Academic Fellow at the Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi. She has written extensively on Imperial history, British foreign policy and strategy, and modern Indian history.

**Siddharth Mallavarapu** is currently Associate Professor and Chairperson, Department of International Relations at the South Asian University (on deputation from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi). Prior to this he has co-edited two volumes on International Relations in India (with Kanti Bajpai) and a volume (with B. S. Chimni) titled *International Relations: Perspectives for the Global South* besides other publications.

**David M. Malone**, a former Canadian ambassador to the UN and High Commissioner to India, now Rector of the UN University in Tokyo and Under-Secretary-General of the UN, is the author of *Does the Elephant Dance: Contemporary Indian Foreign Policy* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

**Surjit Mansingh** presently teaches at the School of International Service at American University. Her research interests include the comparative study of India and China, especially the relations of each with the United States, as well as Indian foreign policy, recently facilitated by declassification of archives and private papers.

**Amitabh Mattoo** is currently Professor of Disarmament Studies at the Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament (CIPOD), School of International Studies. His teaching and research interests include issues of international security, India's foreign policy, and arms control and disarmament.

**Rory Medcalf** is Professor and Head of the National Security College at Australian National University and a Nonresident Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy at The Brookings Institution in Washington, DC. His professional background spans diplomacy, journalism, and intelligence analysis.

**Pradeep S. Mehta**, a student of law, economics and political science, is the head of a 30-year-old NGO: CUTS International with centres in Jaipur, Geneva, Nairobi, Lusaka,

Accra, and Hanoi. He has also served as adviser to the Trade & Industries Minister of India, and with two Director Generals of the WTO.

**Rajan Menon** holds the Anne and Bernard Spitzer Chair in Political Science at the City College of New York/City University of New York and is a Senior Research Scholar at the Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies, Columbia University. His latest book, co-authored with Eugene B. Rumer, is *Ukraine in Conflict: The Unwinding of the Post-Cold War Order* (MIT Press, 2015).

**Rohan Mukherjee** is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Politics at Princeton University, and Visiting Fellow at the United Nations University in Tokyo. His writings on Indian security and foreign policy have appeared in journals such as *International Affairs*, *Global Governance*, *Survival*, and *International Journal*, in addition to various edited volumes.

**Rani D. Mullen** is Associate Professor of Government at the College of William and Mary. Her research and teaching focus is on democratization and development in South Asia, and democracy and state building in India and Afghanistan in particular.

**S. D. Muni** is presently based in the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, as Distinguished Fellow. He has also served as India's Special Envoy on UNSC Reforms (2005) and Ambassador in Lao People's Democratic Republic (1997–9).

**Vipin Narang** is Associate Professor of Political Science at MIT and member of MIT's Security Studies Program. He is the author of *Nuclear Strategy in the Modern Era: Regional Powers and International Conflict* (Princeton University Press, 2014).

**Ligia Noronha** is Director, Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE), at the United Nations Environment Programme. She has published widely on issues relating to energy and resource security, climate change, India's environmental and coastal policy, responsible mining, and resource federalism. This paper was written when she was at the Energy and Resources Institute, New Delhi.

**Jaideep A. Prabhu** is a doctoral student in History at Vanderbilt University, where he is writing his dissertation on India's nuclear policy, titled, *Nuclear Dharma: India's Wandering after the Atom*.

**Pallavi Raghavan** is a Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi. She completed her doctoral dissertation on the history of relations between India and Pakistan from the University of Cambridge, and is now working on a book on the same subject.

**Srinath Raghavan** is Senior Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi. He is the author of *War and Peace in Modern India: A Strategic History of the Nehru Years* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), and *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh* (Harvard, 2013).

**C. Raja Mohan** is a distinguished fellow at the Observer Research Foundation and a contributing editor for the *Indian Express*. His books include *Crossing the Rubicon: The Shaping of India's New Foreign Policy* (2004) and his most recent book is *Samudra Manthan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo-Pacific* (2013).

**Rajesh Rajagopalan** is Professor of International Politics at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

**Lavanya Rajamani** is a Professor at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi, where she writes, teaches, and advises on international environmental law, in particular international climate change law and policy.

**Rahul Sagar** is Associate Professor of Political Science at Yale-NUS College and Associate Professor at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. Previously he was Assistant Professor in the Department of Politics at Princeton University.

**Varun Sahni** is Professor in International Politics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. A Latin America area specialist by training, he teaches International Relations theory and writes on international security issues.

**Samir Saran** is Senior Research Fellow and also Vice President responsible for Development and Outreach at the Observer Research Foundation. His ongoing research projects include: representation of Islam and mediation of radicalism; climate change; economic crisis; regulation; and the emergence of BRICS.

**David Scott** has delivered international relations modules at Brunel University (UK), specializing in the rise of India, its foreign policy, and its wider role in the Asia-Pacific. A prolific researcher, Scott has published varied India-related articles; and has developed various case studies on maritime geopolitics in play in the Indian Ocean, the South China Sea, the Pacific Ocean, and the 'Indo-Pacific'.

**E. Sridharan** is a political scientist who works on international relations, Indian politics and political economy, and is Academic Director of the University of Pennsylvania Institute for the Advanced Study of India in New Delhi. He is Editor of the journal *India Review*.

**Krishnan Srinivasan** was High Commissioner to Bangladesh and Foreign Secretary of India. He has published several books and journal articles on international relations.

**Paul Staniland** is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago. He is the author of *Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse* (Cornell University Press, 2014) and articles on conflict and security in South Asia.

**V. Suryanarayan** is presently Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Asia Studies. He has taught and lectured widely, and his research interests include India's relations with its neighbourhood and with Asia as a whole.

**Ashley J. Tellis** is a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace specializing in international security, defense, and Asian strategic issues.

**Latha Varadarajan** is Associate Professor of Political Science at San Diego State, and the author of *The Domestic Abroad: Diasporas in International Relations* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

**Kudrat Virk** is Senior Researcher at the Center for Conflict Resolution (CCR) in Cape Town. She is the author of *Developing Countries and Humanitarian Intervention in International Society after the Cold War* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

**Christian Wagner** is Senior Fellow at the German Institute for International and Security Politics in Berlin.

**Constantino Xavier** is a Fulbright-sponsored PhD candidate in South Asian Studies at The Johns Hopkins University, School of Advanced International Relations, Washington, DC.

# PART I

---

## INTRODUCTION

---



## CHAPTER 1

---

# INDIA AND THE WORLD

---

DAVID M. MALONE, C. RAJA MOHAN,  
AND SRINATH RAGHAVAN

IN mid-2012, Oxford University Press suggested to us that, in view of the growing weight of India in international relations, the time might now have come for a volume devoted to Indian foreign policy in OUP's flagship *Oxford Handbook* series. Each of us had published on aspects of the topic, and we knew that many talented authors, some already well-established, others strong emerging voices in the field, could likely be persuaded to participate in such a venture. So we agreed, with pleasure.

## RELEVANCE OF THE *HANDBOOK* SUBJECT MATTER

---

During the Cold War years, India's international relations swung between a somewhat idealist posture often associated with the country's first Prime Minister (1947–64), Jawaharlal Nehru, and a harder-edged realism favoured by his daughter, Indira Gandhi (1966–77 and 1980–4). Above all, India's international profile was identified with non-alignment in the Cold War and solidarity with still colonized or newly decolonized countries, and more broadly with the plight of developing countries. In the West, India was tarred, often lazily, with a broad brush as moralistic and hypocritical. While this view conveniently ignored serial Western hypocrisies, it is true that much high-minded Indian rhetoric obscured hard realities from Indian eyes, helping precipitate a traumatic border war with China in 1962 and at times exhausting even India's friends. Moreover, in its relations with some immediate neighbours its conduct hardly lived up to the standards India was preaching from global pulpits, such as those of the United Nations. For within the subcontinent, India saw itself as a power and a legatee of the Raj in providing regional security.

The end of the Cold War (particularly during the years 1989–91) forced New Delhi to rethink many of its international assumptions and partnerships. This most dramatic of recent shifts in international relations was accompanied in India by a painful balance of payments crisis inducing important, if limited, economic liberalization. Together these (in hindsight, salutary) shocks introduced a two-decade-long period of evolution of Indian foreign policy not so much in a straight line as in a set of fits and starts often difficult for casual observers of India to follow. Indeed, beyond its own borders Indian foreign policy was as often summarily dismissed as studied or understood.

By the turn of the century, this was no longer the case: the number of scholars and practitioners with in-depth knowledge of India multiplied in Europe, the United States, and elsewhere. Within India, scholarship took a more critical turn, moving beyond nostalgia for the heyday of non-alignment, and analysing—often with great insight—the specificities of New Delhi’s relationships, international objectives, and policy implementation. Country and regional expertise, always present in the Indian academic world, began to acquire critical mass. In consequence, the range of views and community of interested Indian and foreign scholars and practitioners interacting with each other grew significantly.

Thus, over a period of a quarter of a century, a more mature field of scholarship and a more diverse, frequently expert, set of chroniclers and analysts of Indian foreign policy emerged. This development was encouraged by growing interest in India as both a fast-growing market and a potentially meaningful regional and global power. Indeed, the real, if modest, shifts in Indian economic policy allowed the country to expand on the already healthier economic growth rates achieved during the 1980s (in the 4–6 per cent range) to the electrifying 7–9 per cent range in the mid-2000s. India, along with China, Brazil, and South Africa—soon followed by countries such as Indonesia and Turkey—were suddenly seen as ‘emerging’ rather than as economically challenged. Indian hands within the business world, academia, and officialdom were suddenly in demand.

To be sure India suffered considerably from the back-draught of the transatlantic economic crisis of 2008 and its economic growth rate slowed down considerably. Coupled with New Delhi’s growing paralysis in the second term of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (2009–14), the story of India’s rise looked shaky. The impressive electoral victory in 2014 of Narendra Modi renewed interest in and optimism for India’s growth and international salience. We hope this volume will help inform and stimulate (and at times moderate) this current wave of enthusiasm for India and its international importance.

## HOW WE PROCEEDED

---

A volume of this size and ambition is best not undertaken in a great hurry. We were, above all, determined to secure for it the best possible authors for the chapters we commissioned. And we were keen to encourage a conversation among them. For this reason,

and thanks to the generous funders of the project, we were able to convene from all over the world a gathering of our authors in New Delhi in January 2014. This large, convivial meeting among students of Indian foreign policy proved invaluable to the cohesion of the volume. The dialogue between editors and authors was a particularly rich one for the editors as we proceeded. Draft chapters underwent several revisions, in order to distil the essence of topics that have often merited full-volume-length treatment. The authors, of course, do not always agree with each other, but as a result of the 2014 meeting, they may have a better sense of the reasoning of those others present.

## SITUATING THIS VOLUME IN THE LITERATURE

---

In Chapter 2, Kanti Bajpai offers a rich essay on the relevant literature. Jawaharlal Nehru, who had been reflecting on a foreign policy for independent India since the 1920s—and who whiled away considerable time sampling the hospitality of His Majesty's gaols over the decades—looms very large over the formation of the country's foreign policy as of 1947.

A number of Indian practitioners added to his ideas through their own interpretation of India's actions in memoirs and other writing. Since the late 1960s when India turned inwards, its academic links with the rest of the world began to diminish. This was due in large part to scarce foreign exchange for travel and other means of intellectual exchange. The centralization of the higher education system and the imposition of politically correct values saw the constriction of space for vigorous scholarly debate on international relations and foreign policy. Consequently, Indian scholars tended towards explicating and extolling official positions on international relations rather than questioning them, as noted by Amitabh Mattoo and Rory Medcalf in Chapter 21.

In search of balance and insight, Indian historians have occasionally cited contemporary foreign observers of India from the 1950s and 1960s, who published fond but often quite critical scholarly memoirs. One such work is Escott Reid's *Envoy to Nehru*, written many years after his departure from New Delhi in 1957, where he had served as Canada's High Commissioner for five years. Likewise Australia's Walter Crocker, who served twice as High Commissioner to India, wrote a much admired appraisal, *Nehru: A Contemporary's Estimate*, recently reissued with a foreword by the accomplished Indian historian Ramachandra Guha.

Academic scholarship on India's foreign policy took a more independent turn from the 1990s, falling into two broad categories: those writing abroad (often Indians or of Indian extraction), generally from within well-funded leading universities and think-tanks; and those in India, often working in much more difficult circumstances—featuring punishing teaching loads, poor working conditions, disappointing libraries, archives inadequately curated, or, confoundingly in the case of the Nehru papers, mostly closed

to scholarly scrutiny at the behest of the Nehru/Gandhi family. The turn of the century also saw a greater awareness within the international relations community of the need to revitalize the discipline in India by strengthening old institutions and building new ones (Alagappa 2009).

It is, today, very much a field dominated by Indians and those of Indian extraction. Some of those writing abroad won considerable respect and acceptance within India several decades ago, particularly when writing about India's security dilemmas, including their regional dimensions and responses thereto. Others were sometimes too conveniently disregarded in India as sniping and unworthy critics. More recently, with India very much à la mode, the quantity and quality of Indian scholarship have expanded significantly, particularly in the United States and the United Kingdom, offering economic, geostrategic, regional, and country-specific analysis, with new centres of excellence emerging elsewhere on India's foreign policy. Singapore as well has developed into a pole of attraction for India scholars. Australia also hosts excellent research on India. All of this is good to witness, if bittersweet at a time when India's own universities are undermined by a range of ills. However, scholarship on India's international relations still lags far behind that on China's.

Within India, scholars of great distinction moving beyond the early framework of India's international relations, defined largely by non-alignment and its implications, have tended to specialize on regional and sometimes on bilateral relationships. Several of these are also represented in this volume, notably on important, under-analysed relationships, such as Nepal (S. D. Muni, Chapter 29), Sri Lanka (V. Suryanarayan, Chapter 30), and Israel (P. R. Kumaraswamy, Chapter 39).

The last Indian survey on the model of this one of which we are aware is a monumental, authoritative volume edited by Atish Sinha and Madhup Mohta in 2007, *Indian Foreign Policy: Challenges and Opportunities*, and handsomely published by the Indian Foreign Service Institute (Sinha and Mohta 2007). Its excellent authors (two of them, Talmiz Ahmed and C. Raja Mohan, reprise, on different topics, in this book) were nearly all practitioners of scholarly bent, whereas in this volume, most are full-time scholars, many with a strong interest in policy.

Writing on India's international economic relations has also greatly increased, in the media as well as in academic works. Think-tanks based in New Delhi, but also elsewhere in India, as well as international ones, have produced high-quality writing on India's international economic relations and on India-related bilateral and multilateral trade issues.

Relations with the most important powers or those most neuralgic for India (China, the United States, and Pakistan) have attracted a great deal of attention within India and abroad. We were fortunate to attract to our project Alka Acharya (Chapter 26), Ashley Tellis (Chapter 35), and Rajesh Basrur (Chapter 27) respectively on relations with China, the United States, and Pakistan. Each dissects India's complex, often vexed, sometimes tortuous relationships with these countries.

Just as the United States and Britain feature much literate and acute newspaper, periodical, and journal writing on international relations, so does India. It is home to

a thriving and highly profitable media industry, notable for its often sensationalist but equally often compelling writing on international relations (and entertaining television commentary, which sometimes veers knowingly into the theatrical), much of it in English. Several of our authors (Sanjaya Baru, Chapter 24; Devesh Kapur, Chapter 22) and one of the editors (C. Raja Mohan) bestride the worlds of scholarship and media commentary.

Kanti Bajpai points out in Chapter 2 that India's international relations have been under-theorized. One exception to the paucity of theory might be found in the work of American scholars given to geostrategic perspectives on India's international relations, whose constructs Indian policy-makers quite stubbornly resist. Younger scholars of the field will doubtless fill the theoretical near-void on our topics in the years to come, as done in Chapter 3 of this volume by Siddharth Mallavarapu.

