

A Study Of Deviant State Behavior: Indian Foreign Policy, 1947-62

by

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Abstract

This dissertation argues that between 1947 and 1962, India demonstrated “Deviant State Behavior.” In contradistinction to the understanding that a state’s capabilities determine its behavior, we contend that India demonstrated great power behavior in spite of possessing middle power capabilities. We point out that India did not possess the material capabilities that could justify its great power behavior; nor did it harbor a great power self-image. Rather, it was the bitter rivalry among the great powers, notably Communist China and the US, and its possible repercussions for order that caused India’s deviant behavior. Convinced that a great power war involving nuclear weapons would engulf India, its leaders saw the great power competition as constituting a threat to their country. Since such a threat was not aimed specifically at India, and since its source was not a particular state but rather the condition created by the rivalry among the great powers, we term such threat as “Non-Dyadic Threat.” The policies adopted by India – such as signing highly unequal treaties with the Himalayan states and keeping the great powers away from South and South-East Asia – in order to counter such a threat, gave rise to its deviant behavior.

The insight of the English School, pertaining to order, is used to understand India’s deviant behavior. The English School’s claim that order is a fundamental aspect of international society, and that order ensures that the core concerns of all states are upheld, allows us to establish the link between the threat posed to order by the great power rivalry and India’s insecurity. The English School’s claim that all states in the international society, and not just a few, are responsible for maintaining order is developed further. We argue that if states, by their adherence to the principle of sovereignty, show their commitment to upholding order,

they also should show concern when order is imperiled, since their security is linked to order. India's behavior is a good demonstration of how deeply states are committed to order and the lengths that they can go to maintain it.

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Table of Contents

Abstract		ii
Acknowledgements		iv
Table of Contents		v
List of Tables		viii
List of Figures and Maps		ix
List of Abbreviations		x
1 Introduction		1
1.1	Overview	1
1.2	India's Deviant Behavior	3
1.3	Existing Explanations and their Limitations	8
1.4	Alternative Explanation	12
1.5	The English School as an Explanatory Framework	17
1.6	Relevance of the Study	21
1.7	Methodology	26
1.8	Structure of the Dissertation	30
2 Literature Review		33
2.1	Overview	33
2.2	India as a Middle Power in the International Society	35
2.3	Great Powers in the International Society	43
2.4	Material Attributes of the Great Powers	44
2.5	Non-Material Attributes of the Great Powers	50
2.6	Activities of the Great Powers	55
2.7	India and its Material Attributes: 1947-62	59

2.8	India and its Non-Material Attributes: 1947-62	68
2.9	India and its Great Power Activities: 1947-62	81
3	Theoretical Framework	86
3.1	Overview	86
3.2	The Concept of Deviant State Behavior	86
3.3	The Case for the English School Approach	93
3.4	The English School: An Introduction	98
3.5	The Concept of International Society	110
3.6	International Order – Alternative Explanations	115
3.7	International Order according to the English School	121
3.8	International Order and Institutions	124
3.9	Non-Great Powers and International Order	129
3.10	Threats to Order and the Non-Great Powers	138
3.11	Conclusion	143
4	The Basic Determinants of Nehru’s Foreign Policy	147
4.1	Overview	147
4.2	India’s Non-Dyadic Conceptualization of Threat	150
4.3	The Prevalence of Non-Dyadic Threat Conception	169
4.3.1	Great Power Harmony and International Order	169
4.3.2	Great Power Disharmony, Disequilibrium, and Nuclear Weapons	178
4.4	Conclusion	190
5	India’s Relations with Neighbors: A Hostage of Great Power Disharmony	194
5.1	Overview	194
5.2	India-Nepal Relations	198
5.2.1	Background	198
5.2.2	The 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship	201
5.2.3	Indo-Nepalese Relations in Practice	205
5.3	India-Bhutan Relations	217
5.3.1	Background	217
5.3.2	The 1949 Indo-Bhutanese Friendship Treaty	220
5.3.3	Indo-Bhutanese Relations in Practice	223
5.4	India-Sikkim Relations	235
5.4.1	Background	235
5.4.2	The 1950 Indo-Sikkimese Treaty	242
5.5	Conclusion	249

6	Great Power Rivalry in South-East Asia and India's Deviant Behavior	253
6.1	Overview	253
6.2	The Asian Relations Conferences	260
6.3	Conflict in South-East Asia and the Regional Security Architecture	265
6.4	India's Response to the New Security Institutions	269
6.5	<i>Panchsheel</i> as a Weapon of Resisting Great Power Intervention	273
6.6	<i>Panchsheel</i> and Indo-China	275
6.7	<i>Panchsheel</i> and India's Neighbors	284
6.8	The Bandung Conference	293
6.9	Conclusion	305
7	Conclusion	309
7.1	Deviant State Behavior and the English School	309
7.2	Lessons for Contemporary India and its Foreign Policy	312
	Bibliography	317
	Appendices	332

List of Tables

Table 2.1: Middle Powers (1957)	37
Table 2.2: Size of Country	60
Table 2.3: Infant Deaths per 1000 Live Births	61
Table 2.4: Deaths from Domestic Group Violence per 100,000 Population (1950-62)	62
Table 2.5: Military Balance (1965-66)	66
Table 2.6: India in Relation to Great Power Indices (Material)	68
Table 2.7: India's Behavior in Comparison to Great Power Behavior	84
Table 6.1: Representation at Regional Conferences in Asia, 1947-55	303

List of Figures and Maps

Figure 3.1: Dyadic/Conventional Threat	139
Figure 3.2: Non-Dyadic/Unconventional Threat	141
Map 4.1: Tibet Autonomous Region in Relation to India	153
Map 4.2: The Himalayas as a Barrier between India and Tibet Autonomous Region	164
Map 5.1: Map of British India from 1947 (pre-independence)	197

List of Abbreviations

ABM	Anti-Ballistic Missile
ARC	Asian Relations Conference
AEC	Atomic Energy Commission (United States)
AFPFL	Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (Burmese political party)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
GNP	Gross National Product
GRF	General Reserve Engineer Force (India)
ICSC	International Commission for Supervision and Control
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INC	Indian National Congress (India)
JIC	Joint Intelligence Committee (India)
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs (India)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NEFA	North-East Frontier Agency (India)
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
ONUC	United Nations Operation in the Congo
POW	Prisoner of War
PRC	People's Republic of China
SEATO	South-East Asia Treaty Organization
UK	United Kingdom

UN	United Nations
UNEF	United Nations Emergency Force
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Overview

The anarchical nature of the international society¹ causes states to accord topmost priority to strengthening their security; how this objective is pursued by states is determined by their material capabilities. Based on the understanding that a state's capabilities determine its behavior,² a three-fold typology of states exists for analytical purposes in International Relations³ – the small powers, the middle powers, and the great powers.⁴ The small powers are states which possess weak capabilities. This weakness prevents a robust hands-on engagement with international affairs, causing small powers to remain predominantly focused on domestic issues. The middle powers, possessing a significant amount of capabilities, interact substantially with the international society and engage with issues not directly impinging on their national interest. They are regarded as “good international citizens,” given their frequent mediatory roles in conflicts.⁵ The great powers, being in

¹ This dissertation uses the term “international society” to refer to the international system as it believes that the international system is innately social in nature and that states constitute a society. Chapter 3 establishes this point in detail.

² Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 9.

³ In this dissertation, the term “International Relations” is used to refer to the discipline that studies the relations among states, while the term “international relations” is used to refer to the process of the interactions among states.

⁴ Carsten Holbraad, “The Role of Middle Powers,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 6, no. 1 (March 1971): 78.

⁵ Eduard Jordaan, “The Concept of a Middle Power in International Relations: Distinguishing between Emerging and Traditional Middle Powers,” *Politikon* 30, no. 2 (November 2003): 167.

possession of superior capabilities, have a society-wide interest. Their might enables them to coerce and threaten other states. They also act as managers of the international society.

When the behavior of a state does not correspond to its capabilities (for instance, when a state with great power capabilities refuses to behave like one), it is viewed as an unusual phenomenon. This dissertation argues that India, between 1947 and 1962, demonstrated a mismatch between its capabilities and foreign policy behavior, thereby qualifying its behavior as being “deviant.” In spite of possessing middle power capabilities, India behaved like a great power thereby leading many to believe that it was actively pursuing great power status.⁶ An in-depth study reveals that India had no great power ambitions and that it was fully aware that there existed a stark difference between its capabilities and the capabilities of the existing great powers; in fact India considered such a pursuit as inimical to its national interest. Why, then, did India demonstrate “deviant state behavior”?⁷ Why did it demonstrate great power behavior while possessing only middle power capabilities?

