


Conclusion

A Continued Evolution

National security holds a relevance and importance that goes beyond mere internal stability. Its significance includes the well-being and prosperity of citizens and the populations they form, as well as the relations between all countries on a regional and global basis. At the fulcrum of domestic politics and governance and as the mainstay of international affairs, upholding national security is the *raison d'être* of any country's existence. Although 'national' in designation, at its heart and due to its interactional, relative, and inter-connected nature, security is inalienably *inter-national*.

Due to its complexity, which is ever-growing in intricacy and density as more interests, threats, and fears enter its contemporary orbits, national security—



for India and for other actors—must be regarded as being continually evolving. New Delhi's own experiences since Independence point to such an attribute, as India's expanding global interaction and status have led to her increased level of global participation and a corresponding widening of national security issues. A more visible, resource-hungry, and trade-dependent India has necessitated this involvement, along with the greater and growing diversity of threats that she faces, internally as well as externally. This change has come both from within India itself and also from a shifting international system.

Here, we evaluate and reflect on the constructivist approach laid out in this book concerning our focus on core principles relating to history, identity, culture, values, and interaction, before appraising the appropriateness and applicability of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. We then consider how successful New Delhi's current performance is in effectively responding to, curtailing, and even nullifying the host of threats challenging India. All of this leads us to consider the central quandary facing the study of national security—in India and elsewhere—of paradox and parallax, and how complete freedom from threat for countries is essentially unobtainable, and that as a field of study it is in reality far more concerned with national *insecurity*.

Evaluation

We have described the major facets, actors, and tools that are inherent to national security, and how their analysis can help indicate what is specific to the Indian context. Deploying a constructivist approach premised upon the inclusion of identity-focused factors that go beyond more military (realist) and solely material-based accounts, our analysis unveiled the nature, delivery, and extent of *Indian* national security. To aid this analytical foundation, we also used Maslow's hierarchy of needs to show the range of requirements that national security must meet.

Analytical Attributes

- *History*: Highlighted the origins and roots of New Delhi's national security concerns from badly demarcated borders—legacy of the colonial occupation (and the consequent territorial conflicts across India's borders)—to engrained conflict and tension with Pakistan (through repeated conflict). India's wariness of the international system as a whole, as well as the desire of her leaders to enhance their country's position in it (and inherently to ensure its continued survival), also stems from such anti-imperial and anti-colonial urges.

- *Identity*: Revealed that there are specific and particular elements that characterize a uniquely Indian perspective concerning what is important vis-à-vis her national security behaviour. The distinctive nature of India's political system (and focus on democracy and secularism) as well as her physical outline (as per her desired borders in South Asia) and her guiding self-image (to become a modern great power in the twenty-first century) all derive from this basis. Just as India has its own viewpoint on national security, so too will others.
- *Culture*: Confirmed that context-specific histories, experiences, memories, and identities produce country-specific cultures. From this basis, India's past (and how it is recalled by her leaders and then juxtaposed with future national ambitions) denotes a precise form of exclusivity that advises how her policy is made and the preferences upon which it is based. The repetition of key ideas, fears, interests, conflicts, and agreements serve to formulate this culture, making it distinguishable from more short-lived sets of values and principles.
- *Perception*: Underscored that the various perspectives of its leaders, elites, and institutions influence the delineation of national security. By informing the formation of national identity and national culture, such perceptions aid our understanding of

which interests are of most importance to national security and, by extension, which threats are then challenging these interests. Importantly, perceptions can change—especially concerning the meaning of history and its recollection or memory, which underlines their importance.

- *Interaction*: Acknowledged that national security tasks are not performed in isolation, and that a country's interests, desires, issues, and fears are all dependent upon exchanges with others—either in the past, the present, or the future. Equally, while we can analyse Indian national security, other countries have their own corresponding sets of national security interests, desires, issues, and fears specific to *their* history, identity, culture, and perception. Interaction, coalescence, and divergence across these zones regulate *inter-national* security.

Maslow's Hierarchy

As per Figure C.1 , Maslow's hierarchy of needs determined the different levels of needs that national security must meet, as per the granting of sovereignty by a population to her leaders. The host of security concerns raised in this book mapped onto each of the diagram's levels, with basic biological needs pertaining to the supply of water, food, warmth, and shelter being

followed by larger (societal) safety needs concerning employment, access to resources, family, health, and property. All of these elements directly correlated with internal national security interests and aims.

