

## Conclusions

### *The BJP and India's International Emergence*

'we [India] have by our very practices something that ... can be identified as our cultural indices of foreign policy'<sup>1</sup>

'every country is a product of its own history and experience, the way it behaves is moulded by the way it came into being'

Sinha (2003: 41)

'the world's perception of India, its capacities and its strengths has changed irreversibly'

Mukherjee (2006)

THE BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY (BJP)–led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government witnessed profound changes concerning the development and evolution of India's security practice. These changes continued to be reflected in Indian security policy after the NDA left office in 2004 and were maintained by successive Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) governments. Through the conceptualization and elucidation of the security identity analytical framework, we have been able to isolate this change (as well as deep-seated continuity) through the presence of specific norms. These norms collectively structured Indian security and foreign policy since 1947, and became established via India's international interaction, as well as through the beliefs and experiences of India's security community. By comparing the pre-1998, NDA, and UPA periods, I have shown how ideational constructs of security provide an effective analytical framework of a state's (India's) security policy. Moreover, the security identity framework enabled

an analysis that traced the influence of different beliefs and norms across different political generations and structural changes, largely independent of material or structural factors.

### **Key Findings: An Irrevocable Gearshift**

This investigation of Hindu nationalism and the evolution of Indian security has confirmed the following four key findings as laid out in the Preface to this volume. To reiterate, these are: (1) there has been a consistent normative approach to how Indian foreign policy has developed since 1947; (2) different ideologies (namely those of the BJP and Congress) do produce different security (domestic and foreign) policy norms; (3) the BJP-led NDA regime did importantly inculcate several substantive changes to India's security policy; and finally (4) these normative changes shaped security policy into the post-NDA period, producing an irrevocable gearshift in India's security practice. In turn, these findings have made specific research literature, empirical, and theoretical contributions. They have also reinforced key questions within International Relations (IR) concerning state versus structural influences on a state's foreign policy, and the issue of normative evolution. All of these points are discussed in the following sections.

### **Contribution to Current Literature**

This book has yielded a collective overview of national security and foreign policy-making in modern post-colonial India. Carried out across different political generations, parties, and international events, I confirmed that there are different sets of (quite often overlapping) norms driving different identities. As a collective repository of these multiple norms and identities, Indian security practice has been observed to be absorptive, dynamic, and elastic. In addition, I also isolated variation across the three normative sources of India's security identity. These characteristics explained how the BJP-led NDA was simultaneously constrained by India's pre-1998 security identity but were also a catalyst for substantive change. Thus, while its trajectory was maintained, the BJP produced a long-term gearshift in India's security practice (on nuclear transparency, a tilt towards the US, greater regional pragmatism, and the use of *realpolitik*). An ongoing appreciation of the *internal dynamics/differences* evident within the BJP supplemented

these findings, as personified by the harder (more ideological) and softer (more realist) faces of Hindutva, and the ongoing orientating influence of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

Overall, this volume has made a contribution to the current literature on Indian security by:

- producing the first-ever analysis of BJP security policy before, during, and after the NDA;
- unveiling the discursive security consensus present within India's security community (through the analysis of primary sources and extensive interviewing);
- highlighting the multiple, composite, and competing norms present within India's security practice (from the security identity and BJP policy);
- confirming the impact of internal policy sources on India's external security practice; and
- proving the validity of a norm-based account of India's security practice.

### Empirical Contribution

By isolating the different norms present within India's security practice, I used the new security identity framework to show both continuity and change within India's historical foreign policy behaviour. Such an approach allowed for an analysis across wider structural changes and across different political parties and generations within India. I applied this framework (and its incumbent operationalization strategy) to analyse the development and entrenching of core (foreign and domestic) policy norms in:

- a) Indian security from 1947 to 1998 (Chapter 1);
- b) the BJP's Hindutva ideology until 1998 (Chapter 2);
- c) the 1998 to 2004 BJP-led NDA government (Chapters 3, 4, and 5);  
and
- d) Congress-led UPA governments since 2004 (Chapter 6).