⁶ This dissertation contends that great powers are not made suddenly – the attainment of great power status is a process that spans years, if not decades. Given the social nature of international relations, a state which feels that it is a great power needs the recognition of the other members of the international society. Hence, till recognition is received (in the form of inclusion into the great power “club,” such as being made a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council), the great power candidate will not only verbalize its belief that it is a suitable great power candidate, but it will behave like a great power to convince others that it is capable of playing the balance of power game and carving out its own spheres of influence – activities that are the hallmarks of great powers. A classic example is Japan in the second half of the 19th century. Convinced that it too deserved an equal standing with the European powers, and believing that a trait of superior powers was their ability to aggress upon their weaker neighbors, Japan aggressed upon China’s sovereignty to signal its superior status in Asia. See Shogo Suzuki, “Japan’s Socialization into Janus-Faced European International Society,” *European Journal of International Relations* 11, no. 1 (2005). Between 1947 and 1962, India, by behaving like a great power, created the impression that it too was actively pursuing great power status, and in the process following the rites of passage of great powers in history.

⁷ In Chapter 3, we will develop the concept of deviant state behavior in greater detail.

1.2 India's Deviant Behavior

The dominant narrative in Indian foreign policy scholarship is that India was a middle power under its first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. So committed was the country to international causes that it was believed to have neglected domestic issues at the cost of foreign policy, thereby giving rise to the image of India as an idealistic power in International Relations. Since India had severe socio-economic challenges at home, it was odd that it found the resources and time to focus so much on international affairs. The idealistic image was further strengthened when, in light of the humiliating defeat by Communist China in 1962,⁸ Nehru wondered if he had placed too much faith in the good-will of nations and whether India had been getting out of touch with reality. Nehru asked himself whether India was living in an artificial atmosphere of its own making.⁹ Studies of the 1962 Sino-Indian War reveal that India had refused to strengthen its military capabilities when faced with the danger from Communist China, thereby giving further credence to the “idealistic” interpretation of Indian foreign policy. Scholars reached the conclusion that India had been swayed by 1930s-style European idealism and that it had turned its back on strategic thinking.¹⁰

⁸ The Sino-Indian War started on October 20, 1962, when Chinese troops attacked and overwhelmed Indian positions in the Eastern and Western sectors of the disputed Sino-Indian border. The war, which lasted for a month and which overlapped with the Cuban Missile Crisis in its initial phase, concluded with the Chinese announcement of a ceasefire on November 20, 1962. Subsequently, Chinese troops withdrew from the disputed areas barring Aksai Chin in the North. The disagreement on the border issue has remained unresolved to this day and continues to be a source of friction in the relations between the two Asian countries.

⁹ Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, vol. 3 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1984), 223.

¹⁰ Ashok Kapur, *India: From Regional to World Power* (New York Routledge, 2006), 42. For accounts of Nehru's idealistic foreign policy, see *inter alia*, J.N. Dixit, “Jawaharlal Nehru: Architect of India's Foreign Policy,” in *Nehru Revisited*, ed. M.V. Kamath (Mumbai: Nehru Centre, 2003); B.K. Nehru in Jaswant Singh, *Defending India* (Bangalore: Macmillan India, 1999), 24, 35; Bimal Prasad, *The Origins of Indian Foreign*

Neville Maxwell's book, *India's China War*, played an important role in questioning this conventional narrative when it concluded that it was India's hegemonic ways which had played an important role in provoking the Chinese aggression in 1962.¹¹ Soon, a revisionist account emerged which detected clear signs of *Realpolitik* in Nehru's foreign policy.¹² Revisionists pointed at the perceptions of non-Indian leaders and opinion makers during Nehru's times who believed that India was not an idealistic power in Asia. A few hitherto unpublicized observations were presented to the readers. An "authoritative yet secret document" of the US State Department of the 1950s had concluded that on the basis of the trends in Indian foreign policy, India could become Japan's successor in Asiatic imperialism if its actions were not controlled.¹³ In 1953, the *New York Times* had opined that it was the US which was Nehru's "...major rival for influence in South Asia." The newspaper did not believe that India's interest was confined just to the South Asian region. Instead, it noted that Nehru wanted Indian dominance in Asia, the Near East, and Africa as well.¹⁴ John Garver pointed at a classified Chinese study of the 1962 war that spoke of Nehru's core

Policy: The Indian National Congress and World Affairs, 1885 – 1947, 2nd ed. (Calcutta: Bookland, 1962); and Shashi Tharoor, *Reasons of State: Political Development and India's Foreign Policy under Indira Gandhi 1966-1977* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1982).

¹¹ Neville Maxwell, *India's China War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970).

¹² See Baldev Raj Nayar and T.V. Paul, *India in the World Order: Searching for Major Power Status* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Srinath Raghavan, *War and Peace in Modern India: A Strategic History of the Nehru Years* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2010); K. Subrahmanyam, "Nehru and the India-China Conflict of 1962," in *Indian Foreign Policy: The Nehru Years*, ed. B.R. Nanda (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1976); Ton That Thien, *India and South-East Asia, 1947-1960: A Study of India's Policy Towards the South-East Asian Countries in the Period 1947-1960* (Geneve: Librairie Droz, 1963); and Martin Wainwright, *Inheritance of Empire: Britain, India, and the Balance of Power in Asia, 1938-55* (Westport: Praeger, 1994).

¹³ Nayar and Paul, *India in the World Order*, 119.

¹⁴ The *New York Times* dated December 8-9, 1953 made this observation. Escott Reid, *Envoy to Nehru* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981), 103.

ambition of wanting to establish a “greater Indian empire” within the realm of the old British Empire.¹⁵

Two trends became evident in the revisionist literature. At a minimum, India was seen as a state which did not hesitate to use coercion against weaker powers, leading A.G. Noorani to observe that Nehru was “...a mindless and arrogant hardliner.”¹⁶ At the other end of the *Realpolitik* thesis was the belief that India had been pursuing great power status. India’s policy of non-alignment was seen through the prism of balance of power politics. By becoming an independent pole, India was believed to have been assiduously working its way towards great power status.¹⁷ Far from being a woolly-headed Idealist, Nehru was depicted as being a Machiavellian geo-strategist, cleverly seeking for India the status of an Asian great power.

A close examination of Indian foreign policy during the Nehru years reveals that the country’s behavior did in fact resemble that of the great powers, as argued by the revisionists. India dominated the foreign and security policies of its Himalayan neighbors and unambiguously declared that they were India’s sole “sphere of influence.” To consolidate its hold over their policies, India entered into unequal treaties with Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim, and explicitly declared some of them as its “protectorate.” India curtailed the activities of the great powers in its immediate neighborhood and positioned

¹⁵ John W. Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 19.

¹⁶ A.G. Noorani, “Our Secrets in Others’ Trunks,” *Frontline* 22, no. 14 (July 2 2005). <http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl2214/stories/20050715000807500.htm>

¹⁷ K. Subrahmanyam, introduction to *Defending India*, ix; Nayar and Paul, *India in the World Order*, 148-49.

itself as an indispensable actor in the interactions among the great powers and the other states. India's policies led Ceylon to fear its absorption into India, thereby leading the island nation to enter into a defense arrangement with Great Britain in 1951.¹⁸ India's role in guaranteeing Burma's and Laos' security led it to being referred by the leaders of these countries as "Big Brother"¹⁹ and "Elder Sister,"²⁰ respectively. India's pro-active policies in erecting Asia's security architecture based on the principle of non-intervention saw some leaders suggesting that it assume the leadership of a "Third Bloc." Most importantly, India's policies imperiled US eminence in South and South-East Asia and contributed significantly to the failure of the South-East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). Powerful states (such as Communist China) and weak states (such as Ceylon) alike came to view India as a state whose actions had to be closely watched - a far cry from the "good international citizen" image of middle powers.

Notwithstanding such great power behavior by India, it is difficult to concur with the revisionists that India's behavior was *motivated* by its desire to attain great power status. History reveals that great power candidates have either openly announced their desire to attain great power status or have, at least, sought to match their material capabilities with those of the existing great powers. In either case, the great power candidates have demonstrated their intent to attain parity with the existing great powers. Thus, the motivation to attain great power status has been a key attribute for great power candidates.

¹⁸ Shelton U. Kodikara, *Foreign Policy of Sri Lanka: A Third World Perspective* (Delhi: Chanakya Publications, 1982), 84-85.

¹⁹ William C. Johnstone, *Burma's Foreign Policy: A Study in Neutralism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 88.

²⁰ Thien, *India and South East Asia*, 212.

Under Nehru, India neither announced its desire to have “a place under the sun,” in the way that Germany did in the late 19th century, nor did it seek to match the existing great powers in terms of material capabilities. In fact, Nehru refused to pursue the possibility of replacing China as a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council.²¹ If Nehru was keen on seeking great power status, he would have aggressively pursued informal US hints about the Security Council offer; a seat at the Security Council was an important mark of great power status. Hence, the revisionist claim that India’s behavior proves that it was aiming for great power status has to be questioned in the absence of the much needed intent or motivation of seeking great power status on the part of Nehru.