One of this volume's most welcome revelations, at least to the editors, has been the flowering of a talented younger generation centrally or tangentially focused on Indian foreign policy, including, in this volume, Rahul Sagar (Chapter 5), Pallavi Raghavan (Chapter 6), Andrew Kennedy (Chapter 7), Rohan Mukherjee (Chapter 13), Rani Mullen (Chapter 14), Paul Staniland and Vipin Narang (Chapter 15), Rudra Chaudhuri (Chapter 16), Tanvi Madan (Chapter 17), Latha Varadarajan (Chapter 21), Jaideep Prabhu (Chapter 23), Emilian Kavalski (Chapter 31), Kudrat Virk (Chapter 40), Constantino Xavier (Chapter 41), Poorvi Chitalkar (Chapter 42), Jason Kirk (Chapter 44), and Lavanya Rajamani (Chapter 48). Thus, the field is almost certain to prosper and grow in years ahead, both inside and outside India.

## OUR CONSTRUCT

---

The foreign policy of any country is shaped, powered, and constrained by three major factors: history, geography, and capability. To these we add leadership (both its presence and force, but also at times its absence).

Another factor that has been accorded prominence in the literature on foreign policy-making is identity. Yet the question of identity is also analytically elusive. India's national identity is shaped by the values of the Enlightenment adapted and improvised in the context of its own history. The ideals underpinning the Indian Constitution, for instance, harken to those of the Enlightenment: human rights and democracy, constitutional government, and commitment to public reason. Indian democracy may be a work in progress, yet it is deeply embedded in its identity.

To what extent does the idea of democracy shape India's foreign policy? In its international engagements, India has demonstrated a strong commitment to the ideals of democracy. Yet India has also refrained from making democracy promotion an objective of its foreign policy. For instance, on the question of human rights versus sovereignty, India has refrained from taking an *a priori* stand deriving from its own identity. This stance stems from a variety of factors. For one thing, India evolves in an

unstable neighbourhood where democracy's hold is tenuous. Ensuring stability and coping with threats require engaging with regimes that may not meet democratic benchmarks. For another, India's own experience with democracy underlines how difficult it is to embed its ideals in deeply unequal and hierarchical societies. India is well aware of the need to temper ideological zeal. Finally, India seems to believe that it can best help advance the cause of democracy as well as its own interests by realizing its own tryst with democracy. Pratap Bhanu Mehta writes: 'India certainly has a sense that the greatest source of its power in the world will be the power of its example. If it can successfully handle its deep internal pluralism, maintain a vibrant democracy, and sustain decent rates of economic growth, it will automatically acquire a certain stature and even perhaps pre-eminence in global councils' (Mehta 2011: 106).

In short, the influence of India's identity on its foreign policy can only be understood by locating it in the concrete terrain of history, geography, capability, and leadership.

## History

In the case of India, history explains a good deal of its foreign policy, not just in the immediate post-independence period, but even today. Although fragmented through most of the last three millennia into many smaller polities, the subcontinent did witness the rise and decline for brief periods of powerful empires covering most of present-day South Asia; for example, under the Maurya (322–185 BCE), Gupta (320–550 CE), and the Mughal (1526–1857CE) dynasties. In the modern period, India gradually became a unified territorial entity under the British Raj. Its location at Asia's crossroads and its peninsular projection into the Indian Ocean made it a natural transit point, and destination, of international trade across its vast overland frontiers and along both its Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean coasts. Throughout its recorded history and as evidenced in archaeological digs, the Indian subcontinent traded far and wide. Connection with the reachable world was a constant for India from very early on. Influence and invasions tended to flow into India from the west (or north transiting through the west), while India's cultural and wider influence largely travelled east, *inter alia* through the spread of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Indian trading communities, leaving stupendous remains from a thousand or so years ago in countries as far afield as modern-day Indonesia.

India's capacity to absorb foreign visitors, invaders, and influence is evidenced in many ways. For example, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Ethiopian warrior slaves were adopted into the Deccan plateau's hierarchy of power. The great Mughal dynasty, one of several to sweep into the Gangetic plain from the east, itself sought to adjust to India while India adjusted to it. For a time, it must have seemed to the British colonists in India as of the eighteenth century that they too had been

accepted into India's natural order, albeit as the country's overlords, but they were wrong, as the mutiny of 1857 and the subsequent emergence of political resistance to their rule demonstrate. While the British Raj tends to be remembered with a touch of nostalgia in the West, its legacy in India was far from an unalloyed blessing. The Raj laid the institutional bases of a modern state and sought to integrate India with the global economy, but its economic record was at best mixed, its administrative performance frequently feckless, and its political stance deeply and permanently divisive.

The colonial experience profoundly shaped post-independence India and its foreign policy, breeding lasting suspicion of Western hegemony (no longer led by Britain, but by the United States) and predisposing Nehru towards a model of import-substituting industrialization in a public sector dominated mixed economy.

At the same time, the Raj also left a different legacy for India. It incubated an Indian elite steeped in the values of political liberalism, which under the leadership of Nehru, built one of the earliest most successful democracies outside the West. Much like the Raj, which emulated the Mughal Empire in many ways, independent India incorporated many institutions left behind by the Raj, including the armed forces and a bureaucracy, which in turn included a diplomatic corps. The Raj's construction of a territorial India and the pursuit of its geographic interests, not always coincidental with those of London, established the foundations of a regional policy that encompasses such notions as the geopolitical unity of the subcontinent, the claim for security interests stretching from Aden to Malacca and beyond, and an opposition to the meddling of other powers in and around the subcontinent. These continuities in independent India's foreign policy ran parallel with those such as anti-colonialism and solidarity with the peoples of the Afro-Asian world, inherited from the national movement.

The circumstances of the British departure from the subcontinent left a bitter legacy for independent India. (Sneh Mahajan in Chapter 4 discusses some of the complexities of the Raj legacy.) The territorial partition of the subcontinent along religious lines leading to the creation of Pakistan to its west and east produced a poisoned legacy of hostility and a contested territory (in Kashmir). This led, subsequently, to three full-scale wars, one of them in turn partitioning Pakistan and ushering into existence an independent Bangladesh to India's east. While many of India's Muslims migrated to Pakistan (with many Sikhs and Hindus abandoning what became Pakistan for India), a roughly equal number of Muslims remained in India. While India adopted and emphasized a secular identity, Pakistan emphasized its Islamic one, creating diplomatic challenges for India with other Islamic countries, which for many years reflexively supported Pakistan in votes at the United Nations and elsewhere at times of dispute with India—although much less so today.

Thus, while India's ancient civilizations and much of its early history constitute a soft power asset for India, its history over the past three centuries has produced much unhappiness and struggle, which India started outgrowing convincingly only with its economic success of the past thirty years. However, many challenges left behind by

colonial rule, notably the enduring poverty of hundreds of millions of Indians, remain at best only partially addressed.

## Geography

Although India is to a degree cut off from its neighbours by the towering Himalayas and by its extensive coastline and the seas beyond, its neighbourhood is a tough one, marked by competition and conflict. To a large extent conflict is avoided, but tension occasionally degenerates into military confrontation or pressure—most notably with Pakistan. China's annexation of Tibet in 1951 produced for it a lengthy border with India (left ill-defined at the time of India's independence although charted out to a large degree by the British), interrupted by Nepal and Bhutan, both sandwiched between the Asian giants.

In India's mind, Afghanistan is a close and important neighbour, even though territorial contiguity was extinguished in 1947 with the creation of Pakistan and loss of the northern areas of Kashmir in the 1947–8 Kashmir conflict. Afghan governments since then have sought support from India to strengthen their own sovereignty and independence, often threatened by Pakistan.

Bangladesh (Chapter 28 by Sreeradha Datta and Krishnan Srinivasan) and Myanmar also share land borders with India. Across the seas, India considers Sri Lanka and the Maldives close neighbours, and they also are members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. And the distant, small, but prosperous island state of Mauritius, the population of which is mostly of Indian origin, located much closer to Africa than to India, also enjoys a special relationship with India, akin to a neighbourly one.

As discussed throughout this volume, India's region has been one of the unhappiest and most conflict-prone in the world, featuring three nuclear-armed states (China, India, and Pakistan), a characteristic which may ultimately be stabilizing but is also deeply worrying should technical or political mistakes involving nuclear arsenals be made by any of these parties. Even with Nepal, whose border with India is essentially an open one, relations have been unequal and tense much of the time (Chapter 29 by S. D. Muni). In fact, sustained good relations have existed only with Bhutan and distant Mauritius.

Beyond these often fractious immediate neighbours, India's extended neighbourhood includes Iran and the Persian (or Arab) Gulf—whose states under British protection were overseen during the Raj from Delhi rather than London. To the east, several countries of South-East Asia, including Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia as well as Myanmar, have strong historical and contemporary links with India, most vividly evident in Malaysia and Singapore through large and vibrant Indian diaspora minority communities. More generally, India's large and entrepreneurial diaspora (Chapter 21 by Latha Varadarajan) extends India's sense of connection to the shores of Africa, to the Caribbean, and to other lands as distant as Fiji, all places at least somewhat imprinted

by the flavour of India. With Saudi Arabia and the sheikhdoms of the Gulf fast developing their countries, large Indian diasporas from Kerala in South India and elsewhere provide some of the mid-level professional and much other labour required by the ambitious infrastructure and wider economic plans of these countries. India's growing energy demand is met by ever-expanding energy imports from the oil-rich Middle East and has led to strong economic interdependence with the region.

During the early decades of India's independence, the unanticipated need to fend off the Cold War became New Delhi's top priority and Nehru's early conception of India as above all an Asian power slumbered. But since the early 1990s, New Delhi has increasingly built substance into a 'Look East' policy initially focused mainly on South-East Asia, but today extending equally to East Asia, notably Japan, South Korea, and Australia. These Asian nations are seen in Delhi as important strategic and economic partners in a fast-changing region marked by China's insistent rise.

India also sees itself closely linked by history and sympathy with Central Asia. Indeed, several dynasties that briefly ruled India issued forth, sometimes with breath-taking ferocity, from this region, as Tamerlane's onslaught in North India of the late fourteenth century, in the footsteps of similar depredations by Genghis Khan's armies in the thirteenth century, reminds us. But, as Emilian Kavalski argues in Chapter 31, while the relationship with Afghanistan is in many ways and at many levels organic, India's ties with the Central Asian countries, while welcomed by them, are dwarfed by their links with Russia and China. In Afghanistan and Central Asia as a whole, India's reach and influence are significantly constrained by lack of overland geographic access, thanks to the enduring conflict with Pakistan.

## Capability

A country's capability depends on a number of factors, but none is more important than the health and dynamism of its economy. On this score, until the 1980s, India's record was pretty dismal, with some exceptions. At independence, India accounted for less than 2 per cent of global wealth, with 345 million people to provide for. While the colonial state had integrated India into the first wave of globalization and fostered some industrialization, it hardly made a dent on—and may well have deepened—levels of poverty. While India made considerable advances in the decades after independence, there is no denying its relative economic decline in the world, with its share of the global gross domestic product (GDP) and trade steadily diminishing after independence until the 1980s.

When the British started their expansion into India in 1700, the country then would have accounted for 24–5 per cent of global production (Maddison 2003; Washbrook 2007). Maddison estimates that in 1700 the United Kingdom's GDP amounted to little more than 11 per cent of India's. By 1947 it exceeded India's by half. Looked at another way, Maddison's calculations suggest India's GDP per capita remained essentially flat

during the 200 years that the United Kingdom dominated India, while the United Kingdom's GDP per capita increased fivefold.

Thus, Nehru and his colleagues in 1947 faced a very bleak picture. With India's population continuing to grow, and the country remaining highly dependent on food aid and sales from the West, principally the United States, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi launched a 'green revolution' in the late 1960s and 1970s that greatly increased grain production. However, the medium-term costs of this policy have returned to haunt India, a result of unsustainable use of water and the over-use of fertilizers, which have depleted its aquifers and degraded soil quality. Indeed, as Navroz Dubash and Lavanya Rajamani argue in Chapter 48 on climate change, India will be increasingly constrained by self-inflicted environmental blight, including air quality among the world's worst in some of its major cities.

The early 1970s represent the high water mark of economic *dirigisme* in India. When returned to power in 1980 after an interval in the political wilderness following her ill-conceived emergency rule (1975–7), first Indira Gandhi, and then her son and successor Rajiv Gandhi, undertook modest liberalizing reforms that increased the Indian growth rate significantly during the 1980s. The decisive turning point in economic policy came in 1991 with limited deregulation, privatization, tax reform, and greater openness to external trade and foreign investment. These were to reap lasting benefits until the transatlantic economic crisis as of 2008 and policy paralysis during the second terms of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) coalition (2009–14) conspired to reduce growth to a level of 4.7 per cent in 2013 and early 2014 (from highs in excess of 9 per cent only a few years earlier).

It is tempting to argue that Nehru's great rhetorical skills and the more hectoring ones of his chief foreign policy adviser and spokesman in the 1950s, V. K. Krishna Menon, were all the more godsent as India could afford nothing more. Indeed, the weaker India's capabilities became, the more high-minded its international posture seemed to become, although, as argued by Andrew Kennedy in Chapter 7 on Nehru's foreign policy, an element of realism was always present. This became more pronounced under Indira Gandhi who subjected India and the world to a sharp dose of *realpolitik*, mostly rooted in India's defeat during its border war with China in 1962 and its relative international isolation at the time of its 1971 war with Pakistan. Nevertheless, a constant until quite recently was India's weak capability to implement significant international ambitions, even had it been moved to formulate them.

India's feeble condition at independence might have been overcome more rapidly with a different economic model. But this is not the whole story: its social policies and politics revolved around distributive programmes that rarely delivered fully for the poor in India. Indeed, policy in a number of fields has been confused and contradictory. In this volume, Ligia Noronha (Chapter 12) makes a strong argument that India's dependency on foreign markets for energy supplies is greatly aggravated by its failure to make the most of domestic supply. Likewise, as noted by Sumit Ganguly (Chapter 11), India's often large weapons imports are necessitated by the failure of much of its defence industry to

provide high quality output, which stands in contrast to successful nuclear weapons and space programmes (the former discussed by Jaideep A. Prabhu in Chapter 23).

In the 1990s India's private sector came into its own (Rajiv Kumar in Chapter 18). In the realms of information technology and outsourced services, Indian firms showed themselves capable of competing with the best globally. The Indian private sector also boasts a number of highly successful business empires, including the Tata family of companies and Reliance Industries. Many of these companies, such as Mittal Steel, succeed better outside India than within, and not surprisingly so, given the burden of bureaucracy and corruption that those primarily focused on India must endure. In virtually every sector, over-regulation and regulatory abuse provide opportunities more for graft than for achievement of their purported public purposes. The reforms of 1991 ultimately did little to mitigate the abuses of the 'licence Raj'. Whether India's new government under Narendra Modi, which campaigned vigorously on a platform of economic reform and development, is able to tame both the Indian regulatory impulse and the voracious appetite for rents of so many in public life (including the leading political parties whose election campaigns are among the world's most expensive) remains to be seen.

One further component of capability is worthy of mention here—that of human resources development. Indians for at least a decade have inclined to believe that the country's youthful population will produce the trump card in its competition with a rapidly ageing China. This is not at all clear. The standards of education in India, at every level from primary school to university, are among the most depressing in the world. Thus, the demographic boon could readily turn into a demographic bomb of under-employment and instability unless the country can not only create more and better jobs but also fill them with better-qualified staff. A failing public education system (which coexists with some strong private establishments, but a larger number of private scamsters preying on an often under-informed public convinced that any private education will help their children) is not turned around overnight. Recent decades have produced remarkably little innovation and, if anything, a decline in standards, particularly in rural areas where in excess of 60 per cent of the population still lives.