In sum, this analysis of Indian security over time:

- isolated a number of dominant composite norms present within India's security practice;

- emphasized multiple aspects, sources, and locations of security *simultaneously*, and recognized that India's security exists at the confluence of these sources;
- produced a fuller ideational account of India's security practice through the normative comparison and synthesis of differing political ideologies;
- underlined how norm development is ongoing and underpinned by social learning; and
- showed that ideational factors can have primacy over material factors, especially whereby norm-based accounts overarch and encompass structural change.

Given its focus on political, physical, and perceptual sources, the security identity framework is readily transferable to any state, and will allow us to ask what is exceptional about the normative security practices of other states. It is the framework's focus upon normative measurement (Table C.1) and three empirical loci (Table C.2) that enables such research. Important here is an emphasis upon the conditions, attributes, and worldviews which are *inherent and moreover specific* to each state within the international system—observations which stress the need for individualized, pinpointed, and finely grained analyses of security practice. Although this research has been comparative of different periods in India's security practice, the nature of the security identity framework means that future research pathways can also include state-to-state comparisons. Such comparisons can be carried out over the same historical period to isolate different state responses to the same (structural) events, and will further validate the strength of ideational accounts in IR. This validation will additionally help to additionally show states as being essentially unique, distinct entities influenced by their own normative (and non-structural) assumptions vis-à-vis their international interaction and behaviour. Such an approach would also allow for the comparison of (different) security communities present within different states.

### Theoretical Contribution

In the Introduction of this book, I conceptualized a norm-based and identity-driven account of security (security identity) and used this analytical framework to determine a state's (India's) security practice. The security identity framework linked together the study of foreign

policy, domestic identities, and political parties in India by showing their shared emphasis on deep-seated beliefs and precedents. This elucidation also disaggregated the three major sources present within the security identity framework—the political, the physical, and the perceptual—in order to produce a compound and temporal appreciation of the target state's security practice. Using this analytical framework as part of a norm-based and largely (although not exclusively) constructivist and social psychological research agenda, this examination of the BJP-led NDA and Indian security successfully:

- recorded norm continuity *and* change in India's security practice through the inputs, outputs, and feedback inherent to the security identity framework;
- linked domestic norms to international politics (rather than vice versa);
- demonstrated that security is a holistic, inter-relational, and interdependent entity that is a product of the interaction *between* the domestic and international, occurring at the '/' between self/other;
- illustrated the importance of self/other perceptions in IR; and
- advanced the strategic culture approach in IR away from militaristic (and often deterministic) factors, as aided by my sustained access to security-making elites.

Using the framework for future comparative research may also signify how it can be possibly adjusted and refined to be more indicative of an ideational account of a state's security practice. In particular, given their relative consistency across India's security practice, the necessity of including norms concerning economic policy (*swadeshi*) can be debated. Although normative in the sense of being a shared belief about a certain form of behaviour, such norms (especially in the current era) appear to be heavily reliant on external normative structures. Contemporary debates on globalization, and to an extent neo-liberalism, correlate with such perspectives. With India appearing to be resolutely opening up to the influence of external multinationals (BBC 2012c), and economic growth increasingly underpinning her path towards national development, modernization, and great power status, this expected refinement is further reinforced. To reiterate though, such changes would only be refinements or adjustments rather than a fundamental overhaul of the security identity framework.

*State versus Structure*

While the BJP-led NDA's overall gearshift of India's security identity is clearly visible in this volume's analysis, what does this perspective imply for counter critiques that external factors have determined changes in Indian foreign policy? Internal factors (for example, a political party's policy norms) are important for how a state constructs its foreign policy, both historically and contemporarily. Through repetition and associated consensus, these factors then become established as core policy norms that influence how a state (India) regards and responds to international events. In a similar fashion at an international level, there are additionally core shared beliefs (say on the end of the Cold War, nuclear proliferation, or international terrorism), which have also become entrenched over time through repeated events and interaction. Thus, just as a state can have its own normative security practice, there is in effect an *external normative structure* present within international relations. It is the interaction of these different sets of norms (internal and external) that determines international relations, and in effect produces a global self/other dichotomy between states and the system. Collectively, the interaction of these inter-perceptions produces 'inter-national' relations.