However, a key contribution of the revisionist scholarship is its drawing attention to the fact that there existed a marked disjuncture between India’s material capabilities and its behavior. It certainly is odd that a middle power demonstrated distinct great power behavior. To that extent, Indian foreign policy under Nehru demonstrated deviant state behavior. However, lacking the vital element of motivation, India’s behavior can be regarded as having - at best - created an illusion in the minds of observers that it was pursuing great power status.²² It is this illusion that played a crucial role in leading Communist China to attack India in 1962; it is this illusion that led Ceylonese leaders to believe that India would absorb their country; and it is this illusion that has led revisionist scholars to conclude that India was pursuing

²¹ Nehru to Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, August 30, 1950. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* (hereafter referred to as *SWJN*), Second Series., vol. 15 I (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund), 381; Nehru’s talks with N.A. Bulganin, June 1955. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 29, 231; and Shashi Tharoor, *Nehru: The Invention of India* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2003), 183.

²² The term “illusion” refers to the “faulty perception of an external object.” In this study, the “external object” is India’s behavior with other states. The meaning of the term “illusion” is from Katherine Barber, ed. *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2001), 705.

great power status. If India was not motivated by the desire to attain great power status yet demonstrated great power behavior, what explains the deviant behavior on India's part? What was the motive behind India's behavior?

1.3 Existing Explanations and their Limitations

While a detailed literature review will be provided in the next chapter, a few preliminary explanations as regards India's deviant behavior will be examined in this section. From a materialist perspective, it has been argued that India's vast land mass, population, and its military and economic power can explain its pursuit of great power status. For instance, by 1949, India's armed services numbered half a million active personnel, who were drawn from a reserve of 11 million eligible personnel. Being in possession of "one of the best organized military forces outside of Europe and North America" allowed it to pursue great power status.²³ India's behavior was further motivated by its decision makers' awareness that in spite of being a poor country, it was advanced industrially – a key component in a country's overall power base.

The social or ideational explanatory framework stresses the role of identity and its centrality in accounting for India's idiosyncratic foreign policy. Its assertion that the identity of a state plays a pivotal role in determining its behavior has been employed in understanding India's great power behavior. It has been pointed out that India's self-image as an ancient civilization endowed the country with the "strong assumption" that it was a great power. It

²³ Wainwright, *Inheritance of Empire*, 6. A similar argument has been made by Bharat Karnad. See Bharat Karnad, "India: Global Leadership and Self-Perception," (paper presentation, United Service Institute of India, New Delhi, January 1999).

has also been pointed out that Nehru's belief in the role of destiny led him to consider India as a great power candidate, which in turn shaped the country's foreign policy.²⁴ Having been a British colony for almost 200 years, it was destined that following its independence in 1947, India would regain its pre-British era standing in Asia. Nehru's frequent references to the role of fate and its salience in causing India to play an increasingly influential role in international relations no doubt gives credence to the "destiny" based thesis.

Baldev Raj Nayar and T.V. Paul provide yet another explanation for India's great power behavior by combining the material and ideational elements into their framework. Acknowledging that it is simplistic to focus on just one dimension, given that Nehru appreciated both the material and societal aspects of international relations, Nayar and Paul observe that India's vast manpower, natural resources and territory, its potential military and economic power, its civilizational legacy, as well as its "soft power" allowed it to adopt a foreign policy approach which led the US to believe that India was intent on realigning global political forces to its disadvantage.²⁵ India's materialist and ideational attributes allowed it to adopt a highly independent foreign policy, which has traditionally been intimately linked to assertions of great power status. Nayar and Paul conclude that Nehru sought to secure for his country the status of a great power.²⁶

²⁴ Himadeep Muppidi, "Postcoloniality and the Production of International Insecurity: The Persistent Puzzle of US-India Relations," in *Cultures of Insecurity: States, Communities and the Production of Danger*, eds. Jutta Weldes, et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 126.

²⁵ Nayar and Paul, *India in the World Order*, 137-38.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 127.

This dissertation argues that all the three approaches are lacking in their persuasive ability when it comes to explaining India's deviant behavior. The problem with the materialist approach is that the numbers which are used to justify India's great power behavior, while impressive in absolute terms, are not very impressive when compared with the established great powers. While pointing at India's large number of soldiers, they do not indicate the wide disparity between India's military hardware and that of the great powers.²⁷ Materialist approaches also fail to reveal the qualitative dimension of India's material capabilities, which by all accounts, were inferior to that of the existing great powers. While the great powers had sophisticated military hardware, India had weapons and armaments which were outdated. While the great powers had military hardware capable of projecting power far beyond their shores, India's military hardware was capable of only defending the country's territory. India was also facing an acute challenge of providing a decent standard of living to its people, leading to a pronounced gap between its level of socio-economic development and that of the great powers. Most importantly, Nehru himself acknowledged that materially, India was far behind the great powers. In light of several socio-economic challenges at home, he considered it reprehensible that the country should spend its precious resources on its military. In the "guns versus butter" debate, Nehru was firmly on the side of the latter. Nehru had no illusions that India was anywhere near the established great powers in terms of material capabilities.

The ideational approach is also not free of drawbacks. This is because the scholars examining India's foreign policy attribute too much salience to the "internal" and the historical dimensions. To attribute India's behavior to its identity as an ancient civilization

²⁷ See Table 2.5 in Chapter 2, 66.

would suggest that the distant past had a significant influence on its conduct. It would also imply that India (as a country) was so detached from reality that it was oblivious to its backwardness, especially in relation to the established great powers and relied on its identity to guide its foreign policy. By all accounts, Nehru was acutely aware of India's domestic challenges and no amount of talk of India's past greatness could make him lose sight of the challenges faced by the people of India in their daily lives.

The lacuna of Nayar and Paul's framework is that it is guilty of imposing a covering law-like logic in interpreting Nehru's foreign policy. They imply that since India possessed some important material and ideational attributes, it was only natural that it would pursue great power status. To that extent, India's idiosyncratic foreign policy has been ignored and Nehru has been placed alongside leaders of the great powers of years gone by who displayed a predictable trajectory in their foreign policy: assiduously build the material base and claim great power status. However, Nehru's foreign policy displays too many anomalies in relation to Nayar and Paul's framework: why did India not vigorously pursue the suggestion of replacing China in the Security Council?; why did it reject the suggestion by delegates at the Bandung Conference that it assume leadership of a "Third Bloc" in international relations, thereby establishing itself as an Asian great power?; why did Nehru not build up India's military might when advised to do so by his military commanders? While the eclectic approach adopted by Nayar and Paul makes theoretical sense, the shortcomings of their approach are apparent when the historical record is carefully examined.

1.4 Alternative Explanation

A common drawback of the approaches identified above is that they focus solely on India's internal attributes. Given that many of the scholars, such as Nayar and Paul and K. Subrahmanyam, adopt a Realist lens in analyzing Nehru's foreign policy, it is surprising that they neglect the role of an external threat in Nehru's world view, for threat and insecurity play a central role in Realist theory. This study views threat and insecurity as the prime movers of Indian foreign policy between 1947 and 1962 and the reason for its deviant behavior. The attempt to mitigate its sense of threat led India to undertake policies that created the illusion in observers that it was seeking great power status. What makes India's case an unusual one is that its understanding of threat was unconventional. The conventional understanding of threat in International Relations has been conceptualized in a dyadic sense: a state feels threatened when it perceives another state to be actively working to undermine its security, or when a group of states is seen as creating an alliance to undermine its security.

In India's case, the dyadic conceptualization of threat was muted. A close study of the material pertaining to Indian decision making during the 1947-62 period reveals the absence of a particular state or a group of states which India saw as posing a direct threat to its security. With reference to Communist China, Nehru believed that given its internal challenges, it would not present any threat to India for a considerable period of time.²⁸ With regards to Pakistan, he believed that even though it harbored revisionist tendencies, it could not imperil India's security. Were Pakistan to aggress into Kashmir, as it had done in 1947, it

²⁸ This aspect will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

could cause at best severe “embarrassment” to his country.²⁹ From a conventional view point, it has been noted that Nehru considered his country to be “geographically inviolable” and that he harbored the “Maginot Line” mentality.³⁰ Time and again, Nehru exhorted his colleagues to divert resources to meet domestic challenges and not to waste them based on alarmist instincts with regard to other countries.