## Leadership

Two Indians stand out globally as among the twentieth century's most appealing leaders: Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (known as the Mahatma, and unrelated to the Prime Ministers of that name), who was assassinated in 1948, and thus does not appear much in these pages, and Jawaharlal Nehru. Other than their high degree of education and professional achievement, these men had little in common. Gandhi, while driving an ever-widening movement to free India of the British over a 40-year period, never exercised government responsibilities nor sought to. Nehru, a UK-educated patrician, was Gandhi's choice to lead the independent country. He had schooled himself for this function, reading and writing voraciously. Rahul Sagar in Chapter 5 reviews ideas about

foreign policy before independence, many of them Nehru's. Constantly, through his speeches, he sought to educate the people of India, including, somewhat quixotically, on foreign policy. Like many remaining in power over extended periods of time, he came to believe too much in his own instincts, contributing to the debacle of the 1962 war with China, which may have hastened his early death in 1964.

Just as Gandhi was the incarnation of the drive for decolonization until 1948, so Nehru picked up the mantle, advocating passionately at the United Nations, in the Commonwealth, and elsewhere for those still under the colonial yoke, while helping to shape the notion of non-alignment to assure a margin of manoeuvre for poor countries in the unforgiving climate of the Cold War. While he irritated some counterparts in the West, it is hard to argue today that his foreign policy could have been much improved upon, not least given India's straitened circumstances. Himself of high-caste Kashmiri origins, he may have been too attached to that magical corner of the world to drive hard enough in the late 1940s towards a settlement with Pakistan on this bone of contention between the two countries, which has grown ever harder to resolve as its contours have hardened into multi-generational grievances. But his outlook, overall, was generous and his service to the nation, protean.

It was his daughter, Indira, who succeeded him as Prime Minister after a two-year interval under Lal Bahadur Shastri, who ran up against the limitations of genuine non-alignment when electoral outcomes in Pakistan in 1970 led to crisis. By early 1971 it precipitated fierce repression in East Pakistan and the flight of many of the latter's residents to India. These, in turn, late in the year, provoked war between India and Pakistan and the consequent independence of Bangladesh. Pakistan, by now firmly allied with both China and the United States and commanding considerable international sympathy in its attempt to maintain territorial integrity against the separatist ambitions in East Pakistan of Mujibur Rahman's Awami League, was a clear beneficiary of multiple alignments. India, while frantically seeking to draw attention to the unfolding massacres in East Pakistan by the country's army, had no allies until Indira Gandhi signed a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation with Moscow, thus securing India's flank for the battle soon to come.

A fierce combatant for India's corner, Indira Gandhi gained some admirers internationally, but made few friends for India. India's first nuclear test in 1974 alarmed much of the world, and led to a form of *purdah* for India among nations endowed with nuclear technology. The lofty principles she espoused publicly seemed an ill fit with such episodes as the incorporation of Sikkim into the Indian Union in 1975. If the international reaction to the integration of Sikkim was negative, especially from China, nationalists at home saw it as cleaning up some of the territorial ambiguities left behind by the Raj and unattended by Nehru. Indira Gandhi's undemocratic instincts culminating in emergency rule (1975–7) further undermined her international reputation. Somewhat chastened by her domestic come-uppance in the 1977 elections, and perhaps also by a fast-evolving international scene with Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher holding sway in partnership as of 1981, she seemed to be attempting wider international outreach in the years leading up to her assassination in 1984. Internationally, even the fact that

her chief antagonists were Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, at his least attractive in his dealings with India, as well as Maoist China at its most radical, never did much to further her own appeal internationally. Nevertheless, she remains wildly popular among her own people as a leader who 'stood up for India'. Surjit Mansingh in Chapter 8 provides a wide-ranging assessment of her foreign policy.

No subsequent leaders rivalled Nehru and Indira Gandhi on the world stage. Mostly they borrowed rhetorically from each of these predecessors while doing their best to manage the manifold and complex interests of India in its fraught Asian setting. Rajiv Gandhi championed the fight against apartheid but also launched a poorly conceived and ill-fated military intervention in Sri Lanka under the guise of peacekeeping between 1987 and 1990. Srinath Raghavan in Chapter 9 reflects on the impact in foreign policy of this transitional figure who, in some ways, was more than that—for many of the major diplomatic moves that would transform India's foreign policy in the 1990s and 2000s, for example towards the United States, China, and Israel, were first initiated by Rajiv Gandhi, who was willing to break out of the straitjacket of the Indira years.

Of his successors after 1989, Narasimha Rao (1991–6) stands out as having engineered India's overall fairly deft response to the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, skilfully dropping some old policies, while initiating others, for example the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel, as discussed by P. R. Kumaraswamy in Chapter 39. Inder Kumar Gujral, better known as an engaged Foreign Minister twice in the 1990s, but also Prime Minister for a year late in the decade, consistently championed more generous relationships with India's neighbours under the so-called Gujral Doctrine.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Prime Minister in 1996 and again from 1998 to 2004, first government leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), while leading a coalition and party significantly more nationalist than any previous Indian administration, proved a skilled hand both at engaging Pakistan and dealing in a highly controlled and ultimately effective manner with a risky militarily venture which Islamabad launched stealthily against Indian-held territory at Kargil in 1999. Notably, he empowered two strong foreign ministers (Jaswant Singh and Yashwant Sinha) and his national security adviser, Brajesh Mishra, who raised India's international profile during the BJP's years in power, as discussed in C. Raja Mohan's Chapter 10 on Indian foreign policy since 1990.

The two Congress-led coalition governments of 2004–9 and 2009–14 will be remembered above all for the delicate and controversial dance engaged between 2005 and 2008 by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh with the administration of US President George W. Bush to secure an agreement on cooperation in the field of civilian nuclear energy. This required a change in the United States's domestic non-proliferation law and the international rules of atomic commerce. While Bush saw it as a political move to remove one of the major contentions in the United States's relationship with India, non-proliferation groups in the United States and around the world decried it as a needless concession to Delhi that would undermine the non-proliferation regime. In India, conservatives in the establishment saw it as a potential Trojan Horse. When ultimately accepted by the Indian Parliament, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the

Nuclear Suppliers Group in Vienna, and the US Congress, all in 2008, this potentially game-changing breakthrough released India from its more than three decades of isolation from the global nuclear order. However, most nuclear cooperation with India by international suppliers ground to a halt in the wake of a sweeping Civil Nuclear Liability Act passed by the Indian Parliament in 2010 in response to agitation arising from the lack of adequate compensation from the Union Carbide Company (and its successor company) for the Bhopal chemical disaster of 1984. The provisions of the Act which imposed excessive obligations on the nuclear suppliers were sufficiently onerous as to discourage further international involvement in India in the nuclear energy domain. Rajesh Rajagopalan in Chapter 47 discusses the contradictory nature of India's advocacy of nuclear disarmament since the 1950s while latterly developing nuclear weapons capacity and then the weapons themselves.

Emulating its BJP-led predecessor government in the case of Kargil, the UPA coalition responded cautiously at the international level to the surprisingly effective attack against Mumbai by a small group of terrorists in November 2008. So ineffective was the reaction to the attack of various Indian security forces that Indians seemed as enraged with their own government as with Pakistan from which the terrorists had travelled by sea. As had the Vajpayee government over Kargil, so the Singh government allowed this potentially explosive situation with Pakistan to be managed internationally by the United States (and to some extent the United Kingdom).

During Dr Singh's years, India's international profile grew in tandem with the country's economic success. New Delhi, particularly through the voice of Finance Minister P. Chidambaram, articulated a strong claim by India to a greater role in global governance (through the multilateral institutions of which it is a member). This was achieved to a certain extent with the creation of the Group of 20 (G20) at leader level in response to the 2008 financial crisis, and by the creation of a set of new plurilateral forums such as the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), in which India played a central role, and to which our volume devotes a thought-provoking essay by Samir Saran in Chapter 45 and also some paragraphs in Chapter 42 by Poorvi Chitalkar and David Malone on India and global governance. But, perhaps due to a collapse of coherence or resolve of the government during the years 2009–14, little of substance was achieved in securing formal recognition of India's growing international status, for example the creation of a long-sought permanent seat for the country in the UN Security Council.

Manu Bhagavan in Chapter 43 discusses the (once-central) importance of the UN for Indian foreign policy, while Jason Kirk in Chapter 44 addresses India's growing voice and growing frustrations within the international financial institutions (IFIs), whose efforts at governance reform that would enhance New Delhi's role have been proceeding at a glacial pace. Pradeep Mehta and Bipul Chatterjee in Chapter 46 document India's distinctive profile and often sharp dissent within the World Trade Organization (WTO), which, for now, have been maintained by the new Modi government. India has, for some years, been impatient with the existing world order, but it and other emerging powers have been unable to achieve much change even in the wake of the economic slow-down centred mostly on Western countries since 2008.

India's position on an issue of critical importance in the multilateral agenda at the time of publication, climate change, is considered by Navroz Dubash and Lavanya Rajamani in Chapter 48. While recognizing the need to act on the issue domestically, it has, to date, maintained a firm position advocating deep cuts in the emissions of the industrialized countries as fulfilment of their historic responsibility for high levels of greenhouse gas emissions and financial support by them for efforts by developing countries to limit the growth of their own in the future. Whether this position will be sustained or modified in the run-up to the Paris Summit on climate change in 2015 remains to be seen.

With the arrival in power in 2014 of the BJP, the country's new Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, playing against expectations, launched a charm offensive vis-à-vis neighbours, including Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. He radiated intent to see India prosper, not least due to greater international investment and trade. That the international ambitions and achievements of the previous government were so slight only helped in establishing an early contrast of style, while the growing relevance globally of India also helped overcome concerns in some Western capitals, including Washington, about Mr Modi's record during his controversial first term as Chief Minister of Gujarat.

Some institutions and actors beyond governments and their leaders also matter to the formulation of foreign policy and its implementation. The state itself and its politics are at its centre. In India, democratic processes play a role and officialdom attends foreign policy from start to finish. The private sector (assessed by Rajiv Kumar in Chapter 18), the media (whose influence Manoj Joshi dissects in Chapter 19), public opinion (Devesh Kapur in Chapter 22), and economic actors and pressures all weigh in as well.

## KEY RELATIONSHIPS

---

The unhappy lot of editors is to have to make choices, in order to keep collective projects like this one manageable for readers and publishers. This responsibility came into focus most sharply for us when, having dealt with history by assigning chapters to a number of authors, and the imperatives of geography by doing likewise on neighbouring states and the Indian Ocean (with Chapter 34 on the latter by David Scott), we moved on to relationships that matter to India beyond its immediate vicinity. Some, like the United States, Western Europe (on which Christian Wagner writes in Chapter 36), and the Russian Federation (addressed in Chapter 37 by Rajan Menon) were obvious. On others, we required some consultation among ourselves. We ultimately provided for two chapters on India's relationships with Africa (one of them focused solely on South Africa), one by Varun Sahni on Brazil (India's most important relationship within Latin America, although others, including Mexico and Chile, also stand out), and another on Israel (having dealt with the Persian Gulf states, including Iran, as part of India's extended neighbourhood in Talmiz Ahmad's Chapter 32).

New Delhi's relationship with Tokyo has, particularly since the election of Shinzo Abe as Prime Minister of Japan in 2012, been intensifying, in part as a result of tectonic shifts under

way in Asia related to the accelerated rise of China. China and India are the continent's heavyweights in terms of territory and population, but Japan is the world's third largest economy and thus should matter critically to any Indian policy towards Asia. Surprisingly, the trade and investment figures between the two countries are underwhelming and the recent impetus in the relationship so far remains mainly political and geostrategic. This could change if India becomes more assertively welcoming to foreign investment.

While Abe went out of his way to cultivate relations with India when first Prime Minister in 2006–7, and picked up again with Manmohan Singh where he had left off, the relationship, to the extent that it hinges on individual leaders, should receive a further fillip from the pre-existing close ties of Abe with Narendra Modi over many years. Ultimately, we included Japan in the 'Look East' chapter of Amitav Acharya rather than commissioning a stand-alone chapter, partly because a separate project is under way, involving several of us and our authors, on the bilateral relationship with Japan.

## STRUCTURE OF THE VOLUME

---

Weaving all of these strands together in a cohesive way has not been easy. Critics will point out that we have overlooked this important relationship or that key issue in India's international relations. But mostly, they are featured in the book, often in cross-cutting ways. We tried to ensure this was so by organizing our potentially overwhelming material under five broad headings, after two initial chapters which set the stage in terms of study and thinking on the field:

- History, or the evolution of Indian foreign policy over seven decades and influences thereon from earlier periods (Part II). This section contains seven essentially historical chapters, and several others addressing important cross-cutting themes that arose often in our debates: national security; the role of, and constraints imposed by, natural resource requirements; India's own development programme, and elements of foreign policy projection onto several continents of the world and a number of multilateral bodies; and soft power in Indian foreign policy.
- Institutions and actors (Part III): the state and politics; India's democratic model as a factor in foreign policy formulation and implementation; parliament; officialdom and the private sector; the media, think-tanks, universities, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (as well as certain prominent individuals with careers across several sets of institutions); the Indian diaspora; public opinion; certain key scientific enclaves relevant to foreign policy; and economic imperatives.
- Geography (Part IV): India in the South Asian subcontinent; relations with China; Pakistan; Bangladesh; Nepal; Sri Lanka; Afghanistan and Central Asia; the Persian Gulf; Asia more broadly (under the heading of 'Looking East'); and finally the Indian Ocean, which many of India's partners and potential rivals share.

- Key partnerships (Part V): the United States; Western Europe; the Russian Federation; Brazil, Israel; South Africa; and Africa more widely.
- Multilateral forums and diplomacy, a world within which India has long played an important role, but within which it yearns for greater recognition (Part VI). This latter dynamic is dealt with, first, under the heading of India and global governance; then, the United Nations; the IFIs; new plurilateral forums involving India; the World Trade Organization (and international trade and investment more generally), multilateral bodies dealing with nuclear issues; and negotiations on climate change.
- In a brief concluding section (Part VII), we asked two major scholars of India with an interest in its foreign policy, Sunil Khilnani and Eswaran Sridharan, to look ahead.

We might have sliced and diced our rich subject matter differently, and perhaps should have, but we hope our structure makes a strong argument for itself.

## ENVOI

---

Because India is very much on the move, the wide-lens snapshot that this volume provides will doubtless date somewhat in the years ahead. We have sought to guard against obvious risks in this regard by avoiding a focus primarily on recent events and epiphenomena.

It is for this reason that the election of the BJP-led government in May 2014 and the foreign policy of Prime Minister Modi are mentioned only in passing. This is not to dismiss Mr Modi—far from it. His electoral focus on the need for greater Indian economic connection globally, as well as in its own neighbourhood, has been widely welcomed internationally. And his electoral commitments to clean up India's scandal-infested politics and to reform its hopelessly counter-productive regulatory regime and culture, while a tall order, are likewise music to ears abroad. During the election campaign, he adopted a broadly secular tone, and his earlier muscular nationalism was not so much in evidence. Further, to the extent that a degree of nationalism features at the heart of his electoral appeal, he will find himself in good company in Asia, with both of India's most important partners on the continent, China and Japan, also espousing nationalist themes and (at times) policies.

But we are fairly confident that the primary themes of this volume on India's foreign policy, reflected in the structure of the volume and its main arguments, will remain relevant in the foreseeable future. This is in part because India, even when on the move, generally moves slowly, and in part because the imperatives of history, geography, and capability evolve very slowly or not all—although our interpretation thereof often changes over time.

## REFERENCES

---

- Alagappa, M. (2009). 'Strengthening International Studies in India: Vision and Recommendations', *International Studies*, 46(1-2): 7-35.
- Crocker, W. (2009). *Nehru: A Contemporary's Estimate*. New Delhi: Random House (India).
- Maddison, A. (2003). *The World Economy: Historical Statistics*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
- Mehta, P. B. (2011). 'Reluctant India', *Journal of Democracy*, 22(4): 101-13.
- Reid, E. (1978). *Envoy to Nehru*. New Delhi and Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Sinha, A. and Mohta, M. (eds.) (2007). *Indian Foreign Policy: Challenges and Opportunities*. New Delhi: Foreign Service Institute.
- Washbrook, D. (2007). 'India in the Early Modern World Economy: Modes of Production, Reproduction and Exchange', *Journal of Global History*, 2(1): 87-111.