Furthermore, through its co-constitutive basis, a norm-based analysis nullifies agent-structure debates (which concern the primacy of individual actors or the international system as a whole), as the self/other dichotomy is co-dependent and based upon mutual causality. We saw this in practice in the security identity framework whereby the nature of the three normative sources (especially the domestic/international dichotomy in the political source) was highly interdependent. Hence, a norm-based research agenda shows that as much as (international) events are the main stimuli for the actions of states in the international system, it is states themselves that are the primary drivers of their own security behaviour. Thus, as we saw in this investigation, it was the BJP-led NDA who explicitly took advantage of confluent international events (such as the 9/11 attacks), rather than allowing their security policy to be dictated by them.

In the same vein, the foundations of the BJP's gearshift were aided in the 1990s by India acquiring more resources as she moved away from a socialist-orientated economy and slowly embraced globalization. As part of the gearshift metaphor, such a change is analogous to India gaining a bigger and more powerful engine through which to accelerate her

foreign policy standing. In addition, the relative decline of Pakistan and the elimination of the Soviet Union helped remove obstacles from India's path, aiding the Indo-US rapprochement under the NDA. Again, these changing structural factors did not drive policy-making but importantly coalesced with BJP policy norms and helped smooth the pathway to India finding a new international voice (and rearranged security policies) by the turn of the millennium.

All of these observations underline how foreign policy construction, and its transition to practice, is based upon engrained beliefs, interests, and behaviours that primarily reflect the core normative trends associated with a certain specific state, not the wider general international structure. While material factors (economic growth and subsequent military growth) and material concerns (trade and energy security) may inform policy, they do not wholly determine it. Instead, policy-making and policy-implementation are reliant upon the dominant narratives coming from multiple ideational sources within a state. As this volume's analysis of India's interaction and international relations has shown, states do not necessarily have the same interests (even in response to shared structural conditions) but do have their own unique histories and self-images. It is because of these distinctive (but not exclusive) perspectives that the core dynamics personifying international relations thus come primarily from differences at the state, not the system, level.

### *Normative Evolution*

I have highlighted how norms are at once fixed and flexible. This duality is firstly a reflection of the permanent long-term interests of a state—for example, for India, maintaining foreign policy autonomy or gaining great power status. It is also, however, symptomatic of how states adapt to contemporary conditions to maintain these very same interests. Such interests often override domestic political changes and are transferred across different generations by a state's security community.<sup>2</sup> As Kissinger pertinently notes, 'what passes for planning is frequently the projection of the familiar into the future' (quoted in Chari *et al.* 2008: 10), as prior interaction forms habits, precedents, and expectations. Concurrent to these remarks is the assertion that differences in style, nuance, or leadership can become increasingly critical as underlying foreign policy principles are achieved. Thus, we saw a greater general assertiveness in the BJP-led NDA's approach to Indian security but also a simultaneous

evolution of existing approaches resulting in, for example, the Look East phase two policy or the extended strategic neighbourhood policy.

In these conditions, there has thus been an essential continuity concerning Indian security but with a gearshift in priorities, whereby the menu or hierarchy of Indian security norms has been changed. This shift shows how security practice is constantly learning and evolving, not just for a state but also for political parties and other identities. Thus, while we saw a number of substantive normative changes occur in India's security identity, during the UPA Congress themselves (for example) became more accepting of Indo-Israeli relations. In turn, a former Indian Foreign Secretary noted how nearly all parties (except the Left) now talk of India as a great power.<sup>3</sup> We also saw how BJP policy norms evolved as a result of being in power (for instance, whereby *Akhand Bharat* lost its original purely geographic emphasis). Such observations fit with Hindutva being viewed as a developing ideology based upon multiple and chosen symbols, and which is syncretic and strategic (Jaffrelot 1993). More generally, these observations confirm arguments that norms innately adapt and evolve through accumulated experience and interaction. Further still, when different norms from different identities also interact, some variety of norm/identity synthesis and evolution will occur.