Instead, India conceptualized threat in a non-dyadic sense. The intense competition between the US (on one hand) and the USSR and Communist China (on the other) on the Asian landmass was an extremely worrisome development for Nehru. Given the fact that decolonization was taking place at a rapid pace on the continent, the Western and Communist powers were trying hard to recruit new converts to their cause. This led dangerous conflicts to break out such as in Korea and in Indo-China. What made the conflicts even more dangerous was the introduction of atomic and nuclear weapons in the strategic competition among the antagonistic powers. From recent history, Nehru had learnt that it did not take much to turn small scale conflicts into total wars. A total war between the great powers involving nuclear weapons was deemed catastrophic. The size and scale of the belligerents and their interlocking alliances meant that a conflict would not remain localized. Given this scenario, how could non-belligerents like India even hope to survive?³¹ Nehru’s penchant for equating the overall stability of the region with India’s well-being led him to think pro-

²⁹ Nehru’s note to Secretary General, Foreign Secretary, and Commonwealth Secretary (MEA), December 9, 1956. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 36, 639-40.

³⁰ Thien, *India and South East Asia*, 279.

³¹ In a speech at a public meeting in New Delhi, Nehru stated that, “A war can destroy the whole world and even ruin us, whether we are involved in it or not...but a war, if it comes, is bound to affect us.” Nehru, April 13, 1953. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 22, 24.

actively on the peril posed by the great power competition and to devise policies in order to avert disaster. For him, the stability of the international order was truly indivisible. Contra conventional understanding of threat, India did not see any one state as constituting a source of threat, but instead saw the *condition* created by the great power competition for power and influence as constituting a grievous threat to its security and survival. To that end, its understanding of threat was predominantly non-dyadic in nature.

In order to avoid getting drawn into the vicious Cold War politics and becoming a theater of a great power war, India announced its non-aligned foreign policy from the very beginning of its existence as an independent state. However, given the possibility that a great power war would spread and not remain localized, it was necessary for India to prevent other Asian states from joining the Western or Communist camps. It was essential that the great powers be denied a foothold in India's surrounding regions. While the Cold War was making its presence felt all over the continent, it was very intense in South and South-East Asia, where the emergence of Communist China and its ideological zeal had drawn the attention of the Western countries. With the Chinese occupation of Tibet in October 1950 and the involvement of Chinese troops in the Korean War, the Americans were convinced that Communist China was an unpredictable power that had to be contained. As a result, the US sought to establish a strong presence in the Himalayan states, which were located just south of Tibet and to the north of India. Aware that its immediate neighborhood could become the site of great power conflict, as had been the case with Korea, India used pre-existing unequal treaties between British India on the one hand and Bhutan, Sikkim, and Nepal on the other, to deny the Western powers a foothold at its borders. The treaties severely compromised the latter's sovereignty. India publicly declared that they were its exclusive

“sphere of influence.” It is surprising that a state which claimed to adhere to principles such as equal respect to all and the harmony between ends and means could impose such harsh terms on its smaller neighbors.³² This aspect of Nehru’s foreign policy did strike many as being out of character with Nehru’s professions of peace and mutual respect and played an important role in imparting his foreign policy with a deviant character.

The realization that South-East Asia was another site of great power competition spurred Nehru to reach out to states in that region. US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles’ announcement that he sought to establish a military alliance system to contain communism in the region (SEATO) led Nehru to take an active interest in the affairs of that region. Not only did Nehru engage in bilateral diplomacy with Cambodia and Laos, but he also took an active interest in convening the Bandung Conference in 1955 with the express aim of creating a consensus among Asian states that intervention by foreign powers should be resisted. The Bandung Declaration and the resultant “Bandung Spirit” was seen as an important factor for the failure of SEATO. Nehru’s pro-active policy with regard to South-East Asia and his strident diplomacy in relation to Asian states like Ceylon, the Philippines, Iraq, and Pakistan led many to believe that Nehru was actively pursuing great power status in Asia. His declaration that South-East Asia be recognized as an “area of peace” led some to believe that this was nothing but “sphere of influence” politics in a different guise.³³

³² Chapter 5 will go into the details of India’s relations with its Himalayan neighbors and the inequality that India perpetrated.

³³ India’s relation with South-East Asia will be examined in Chapter 6.

The fact that India's freedom struggle had won it many fans among the new Asian states enabled the country to utilize this "soft power" in its outreach strategy. Given that nationalism was a strong force in Asian politics and that Indian nationalism had inspired many in their own anti-colonial struggle, India was at a distinct advantage in terms of getting its voice heard over the din of Cold War conflict in Asia. It utilized this commonality to forge a strong relationship with other Asian states and promote the principle of non-intervention. India also used its common background with Communist China – both were ancient civilizations and both shared a history of colonial subjugation – to influence its northern neighbor's foreign policy. If Communist China could be restrained in its foreign policy, the US would find it more difficult to get Asian states to join its military alliances like SEATO. Absent a threat from Communist China and having recently thrown off the colonial yoke, the Asian states would have very little reason to join a Western military alliance.

For a world attuned to a zero-sum Cold War mindset, Nehru's policies seemed unquestioningly similar to that of a great power.³⁴ Nehru's attempt to restrain Communist China and regulate its behavior was seen as his ploy to emerge as an Asian great power. Nehru's effort at keeping the US-led alliance away from South-East Asia was seen as his attempt to bring countries in that region under his "sphere of influence." India's unequal relation with the Himalayan states was seen as evidence of its hegemonic tendency. Absent a

³⁴ It needs to be noted that India's actions resembled those of the US in the latter half of the 19th century when the US was slowly ascending to great power status. Martin Wight observes that as part of the US' process of attaining that status, it established a quasi-protectorate over Samoa in 1878, it took part in the Berlin conference in 1889, and it founded the Pan American Conference in the same year. Martin Wight, *Power Politics*, eds., Hedley Bull and Carsten Holbraad (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1978), 58.

deep understanding of Nehru's world view and his apprehensions, a random "snapshot" of the country's activities would most certainly draw attention to India's deviant behavior and lead many to believe that the country was pursuing great power status, when it lacked the capabilities of a great power.

1.5 The English School as an Explanatory Framework

The English School as a theoretical approach is best suited to explain Nehru's foreign policy. A central assumption of the English School is that states are concerned not only with their narrow self-interest and well-being, but also with the overall stability of the international society of which they are a member. States define their interests in a much broader sense than what some theorists of International Relations would have us believe. Even though states are the primary actors who exist in a condition of anarchy, they do not necessarily lead a purely Hobbesian existence. As all states share some basic interests and values - the limitation of violence, the honoring of promises, and the commitment to sovereignty, and seek to uphold them to the greatest extent possible - they are said to constitute an international society or a society of states.³⁵ A crucial aspect of a society is the ability of its members to make common cause with each other by transcending one's narrow understanding of interest. The existence of the society of states is best demonstrated by the prevalence of order, which refers to "the pattern of activity which sustains the elementary or primary goals of the society of states or international society."³⁶ According to the English

³⁵ Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 13-18.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

School, states are aware that their security depends on the overall stability of the international order. As a result, order becomes a key goal for all states.

Many theories of International Relations, such as Realism and Neo-Liberal Institutionalism, view the creation and maintenance of order as the sole prerogative of the great powers, with the non-great powers being treated as mere objects. While the great powers create order, the rest are simply treated as the recipients of the public goods that are produced as a result. Non-great powers are seen as the consumers and not the producers of order. It is the English School which creates the space for examining the role of the non-great powers in creating order by arguing that order is created not just by a few states but by the society of states as a whole. It is the collective and prolonged adherence to rules such as those pertaining to diplomatic immunity and non-intervention that has witnessed the establishment of “institutions” in international relations. Hedley Bull, a key English School theorist, identifies five basic institutions in the society of states: international law, diplomacy, wars, great powers, and the balance of power.³⁷ It requires the co-operation of all the members of the society of states to uphold these institutions. Three or four great powers out of almost two hundred states cannot be imagined to uphold all these institutions. The co-operation of all the members of the international society upholds the efficacy of the institutions which in turn produces and reproduces order.

The great powers, being a crucial institution of international society, have an especially close relation with order. Since the great powers on their own cannot create and maintain order, given the expanse of the international society, the complexity of the international society,

³⁷ Ibid., 74.

and the number of states constituting it, they seek the active co-operation of the non-great powers. Because the latter have a keen interest in upholding order as it guarantees the sanctity of their primary goals, they assent to the great powers' request.³⁸ This gives rise to what Gerry Simpson refers to as "Legalized Hegemony."³⁹ The term refers to the superior constitutional rights accorded to the great powers by the non-great powers so that the former may better manage the society of states and uphold international order.

While critics may argue that the consent of the non-great powers is a result of coercion, a perusal of the process of the creation of great power bodies and arrangements, be it the Concert of Europe system or the UN Security Council, demonstrates that there is a significant element of bargaining between the two groups. It was due to the pressure from a section of the non-great powers that France was made a member of the Concert system and also the Security Council. The imperative to give representation to Asia and assuage nationalist sentiments in the continent necessitated the inclusion of Nationalist China in the Security Council. Hence, not only do the non-great powers play a role in upholding order, they in fact have an interventionist role in the creation of the institution of great powers.