## CHAPTER 2

---

# FIVE APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY

---

KANTI BAJPAI

PROTRACTED conflict (or ‘enduring rivalry’) refers to a pattern of serious contention between two or more countries over a long period of time, punctuated by military crises and war (Paul 2005). If so, India–Pakistan and India–China are cases of protracted conflict, especially India–Pakistan. India–US relations have never come close to hostilities. Nevertheless, India’s relations with the United States have been marked by a very long period of serious contention over a number of issues. This chapter argues that India’s protracted conflicts have been understood largely through five interpretive lenses—sovereignty, alliances, power asymmetry, political values, and domestic politics—of which the sovereignty lens is perhaps the most important.

Indian foreign policy (IFP) is an enormous field of scholarly publishing. To summarize the various approaches exhaustively would be impossible. The aim here is to cull out and present a stylized version of influential lines of interpretation, which are often more implicit than explicit in the writings on the subject; it is not to analyze exemplar texts or bodies of work cohering around a particular issue area of IFP, at least in part because there are few if any seminal texts and core intellectual puzzles which organize the field. This approach risks simplification, even a degree of caricature. On the other hand, it helps identify more clearly some key intellectual tools and trajectories by which Indian foreign policy has been studied.

## THREE PROTRACTED CONFLICTS: INDIA–PAKISTAN, INDIA–CHINA, INDIA–UNITED STATES

---

A survey of India’s leading International Relations (IR) journals, *India Quarterly* (IQ), *International Studies* (IS), and *Strategic Analysis* (SA) suggests that conflict with

Pakistan, China, and the United States have dominated the field of study.<sup>1</sup> The three journals published articles by Indian and foreign scholars, though mostly the former. Between 1945 and 2010, the three journals were published approximately 800 times. On a rough estimate, they featured some 4,500 articles, of which 1,000 related to IFP. Table 2.1 summarizes two periods of publishing—the Cold War (1945–89) and the post-Cold War period (1990 onwards).

Table 2.1 suggests the following. First, India–Pakistan, India–China, and India–US relations plus India–rest of world (ROW) together account for 45–68 per cent of all IFP articles. Second, articles dealing with the Pakistan, China, and US relationships together amount to 20–39 per cent of all IFP articles, depending on the journal. Third, articles dealing with broad principles and practices including the historical and philosophical roots of India's foreign policy are a distant second to relational studies. Fourth, nuclear and security policy do even worse than general foreign policy studies except in SA.

That a major focus of IFP studies is India's relations with Pakistan, China, and the United States is not surprising. Relations with all three quickly became contentious

**Table 2.1 Publications on Indian foreign policy in *India Quarterly*, *International Studies*, and *Strategic Analysis*\***

Subject areas	<i>India Quarterly</i> 1945–89	<i>International Studies</i> 1959–89	<i>Strategic Analysis</i> 1977–1989	<i>India Quarterly</i> 1990–2008	<i>International Studies</i> 1990–2010	<i>Strategic Analysis</i> 1990–2006
India–Pakistan	9.0	10.0	17.0	5.7	7.5	6.0
India–China	14.0	24.0	6.5	4.7	10.7	5.0
India–US	12.0	4.6	12.0	9.3	9.6	9.0
India–ROW	23.0	29.0	20.0	38.0	26.0	25.0
General foreign policy and non-alignment	18.0	15.0	2.7	10.0	8.6	5.0
Nuclear policy	4.8	2.8	16.0	4.7	5.4	14.0
General security/defense	4.8	1.8	21.0	9.0	12.0	35.5
International/regional institutions	8.0	4.6	—	6.5	9.6	2.6
Indian Foreign Service—organizational issues	2.0	1.8	4.3	—	1.0	—
Overseas Indians/non-resident Indians	4.0	1.8	—	2.8	—	—
Foreign economic policy/India in world economy	—	4.6	—	8.4	9.6	1.4

\* There were issues unavailable to me in both periods. The number of missing issues, though, is not very large. There is no reason to expect that the trends indicated by this table would be changed by a fuller count of the journals.

Note: The figures in the cells represent the percentage of articles published in a given subject area. Columns may not add to 100.00 with rounding.

after 1947. In the case of Pakistan and China this led to war; in the case of the United States, it turned India into a quasi-ally of the Soviet Union. Relations with all three remain contentious, even if New Delhi and Washington have mended fences. India's conflicts with its two neighbors and the United States are puzzling since Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru attempted to befriend the three powers and sought to position India as a constructive internationalist power. Why then did India find itself, by the late 1950s, and thereafter for much of the Cold War and post-Cold War period, in conflict with Pakistan, China, and the United States?

## FIVE INTERPRETATIONS OF CONFLICT

---

India's conflicts with Pakistan, China, and the United States have been understood through the prism of five interpretive lenses: sovereignty, alliances, power asymmetry, political values, and domestic politics. Indian foreign policy studies rarely rely on a single lens; nor, usually, do they make their interpretive stances explicit. However, over a large body of writings, it is possible to disentangle five viewpoints.

### Post-Colonial Sovereignty

India's quarrels with Pakistan, China, and the United States are first of all deeply related to concerns about territory, nationhood, and independence of decision-making. None of India's other relationships are quite so marked by these concerns. In spite of global, regional, and national changes over the past seven decades, India's foreign policy remains preoccupied with threats to territorial integrity, a preferred conception of nationhood, and control over economic, domestic, and foreign policy. Pakistan, China, and the United States appear as the greatest challenges to all three.

Depictions of the India–Pakistan conflict usually begin with the quarrel over Kashmir. Kashmir is the original feud that has persisted beyond the war of 1948, and the inability of India and Pakistan to end the feud has left the two countries in a permanent 'state of war' (Koithara 2004: 28–33). While there is a large literature on the former princely state's accession to India, the history of its integration within India, and the rise of disaffection and militancy since 1989, why Kashmir is such a point of contention remains an open question. It is arguably no great prize economically, and even its strategic importance is a debatable one: India well might be more secure defending itself in the plains than in the hills and valleys of Kashmir.

Perhaps the most widely held view is that from the beginning, powerfully shaped by Jawaharlal Nehru, Indians have come to see the state as being part of the map of India and as vital for its sense of nationhood. This 'cartographic imagination' of India and the construction of nationhood around the inclusion of Kashmir have taken powerful hold.<sup>2</sup> For India, Kashmir is a symbol of secular nationalism. Its inclusion in India affirms the

view that Muslims can be happy and secure in a Hindu-majority nation. For Pakistan, by contrast, Kashmir is symbol of religious nationalism. Kashmir substantiates the view that Muslims in the northwestern part of the subcontinent are part of a larger Muslim nation and must be free of Hindu domination (Ganguly 1995; Varshney 1991).

These two opposite views are inextricably intertwined, and it is impossible to say which came first—the Indian or the Pakistani attachment to Kashmir. Since India controls most of the state, attention has usually focused on Pakistan's role in instigating conflict. Building on Myron Weiner's insight into irredentism as a key variable in international conflict, Sumit Ganguly has suggested that the Kashmir conflict arises from Pakistani irredentism (Weiner 1971; Ganguly 1995). That Pakistan is the unrequited claimant and the instigator of conflict is the dominant view, but India's stakes in Kashmir are clearly a part of the problem (Varshney 1991).

What Kashmir is to the India–Pakistan conflict, Tibet and the border quarrel are to India–China relations—original causes of conflict that continue to influence the course of the relationship. Here too territory, conceptions of nationhood, and sovereignty are at the heart of the issue. Just as Kashmir's accession is a contested issue, so in the case of India–China the validity of the Johnson Line and MacMahon Line and the status of Tibet remain points of sharp difference (Garver 2001: 3–109). While India makes no irredentist claim on Tibet, the Indian sense of kinship with and responsibility towards Tibetans and the refuge accorded the Dalai Lama are regarded with deep suspicion in China.

The attachment to territory is made more intense by Indian and Chinese post-colonial nationalism. Both countries entered international society in the late 1940s with a powerful sense of victimhood in relation to the West. It is difficult, given this historically engendered deep structure, for either side to regard the border quarrel as susceptible to simple territorial adjustments (though China has in the past proposed a pragmatic 'exchange' deal on the border involving Aksai Chin for Arunachal Pradesh). Western rule and domination in effect entailed loss of control over territory; with independence both India and China were resistant to once again losing control of 'their' land. Any alienation of territory would have suggested that the two governments were not committed to territorial integrity and a complete sense of nationhood and sovereignty. This would have struck at the legitimacy of the Congress Party and Communist Party, both of which had come to power on the promise of emancipation from foreign rule (see Miller 2013 on the Indian and Chinese sense of victimhood).

So also, the attachment to sovereignty has affected how the two regard Tibet and the Dalai Lama's presence in India. The writings on India–China relations show clearly that India feels it has a degree of responsibility towards Tibetans and, under international law, is obliged to give refuge to the Dalai Lama and his followers. China on the other hand feels that India has no *droit de regard* whatsoever on Tibet and that hosting the Dalai Lama and his followers is a form of intervention in the affairs of China (on India–China–Tibet, see Garver 2001: 32–78).

India's relations with the United States, too, are marked by concerns relating to post-colonial sovereignty, and this features quite prominently in accounts of their interactions since 1947. While the two countries are not in conflict over territory, on the

Indian side there has always been considerable resentment over America's stance on the status of Kashmir which is seen as favoring Pakistan. More importantly, though, at independence India quickly came to harbor deep anxieties about India's ability to withstand US power and influence (Kux 1993: 51–7; Chaudhuri 2013: 25–47). In 1947, India cast off colonial rule only to enter a world dominated by the United States. As British imperialism waned in the 1950s, the United States came to be seen in India as a neo-imperial power, one that would constrain India's external policies, intervene in regional conflict, and meddle in its domestic policies. To this day, India has not altogether lost its fear of US imperialism, even if the extent of Indian fearfulness has diminished.

In short, one approach to understanding Indian foreign policy, at least in respect of its three greatest grand strategic challenges, is to comprehend the country's deep anxieties over threats to territory, nationhood, and independence of decision-making.

## Alliance Pressures

A second set of arguments about India's protracted conflicts relates to the effects of alliance politics, particularly in the early years of the Cold War, which deeply structured its view of Pakistan, China, and the United States.

The alliance perspective on India–Pakistan relations suggests that the two countries quickly became captive to the structural logic of the global bipolar conflict which coincided and became entangled with the regional bipolar conflict, causing the latter to be magnified. In this view, the differences between India and Pakistan after 1947 could have been resolved—indeed were close to being resolved—if US military aid and Pakistan's membership in US-led alliances had not intervened to exacerbate South Asian differences. Indians came to fear that the Pakistanis were using their Cold War alliance against India and thus balked at solving the Kashmir dispute; and the Pakistanis saw no reason to compromise on Kashmir given US arms and diplomatic support. India's answer to this was to try to convince Islamabad of the advantages of non-alignment and bilateral negotiation, to wean the Americans away from Pakistan, or to line up allies (or quasi-allies) of its own, such as the Soviet Union, to counter Pakistan's Cold War alliances (see Mehta 2008: 103–30, 163–76, 249–313).

After the Cold War, Pakistan predictably became less important for the United States. However, the events of September 11, 2001, made it the United States's most important 'non-NATO ally'. Once again the United States's interests and policies profoundly affected regional politics, ostensibly to Pakistan's advantage and India's disadvantage. With US aid pouring in and with Washington urging India to negotiate with Pakistan in the interest of regional stability, Islamabad was able to bring an extra-regional balancing power back into South Asia even though the Cold War was now over.

The India–China conflict, too, has been traced back to the Cold War, the struggle between the two blocs, and a contest between the Asian giants for global leadership. By the late 1950s, non-aligned India had developed fairly close relations with both the United States and the Soviet Union. China on the other hand was deeply opposed to

the United States and had broken with the Soviets. From Beijing's point of view India was part of a Cold War gang-up that included the two superpowers. The 1962 war and subsequent rivalry has been described as part of a larger Cold War struggle, with Beijing choosing in the end to attack India in order to show that non-alignment was futile, that the Soviets' emerging tilt towards India was misguided, and that peaceful coexistence between the East and the West was a delusional project (Guha 2011: 55). By 1971, China had changed sides in the Cold War, allying now with the United States against the Soviets. India in response allied with the Soviets against a United States–China–Pakistan combine (Raghavan 2013: 108–30). Thus, by the early 1970s, the India–China conflict had been complicated by alliance preferences.

The Cold War is over, but India–China relations can still be seen from the perspective of a larger geopolitical struggle, with China on one side, the United States on the other, and India as a potential partner of one superpower against the other. In this view, the border quarrel between India and China appears as a secondary issue, the real concern in New Delhi being the larger geostrategic triangle that has formed over the past decade and whether to choose sides or be non-aligned (for the latter view, see Khilnani et al. 2013).

Perhaps the dominant view of the India–US conflict is that it arose out of the Cold War and the imperatives of alliance politics. India under Nehru had decided quite early not to take sides between the Western and Communist blocs. While the term non-alignment came later, the basic idea of staying away from alliances predated India's independence (Chaudhuri 2013: 17–23). The aversion to alliances was premised on the hardheaded strategic premise that opting for one alliance system would attract the hostility of the other. Alignment with one side might provoke the other to undermine India from within, by stoking domestic dissent. India was particularly concerned that tilting to the West would antagonize Indian communists at a time when India was attempting to build a democratic order, and tilting towards the Soviets and its allies might alienate the Indian right wing.<sup>3</sup>

India's aloof attitude towards the United States was based not just on the calculation that alliance commitments would earn India the ire of one side or other in the Cold War. There was also India's dislike and suspicion of great powers per se: it had after all lost its independence to a great (Western) power and had only just, after a lengthy struggle, got rid of that power from its shores. As for the United States, it presumed that India, as a former British colony, would more or less automatically side with the West. The United States also felt that New Delhi's rejection of the Western alliance was foolish if not politically immoral (Kux 1993: 126–44). When India stood by its insistence on non-alignment, Washington sought allies elsewhere including in neighboring Pakistan, which with its 'martial race' tradition looked a good partner militarily and strategically. Pakistan was attractive for other reasons too, namely for its Muslim credentials which might help the United States and the West with the oil-rich Islamic world (Kux 1993: 105–15). The United States's siding with Pakistan because of its alliance imperatives only intensified India's fears of America.

After the Cold War, India continued to remain suspicious of the United States. There were a number of reasons for Indian suspicions—US non-proliferation policy, its

human rights crusade, Washington's post-9/11 rapprochement with Pakistan, amongst others—but a recurring theme in the analysis of India's policies towards the United States has been a sense that there is a geopolitical context that conditions New Delhi's choices. India fears that the United States will gravitate once again to a Pakistan–China partnership (against terrorism, for example) or to a US–China condominium in Asian and global affairs (see Raja Mohan 2012: 240–2, on the G-2).

In sum, Indian foreign policy choices with respect to Pakistan, China, and the United States can, and have been, understood through the lens of Cold War alliance and post-Cold War alliance politics, an alliance politics in which India's greatest fear is the United States allying with Pakistan and/or China to the detriment of Indian interests.

## Power Distribution(s)

A third view sees the distribution of power between India and its three interlocutors as being the key to understanding Indian foreign policy. Between India, on the one hand, and Pakistan, China, and the US, on the other, there exist asymmetries of power that have profoundly affected New Delhi's dealings with Islamabad, Beijing, and Washington.