Further up the scale, the esteem needs—of independence, status, dominance, prestige and respect from others—specifically related to sovereignty and territorial issues, along with India’s long-sought quest

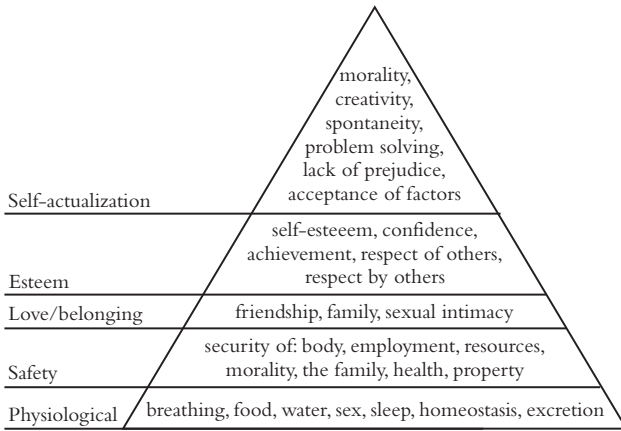


FIGURE C.1: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

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to become a great power in the international system. At the zenith of the hierarchy are self-actualization needs regarding realizing potential and self-fulfilment. Of note is that our analysis did not include the middle level of love or belonging but which could be applied to seeing the world in a positive or negative light, as based upon assurance or as based upon fear. If the latter perspective is prevalent, it suggests that national security may not ever be wholly obtainable.

We must also note that in Maslow's original designation of his hierarchy, there was an emphasis on progression. As such, when applied to the individual, the basic physiological needs at the bottom of the pyramid were to be attained first before other higher needs could be realized. In contrast, in our analysis we related how these needs collectively form a set of requirements that an aspiring great power such as India is seeking to meet *simultaneously*. As such, elites are pursuing esteem and self-actualization needs at the same time as physiological and safety needs. Tellingly in this regard, and given the government's current shortcomings concerning these latter elements, it may be in India's national interest to fulfil Maslow's original intentions of first fully meeting basic needs, as only then will New Delhi be able to genuinely achieve its great power aspirations.

How Is India Doing?

As with all elements of national security, evaluating how well a country is doing in terms of meeting its core interests (and combating accompanying fears) is a relative process. On the most basic count, governing elites in India are far from meeting biological needs, with large portions of the population currently without sustained access to electricity, running water, and sanitation. That stated, New Delhi does guarantee some level of food security as well as rudimentary access to work so as to better achieve these safety needs along with family, health, and property needs. Large national and local security forces are present to counter myriad founts of instability and, along with her armed forces, seek to provide a safer and securer environment for India's citizens.

At the root of these issues is the size of India's population, which has always magnified such resource-based needs on a scale that only leaders in Beijing are familiar with. Decades of rapid economic growth are producing results though, and India is, without doubt, trying to develop and modernize many facets of its infrastructure. An outward-looking and outward-embracing economic policy is bolstering these aims and, if growth can be maintained, one will see the gradual amelioration in each of these areas. The modernization

process is also helping New Delhi in terms of fulfilling wider esteem and self-actualization needs, as more countries are recognizing India's dominant position in South Asia and her emergent/emerged position as a great power. As with the other levels, these needs are not yet fully resolved, especially regarding her potential.

Scale again plays a vital role by intensifying the threat posed by anything from insurgency to pollution, and is thus amplifying threats and incumbent fears to a level that would challenge any country. Among other issues, that over a tenth of her territory is contested, that an average of 2,000 people have died each year from terrorist and insurgent deaths since 1994, and that at least a million people are dying per year due to pollution, indicate the extreme size of her problems.

Such observations point to a few areas of contention. Firstly, India is a country transitioning to become a developed and modern entity, and as such we ought to temper our criticism of her current record and standing. Secondly though, and conversely, we must ask if the huge range of national security tools that India possesses—institutionally, legally, militarily, economically, and diplomatically—are sufficient to meet the overload of national security threats that she faces.

Certainly, India has been censured on a number of occasions for not having the resources to adequately meet her national security needs. These include an

under-prepared and slow response to the mass 2008 Mumbai attacks (despite receiving prior warning); having too insufficient a number of trained diplomats in the MEA; as well as modernizing her military forces without the necessary strategic overview, whereby even though it is spending vast sums on modernizing its forces and buying new weapons systems, there has been limited progress in general capabilities. Criticism of the conduct of her armed forces, widespread human rights abuses, and societal inequalities only add to the weight of denunciation that is periodically fixed towards India's elites.