³⁸ It needs to be pointed out that not all non-great powers have been such willing participants in the maintenance of order. History is witness to the existence of revisionist states that have sought to challenge the status quo. However, when one considers the history of International Relations in its entirety, it is apparent that revisionist powers have been in the minority. It is this observation which has led scholars such as Hedley Bull to conclude that states are primarily status quo-ist in their orientation. In the contemporary international society, a handful of states such as North Korea, Iran, and Venezuela may be identified as being clearly revisionist. While states like India, Brazil, Russia, and China are sometimes viewed as being unhappy with the present order, their attitude is reflective of their desire to be better integrated and having a greater say in the existing international order. They do not seek to overthrow the prevailing order, a key attribute of a revisionist state.

³⁹ Gerry Simpson, *Great Powers and Outlaw States: Unequal Sovereigns in the International Legal Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004).

It is the English School that demonstrates the lengths to which the non-great powers will go to uphold order. It is the non-great powers' strong commitment to order that can explain why they agree to a constitutional order such as the UN Charter that legally underlines their secondary status by giving the right of veto to the great powers. If non-great powers can display such commitment to empower the great powers to maintain order, one may appreciate why they go to such great lengths, as Nehru did, when order was imperiled by the disharmony among the great powers. When faced with disorder, one may appreciate why a large number of de-colonized states chose to adopt the policy of non-alignment and resist the call to take sides in the Cold War. Non-alignment did not mean sitting quietly on the fence, it meant taking a decision not to join the Cold War and foregoing material incentives such as military and economic aid from the most powerful states in the international society.

In light of the above formulation, one may pose the following question: if, as the English School claims, all states are worried about order, why is it that only Nehru seemed most perturbed by the disharmony among the great powers? While it is a fact that other states such as Canada and Australia played a role in upholding order by mediating in conflicts, none went as far as India did in trying to uphold and protect order.⁴⁰ None tried to keep the great powers at bay and none sought to establish a "sphere of influence" in the name of

⁴⁰ It needs pointing out that this dissertation acknowledges Canada and Australia's commitment to international order, evidenced by their robust involvement with the UN and their active role in issues such as arms control. What is being argued is that so pronounced was India's concern as regards international order that it did not hesitate to defy the great powers and challenge their authority in South and South-East Asia. Hence, its activities had an element of subversion and opposition when viewed from the vantage point of the great powers. The element of subversion was missing on the part of the other middle powers.

upholding order. Does India's activism not betray ulterior motives? The answer is no. It was Nehru's innate belief in the indivisibility of international affairs and the perception that order was threatened that spurred him to action. Nehru was convinced that the domestic and the international could not be segregated into water-tight compartments - what occurred on the "outside" was bound to impinge on the "inside." As he once remarked, "To my misfortune, I am affected by international happenings more than I should be..."⁴¹ This point is validated by Yaacov Vertzberger who observes that, "Nehru's globalism brought him to the verge of absurdity in over-assessing the importance of global events relative to immediate problems of India's own foreign policy."⁴² As a result, Nehru's specific understanding of international relations did impart an idiosyncratic character on Indian foreign policy.

History also was India's ally in its bid to keep away great power politics from the region. Being the successor to British India, it inherited unequal treaties with regard to the Himalayan states which relegated them to secondary status. A few years after attaining independence, India renewed them, thereby being able to regulate the Himalayan states' relation with the great powers. India's anti-colonial struggle had won it many fans in Asia. India successfully utilized its soft power to convince others to shun great power enticements.

1.6 Relevance of the Study

This dissertation contributes to our understanding of Indian foreign policy and international relations in five distinct ways. First, contemporary scholarship has showed an increasing

⁴¹ Michael Brecher, *Nehru: A Political Biography*, abridged ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 101.

⁴² Yaacov Y.I. Vertzberger, *Misperceptions in Foreign Policymaking: The Sino-Indian Conflict, 1959-1962* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 79.

realization that a simple “Idealist” or “Realist” label cannot be applied to Nehru’s foreign policy given the way in which materialist and ideational aspects are closely interwoven with each other.⁴³ Notwithstanding this realization, scholars who attempt to tread the middle path usually end up privileging a largely Realist interpretation of Nehru’s foreign policy. For instance, Nayar and Paul utilize a Classical Realist lens.⁴⁴ What this entails is that even though there is an acknowledgement that power and ideas matter in the beginning of their analysis, their work ultimately leans so much on the Realist side that it concludes that Nehru’s foreign policy was based on balance of power politics. This study gives equal emphasis to both dimensions and does not allow either one to drop out from the analysis. The challenge is to adopt a theoretical framework which is flexible enough to incorporate both ideational and materialist strands of Nehru’s foreign policy at different points of time yet show how they functioned according to the same logic.

Second, a shortcoming of the recent literature on Indian foreign policy, especially those focusing on Nehru’s foreign policy, has been the reluctance to engage with the large number of declassified notes and correspondences of Nehru. There is a tendency to rely only on secondary sources, which typically focus either on Nehru’s “idealistic” streak and his pious hopes for world peace or his Machiavellian policies. As a result, previous themes and debates in Indian foreign policy get repeated. Hence, Nehru’s foreign policy continues to remain hostage to the perpetual “Idealist-Realist” binary and stereotype.⁴⁵ This is rather unfortunate

⁴³ Nayar and Paul, *India in the World Order*, 153; Raghavan, *War and Peace in Modern India*, 14, 320.

⁴⁴ Nayar and Paul, *India in the World Order*, 22.

⁴⁵ A notable exception is Raghavan’s *War and Peace in Modern India*. In fact he also notes the lack of engagement with primary sources and observes that, “Books about Nehru flow off the presses, the bulk of

when one takes note of the fact that since 1984, a large body of Nehru's personal papers (The Nehru Papers) has been declassified.⁴⁶ These have been compiled as part of the *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, published at regular intervals by the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, New Delhi. However, a perusal of the recent books on Indian foreign policy (such as *India in the World Order*) shows that the authors have been circumspect in engaging with these primary sources.⁴⁷ This dissertation closely reviews the primary sources and provides a better understanding of Nehru's foreign policy. By incorporating contradictory thoughts and policy decisions on the part of Nehru, it seeks to present Nehru's foreign policy thinking with the scaffoldings – something that a wholly Idealist or Realist narrative does not allow the reader to have a glimpse of.

Third, another aspect of Indian foreign policy scholarship is that India's engagement with certain parts of the world is simply not studied. This is especially the case of the Himalayan states and South-East Asia. A close examination reveals that India's deviant behavior, and the resultant illusion on the part of observers that India was pursuing great power status, has a lot to do with India's relations with countries like Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Burma, Ceylon, Cambodia, and Laos. It is in relation to these states that India displayed its great power behavior the most. While the Himalayan states were explicitly declared as India's "sphere of influence," the South-East Asian states were designated an "area of peace" and thus subject

them relying on the same set of sources: Nehru's books and speeches, newspaper reports and secondary accounts, memoirs and interviews...there have been few well-researched historical studies of Indian foreign policy in the Nehru years." Raghavan, *War and Peace in Modern India*, 2.

⁴⁶ The Nehru Papers are selectively declassified. Thus, one does not claim that by examining these papers, one has had access to all the Nehru Papers.

⁴⁷ It is interesting to note that the book does not engage with the Nehru Papers, while adopting a very critical stand against Nehru's "utopianism."

to Indian influence. It is largely in relation to these regions that scholars have implicitly drawn their conclusion that India was following a balance of power strategy. However, hardly any scholar has focused on these regions empirically, choosing instead to focus on the reactions to India's policies in these regions by foreign leaders and decision makers and drawing on their conclusions.⁴⁸ The fixation of Indian foreign policy scholarship with the same cast of characters such as the US and Pakistan prevents one from gaining any additional and fresh insights.⁴⁹ This study devotes the bulk of its attention to these neglected regions and shows how a fresh perspective on Indian foreign policy becomes manifest.

Fourth, this study is one of the first to utilize the English School approach to analyze Nehru's foreign policy. The English School proves to be very useful in highlighting and interpreting Nehru's understanding of international relations as well as his motivations. Its emphasis on Realist concepts such as the great powers and its engagement with the more social aspects such as the contrived nature of order serves as an ideal platform to understand Nehru's foreign policy. It is surprising that, given the similarity between the English School

⁴⁸ Typically, scholars draw on the comments of foreign officials who spoke of the "Nehru Plan" for Asia or of India's unwarranted interest in South-East Asia. The latter's use of terms like "sphere of influence" and "hegemony" in relation to Indian foreign policy has been adopted uncritically by scholars. While the foreign officials viewed India's policies from a Cold War lens which promoted a black or white image of foreign policy, there is no cause for scholars in present times, having the benefit of accessing Nehru's private papers, to accept their interpretations of India's foreign policy motivations in their entirety. While India did display far more interest as compared to its capabilities, one needs to analyze the roots of its activism and not base their analyses merely on its external behavior.