In the power asymmetry view, the India–Pakistan conflict arises from the regional power structure: until 1971, in population, land area, and GDP, India was four times bigger than Pakistan; after the creation of Bangladesh, it was eight times bigger. Given the disparity of power, Pakistani rulers have an incentive to 'borrow' power from non-regional powers—first the United States, then the United States and China, even other regional powers and blocs such as Iran and the Muslim world—and to use conventional military strategies and asymmetrical means such as insurgency and terrorism to resist India and refuse to negotiate seriously. T. V. Paul argues that India is bigger than Pakistan but not big enough to compel Pakistan to do its will and that Islamabad has used alliances, nuclear weapons, and non-conventional military strategies to compensate for India's overall power advantage (Paul 2005). The power imbalance exacerbated conflict, given that differences between India and Pakistan have been magnified and become more dangerous since 1971. India's role in the creation of Bangladesh was seen by Pakistanis as New Delhi's way of permanently 'cutting Pakistan down to size'. Islamabad's response was to develop nuclear weapons, to ally itself more closely to China in particular, and to exploit India's vulnerability in Kashmir when the time came which culminated in a series of crises (1986–7, 1990, 2001–2) and eventually war (1999) (Chari et al. 2007).

As with India–Pakistan, conflict between India and China can be traced to the distribution of power—but also of status—except in this case India is the weaker party. While there was rough parity in the early years, since the late 1980s China has steamed ahead of India, and today is estimated to have a GDP 4.5 times the size of India's. This gap might suggest that India would be subdued by China. Yet, Indian policies since the late 1990s suggest otherwise. The widening power gap may have instigated India to

respond—to go nuclear in 1998, to strengthen its military, to reform its economy, and to cultivate strategic partnerships in Asia including most importantly the United States (Malik 2009: 182–9). India's response to the power gap is reminiscent of Pakistan's response to India, except that India has not resorted to asymmetric strategies against China—though Beijing might well argue that hosting the Dalai Lama and Tibetan refugees is a latent if not actual asymmetric strategy.

How has the distribution of power thought to have affected India–US relations? India and the United States came into conflict as Indians came to look upon the United States as the primary imperial power after the Second World War. The Cold War only confirmed India's suspicions that the United States was the power more to be feared: it was clearly the stronger and more crusading power as well as less sympathetic to the concerns of the emerging post-colonial world, seeing the containment of communism as more central to world politics than emancipation from colonial rule (Kux 1993: 47–57). Even though New Delhi favored non-alignment, it in fact tended to look upon the Soviet Union and its allies with greater favor—a tilt that was to persist throughout the Cold War and through virtually all of the international crises of the period. The United States's support of Pakistan's case on Kashmir, its alliance with it, and after 1971 its alliance too with China meant that the United States was ranged against India in a much more direct sense. In New Delhi's view, US policies in Korea, Vietnam, and in various other theaters of the Cold War were symptomatic of American imperialism. India's vociferous opposition to these policies in turn alienated US opinion. The asymmetry of power may not have been the origins of the divide with the United States, but it caused India to fear the United States and to see virtually everything Washington did as arrogant and malign; in turn, given its superiority in power, the United States tended to see India as a supplicant or as an upstart.

## Conflict over Political Values

India's conflicts with Pakistan, China, and the United States are also portrayed in terms of differences in political values. In the case of Pakistan, the argument is that the roots of conflict are not just territorial but also political and are to be found in Congress Party–Muslim League differences over the organization of the subcontinent. The Congress view of a secular, united India stood in opposition to the Muslim League's notion of a separate Islamic homeland for Muslims and eventually the Pakistani insistence on an Islamic if not theocratic state (Ganguly 1995; Cohen 2013). The conflict between the two countries is often described as a continuation of this fundamental difference over the relationship between religion and the state, a point of contention that has only deepened with the rise of Islamic conservatism and extremism in Pakistan. The reification of this struggle is 'India versus Pakistan'.

Another political fault line that affects the relationship is India's view of Pakistan's praetorian politics. A constant thread running through accounts of India–Pakistan interactions is the dominance of the military in Pakistani politics and the effects

of praetorianism on bilateral ties (Koithara 2004: 92–5). One formulation is that India–Pakistan conflict is chronic because the Pakistan army has played a pivotal role in keeping the India threat alive, at least in part because of its corporate interests (Parthasarathy 2007: 634–40). With the rise of extremism and terrorism in Pakistan, the argument over political values has taken a slightly modified turn, namely, that these two phenomena—the mixing of religion and politics, and the undue influence of the military which for its own corporate interests supported Islamic extremism—are leading to the collapse of the Pakistani state, with serious consequences for Indian security (Khilnani et al. 2013: 43).

Where India–Pakistan conflict has been portrayed as arising from differences over the role of religion and of the military in politics, India–China conflict has been ascribed to differences over pluralist democracy and authoritarian one-party rule as the basis for statehood and development in Asia. For Indians, China's success with a one-party *dirigiste* state stands as a powerful challenge to the anarchic, pluralist democratic system that India has chosen; and for the Chinese, India's experiment with democracy raises uncomfortable questions about why China cannot be more democratic. Both countries see themselves as beacons for Asia and regard their political way of life as being a surer pathway to security and well-being. If this view is correct, then the India–China conflict goes much deeper than a territorial dispute, and its resolution can only occur when one side is converted to the other's view or if one ideology or the other stands vindicated by the choices of other Asians, that is, by history (Garver 2001: 110–37).

While India and the United States do not have a territorial quarrel that pitched them against each other, India–US contention has been traced back to a foundational difference, related to their broad political stance on development. India under the Congress Party favored economic development led by a strong developmental state which, via central planning, would allocate scarce resources more efficiently than the market (see Johnson 1982 on the notion of the developmental state). The Congress philosophy was a socialist one in which the state would occupy the commanding heights of the economy to foster rapid growth and to bring about social justice through entitlements and redistribution. As the years went on, India favored an autarkic, import-substitution view of manufacturing, and it shunned foreign investment.

The United States, on the other hand, argued for a development strategy based on the market's allocation of resources, a capitalist economy in which private business dominated, social justice through growth and social mobility, and receptivity to trade and investment. The difference in development philosophy would not have mattered except that it came to affect US development and aid policy, India's stance on the workings of the global economy, and New Delhi's view of Washington's geopolitical objectives. The United States appeared not just as a military superpower but also as an exploitative capitalist power (Brecher 1968: 300–4; Kux 1993: 68–72).

A fourth perspective, then, on India's protracted conflicts is that it was not sovereignty, alliances, and power asymmetries but rather differences in political values that resulted in chronic suspicion and friction with Pakistan, China, and the United States. Interestingly, value differences continue to complicate India's relations. India regards

Pakistan's Islamicization with deep foreboding, is in tacit competition with China's strutting authoritarianism, and remains suspicious of US-led globalization.

## Domestic Politics

Fifth, there is a view that the domestic politics of India, on the one hand, and Pakistan, China, and the United States, on the other hand, have deeply structured their mutual interactions in largely negative ways.

The clearest argument along these lines is the weak states argument as applied to India–Pakistan—that it is the weakness of Indian and Pakistani institutions and organizations which has prevented them from reaching rational, win-win solutions (Paul 2010: 3–27; Bajpai 1995; on India as a weak state, see Malone and Mukherjee 2010). A related argument is that when they do reach seemingly rational solutions, weak leaderships and institutions lack the legitimacy and authority to sell agreements to key domestic constituencies, and this has perpetuated if not deepened conflict between India and Pakistan. A third argument is that ruling groups in weak states are tempted to blame each other for their internal troubles and to use—if not to create—conflict to legitimize their rule. In India, Jawaharlal Nehru and to some extent Indira Gandhi presided over relatively strong institutions, had the legitimacy and authority to sell agreements, and were strong enough politically to avoid demonizing Pakistan beyond a point. In Pakistan, Ayub Khan in the early years of his rule and Zulfikar Bhutto briefly after 1972 were perhaps similarly placed. Since then neither country has had leadership of sufficient stature to negotiate a final settlement of any of their mutual conflicts.

There is a view that, like India–Pakistan, India–China conflict also arose from domestic exigencies and as a function of weak state behavior at critical moments. Thus, the cause of the 1962 war has been traced to domestic political pressures on both sides: to Nehru's buckling to public opinion by hardening his stand on the border and instituting the Forward Policy; and to Mao's desire to solidify his internal position after the disaster of the Great Leap Forward (Raghavan 2010: 284–304). After the departure of Indira Gandhi and Deng Xiaoping from the historical stage, neither side seems to have had leadership strong enough to negotiate a final settlement. With the rising tide of nationalism in both countries and the growing influence of electronic and social media, the chances of a settlement seem even more remote. India's leadership, assailed by the media, public opinion, opposition political parties, and think-tanks, is often portrayed as particularly lacking in the ability to carry through agreements that might entail any loss of territory to China.

India's tempestuous relationship with the United States, too, has been explained by domestic politics in the two democracies. In the case of India, a fairly deep-seated anti-Americanism took root in the intelligentsia, bureaucracy (especially the Indian Foreign Service), Congress Party, media, and public opinion. Indian anti-Americanism has been attributed to various factors including the United States's preference for Pakistan and later China during the Cold War, all manner of perceived slights and

insults from US leaders and opinion makers, the cultural condescension that Nehru and his daughter felt for America, the left-of-center aversion for the West and capitalism, and the fear that US intelligence agencies were interfering in Indian politics (Rotter 2000 deals with the cultural-ideational divide).

Anti-Americanism in India was matched by anti-Indian feelings in the United States. Accounts of India–US relations show that here too the Cold War played a role, with India's non-alignment and Third Worldism, its criticism of US external policies, and its tilt towards the Soviet Union playing negatively with American opinion including in the White House, Congress, key bureaucracies, think-tanks, media, and the public at large. Cultural antipathy also played a role. Americans were repulsed by what they regarded as the spirituality and disorderliness of Indians and dismayed at India's poverty and violence (Bajpai 1999; Rotter 2000: xiii–xxiv, 1–36). At the height of the Cold War and in the aftermath of the Korean War, Harold Isaacs, in his comparative study of American images of China and India, found that Americans were decidedly more attracted to Chinese than Indian society (Isaacs 1958).

In authoritarian political systems, these kinds of negative images may not have constrained decision-makers, but in open pluralist democracies they affected policy, especially so in India where it is virtually impossible to support a strong relationship with the United States. This remains the case, despite the fact that over the past decade surveys of Indian opinion have revealed consistently favorable opinions of America (Schaffer 2009: 14–15). By contrast, politicians, the bureaucracy, and the media all continue to harbor deeply mixed views of the United States—admiration and friendship but also resentment and suspicion.

## CONCLUSION

---

The study of Indian foreign policy has been dominated by writings on India's relations with Pakistan, China, and the United States. India–Pakistan, India–China, and India–US relations have been conflict-ridden over a very long time—a confounding and perplexing result for Indian policy-makers who had sincerely hoped that as a newly-independent country India would take its place as a constructive member of international society. The literature on India's conflicts with Pakistan, China, and the United States suggests that these conflicts can be understood in terms of five common themes or approaches: an original and unresolved quarrel around sovereignty; alliance dynamics; power asymmetries; differences in political values; and domestic politics.

This raises the question of which is the best interpretive lens by which to understand India's protracted quarrels. Any one of the approaches might account for India's conflicts—a classic case of what methodologists call 'over-determination'. With the opening up of official archives particularly in the West but also in China, and to a lesser extent with access to oral records and documents in India, it may be possible to produce detailed and careful histories of the three relationships which would help settle

the interpretive question. A new wave of archive-based Indian foreign policy studies is making its appearance and heralds just such a development (Raghavan 2010, 2013; Chaudhuri 2013). More likely than not, though, social reality being complex, a stance of 'analytical eclecticism' will probably be more fruitful (Katzenstein and Sil 2008 argue the case for eclecticism), and these various interpretations will need to be woven together in a rich tapestry of understanding. The new historical scholarship in Indian foreign policy studies already suggests that a layering of several different interpretive approaches will produce better understanding.

Thus, the various interpretive stances could be deployed to help us understand the nature of conflict over time. Take the India–Pakistan case. The origin of the conflict is in the contention over Kashmir, an elemental quarrel over territory, nationhood, and sovereignty. With the coming of the Cold War, India's desire to stay away from alliance relationships had the ironic effect of embroiling it in alliance politics: non-alignment alienated the United States, which sought out Pakistan, and the evolving US–Pakistan relationship added to India's differences with its neighbor. Almost from the beginning but certainly when the UN-led Kashmir process failed to deliver a solution and later still after the Bangladesh war, the power asymmetry between India and Pakistan led Pakistani leaders to enter into ever-deeper military and diplomatic partnerships, first with the United States and then China—which only made matters worse with India. In time, the differences in political values between India and Pakistan added to the widening gulf between the two societies. Finally, as conflict persisted and deepened, and as leaderships in both countries weakened, neither government was able to push negotiations on Kashmir (and other bilateral quarrels) to successful completion.

A deep post-colonial attachment to sovereignty, Cold War alliance politics, and the power asymmetry produced a seemingly unbridgeable divide. Yet if India and Pakistan had evolved more compatible ideas about the proper constitution of political life, and if they had produced strong second- and third-generation leaders and resilient institutions, they might have settled their quarrels and lived in peace and harmony. Instead, their political values diverged, and they were left with weak leaders and weak institutions—and a protracted conflict that ramified and has endured. A similar if less negative story could be told for the India–China and India–US relationships.

The power of original quarrels to structure India's relations with these three powers merits more attention in Indian foreign policy studies. At the heart of these quarrels are concerns about sovereignty—that is, about control over territory (with Pakistan and China) and over economic, domestic, and foreign policy (with the United States). India's 'hard' view of sovereignty is not just at the heart of its relations with Pakistan, China, and the United States. It is at the heart of its foreign policy more generally. Not surprisingly, India resists international agreements and arrangements, including bilateral and regional ones, that require a loosening of control over what happens within its boundaries. And it continues to take a conservative view of humanitarian intervention and climate change obligations, amongst others.<sup>4</sup>

India's foreign policy has been marked by ambivalence. On the one hand, its deepest and finest instincts have been internationalist and cosmopolitan—there is a substantial

body of Indian international thought, from Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore to Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru and beyond, that bears this out. On the other hand, partition and war, at the time of India's entry into international society, scarred its foreign policy psyche, leaving it unable to transcend narrow, gnawing anxieties over sovereignty. India is not the only post-colonial state to be animated in its foreign policy by a sovereignty imperative; but it is the largest and most powerful of the new states to be so deeply enmeshed in what, to borrow from economists, we could call a 'low-level equilibrium trap'—a policy stance that is stuck in managing protracted conflicts, often with considerable deftness, but that is unable to settle long-standing and burdensome quarrels. For 70 years, it has been preoccupied with not giving an inch to Pakistan, China, and the US, and as a result, with some exceptions, has been prevented from playing the more constructive global role it had envisaged at its birth. Indian foreign policy studies going forward could help rescue India from this low-level equilibrium trap.

## NOTES

1. *India Quarterly* began publication in 1945, *International Studies* in 1969, and *Strategic Analysis* in 1977.
2. See Krishna (1994) for the importance of maps and cartography in the construction of India's national identity. On the term 'cartographic imagination', see Smith (2008). Smith uses the term differently.
3. Appadorai (1981: 6) suggests that non-alignment was essential if domestic tranquillity was to be preserved.
4. On India's attitude to sovereignty and multilateralism, see Sidhu et al. (2013).

## REFERENCES

- Appadorai, A. (1981). *The Domestic Roots of India's Foreign Policy: 1947–1972*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Brecher, M. (1968). *India and World Politics: Krishna Menon's View of the World*. New York and Washington, DC: Frederick A. Praeger.
- Chari, P. R., Cheema, P. I., and Cohen, S. P. (2007). *Four Crises and a Peace Process*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Chaudhuri, R. (2013). *Forged in Crisis: India and the United States Since 1947*. London: Hurst.
- Cohen, S. (2013). *Shooting for a Century: The India–Pakistan Conundrum*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Ganguly, S. (1995). 'Wars Without End: The Indo-Pakistani Conflict', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Special issue, Small Wars, September, 541: 167–78.
- Garver, J. (2001). *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.
- Guha, R. (2012). *Patriots and Partisans*. New Delhi: Allen Lane.
- Katzenstein, P. J. and Sil, R. (2008). 'Eclectic Theorizing in the Study and Practice of International Relations', in C. Reus-Smit and D. Snidal (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 109–30.