At its most extreme—and when conveyed through the prism of thinking about national security interests with regard to the fears that challenge them—inadequate delivery in these areas can be seen to rest with those who are governing (and have governed) India. Certainly such an argument is pertinent domestically, concerning providing basic needs to India's population. By extension, incompetent leaders can thus be perceived as a national security threat in that they are/were unable to protect national interests by effectively resolving the threats posed to them. Open political abuses such as corruption, nepotism, and patronage are the most egregious cases of such conduct. It is the virtue of (Indian) democracy that it is a mechanism for the population to remove such leaders.

Paradox and Parallax

Paradox: A statement containing two opposite ideas that make it seem impossible or unlikely, although it is probably true.

Parallax: The effect whereby the position or direction of an object appears to differ when viewed from different positions.

While we can be both understanding and critical of New Delhi's predicaments concerning the array of threats that she faces vis-à-vis her national security outlook, this treatise on Indian national security has also indicated an inherent quandary within such dynamics. This dilemma rests within the interactional aspect of our analytical stance, whereby security is a relational and relative exchange that occurs between actors. This dilemma rests within the interaction aspect of our analytical stance, whereby security is a relational and relative exchange that occurs between actors. So essential is this behaviour that if there were no such interaction there would be nothing for countries to be threatened by and thus nothing to fear. This contention brings us to two indispensable features of national security: paradox and parallax.

Firstly, national security is a relational act that frequently, and necessarily, brings countries (and other

actors) into conflict with each other. As such, what may be a national security prerequisite for generations of Indian leaders, say concerning the status of Jammu and Kashmir as being wholly part of the Indian landmass, is diametrically opposed to it also concurrently being a precondition within, for instance, *Pakistani* national security. Applicable to almost any dispute or contestation, this innate tension produces the feature of *paradox* within national security analysis whereby there are competing but intractable claims for the same (material- or identity-based) end.

Secondly, this observation also highlights that national security—in terms of negatively pertaining to mutually incompatible interests and ambitions—is inherently concerned with difference. In this way it is very difficult for actors (of any kind, at the international, national, or sub-national level) to perceive the same issue, problem, fear, assurance, and desire in exactly the same way, especially if it relates to a specific paradoxical interaction between them. It is from this basis that our analysis of national security indicates a second feature—that of *parallax*—through which basic differences between those interacting fundamentally produces existential fear, threat, and danger.

When applied to the vicissitudes of contemporary domestic and international politics, and its constant evolution and adaptation as actors continually interact

with each other, the features of paradox and parallax importantly show us that national security is never entirely in the singular control of its major actors. Thus, for India, if other neighbouring countries wish to contest their mutual borders, such issues will endure as a source of insecurity. Equally, if an insurgent group is unwilling to give up its alternative political or territorial image of India, they will also persist as a threat to New Delhi. In these ways, it is the aim of national and international diplomacy to produce outcomes that different parties are able to agree on and which meet their respective self-images.

Such a task is far from straightforward, especially as it is the interaction between actors *itself* that frequently leads to an emboldening—and potentially worsening—of relations, and which is majorly reliant upon the perceptions governing them. For instance, New Delhi may feel that it is necessary to modernize her military forces so as to protect India's trade and energy routes, and augment her international image as a developed great power. Such virtues are benign in isolation but may be seen as threatening by others (say Beijing), who then feel that they must also modernize their armed forces. Such interaction, even though rational and ostensibly peaceful in origin, is then the basis for an arms race and an insecurity spiral among two self-interested actors.

National (In)Security

Given these tensions, national security in its purest sense is a highly idealized sentiment. As domestic politics and international affairs rest upon interaction between actors in situations that are often paradoxical and zero-sum, the simultaneous attainment of complete security by all actors is impossible. At best, countries must balance achieving their national interests with some form of concession, which creates a more stable environment rather than exacerbating tensions. India's multi-pronged international diplomacy, especially her membership of different multilateral institutions that demand some loss of sovereignty, highlights the usefulness of such an attitude.

In this way, there is a limit to what New Delhi can achieve, both literally in terms of the threats she faces and fundamentally in terms of the general paradigm of national security. What is also clear is that the focus of national security—for policymakers and analysts alike—principally lies on its negative aspects. As such, as much as we can examine national security interests—those things that a country or actor would preferably like to accomplish—our discussion weighs more heavily on the threats towards these interests and the often deep-seated fears that they symbolize.

When taken together with paradox and parallax, such is the scale of these adverse features—especially when magnified by memory and imagination (of what might happen)—that there exists an *infinity of fear* between actors that no number of tools can fully compensate for. Within such an atmosphere, and given that it affects all actors at some direct or indirect level, rather than thinking of national security, we are in actual fact considering national insecurity. Therefore, and even if New Delhi can resolve most of the threats she currently faces, because of its essentially utopian nature, any study of her national security really remains that of *Indian national insecurity*.