⁴⁹ Gilles Boquerat, "India's Commitment to Peaceful Coexistence and the Settlement of the Indochina War," *Cold War History* 5, no. 2 (May 2005): 230, ft. 2.

and Nehru's understanding of international relations, no attempt has been made to use an international society framework to explain Indian foreign policy.⁵⁰

Lastly, a notable feature of the English School is that while scholars working within this tradition have developed interesting concepts and insights, they have been guilty of not demonstrating their utility in relation to specific case studies. While there exists a robust body of literature showing how English School scholars developed the concept of the international society and how their understanding of international relations differs from other approaches, very little effort has been made to show how these could be used in understanding the foreign policies of different countries.⁵¹ As a result, though theoretically very rich, the approach lacks in its empirical aspect. This has imparted the approach a slightly abstract and esoteric character. It is believed that though subscribing to an interpretivist approach, very little English School scholarship actually engages with diplomatic documents

⁵⁰ Kanti P. Bajpai is one of the few scholars who has used the English School framework to examine Nehru's foreign policy. His work on highlighting Nehru's understanding of order and justice is informed by Bull's *The Anarchical Society*. However, he has not used the English School framework to theorize Nehru's foreign policy; rather he has used it to organize international thinking in India into four categories based on the concepts of order and justice: the Nehruvians, the Gandhians, *Hindutva* thinkers, and the Neo-Liberals. Kanti Bajpai, "Indian Conceptions of Order and Justice: Nehruvian, Gandhian, *Hindutva*, and Neo-Liberal" in *Order and Justice in International Relations*, eds. Rosemary Foot, John Lewis Gaddis, and Andrew Hurrell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). Gopal Krishna has also contributed a chapter in Bull and Adam Watson's book on the expansion of the international society. His scholarship is confined to outlining Nehru's internationalism and his deep commitment to international order, and is more descriptive than theoretical in nature. Gopal Krishna, "India and the International Order: Retreat from Idealism," in *The Expansion of International Society*, eds. Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984)

⁵¹ This does not mean that such scholarship is totally missing. Examples of work within the English School tradition which have sought to explain foreign policies of specific countries are, inter alia, Galia Press-Barnathan, "The War in Iraq and International Order – From Bull to Bush," *International Studies Review* 6, no. 2 (June 2004); and Shogo Suzuki, "China's Perceptions of International Society in the Nineteenth Century: Learning more about Power Politics?" *Asian Perspective* 28, no. 3 (2004); and Suzuki, "Japan's Socialization into Janus-Faced European International Society."

to gauge elite perception.⁵² The English School's focus on theory reminds us of Steven van Evera's observation that, "we cannot all be doing theory all the time, that is, writing pure theory."⁵³ To that end, this dissertation will demonstrate that the English School can indeed be used to explain the foreign policies of specific countries. In order to do so, we will engage with the private papers, notes, and memoirs of key leaders and diplomats in Indian foreign policy.

1.7 Methodology

This dissertation focuses predominantly on Nehru. Between 1947 and 1964, Nehru reigned supreme in the Indian political firmament in general and in Indian foreign policy in particular.⁵⁴ Not only was he the Prime Minister of the country between these years, he was also its Minister of External Affairs (for the entire period), its Minister of Finance (1958-59), its Defense Minister (1953-55), and the Chairman of the Planning Commission. So central was Nehru to India and its policies that the Canadian High Commissioner to New Delhi, Escott Reid (1952-57), commented that, "There is no one since Napoleon who has played both so large a role in the history of his country and has also held the sort of place which Nehru holds in the hearts and minds of his countrymen. For the people of India, he is

⁵² Dale C. Copeland, "A Realist Critique of the English School," *Review of International Studies* 29, no. 3 (July 2003): 432.

⁵³ Steven van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 1.

⁵⁴ In fact, Nehru made his mark prior to 1947. With special reference to foreign policy, Nehru was the Indian National Congress' main pundit for quite some time. As he himself noted in December 1948, "In the past 18 or 20 years, whenever resolutions on foreign policy were drafted, I have had some hand in them. And in the past 2 years, the entire foreign policy of the Government of India has been in my hands. Obviously, considerable importance and authority are attached to my speeches." *The Hindustan Times*, December 17, 1948.

George Washington, Lincoln, Roosevelt and Eisenhower rolled into one.”⁵⁵ With specific reference to Nehru and Indian foreign policy, one of his biographers noted in 1961 that, “Nowhere does one man dominate foreign policy as does Nehru in India.”⁵⁶

Given the indispensable role played by Nehru in India’s foreign policy, we will engage extensively with his views on crucial aspects of international relations. Such an approach will enable us to understand the motivations behind India’s policies and the resultant deviant behavior. Scholarship on Nehru’s foreign policy will certainly benefit from greater critical reflection, contextualization, and historicization. The tendency to apply a covering law-like approach to the issue, where important variables such as threat are pre-defined, means that Nehru’s unique understanding of the key dynamics of international affairs is ignored. Frequent attempts at situating Nehru’s foreign policy within the larger body of post independence foreign policy (1947 - present) results in “information loss,” where the uniqueness of Nehru’s thinking is sacrificed at the altar of generalization.⁵⁷ If the uniqueness is identified, it is often labeled as being “utopian,” and hence dismissed as a candidate for a robust theoretical inquiry. Far too often, emphasis is laid on India’s external behavior as compared to properly understanding the motivations behind its actions.⁵⁸ It is felt that a

⁵⁵ Reid, *Envoy to Nehru*, 220.

⁵⁶ Brecher, *Nehru: A Political Biography*, 216.

⁵⁷ For a discussion on the tension between rich historical explanations and analytical explanations, see Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 225.

⁵⁸ A case in point is India’s deviant behavior. Encountered with its great power behavior, positivist scholars fall back on the general observation that only great power candidates demonstrate such behavior. Since states pursuing great power status behave in a particular way, and since India demonstrated such behavior, the conclusion is reached that India too sought great power status. Scholars

covering law-like approach encourages a “snapshot” reading of Nehru’s foreign policy – which is a problem, given Nehru’s idiosyncratic world view.

In order to bring to the fore Nehru’s world view and India’s foreign policy motivation, one needs to eschew a strict positivist approach.⁵⁹ This dissertation believes that an “interpretivist” or “hermeneutic” approach allows one to peer into the deepest recesses of Nehru’s mind and come to grips with his particular understanding of international affairs. Given that foreign policy is conducted in an innately social world, it is essential that the method of *Verstehen* or “understanding” be adopted so as to illuminate the motivations behind Nehru’s actions.⁶⁰ Given the English School’s long time focus on diplomatic culture and the history of ideas, it has consistently adopted and utilized the “interpretivist” approach in its research.⁶¹ As a result, besides utilizing the theoretical insights of the English School,

adopting a positivist approach have not considered the possibility that a state may demonstrate great power behavior without wanting to become one. Such an approach undermines the concept of “equifinality” or the phenomenon where the same outcome can be arrived at through more than one causal path. See Andrew Bennett and Alexander L. George, “Case Studies and Process Tracing in History and Political Science: Similar Strokes for Different Foci,” in *Bridges and Boundaries: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Study of International Relations*, eds., Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 138.

⁵⁹ For a lucid explanation of the positivist approach, and its difference with the post-positivist and classical humanist approaches, see Robert Jackson, *The Global Covenant: Human Conduct in a World of States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 44-58.

⁶⁰ Hidemi Suganami, “British Institutionalists, Or the English School, 20 Years On,” *International Relations* 17, no. 3 (2003): 253.

⁶¹ Roger Epp, “The English School on the Frontiers of International Society: A Hermeneutic Recollection,” *Review of International Studies* 24, issue 5 (December 1998): 49.

this dissertation shall also employ its methodology, which is understood to mean “a logic of inquiry.”⁶²

In order to tell the story “from the inside,” the interpretivist approach accords a great deal of importance to primary sources, such as private correspondences. Public speeches and interviews, which form the basis of most of the material of the secondary sources, while informative, have a tendency of misleading us. As B.N. Mullik, Nehru’s chief of intelligence, remembers Nehru saying in a private conversation, “...in foreign relations, one often had to take a posture contrary to views one held inwardly and those in responsible positions. One should not be guided by open statements.”⁶³ Hence, this dissertation will accord a lot of importance on the personal memoirs and government documents. To cite Robert Jackson, “States-people leave a trail of their activities, much of it a paper trail: speeches, policy statements, legislation, treaties, agreements, etc. It is that synthetic evidence spawned by human activity that the classical approach tries to locate and interpret in academic terms.”⁶⁴

To maximize the effectiveness of the “interpretivist” approach, the Case Study method will be adopted in explaining India’s deviant behavior.⁶⁵ Such a method allows us to examine a

⁶² Abraham Kaplan cited in Richard Little, “Neorealism and the English School: A Methodological, Ontological, and Theoretical Reassessment,” *European Journal of International Relations* 1, no. 1 (March 1995): 14.