- Khilnani, S., Kumar, R., Mehta, P. B., Menon, P., Nilekani, N., Raghavan, S., Saran, S., and Vardarajan, S. (2013). *Non-Alignment 2.0: A Foreign and Strategic Policy for India in the Twenty First Century*. New Delhi: Penguin.
- Koithara, V. (2004). *Crafting Peace in Kashmir: Through a Realist Lens*. New Delhi: Sage.
- Krishna, S. (1994). 'Cartographic Anxiety: Mapping the Body Politic in India', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 19(4): 507–21.
- Kux, D. (1993). *Estranged Democracies: India and the United States. 1941–1991*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Malik, P. (2009). *India's Nuclear Debate: Exceptionalism and the Bomb*. New Delhi: Routledge.
- Malone, D. and Mukherjee, R. (2010). 'India and China: Conflict and Cooperation', *Survival*, February/March, 52(1): 137–58.
- Miller, M. C. (2013). 'India's Feeble Foreign Policy', *Foreign Affairs*, May/June.
- Paul, T. V. (ed.) (2005). *The India–Pakistan Conflict: An Enduring Rivalry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Raghavan, S. (2010). *War and Peace in Modern India: A Strategic History of the Nehru Years*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black.
- Raghavan, S. (2013). *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Raja Mohan, C. (2012). 'India as a Security Provider: Reconsidering the Raj's Legacy', Working Paper, Institute for South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore.
- Sidhu, W. P. S., Mehta, P. B., and Jones, B. (2013). *Shaping the Emerging World: India and the Multilateral Order*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institute.
- Smith, D. K. (2008). *The Cartographic Imagination in Early Modern England*. London: Ashgate.
- Varshney, A. (1991). 'India, Pakistan, and Kashmir: Antinomies of Nationalism', *Asian Survey*, 31(11): 997–1019.
- Weiner, M. (1971). 'The Macedonian syndrome', *World Politics*, 23(1): 665–83.

## CHAPTER 3

---

# THEORIZING INDIA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS

---

SIDDHARTH MALLAVARAPU

## INTRODUCTION

---

A. P. RANA and K. P. Misra argued several years ago (2005 [1989]: 78; Mallavarapu 2005: 6–7), in an audit of the state of international relations (IR) in India that there exists a ‘submerged “theoretical base”’ in Indian writings on IR. The suggestion is an inviting point of departure to critically examine and sift through some of the early disciplinary interventions on Indian foreign policy to make explicit some of the latent theoretical premises that appear to have informed a prior generation. For the purposes of this enquiry, a set of four volumes with different contributing editors on *India and World Affairs* along with a rich ensemble of representative writings of Sisir Gupta on various facets relating to India’s foreign relations remain particularly relevant.<sup>1</sup>

The intent here is to make a best-case argument about home spun theorizations of India’s foreign relations. While these accounts might not meet the criterion of international relations theory (IRT) as we understand it in the conventional sense, they nevertheless provide in some instances the appropriate backdrop to both raise and pursue first-order theoretical questions. Some of these writings merit being revisited by a newer generation of scholars both for a sense of the disciplinary history of the field in India as well as avoiding the ever-present spectre of ‘presentism’ (Schmidt 1998). It is perhaps also worth reminding ourselves that as far as the Indian variant of the discipline of IR is concerned, the first generation was constituted by *tabula rasa* IR academics who had to literally inaugurate a disciplinary field of study with the nomenclature of *International Studies* in a vastly different milieu. It is hard today to fully appreciate the set of basic institutional constraints operating at that time on these scholars. These constraints were compounded by the fact that India was only beginning its innings as a modern nation state. This is not to deny that perhaps more could have been accomplished. However, it is to testify to the reality that there existed a critical mass of thinking and latent theorizing

on various facets of India's foreign relations though arguably minuscule for a country of India's size with its accompanying claims for international stature.

The attempt here to bring to the fore certain theoretical elements from the earlier generation of writings is not to force the pace and suggest that India has its own Waltzian realists, Keohanean liberals, and Wendtian constructivists or to alternatively suggest that the national foreign policy discourse was particularly derivative of theoretical currents in the West prevailing at that moment in time. Perhaps we have all or none of them but that is beside the point. It is important to study these interventions on their own terms, to appreciate the manner in which Indian scholars theorized as insiders their place, yearnings, and dilemmas as they reached out as an independent nation state keen to build bridges with the external world. In the process of reaching out, India made its own allies and adversaries and got embroiled in various episodes (not always consciously intended). The core issue at hand is how an earlier generation of IR scholars living and working in Indian institutional settings came to intellectually interpret India's broader global moorings. Given the limited and merely illustrative nature of this enquiry, I would like to forewarn readers that this is not intended to be an exhaustive survey or catalogue of the relevant domain. I only seek here to draw attention to some early strands of writing on Indian foreign policy that gesture to theoretical concerns pertaining to India's engagement with the wider world.

This is also not to deny that there has been a spate of commentaries by scholars located outside of India on facets of Indian foreign policy right from its early post-independence days to the intervening and more recent years. This would encompass the work of Taya Zinkin, Adda Bozeman, Alan De Russett, Michael Brecher, T. A. Keenleyside, Stephen Cohen, Sumit Ganguly, T. V. Paul, Baldev Raj Nayar, and in more recent years notably the work of Priya Chacko, Rudra Chaudhuri, Harsh Pant, Daniel Markey, Andrew Kennedy, David Scott, Walter Andersen, Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu, Bruce Jones, and Michael Arndt among others. This collective body of scholarship has engaged questions relating to the origins of Indian foreign policy, introduced comparative perspectives, studied cultural influences, diplomatic styles, colonial path dependencies, and institutional settings as well as scrutinized at some length the persona of Nehru and its implications for Indian foreign policy. Apart from these concerns, the geopolitical crucible that has forged Indian foreign policy trajectories, the dynamics of India repositioning itself as a rising power, and its evolving stance towards multilateralism both in terms of global and regional analysis have also merited some attention.

In terms of a broader roadmap, the current chapter begins by discussing the general state of play in contemporary IR in terms of theorizing foreign relations. It subsequently proceeds to focus on facets of theorizing India's foreign relations and finally, given the pedagogic functions of the *Handbook*, signals further possibilities in terms of research designs that might incorporate theory more strongly while approaching the study of foreign policy generically and India's foreign relations more specifically. The conclusion argues that what is warranted is more not less theory. But the critical question that needs to be addressed is what kind of theorizing? The suggestion here is that we need diverse strands of theorizing and theorists

of eclectic persuasions. However, theories that factor context, remain attentive to sedimented historical and cultural sensibilities, and are receptive to non-Western epistemologies are regarded as better positioned to account for how India views the world of foreign relations. It is perhaps important to state that no quintessential single Indian theory of IR or for that matter of foreign policy is essential. However, if we articulate with clarity theoretical preferences as viewed from the distinctive vantage point of India in foreign policy terms, it would contribute to a better understanding of India's motivations and actions in the international sphere. Such an enterprise calls for an awareness of both classic and cutting-edge theorizations of foreign policy from around the globe and caution to avoid uncritically embracing any of these claims merely because they emanate from conventional power centres of IR knowledge production.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY AND FOREIGN POLICY

---

Theory more often than not does not directly inform foreign policy analysis. James Rosenau, reflecting on the general state of the field of foreign policy studies, remarked that 'foreign policy analysis is devoid of general theory' (Rosenau 2011: 145). Distinguishing between 'pre-theory' and 'theory', Rosenau highlights the need for a 'pre-theory which renders raw materials comparable and ready for theorizing' (Rosenau 2011: 150). In the absence of a 'pre-theory', the general enterprise of theory building is likely to suffer. The emphasis on uncovering causality represents one significant modality of theorizing that is explanatory in nature.

There are several other idioms in which theorizing occurs in the domain of foreign policy thinking. K. J. Holsti places an emphasis on 'national role conceptions' (K. J. Holsti 2011: 220). He claims that there is a need to distinguish between different possible 'role conceptions' and also avoid misleadingly conflating for instance the foreign policies of all non-aligned nations as belonging to the same category (K. J. Holsti 2011: 225).

The constitution of adversarial 'images' in foreign policies of states and how it impacts decision-making is evident in the theoretical focus of Ole Holsti. Of specific interest is the 'structure of the belief system' and its amenability to change (O. R. Holsti 2011: 257). The broader claim Holsti advances is that 'rigid images' are quite perceptibly to the detriment of any serious amelioration of a conflict situation (O. R. Holsti 2011: 269). In similar vein, Alexander L. George's 'operational code belief system' is pivoted on theoretical dimensions of information processing (George 2011).

An additional dimension added to pursuing 'beliefs' in foreign policy decision-making is the more recent entry of emotions as an important motif alongside beliefs. Jonathan Mercer argues that '[r]ejecting the view that emotion must follow cognition or only

distorts rationality makes it possible to explore how emotion and cognition co-produce beliefs' (Mercer 2011: 243). The role of affect in shaping foreign policy one way or the other assumes increased salience in Mercer's theoretical slant of emphasis.

Margaret G. Hermann theorizes leadership in foreign policy decision-making and makes a distinction between 'independent' and 'participatory' foreign policy orientations. The degree of 'control' exercised by leaders, with the former tending to be much more control-oriented and the latter turning out to be much less control-oriented, appears to carry implications for the conduct and success or failure of foreign policy (Hermann 1980). Janice Gross Stein's theoretical interest in foreign policy relates to processes of political learning (Stein 1994). For Robert Jervis, the crux of foreign policy analysis is to decipher beliefs (Jervis 2011).

Apart from the above modes of theorizing foreign policy, all the mainstream IRTs also provide different pictures of what they treat as important in the study of foreign policy. The classical realist, Hans Morgenthau warns that '[t]he human mind in its day-by-day operations cannot bear to look the truth of politics straight in the face. It must disguise, distort, belittle, and embellish the truth—the more so, the more the individual is actively involved in the processes of politics, and particularly in those of international politics' (Morgenthau 2011: 27). Most classical realists are theoretically interested in discerning what constitutes the 'national interest' for states and how that self-definition impacts their actual behaviour in the international sphere. Arnold Wolfers further nuances how we interpret 'national security' by demonstrating that it is an 'ambiguous symbol' (Wolfers 1952).

In terms of neorealism, Colin Elman suggests that 'there is a long-running but understudied dispute about whether neorealist theories can be considered theories of foreign policy' (Elman 2011: 110). Elman's overall claim is that neorealism could be employed 'to make determinate foreign policy predictions' (Elman 2011: 123). Depending on whether you are a defensive realist or an offensive realist, Elman suggests that it carries different implications for how foreign policy behaviour is likely to be explained by these theoretical strands (Elman 2011: 118).

In more recent years, neoclassical realism seeks to directly address the theory of foreign policy. Critical of the general neglect in foreign policy theorizing, Gideon Rose argues that neoclassical realism provides a more holistic account of foreign policy by relating the 'external' to the domestic dimension much more nimbly via 'intervening variables' (Rose 2011: 73).

Liberals like Helen Milner and Andrew Moravcsik have also advanced our theoretical understanding of foreign policy in important ways. Milner in her account of trade policy for instance suggests that 'increased international interdependence have wrought changes in the trade policy preferences of industries' (2011: 153). Moravcsik goes on further to argue that 'liberal theory provides a plausible theoretical explanation for variation in the substantive content of foreign policy' (Moravcsik 2011: 182).

Constructivists are not far behind in claiming theoretical ground in interpreting foreign policies of particular states in the international system. Ted Hopf rejects only one set of possibilities in terms of the dynamics between the 'Self' and the 'Other' (Hopf

2011: 363). Jutta Weldes remains particularly attentive to how the state in the process of articulation of its self-identity 'constructs' its national interest (Weldes 2011: 323).

Besides these theoretical approaches to foreign policy, mention may be made of other well-known slices of scholarship—Graham Allison's work on decision-making, Jack Levy on organizational processes, the interplay of ideas and foreign policy in the work of Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane and explications of the connections between domestic and international politics in the works of Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert D. Putnam.<sup>2</sup> Suffice it to say that for any scholar interested in theorizing India's foreign relations there is much to factor from within the existing repertoire of generic theoretical scholarship on foreign policy. The challenge is to examine how context complicates these claims and whether they are more persuasive ways of theorizing developments relating to Indian foreign policy.

## ESCHEWING A 'QUARANTINE': THEORIZING INDIA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS

---

A matter of some concern is that in the standard canonical literature of theoretical slices of foreign policy scholarship, there are scarce references to scholars from Africa, Asia, the Arab world, and South America. Surely something is amiss in terms of representation within the field of foreign policy theorizing and analytics. How do scholars in IR from these assorted regions view the foreign policy action of their own states and come to interpret the broader palimpsest of international politics? Why is it that so few of these commentaries find a way into the main sinews of IR? Is this merely a happenstance or another symptom of the Anglo-American ethnocentrism that pervades IRT more generally? How can foreign policy, a traditional arena of enquiry in IR, remain entirely insulated from some of this mainstream ethnocentrism? While being wary of any form of nativism, we need to more seriously invest in acquainting ourselves with our intellectual inheritances especially in disciplinary terms to understand the peculiarities that attach to particular forms of representation and argumentation in IR. This is not to suggest that all these scholars were making entirely exceptionalist arguments about India and her role in world affairs. On the contrary, some struck out boldly and made robust arguments often invoking universal logics.

While reading through the writings of some of the first generation of Indian IR scholars writing on foreign policy, a scholar who struck me as particularly prescient, insightful, and (most importantly from our perspective here) theoretically informed in his approach was Sisir Gupta. While he is perhaps best known for his book *Kashmir: A Study in India-Pakistan Relations* (1967), Gupta also contributed to a whole range of other questions germane to foreign policy but also directly on issues such as 'great power relations' and the place, status, and strategies of the Third World vis-à-vis the

major powers in the Cold War milieu.<sup>3</sup> I quote from his work here rather extensively to give you a flavour of his mode of reasoning and the theoretical tenor of his reflections.

On the category as well as the connotation of 'Third World', Gupta writing in the 1970s argued that

[o]bjective realities apart, the elites of the Third World states have often been brought up in those Western intellectual traditions which attached considerable importance to the problem of uplifting the weak and under-privileged sections of their societies and which extrapolated the theory of the need for solidarity among the under-privileged for collective struggles to improve their lot into a theory of international relations which thought of associations or leagues of 'Oppressed Peoples'. (Gupta 1981a: 45)

He further claimed that

[t]he Leninist theory of imperialism has had great impact on the minds of the people who formulated the world view of these countries, and without being Communists or Socialists in their attitudes to internal social problems, many of them regarded their anti-imperialist struggles as part of a world wide effort to improve the lots of the international have-nots (as indeed Lenin and Stalin had anticipated). The consciousness of being the have-nots of the world has influenced and will continue to influence the behaviour and attitudes of the Third World states. (Gupta 1981a: 45)

Distinguishing between appearances and realities, Gupta observed that

both the revolutionaries and the conservatives of the world make the facile assumption that because they are under-privileged and are have-nots in some ways, the Third World states are like the proletariat of the international society: the former hope and the latter fear that being under-privileged, the nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America will seek to bring about radical transformation of the institutions and arrangements which sustain the present international system and are dedicated to total change in the structure of world politics. (Gupta 1981a: 46)

However, Gupta points out that 'to bring about radical social transformation through revolutionary methods is for many Third World elites tantamount to passing a death sentence on themselves. The aversion to internal radicalism, of the unwillingness to conceive revolutionary transformations within one's society tempers the zeal to act as have-nots' (Gupta 1981a: 46).