This last point refers not only to what we have witnessed concerning India's security identity, BJP policy, and UPA policy. It also applies to individual leader identities. Such a potential influence is clear concerning the shaping of Indian foreign policy by Nehru's principles in the first decades of independence but also concerning the BJP's Vajpayee. Vajpayee (like Nehru) had been a Minister of External Affairs (from March 1977 to July 1979) prior to becoming Prime Minister. This attribute is far from unusual in India, and applies to the majority of Indian prime ministers.<sup>4</sup> Such an attribute suggests a shared normative understanding of Indian security policy, and may have been a critical constraining influence between the NDA and previous regimes, especially if Vajpayee is regarded as a more moderate BJP leader (Dixit 2004b: 296–309). Indeed, an ex-Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson, in comments to the author, noted internal MEA perceptions of Vajpayee as a Nehruvian.<sup>5</sup> Thus, although they inculcated substantive changes in India's security identity, the positioning of the BJP-led NDA's prime minister within India's security (consensus-making) community could also explain why more radical changes did not occur. In turn, the influence of Brajesh



Mishra's extensive diplomatic career prior to becoming the NDA's National Security Advisor can also be regarded as a significant orientating influence upon their resultant foreign policy outcomes.

### The BJP and the Future of Indian Security

This book has produced new findings on the development, nature, and potential trajectory of Indian security. These findings underline the importance of studying how security is normatively produced and practised within states, and the ideational factors that critically inform these processes. Moreover, I have reinforced the importance of understanding how 'elites socialized in different cultural contexts may behave in different ways and make different choices, even when placed in similar situations' (Latham 1998; 129). Indeed, the better the past is understood, the better prepared scholars can be to more comprehensively understand current actions and future conduct. These benefits further apply to policymakers themselves (and a state or region's security community), particularly concerning system-level responses to state decisions. Such a viewpoint is critical when discussing the future trajectory of Indian security in all its facets and in its various bilateral (and multilateral) relations. It is also crucial concerning Hindu nationalism's potential future influence upon Indian security, especially in light of BJP's now established position as India's leading Opposition party.

A major appreciation of political rhetoric informed the research central to this volume, and as we have seen with the BJP, election manifestoes do matter—especially for those political parties in opposition. As such, these manifestoes (and other official pronouncements) continue to provide invaluable indications of what policies the BJP would wish to implement upon any return to power. The longitudinal lens and appreciation of domestic politics, as applied in this book, only serves to reinforce this importance. India's continued rise to prominence within the international system, either through heightened multilateral and bilateral interaction, increased economic interdependence, or simply perceptually, as part of an emergent Asian 21st Century, simply redoubles this emphasis. At the same time, this criticality is tempered by the need to look at how Indian foreign policy and security practice will continue to form *across* different political leaders and *across* different political generations. Given our focus upon history, experience, and learning, such a process remains indicative rather than deterministic.

In the aftermath of their 2009 general election defeat, the BJP appeared to be descending in chaos. The party's former Union Minister Arun Shourie called the party president Rajnath Singh 'Alice in Blunderland' (quoted in Ramakrishnan 2009), and indicated a renewed contest between the militant and conciliatory faces of Hindutva. Then, the party expelled one of its foremost members, Jaswant Singh (Minister for External Affairs and Finance Minister during the NDA), for publishing a book that praised Pakistan's founder Mohammed Jinnah. Reflecting the RSS's ongoing influence, reports noted how the RSS's leader, Dr Mohan Bhagwat, had ordered Singh's expulsion (Noorani 2009). In response, Singh called the BJP an Indian version of the Ku Klux Klan (*The Times of India* 2009). Overall, this disorder confirmed the continued presence of different influences upon BJP ideology, and the need to balance between the party's two faces.