⁶³ B.N Mullik, *My Years with Nehru, 1948-1964* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1972), 82.

⁶⁴ Jackson, *The Global Covenant*, 58.

⁶⁵ The adoption of a Case Study approach does not mean that a Cross-Case Analysis (or a Comparative Analysis) has been completely eschewed. As John Gerring underlines, “I insist that there is no such that as a case study, *tout court*. To conduct a case study implies that one has also conducted cross-case analysis, or at least thought about a broader set of cases. Otherwise, it is impossible for an author to answer the defining question of all case study research: what is this a case of?” John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Research* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 13.

wide range of activities and processes and prevent “information loss.” In particular, the Deviant Case Study method will be adopted; the term refers to “the study of cases whose outcomes are not predicted or explained adequately by existing theories...”⁶⁶ Within the Deviant Case Study method, the Process Tracing technique will be utilized which will help in empirically and temporally tracing the causal sequences of events. It has the potential to highlight different paths to an outcome and identify variables that have been left out previously.⁶⁷ Since a key assertion of this dissertation is that India’s great power behavior cannot be explained by existing scholarship, one needs to revisit the empirical material and examine previously neglected variables that will account for India’s deviant behavior.

The adoption of an interpretivist approach, employing the Deviant Case Study method and the Process Tracing technique will enable us to provide a “thick” account,⁶⁸ as compared to a “snapshot” analysis of India’s foreign policy between 1947 and 1962.

1.8 Structure of the Dissertation

The first part of Chapter 2 will establish that India was a middle power *par excellence* and that it met both the capabilities and behavior-based criteria for it to be labeled a middle power. The second part will highlight the anomalous nature of India’s behavior. Using the typology devised by Bull for detecting great power behavior, it will be demonstrated that India’s behavior in fact resembled those of the great powers. The third part of the chapter will examine the work of scholars who explain why India behaved like a great power. The

⁶⁶ Bennett and George, “Case Studies and Process Tracing in History and Political Science,” 150.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 144.

⁶⁸ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

chapter will conclude by establishing the fact that the reasons forwarded by the scholars are unconvincing and that an “inside-out” explanation is unsatisfactory. Hence, a wholly different line of inquiry needs to be pursued to explain why India behaved like a great power when possessing only middle power capabilities.

Chapter 3 will establish the theoretical framework which informs our interpretation of Nehru’s foreign policy and will ask the reader to adopt an “outside-in” approach. The first half of the chapter will begin by explicating the concept of deviant state behavior, after which the basic parameters of the English School - the approach that will be used to account for India’s deviant behavior – will be outlined. The latter section will focus on the concept of international order. It will be shown that contra popular approaches in International Relations, non-great powers do play a role in the creation and maintenance of order. It will be shown that the non-great powers value order and are loath to allow a breakdown in order. By establishing this point, it will be argued that the reverse logic also holds: when order is compromised, non-great powers are prone to take appropriate measures to minimize instability. The exact nature of measures taken by states is mediated by their history and inherent strengths and attributes.

Chapter 4 will empirically demonstrate that Nehru’s world view accorded with the basic assertions of the English School. Hence, aspects of Indian foreign policy will be examined to show that Nehru did equate his country’s security with the stability of international order. It will be established that he privileged a non-dyadic rather than a dyadic notion of threat, that he saw security as being indivisible, and that he saw the introduction of nuclear weapons and the increase in great power hostility as severely imperiling the stability of international order.

Having fully grasped the crucial aspects of Nehru's thinking, the next two chapters will examine how his thinking affected his policies.

Chapter 5 will analyze the effect of Nehru's conviction that international order was threatened. India's relation with the Himalayan states will specifically be analyzed. While the "China threat" thesis has informed scholarship on India's relations with these states (the belief that India's fear of Communist China shaped its policies towards the Himalayan states), it will be shown that India's relationship with Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim was shaped by the fear of instability in international order occasioned by the rivalry between the US and Communist China. It was India's attempt to keep great power politics away from the region that led to India's deviant behavior.

Chapter 6 again analyzes the effect of Nehru's conviction that international order was imperiled. India's relation with the South-East Asian states (such as Cambodia, Laos, and Burma) and also some South Asian states (such as Ceylon) will be analyzed in this regard. Contrary to the belief that India was asserting its role in these areas due to its competition with Communist China or due to visions of grandeur and destiny, this dissertation will argue that the imperative to keep great power politics away led India to adopt policies which led to its deviant behavior.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Overview

This chapter examines the anomalous phenomenon of India demonstrating great power behavior while possessing middle power capabilities. The extant literature on Indian foreign policy will be reviewed to examine if there exist convincing reasons as to why such an asymmetry is witnessed between India's capabilities and its behavior. It will be concluded that while the revisionist claim of India demonstrating great power behavior is correct, revisionists are unable to provide a satisfactory reason for India's deviant behavior between the years 1947 and 1962.

In order to fulfill this objective, the chapter is divided into three parts. The first part will establish that India was a middle power, both in terms of capabilities and behavior. While scholars of Indian foreign policy have alluded that India was a middle power, they have not situated their assertion in clear analytical terms. Their account has been impressionistic and descriptive and lacking in methodological rigor. They have not utilized the frameworks developed by scholars like Carsten Holbraad, who have studied middle powers extensively, to conclusively demonstrate that India was a middle power by situating India's capabilities and behavior in relation to that of other middle powers. By combining the descriptive dimension of Indian foreign policy scholarship and the analytical dimension of International Relations scholarship, we will firmly locate India as a middle power in the hierarchy of states. Only by conclusively "anchoring" India to the middle power status can this dissertation

ascertain if it was breaching the boundaries of middle power behavior and behaving in a deviant manner.

The second part of the chapter will utilize Bull's template as regards the key "markers" of the great powers. The reader will be acquainted with the capabilities possessed by the great powers and their characteristic behavior. Providing such a template is crucial in appreciating the core argument of the revisionist scholars: that India was behaving like a great power between 1947 and 1962. Bull will provide us with a clear framework on the basis of which we can judge the veracity of the revisionist claim as regards India's great power behavior. Bull's template will also provide the bench mark to evaluate if India's behavior was the outcome of the country possessing key tangible and intangible attributes such as military power and a strong sense of destiny, as claimed by the revisionists.

On the basis of Bull's framework, the final part of the chapter will assess whether India possessed the key "ingredients" that are the hallmarks of great powers. It will also determine if India's behavior between 1947 and 1962 resembled that of the great powers in history. It will be concluded that while India lacked vital great power ingredients such as military power, it did behave like a great power. Hence, while the revisionists are correct in claiming that India's behavior was similar to that of the great powers, they are incorrect in stating that such behavior was a function of its internal attributes, for India simply did not possess such attributes. The disjuncture between their valid observation (regarding India's behavior) and their invalid explanation (regarding India's capabilities) provides the basis for examining Indian foreign policy between 1947 and 1962 and accounting for its deviant behavior,

understood as the disjuncture between its middle power capabilities and its great power behavior.

2.2 India as a Middle Power in the International Society

Despite the fact that the number of middle powers usually exceeds the number of great powers at any given point of time, scholarship focuses a lot more on the latter category of states. This is due to the understanding that the great powers play a predominant role in shaping international relations. The relative lack of attention on the middle powers means that the parameters for the identification of middle powers is less rigorous than the parameters that exist for categorizing states as great powers. A basic understanding of a middle power is provided by Martin Wight when he writes that

A middle power is a power with such military strength, resources and strategic position that in peacetime the great powers bid for its support, and in wartime, while it has no hope of winning a war against a great power, it can hope to inflict costs on a great power out of proportion to what the great power can hope to gain by attacking it.¹

After having provided a concise sketch of a middle power, Wight makes no attempt at outlining either the attributes or characteristic behavior of middle powers in international society. In order to impart rigor and methodological finesse to the issue, Holbraad argues that the GNP of a country is the best “objective” indicator in recognizing a middle power. According to him, the GNP is a comprehensive figure which efficiently encapsulates the inherent strengths of a state. By incorporating existing capabilities and potential resources such as raw minerals, the GNP can competently account for the standing of a state in the

¹ Wight, *Power Politics*, 65.

international society.² Once states have been placed in a hierarchical manner based on their GNP, Holbraad avers that the category of middle powers can be identified by drawing two lines, one separating the middle powers from the great powers, and a second line separating them from the smaller powers. He points out that as it is easy to recognize the great powers of an era, it is fairly simple to draw the first line, thereby separating the middle powers from the great powers.³ To separate the middle powers from the smaller powers, a regional approach is advocated, where all the states in a region (barring the great powers) are placed in a hierarchical order based on their GNP, and only the top one or two states are selected as middle powers. The top ranking states in each region are added to the list of the middle powers at the global level. While Holbraad's book, *Middle Powers in International Society*, identifies the middle powers in 1975, we adopt his methodology and apply it to the year 1957, as per data available from the *World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators*.