More telling is his eschewal of polemics and diagnosis that

[i]f the Third World consciousness was a primary motivating force, India and China, Pakistan and Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Somalia would have found it easier to resolve their disputes and problems in order to be able to present a united front before the rest of the world. The inescapable fact is that many of the Third World states have in fact sought to promote their national interests vis-à-vis their neighbours with the

help of the very nations who are most unquestionably the haves of today's world.  
(Gupta 1981a: 46)

His verdict was that '[t]he foreign policy preoccupations of many of the Third World states are, and in all probability will continue to be, more varied than one of seeking structural changes in world politics' (Gupta 1981a: 47).

By this reading, there is no exceptionalism one can assign to Third World states and their foreign policies. Similar to some strands of realism, Gupta argued that 'they [the Third World] not only want to promote their individual and collective interests through the manipulation of existing international forces, but also to avoid any contingency in which international anarchy or disorderliness hinder their efforts to build their nations and consolidate their independence' (Gupta 1981a: 48). The policy prescription that flows from this diagnosis of the Third World quandary and its IR practice was clear: '[g]radual improvement of their position within the international system, through orderly change, rather than collapse of whatever order exists, is therefore the most rational goal for the Third World' (Gupta 1981a: 48).

I referred to Gupta as prescient because he argued then as perhaps some would now that '[d]isarmament, as a method of reducing the existing inequalities of power distribution among the nations of the world, remains a chimera' (Gupta 1981a: 67). While in one register, Gupta's writing can be interpreted as mirroring elements of realism, in another register Gupta could, in contemporary theoretical parlance, be viewed as a constructivist who is attentive to power-knowledge configurations. He observes on one occasion that '[w]hat has made the Third World's confusion worse confounded is that the major Powers of the world have sought to describe ... changes in their relationships in a manner that would help them retain their advantage in the outlying continents and among the smaller Powers of the world' (Gupta 1981a: 63). That a large part of politics has to do with the framing and generation of meaning that occludes certain possibilities in the interests of the powerful is a claim most constructivists would be sympathetic to.

Theoretically, the puzzle in relation to the Third World states was to ask 'whether they can ever re-introduce themselves as active participants in international politics without acquiring a relatively higher degree of power than what they now possess' (Gupta 1981a: 85). To reiterate, the context being referred to was the 1970s. This provides an interesting theoretical opening in terms of examining how states can impact political outcomes while faced with conventional power deficits.

Even in terms of foreign policy, Gupta recognized most clearly the paradox of a materially weak power like India being 'a far more important element in world politics than the power and resources at its disposal warranted' (Gupta 1981b: 342). Going beyond the specific, Gupta diagnosed India's eternal foreign policy dilemmas as being '(a) [c]hoosing between alternative methods of advancing the country's national interests in the areas of internal progress, regional stability and world peace and world reforms; and (b) deciding how the emphases on these three sets of objectives should be distributed when they exerted contradictory pulls over the country's foreign policy' (Gupta 1981b: 340). To me, this represents another excellent theoretical opening in terms of both the

‘diagnostic’ and ‘choice’ propensities evident in the work of scholars like Alexander L. George, leading to specific preferences and allocation of finite resources for a middle power state (George 2011: 280).

In a commemorative volume honouring Sisir Gupta who died rather young, Hedley Bull was keen to engage the corpus of work that Gupta left behind. He asked himself and his readers, ‘to what extent can his [Sisir Gupta] interpretation of events in India be applied to the non-Western or non-European world as a whole?’ (Bull 1981: 201). Regretting the fact that ‘[o]ur thinking about world politics today has been mainly shaped by explanations and interpretations that pay little attention to the persistence of traditional cultures’, Bull went on to argue that ‘cultural differences are also a fact of life, and to understand them we shall need knowledge—historical, literary, anthropological—of the particular cultures concerned; explanations of the processes at work in all societies will not help very much. If Sisir Gupta is right, the forward march of modernization, so far from eliminating traditional forms of life, may actually strengthen them’ (Bull 1981: 208).

The four volumes on *India and World Affairs* produced in the 1950s and 1960s provide another relevant site for thinking about the underlying theoretical assumptions that might have informed foreign policy reflection among an earlier generation of IR scholars from India. K. P. Karunakaran (who edited both the first two volumes in the series from 1947 to 1953) details at some length the debate surrounding India’s participation in the Commonwealth. What is theoretically of interest is an assessment of India’s standing in the wider world and the forces of history at play during the early post-independence years. Karunakaran argued that

India’s contribution to the awakening of Asia was significant. India holds a unique position in the continent, and strategically she is so situated that she cannot be ignored in a consideration of any major problem relating to defence, trade, industry or economic policy, affecting any group of Asian countries. Her Government is comparatively stable and she is potentially a powerful country. India is, therefore, bound to play an important part in Asian affairs. (Karunakaran 1952: 33)

In the second volume, Karunakaran argued that Cold War politics militated against a more influential role for India in world affairs. He observed, ‘[t]his aspect of the international situation made it possible for India and other Asian and African states, who were uncommitted to either of the two camps, to make their influence felt in world affairs, something which, otherwise, they might not have been able to do so’ (Karunakaran 1958: 1). The constraints imposed by the international system on national ambitions of new post-colonial states or latecomers in history provide another ripe arena for further theoretical enquiry. India’s mediatory role in international politics also came in for some special attention. Karunakaran noted that ‘[b]y 1952 the infant State of India had also emerged as a significant factor in international politics—a factor which could not be ignored by others—not only when her own interests were at stake but also with regard to the settlement of international disputes

in which the Big Powers were concerned and in which India itself was not directly involved' (Karunakaran 1958: 1).

M. S. Rajan's part of the series on *India in World Affairs* covered the period from 1954 to 1956. Attempting to decipher the Indian proclivity to 'moderation' in international affairs, Rajan seeks to demonstrate the interplay of international and domestic politics to determine a particular stance in international affairs. Again avoiding any claim to a distinct exceptionalism, he observes that:

India's approach to foreign policy was characterized by several distinguishing features—of course, not all of them peculiar to India. Perhaps the most characteristic of these was the tolerance of differing views and attitudes, and moderation. The former was imposed (as much on India as on all other nations of the world) by the very fact of membership of international society by states of diverse ideologies and interests. In a sense, therefore, peaceful co-existence of nations was not a discretionary policy but a mere acknowledgment of the facts of international society. (Rajan 1964: 31)

Registering his dissent from conventional characterizations of Indian foreign policy as idealist Rajan clarified that

[a]n approach to Indian foreign policy which is governed by the several considerations ... had the risk of being misunderstood as an idealistic or ethical approach—in other words, one which was not solely governed by a country's national interest as such—and India was not quite successful in running that risk. But there was, and is never, any question in the minds of the Indian policy-makers of consciously trying to operate on an idealistic or moral plane in world affairs; they are, like statesmen of every other country, primarily interested in promoting, directly or indirectly, India's national interests, conceived of course, within the broader framework of mutual interests of other nations as well as the overall needs of a progressive world society. It so happened that many of the policies and actions of the Indian Government and the aspirations of the Indian people (e.g. opposition to colonialism and racialism) were in harmony with the needs of world society and the general moral values prevailing in the world at large. (Rajan 1964: 39)

He further suggests that '[i]t is largely due to this emphasis on the right means to achieve even right ends in India's IR that the widespread, but inaccurate, belief has come to prevail, especially abroad, that India's foreign policy is based on, or is guided by, moral principles. India's policy is no more moral than that of any other country; the policy as such is amoral' (Rajan 1964: 48). What makes this relevant is that none of these assessments are saccharine endorsements of the official stance or crude hagiographies.

A final volume covered just one year, 1957–8, and was authored by V. K. Arora and Angadipuram Appadorai. There are two elements which I intend to briefly flag here. The first observation relates to the eschewal of the language of 'national interest' in at least some of Nehru's speeches. While assuming that the obvious need not be stated Arora and Appadorai note that '[n]either in Nehru's broadcast from New Delhi on 7

September 1946 nor at the subsequent press conference was there any reference to the promotion of India's national interest as an objective of foreign policy. Why was this not mentioned? I believe it was taken for granted' (Arora and Appadorai 1975: 1). The other dimension related to some failings regarding India's foreign policy even during the early years. Arora and Appadorai argue that '[i]t had not been possible to incorporate Goa with the Indian Union. The people of Indian origin settled in Ceylon had not been treated as full-fledged citizens of the country. Relations with Pakistan continued to be unfriendly and it had not been possible to evict Pakistan from the part of Kashmir it had occupied' (Arora and Appadorai 1975: 304). However, 'to say that India's foreign policy was a disastrous failure because of these facts is to misjudge what is possible and what is not possible in international politics. Even states more powerful than India militarily and economically have not always been able to achieve the objectives of their foreign policy' (Arora and Appadorai 1975: 304). The comparison held out with other more privileged members of the international community is healthy in theoretical terms and provides yet another set of theoretical possibilities to build on.

In the 1980s, a special issue of the journal *International Studies* brought together a whole range of contributions on the subject of non-alignment. Based on an engagement with this literature, I argued elsewhere that that this body of literature also raised some important theoretical questions. These pertained to 'how one might explain the nature of political change and historical transitions, decide on the cast of actors who mattered, give consideration to what causal mechanisms account for change and how the broader international community responds to these developments' (Mallavarapu 2009: 171). However, I also suggested that 'there were no attempts to formulate an explicit theory which looked at how middle powers/post-colonial states interpreted their material and ideational resources and what sort of policy outcomes these conceptions were likely to generate' (Mallavarapu 2009: 171). I am now of the view that Sisir Gupta's work of the 1970s engages this question and does indeed articulate in theoretical terms how the 'Third World' and within that India was positioning itself in the wider international system.

## CONCLUSION

---

The chapter has sought to foreground the case for a closer reading of Indian accounts of foreign policy with the objective of extrapolating the tacit theoretical premises that inform particular authors and their view of India's role in the world. The intellectual crucible and broader milieu in which these scholars were working to forge a new discipline of international studies generated its own accents in the manner in which theory was understood and employed in their work. While some of these scholars strayed away from consciously partaking of broader theoretical schools, they nevertheless had their own assessments of what mattered in foreign policy and how best India's actions can be interpreted in the specific milieus that concerned them. While it is perhaps possible to

discern realist, liberal, or constructivist moments in Indian foreign policy thinking and reflection, we need to be cautious not to box any of these scholars prematurely under one or the other rubric without an adequate engagement with the entire corpus of their work.

In fact, a part of the reason why theory in its explicit avatar may not have appealed to these scholars is because in their own assessments it was perceived as inadequate to the task of neatly explaining what was going on in the domain of Indian foreign policy. The heuristic strategy adopted by me here could be applied to a much wider gamut of subsequent writings on various aspects of Indian foreign policy. Minimally, book-length accounts dealing with different phases and facets of Indian foreign policy by Bimal Prasad, J. Bandhopadhyay, V. P. Dutt, S. D. Muni, Surjit Mansingh, C. Raja Mohan, Harish Kapur, Srinath Raghavan, and Rudra Chaudhuri deserve closer attention. Apart from these, assorted edited volumes on foreign policy by Rajen Harshe and K. M. Seethi, Sumit Ganguly, Waheguru Pal Singh, Pratap Bhanu Mehta, and Bruce Jones on India's engagement with multilateralism and the more recent co-edited anthology by Kanti Bajpai and Harsh Pant on foreign policy should be carefully engaged with the intent of discerning broader patterns of theoretical reflection that have informed slices of Indian foreign policy analysis and to detect what has changed over the years. Besides these accounts, an enquiry into the manner in which Indian practitioners cognized the external world reflecting their own prior socialization in the Indian Foreign Service might also open up avenues to examine particular interpretations of foreign policy. The contributions of J. N. Dixit, Muchkund Dubey, Shyam Saran, and Rajiv Sikri serve as a case in point and are also likely to reveal latent or explicit theoretical premises about how things appear to work especially in the sphere of foreign policy preference formation and political outcomes.<sup>4</sup> This could profitably be explored alongside practitioner accounts of Indian foreign policy by former diplomats from other countries who have served stints in India.<sup>5</sup>

During the course of the chapter, the attempt has been to encapsulate the theoretical lay of the land as far as mainstream IR theoretical scholarship on foreign policy is concerned. IR theorists of various persuasions recognize that there is a fair amount of theoretical work that still remains undone in the field of foreign policy studies. Neoclassical realists are keen to learn more about 'the waxing and waning of material power capabilities in the first place' (Rose 2011: 90). Neoliberal institutionalists believe that '[w]hat we need now are theories that account for (1) when experiments to restructure the international environment are tried, and (2) whether a particular experiment is likely to succeed' (Axelrod and Keohane 2011: 204). Constructivists would like to know more about 'the interaction among learning, politics, and foreign policy change [as] inextricably joined to a deep debate about the construction of knowledge in political life' (Stein 1994: 300). Another positive direction for scholars working on foreign policy would be to introduce a strong comparative dimension to their research. Rosenau argues that 'single country analyses are themselves theoretically deficient' (Rosenau 2011: 148).

Foreign policy analytics in India needs its own share of theorists. Ideally, they need to represent a broad spectrum of theoretical persuasions and must productively

engage different slices of foreign policy realities. Further, good theory must be built on good empirics and theory could also be generated both in the explanatory and understanding traditions that Martin Hollis and Steve Smith envisage in their explanation of these approaches in social science and its implications for IR research (Hollis and Smith 1990). Context remains critical to good theorizing and if it is informed by local histories and an appreciation of cultural path dependencies it would contribute to a much more nuanced theory-building enterprise. Finally, while it is important to study recent theoretical developments in the field of foreign policy studies, it is equally critical to approach these trends with some caution while assessing their relevance to our particular foci in this part of the world. Uncritical grafting of mainstream theories will do us more a disservice than help in comprehending a complex world. The fact that much is still not settled and is unlikely to be so (given the contingent nature of the field of enquiry) is good news for anybody embarking afresh on a journey of ‘thinking theoretically’ about foreign policy generically or curious about the relevant Indian ecology in this traditional and crucial arena of world politics.<sup>6</sup> After all, Albert Hirschman in the pages of *World Politics* as far back as 1970 reminded us that ‘paradigms’ could indeed prove at times a ‘hindrance to understanding’ (Hirschmann 1970).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

I would like to record my special gratitude to Gnanagurunathan Dinakaramohan for making accessible the *India in World Affairs* reports cited in this study and to the co-editors and participants for comments on an earlier version of this chapter. The usual disclaimer applies.

## NOTES

---

1. These volumes are as follows: Karunakaran (1952, 1958); Rajan (1964); and Arora and Appadorai (1975). All these studies were published under the auspices of the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA). Many of Sisir Gupta's writings are collected in Rajan and Ganguli (1981b). See also Rajan and Ganguli (1981a).
2. See, for example, Allison (2011); Levy (2011); Goldstein and Keohane (2011); Katzenstein (2011); Putnam (2011).
3. Also see Gupta (1964).
4. See, for example, Dixit (2001); Sikri (2009); Dubey (2012).
5. See Malone (2012).
6. See, for example, Rosenau and Durfee (2000).