The first of these faces, largely represented by Advani, is a hard militant Hindutva that advocates aggressively pursuing a right-wing Hindu-dominated nationalist agenda. The second face, mainly represented by Vajpayee, is a softer and more conciliatory Hindutva that emphasizes itself as a credible centre-right conservative alternative to Congress. With Advani announcing his retirement in 2009 and Vajpayee's impact on the party already considerably lessened since 2004 through ill-health, the era of the two figures who have dominated the political rise of Hindu nationalism for the last 60 years is now nearly over. Although Advani is still playing a central role in Indian politics (for example his 38-day Jan Chetna Yatra [public awareness tour] in October/November 2011 against widespread corruption and graft), from December 2009 Sushma Swaraj replaced him as Leader of the Opposition for the BJP in the Lok Sabha. In turn, Nitin Gadkari, who has protracted ties with the RSS, became BJP president in December 2009. In addition, and courtesy of his widely acclaimed running of Gujarat, as well as his broad succour among the Hindutva faithful (especially the RSS), Narendra Modi is being increasingly referred to by observers as the BJP's prime ministerial candidate at India's next general election (Halarnkar 2012). These individuals highlight enduring ties between the BJP and the RSS, and thus continued linkages with harder dimensions of Hindutva.

Certainly, it is very difficult for the BJP to carry out a wholesale redefinition of Hindutva without negating its core ideological content and thus alienating core Hindutva (and thus BJP and RSS) supporters. As

such, the BJP stays fully subscribed to its core policy norms of abrogating Article 370 regarding the status of Kashmir, introducing a uniform civil code, building the *Ram Janmabhoomi* at Ayodhya, and promoting positive secularism. Furthermore, the party remains primarily focused upon building 'a prosperous, powerful nation, [that] recall[s] India's past' (BJP 2009 Manifesto 2011). Concurrently, the softening in tone concerning cultural nationalism, which occurred during the 1998 and 1999 elections, has remained in place and the term was almost absent from the BJP's 2009 manifesto. This stance variously recognizes the BJP's difficulty in gaining an absolute majority solely from India's higher caste Hindu population, the coalitional nature of Indian politics [Hansen and Jaffrelot's 'compulsions of politics' Hansen and Jaffrelot (2001)], and the need to inculcate support from smaller parties to re-gain power via a new NDA. We must also recall that because of its ideological stance, its potential support from Muslim or Leftist groups is extremely limited at best. Underlying this weakness, in 2011 Muslims represented 13.4 per cent of India's population, with Hindus making up 80.5 per cent (Census of India 2011: 1).

While the 1990s' Ayodhya agitations gave the BJP electoral momentum, a repeat of such actions seems implausible, as India's electorate has now matured to focus more on economic rather than communal issues. Times of economic or existential crisis (such as conflict with Pakistan) could however allow such sentiments to be effectively employed, and are the party's natural rallying call whereby 'nationalism is the very soul of BJP' (Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] 2012b). A case in point is Anna Hazare's anti-corruption drive in 2011, whose main supporters were Hindu nationalists (and which inspired Advani's Jan Chetna Yatra). Although they did not take a central role in the Hazare campaign due to their own associations with corruption, the BJP has much to gain if any anti-graft movement can be steered into an anti-government movement. As such, the BJP will highly emphasize Congress's association with corruption in future elections, especially how it has reduced India's prestige (concerning the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi), development (various telecommunications scandals), and general international standing (corporate bribery).