## REFERENCES

- Allison, G. T. (2011). 'Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis', in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, ed. W. Carlsnaes and S. Guzzini, vol. 1. Los Angeles: Sage, 91–141.
- Arora, V. K. and Appadorai, A. (1975). *India in World Affairs*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.
- Axelrod, R. and Keohane, R. O. (2011). 'Achieving Cooperation Under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions', in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, ed. W. Carlsnaes and S. Guzzini, vol. 2. Los Angeles: Sage, 181–207.
- Bull, H. (1981). 'The Revolt Against the West', in *Great Power Relations, World Order and the Third World*, ed. M. S. Rajan and S. Ganguly. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 200–8.
- Dixit, J. N. (2001). *India's Foreign Policy and its Neighbours*. New Delhi: Gyan Books.
- Dubey, M. (2012). *India's Foreign Policy: Coping with a Changing World*. New Delhi: Pearson.
- Elman, C. (2011). 'Horses for Courses: Why Not Neorealist Theories of Foreign Policy?' in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, ed. W. Carlsnaes and S. Guzzini, vol. 1. Los Angeles: Sage, 109–50.
- George, A. L. (2011). 'The Causal Nexus Between Cognitive Beliefs and Decision-Making Behavior: The "Operational Code" Belief System', in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, ed. W. Carlsnaes and S. Guzzini, vol. 1. Los Angeles: Sage, 273–97.
- Goldstein, J. and Keohane, R. O. (2011). 'Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework', in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, ed. W. Carlsnaes and S. Guzzini, vol. 5. Los Angeles: Sage, 3–27.
- Gupta, S. (1964). *India and Regional Integration in Asia*. New Delhi: Asia Publishing House.
- Gupta, S. (1967). *Kashmir: A Study in Indo-Pakistan Relations*. New Delhi: Asia Publishing House.
- Gupta, S. (1981a). 'Great Power Relations, World Order and the Third World', in *India and the International System: A Selection from the Major Writings of Sisir Gupta*, ed. M. S. Rajan and S. Ganguly. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 41–87.
- Gupta, S. (1981b). 'India's Foreign Policy, 1947–1970', in *India and the International System: A Selection from the Major Writings of Sisir Gupta*, ed. M. S. Rajan and S. Ganguly. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 339–48.
- Herrmann, M. G. (1980). 'Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior Using the Personal Characteristics of Political Leaders', *International Studies Quarterly*, 24(1): 7–46.
- Hirschman, A. O. (1970). 'The Search for Paradigms as a Hindrance to Understanding', *World Politics*, 22(3): 329–43.
- Hollis, M. and Smith, S. (1990). *Explaining and Understanding in International Relations*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Holsti, K. J. (2011). 'National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy', in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, ed. W. Carlsnaes and S. Guzzini, vol. 1. Los Angeles: Sage, 219–50.
- Holsti, O. R. (2011). 'Cognitive Dynamics and Images of the Enemy', in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, ed. W. Carlsnaes and S. Guzzini, vol. 1. Los Angeles: Sage, 251–72.
- Hopf, T. (2011). 'Constructivism at Home: Theory and Method', in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, ed. W. Carlsnaes and S. Guzzini, vol. 2. Los Angeles: Sage, 357–93.
- Jervis, R. (2011). 'Understanding Beliefs', in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, ed. W. Carlsnaes and S. Guzzini, vol. 3. Los Angeles: Sage, 311–34.
- Karunakaran, K. P. (1952). *India in World Affairs (August 1947–January 1950)*. Calcutta: Oxford University Press.
- Karunakaran, K. P. (1958). *India in World Affairs (February 1950–December 1953)*. Calcutta: Oxford University Press.

- Katzenstein, P. (2011). 'International Relations and Domestic Structures: Foreign Economic Policies of Advanced Industrial States', in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, ed. W. Carlsnaes and S. Guzzini, vol. 2. Los Angeles: Sage, 3–48.
- Levy, J. S. (2011). 'Organizational Routines and the Causes of War', in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, ed. W. Carlsnaes and S. Guzzini, vol. 2. Los Angeles: Sage, 277–314.
- Mallavarapu, S. (2005). 'Introduction', in *International Relations in India: Bringing Theory Back Home*, ed. K. Bajpai and S. Mallavarapu. Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1–16.
- Mallavarapu, S. (2009). 'Development of International Relations Theory in India: Traditions, Contemporary Perspectives and Trajectories', *International Studies*, 46(1–2): 165–83.
- Malone, D. (2012). *Does the Elephant Dance? Contemporary Indian Foreign Policy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mercer, J. (2011). 'Emotional Beliefs', in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, ed. W. Carlsnaes and S. Guzzini, vol. 5. Los Angeles: Sage, 239–71.
- Milner, H. (2011). 'Resisting the Protectionist Temptation: Industry and the Making of Trade Policy in France and the United States during the 1970s', in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, ed. W. Carlsnaes and S. Guzzini, vol. 3. Los Angeles: Sage, 133–60.
- Moravcsik, A. (2011). 'Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics', in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, ed. W. Carlsnaes and S. Guzzini, vol. 3. Los Angeles: Sage, 161–205.
- Morgenthau, H. (2011). 'A Realist Theory of International Politics', in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, ed. W. Carlsnaes and S. Guzzini, vol. 1. Los Angeles: Sage, 25–37.
- Putnam, R. D. (2011). 'Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games', in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, ed. W. Carlsnaes and S. Guzzini, vol. 2. Los Angeles: Sage, 49–83.
- Rajan, M. S. (1964). *India in World Affairs (1954–56)*. Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
- Rajan, M. S. and Ganguly, S. (eds.) (1981a). *Great Power Relations, World Order and the Third World*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.
- Rajan, M. S. and Ganguly, S. (eds.) (1981b). *India and the International System: A Selection from the Major Writings of Sisir Gupta*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.
- Rana, A. P. and Misra, K. P. (2005 [1989]). 'Communicative Discourse and Community in International Relations Studies in India: A Critique', in *International Relations in India: Bringing Theory Back Home*, ed. K. Bajpai and S. Mallavarapu. Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 71–122.
- Rose, G. (2011). 'Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy', in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, ed. W. Carlsnaes and S. Guzzini, vol. 3. Los Angeles: Sage, 71–98.
- Rosenau, J. (2011). 'Pre-Theories and Theories of Foreign Policy', in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, ed. W. Carlsnaes and S. Guzzini, vol. 1. Los Angeles: Sage, 143–95.
- Rosenau, J. and Durfee, M. (2000). *Thinking Theory Thoroughly: Coherent Approaches to an Incoherent World*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Schmidt, B. (1998). *The Political Discourse of Anarchy: A Disciplinary History of International Relations*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Sikri, R. (2009). *Challenge and Strategy: Rethinking India's Foreign Policy*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Stein, J. G. (1994). 'Political Learning by Doing: Gorbachev as Uncommitted Thinker and Motivated Learner', *International Organization*, 48(2): 155–83.
- Weldes, J. (2011). 'Constructing National Interests', in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, ed. W. Carlsnaes and S. Guzzini, vol. 2. Los Angeles: Sage, 315–55.
- Wolfers, A. (1952). 'National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol', *Political Science Quarterly*, 67(4): 481–502.

PART II

---

EVOLUTION  
OF INDIAN  
FOREIGN POLICY

---



## CHAPTER 4

---

# THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE RAJ AND ITS LEGACY

---

SNEH MAHAJAN

THE ‘Raj or the ‘British Raj’ is the term usually used for the British Empire that extended over the Indian subcontinent from the mid-nineteenth century until 1947, and was commonly called ‘India.’ The British had a clear concept of the region which they knew as ‘India’ and over which they established what became known as the British Empire in India, and which today forms India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. In the year 1600, the British established a chartered company to trade and called it the English East India Company. In 1773, when the British had established control only over the province of Bengal and small conclaves near Chennai and Mumbai, the Regulating Act was passed under which the Governor of Bengal was described as the ‘Governor General of British possessions in *India*’.

The British took far-reaching precautions to prevent any European country from advancing towards India. In 1798, when Napoleon invaded Egypt, the British government thought in terms of organizing a distance defense for the entire region that lay on the route to India. In July 1807, when Napoleon and Tsar Alexander I held discussions about a joint invasion of India and signed the Treaty of Tilsit, it asked the Government of India to send friendly missions to all states that lay between India and Europe—Punjab, Sind, Muscat, Afghanistan, and Persia. By 1856, the British had brought India under either their direct rule or indirect control through what they described as ‘the Indian Princes’.

The British Empire in India was too massive ever to fall under the aegis of the Colonial Office. It was governed as a distinct unit. London needed a strong central government in India, obedient to it, yet capable of keeping the provincial administrations in line with metropolitan purposes. Step by step, the British built their Empire on the administrative structure that existed under the Mughals from the center to the *tehsil* level.

In the nineteenth century, when the British established their control over India, Britain was the ‘top’ nation. The British policy-makers wanted to maintain Britain’s standing as a great power. It is generally held that Britain’s great power status was based

on three things—its industrial and commercial strength, its naval supremacy, and its worldwide empire. However, trade and the navy were merely instruments of power. It was Britain's Empire that was the most visible expression of Britain's standing in the affairs of the world. The Indian Empire formed 97 per cent of Britain's Asiatic Empire. In Britain's worldwide Empire, in terms of population, in 1912, of every 100 persons in Britain and its Empire (dependent and self-governing together), ten lived in the United Kingdom, five lived in self-governing dominions, 12 in all other colonies put together, and 73 lived in the Indian Empire alone (Davis and Huttonback 1986: 28).

The Indian Empire, with its immense human and material resources, its huge army, and its great importance to the British economy, always featured high in the calculations of the British. There is compelling evidence to show that, in Britain as well as in all European countries, it was taken for granted that loss of India would be a great blow to Britain. India's substantial contribution to the two World Wars reiterated emphatically that India was an imperial asset. The First World War galvanized nationalist sentiment in India. The British government passed Government of India Acts in 1919 and 1935 ostensibly for 'the gradual development of self-governing institutions'. However, now historians accept that the aim of the government was not to prepare Indians for self-government but to prolong their rule by winning over the support of a section of Indian leaders. Britain's determination to retain hold over India did not falter until after the end of the Second World War.

The most important feature of the Government of India's foreign policy until 1947 was that, being a colony of the British, its foreign policy was decided in the interest of the British. A colony or a colonial state is a regime through which a colonial power, i.e. an external entity, governs with a view to deriving maximum benefit from the resources and labor within that colony. The grand strategy adopted by the British aimed at ensuring full security to the Indian Empire, protecting all routes between Britain and India, and ensuring that India's trade and commerce were carried on in Britain's interest. Generations of historians have argued that the strategic and political needs of the British were different from, and occasionally in conflict with, those of India and that the Government of India enjoyed considerable liberty of action especially in determining relations with other states in Asia. Four types of explanations are advanced in this connection. First, the distance between Britain and India enabled the Government of India to act in its own way either by calculated design or inadvertently. Second, 'the man on the spot' tended to act in such ways as not to leave much choice to the authorities at London. Third, it is argued that the execution of policies in any case lay with the government at Kolkata/New Delhi, and, finally, that the Government of India maintained direct relations with the states in the neighborhood. But, as already said, British India's foreign policy was decided at London and wholly in Britain's interest.

This created essential unity of purpose and harmony between the authorities in London and Kolkata/New Delhi.<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office, the War Office, the India Office and the Government of India all became associated with the external relations and the security of the Indian Empire, sifted and exchanged information regarding the motives and military potentialities of states in the vicinity of India, and coordinated different

plans of action. But, in the end, it was the decision of the government at London that prevailed. The mere hierarchy of power ensured that. The Government of India remained an arm of the government at London. Foreign policy of the Government of British India was the foreign policy of the British, for the British, and by the British.

## GUARDING THE LAND FRONTIER

---

The land frontier of Britain's Indian Empire extended in a half circle touching from west to east – Iran, Afghanistan, Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, and Burma. The Government of India was entrusted with the task of handling relations with all these states (except Iran). The British did not apprehend danger to their Indian Empire from any of these. Inside India, there were French conclaves at Pondicherry, and Portuguese in Goa, Daman, and Diu. But given Britain's naval superiority, these did not cause anxiety.

The British rulers of India constantly adopted a policy of interposing a protected state between the actual possessions they administered and the possessions of formidable neighbors whom they desired to keep at arm's length. This state in between was called the 'buffer' state. In fact, the buffer state as a concept of international politics is primarily of British-Indian coinage and came into vogue somewhere in the 1880s. The buffer state was given internal freedom, but was expected to exclude all extraneous influences in the conduct of foreign relations. It thus accepted derogation of sovereignty. It was not even a satellite state. A buffer state would break down if any attempt was made to convert it into a satellite (Mehra 2007: 114–15). In 1902, Lord Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary, who had been the Viceroy of India (1884–94) and later, the Secretary for War, defined a buffer zone as 'an intervening zone sufficient to prevent direct contact between the dominions of Great Britain and those of other great military Powers'.<sup>2</sup>

In the nineteenth century, the British gradually built up a series of buffers along the landward periphery of the Indian Empire. In the parlance of the Raj this system became known as 'the ring fence.' They maintained Iran, Afghanistan, and Tibet as the outer ring. The three Himalayan states—Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim—were maintained as the inner ring. These formed a territorial buffer between India, and China and Tibet. These states in the vicinity of India remained weak and economically 'undeveloped'. The British did not apprehend danger to their Indian Empire from any of these. Beyond these states lay the Russian Empire and the Chinese Empire. Relations with Russia and China were maintained by the British government at London. The foreign policy of British India was determined at London though there were constant consultations between the governments of Britain and India.

From the 1860s, the security policy in India centered on defense against the expansion of the Tsarist Empire towards the northwest frontier. In the direction of Kabul, it occupied Tashkent in 1865, Bukhara in 1866, and Samarkand in 1868. Babar had invaded India in the 1520s from Samarkand. The occupation of Merv in 1884 brought the Russian Empire almost to the Afghan frontier. In the 1890s, the British government tried to settle

the issue by demarcating the frontier of Afghanistan—between the Indian Empire and Afghanistan in 1893 and the Russian Empire and Afghanistan in 1895. These were not drawn on an ethnic, cultural, or economic basis. The sole aim was to avoid having a frontier contiguous to the Russia Empire. In Afghanistan, a long corridor which became known as the Wakhan Corridor—220 kilometers in length and 16–60 kilometers in width—was created. The problem became worse confounded when, towards the end of the nineteenth century, Russia started building railways in Central Asia. After the Franco-Russian Alliance of 1894, France began to provide funds for building these railways. With this it seemed that Russia was overcoming the biggest obstacle—distance. Moreover, in case of Russia's invasion of India, the French navy could delay the sending of British troops to India. The fear generated by Russia's expansion became known as 'Russophobia'.

Why did the expansion of Russia cause such anxiety at London? The reason was that the British knew that the Raj was based on the awe of British arms and not on the consent of Indians. Any defeat by the Russian army, even on the remote frontier in a mere skirmish, could create a spasm of sedition from one end of India to another. Besides, by taking advantage of Britain's vulnerability on the Indian frontier, Russia could extract concessions from Britain elsewhere. The British navy could not move on wheels. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, Britain's strategic preoccupation with this threat to the Indian Empire became a major component of Britain's foreign policy in general and defense of the Indian Empire in particular (Mahajan 2002: chs. 1 and 4).

In this background, in 1902, the British government appointed the Committee of Imperial Defence to advise on the grand strategy to be adopted for the defense of Empire. It became the direct link between military experts and the Cabinet and had the potential to influence foreign as well as defense policy. The Government of India was kept well-informed. Since its inception in 1902, the War Office and the India Office agreed that, in view of the construction of railways in Central Asia by Russia, it was difficult to defend India from Russian assault as the British did not have adequate manpower and the material resources to defend India from a position of strength. Such was the determination to hold on to India that grotesque plans like keeping some army units in South Africa to reinforce the Indian army and requisitioning soldiers from Japan were discussed.<sup>3</sup> The issue of lack of means to defend the Indian Empire was one of the reasons for opting for a diplomatic solution—the signing of the Anglo-Russian Convention in 1907. During the First World War, Britain, France, and Russia joined the war against Germany on the same side.

Even after the collapse of the Tsarist Empire in 1917, the War Office remained convinced that Soviet Russia would strike a blow at the Indian Empire as soon as its forces were ready. The threat was exacerbated by the Bolshevik ideology that projected itself as the enemy of imperialism. Down to 1940 when Russia joined the Second World War on the side of Britain, the problem of defense of India against Russia's designs remained the central preoccupation of British foreign and defense policies.

The British came into contact with China from the late eighteenth century from the side of India to ensure the security of the northern frontier, and from the side of the