With many of their primary pre-1998 foreign policy goals being achieved during the NDA and sustained after it (such as regional pragmatism, a pro-US tilt, balanced West Asia relations, and expanding

India's influence via multi-pronged interaction), the BJP has become largely focused upon sustaining and utilizing India's economic growth. In this way, its leaders have stated that 'we should show greater political will in using India's economic potential for enabling our move to the global centre stage' (BJP National Executive 03.06.11 2011). This focus co-joins with not only anti-graft campaigns but also the BJP's emphasis on reasserting India's standing in the international system (as we saw in Chapters 4 and 5), and its advantageous electoral positioning within a modernizing, globalizing, and media-dominated middle class (Chapter 3). As this latter group grows, courtesy of India's own rapid economic development, the mainstreaming of Hindutva will become further accepted and can help embolden possible future general election successes for the BJP.

Protecting this group plays into other continued BJP foreign policy norms of India-first swadeshi and calibrated globalization. Hence, the BJP was opposed to measures announced in November 2011 to open up the Indian economy to multinational supermarket chains. As such, the BJP's Murli Manohar Joshi regarded such moves as 'a tool to kill the domestic retail industry' (quoted in BBC 2011c), and which were thus a direct threat to many core BJP supporters. These sentiments have blended with the BJP's continued focus on policy norms of assertive autonomy, either in terms of strengthening India's armed forces or the use of indigenous thorium reserves, rather than importing uranium, for India's new nuclear reactors (BJP 2009 Manifesto 2011). However, as India places more emphasis on economics as a way to achieve greater development and modernization (and prestige), its interconnectedness and susceptibility to international events will only increase.<sup>6</sup> Again, this susceptibility can embolden the BJP's political support, opening up a possible return to power and the reassertion of core Hindutva values versus external threats—be they from minorities, Pakistan or China, or the global financial system. In this regard, a suspicion of India's larger neighbours remains crucially present in BJP rhetoric, especially concerning 'an emerging Pakistan–China military axis' (BJP 2012a).

There is little doubt that the BJP would try to quickly pursue their normative agenda if they were to gain power again, either as a single entity or in a new NDA. Furthermore, if the BJP were ever able to gain their own majority, the implementation of their Hindutva agenda would be rapid, comprehensive, and extensive—indelibly altering India's social and political landscape. As such, and as evidenced during the 1998–2004

NDA, on a domestic level (Chapter 3), we saw the wholesale promotion of their Sangh Parivar supporters, as well as attempts to influence the legal and education system, and the rewriting of history textbooks. Equally, in the foreign policy sphere (Chapters 4 and 5), the BJP were unafraid to advance their own policy norms, and resolutely pushed Indian security beyond its traditional trajectories and expectations. According to a member of India's security community, this was the BJP-led NDA's 'tectonic shift,'<sup>7</sup> whereby foreign policy was no longer regarded as a continuum because of previous consensus but as something that could be fruitfully altered and changed. As this book has shown, while constrained by India's underlying security identity, the BJP-led NDA did successfully reorient the normative basis of Indian security. Our core argument that security (in India or any other state) is organic, embryonic, and evolving is central to this premise. It is also from this basis that future gearshifts (by the BJP or others) are both plausible and realizable.

## Notes

1. Interview A19, 2008: Interview with a leading senior strategic analyst, Delhi, 9 May.

2. Interview B21, 2008: Interview with a former Indian ambassador to the United States, Delhi, 27 October; Interview B38, 2008: interview with a senior Indian newspaper editor, Delhi, 14 November.

3. Interview B4, 2008: Interview with a leading think-tank head and former Indian Foreign Secretary (the most senior diplomat in Indian foreign relations), Delhi, 17 October.

4. Lal Bahadur Shastri, Indira Gandhi, Narasimha Rao, Rajiv Gandhi, I. K. Gujral, and Manmohan Singh have all held the minister of external affairs post before acceding to or during their tenure of the office of Prime Minister.

5. Interview B23, 2008: Interview with an ex-MEA spokesperson, Delhi, 29 October (by telephone).

6. Interview B2, 2008: Interview with a former Indian Foreign Secretary (the most senior diplomat in Indian foreign relations), Delhi, 17 October.

7. Interview B5, 2008: Interview with a senior journalist and newspaper editor, Delhi, 17 October.