² Carsten Holbraad, *Middle Powers in International Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 78.

³ Curiously, Holbraad includes China, France, and Great Britain in the ranks of the middle powers. We disagree with such a categorization as it goes against what Holbraad himself points out in his article, "The Role of Middle Powers." In the article, Holbraad claims that a great power is distinguishable from the middle powers as "other states recognize it as having a certain status in the international society." Since the afore-mentioned states were recognized as having a special status, courtesy of their veto power at the UN, and being identified as members of the "Big Five," there is no rationale for including them in the middle power category. Holbraad, "The Role of Middle Powers," 82. Any ambiguity as regards China's great power status was effectively removed when it prevailed against the US in the Korean War (1950-53). Wight, *Power Politics*, 47; Nayar and Paul, *India in the World Order*, 39.

Table 2.1: Middle Powers (1957)

Source: Bruce Russett et al., *World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 152-54.

As can be seen from the table above, India was clearly a middle power in terms of GNP. However, using GNP as an indicator to identify middle powers is not free from problems. As Holbraad himself concedes, the identification process suffers from certain methodological drawbacks. The establishment of a hierarchy of states based on a single indicator entails relating different currencies and comparing states with different socio-economic systems. For instance, the socialist states of Eastern Europe restricted their data to material output and excluded service figures, which other states included in calculating their GNP.⁴ The presence of an inherent asymmetry in the GNP figures means that the process

⁴ Holbraad, *Middle Powers in International Politics*, 79.

of identifying middle powers is not conclusive. Hence, at best, the GNP is a “relatively crude and shifting indicator.”⁵

In order to compensate for the element of inaccuracy that is built into the “objective” method of identifying the middle powers, scholars have incorporated state behavior as a crucial component of the identification process. Eduard Jordaan claims that a key trait of middle power behavior is the tendency to involve themselves with events and developments well beyond their borders and well outside the bounds of their direct self-interest. It is their willingness to be a part of the solution to global problems that distinguishes them in the international society.⁶

The label “middle power” is given to a state not only because it occupies a middle position in the hierarchy of state capabilities, but also because it tends to occupy a middle position in disputes among other states.⁷ The commitment to help the belligerent sides arrive at a workable compromise, mainly through the use of multilateral channels and institutions, has been the hallmark of middle power behavior.⁸ In doing so, middle powers have often worked under the UN umbrella in peacekeeping missions and in the process, have averted deadly conflicts in various parts of the world. For instance, Canada distinguished itself through its constructive diplomacy in the Indo-China conflict in the early 1950s and in the

⁵ Bernard Wood, “Towards North-South Middle Power Coalitions,” in *Middle Power Internationalism: The North South Dimension*, ed., Crawford Pratt (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990), 74.

⁶ Jordaan, “The Concept of a Middle Power in International Relations,” 166.

⁷ Holbraad, “The Role of Middle Powers,” 79.

⁸ Jordaan, “The Concept of a Middle Power in International Relations,” 167.

process helped contain the deterioration in the relation between the Western and Communist powers. It also played a notable role in the Suez Crisis in 1956, for which Lester Pearson, the Canadian Foreign Minister, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957.

Middle powers have also been seen as holders of the balance of power in global politics; they seldom threaten the existing status quo - understood as the prevailing economic and military-political balance of power.⁹ Such an observation as regards the middle powers can be traced back to the first half of the 19th century when Friedrich Ludwig Lindner, an editor and writer in Stuttgart, pointed out that the middle powers were the guardians of the balance of power. They were seen as ensuring the peace in Europe and the security of other powers on the continent.¹⁰ A recent manifestation of the middle powers' commitment to upholding the peace is Canada's leading role in promoting the principle of the Responsibility to Protect, whose objective is preventing genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing. It was the establishment of the International Commission on Intervention and State sovereignty by the Canadian Government in 2000 and its report, "The Responsibility to Protect" that led the UN to adopt this principle in 2005.¹¹

A survey of India's foreign policy between 1947 and 1962 reveals that it behaved precisely in the manner that a middle power is expected to behave. A noticeable aspect of Indian foreign policy was its steadfast commitment to the UN as a vehicle for resolving disputes and

⁹ *Ibid.*, 167.

¹⁰ Holbraad, "The Role of Middle Powers," 79.

¹¹ For more information on the Responsibility to Protect, see Gareth Evans and Mohamed Sahnoun, "The Responsibility to Protect," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 6 (Nov-Dec 2002).

promoting amity between states. To that end, notwithstanding its domestic challenges, India was one of the largest contributors to the UN. For instance, its contribution in 1954 was 3.4% of the total UN budget, in 1955 it was 3.3%, and in 1956 it was 2.97%. Except for 1954 (when India paid a higher contribution than Canada), only the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council and Canada made higher contributions than India.¹² It was a reflection of India's faith in the UN and also India's commitment to the UN's activities that Nehru's sister, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, was chosen as the eighth President (and the first woman President) of the General Assembly. It is noteworthy that six of the previous Presidents of the General Assembly were from the middle powers, thereby demonstrating the close association between the middle powers and the UN.¹³

India also played an important role in the Korean War, especially in relation to the vexed issue of the repatriation of the Prisoners of War (POWs). At the end of the Korean War, the 140,000 Chinese POWs became a topic of immense controversy, with their repatriation becoming a heated and emotive issue. While the UN insisted that the prisoners should be free to decide whether they wanted to go back to their countries or not, the North Korean and Chinese governments argued that the POWs had to be released and repatriated to their respective countries without delay. So contentious did this issue become that on two occasions talks broke down, causing a delay of nine months, and keeping the hostilities between the disputants simmering. Hectic diplomacy on the part of India led to a 17 Point solution that was accepted by all the parties. This was a notable achievement in the realms of

¹² M.S. Rajan, *India in World Affairs, 1954-1956*, vol. 3 (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1964), 555

¹³ <http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/index.shtml>

mediation by India.¹⁴ As a result of its appreciable performance in mediation during the war, India was nominated as the Chairman of the Neutral United Nations Repatriation Commission. India also contributed a paramedical unit and an army brigade in the Korean War.¹⁵

While Korea was one of the most high profile achievements in mediatory diplomacy on India's part, the country also took an active interest in the Indo-China War, and the conflicts in the Congo and the Middle East. With regards to the Indo-China War, India played an important behind-the-scenes role at the 1954 peace talks in Geneva. It was pivotal in "interpreting each side to the other" and removing misunderstandings.¹⁶ India was also made the Chairman of the International Commission for Supervision and Control (ICSC) which implemented the ceasefire between France, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.¹⁷ With regards to the conflict in the Congo in 1960, India played a lead role in peacekeeping activities of the United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC). It lost 36 troops and sustained 124 casualties. Between 1960 and 1964, India contributed two infantry brigades consisting of almost 12000 troops.¹⁸ India was also intricately involved in the Middle East conflict between Egypt and Israel. India contributed an infantry battalion as part of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF I). Over a period of 11 years, between 1956 and 1967,

¹⁴Harish Kapur, *India's Foreign Policy, 1947-92* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1994), 128.

¹⁵ http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/peace_keeping/history_india_UN_peace_keeping.htm

¹⁶ Kapur, *India's Foreign Policy*, 128

¹⁷ http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/peace_keeping/history_india_UN_peace_keeping.htm

¹⁸ Alan Bullion, "India and UN Peacekeeping Operations," *International Peacekeeping* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 113.

12000 Indian soldiers took part in an effort to keep the antagonist parties away from each other.¹⁹

As can be seen from the above accounts, there is no doubt that India was a middle power *par excellence*. Not only did it meet the empirical GNP indicator of a middle power, but it also took an active interest in international affairs and expended resources – both money and personnel – to retain the status quo and prevent local conflicts from escalating into larger conflagrations. The image of India as a “good international citizen” correctly forms the basis of the conventional Indian foreign policy scholarship between 1947 and 1962.

However, it is this very narrative which has been challenged by the revisionist scholarship. The revisionists reason that India behaved more than just like a middle power; in fact it behaved very much like a great power. As Martin Wainwright argues, “The new government in New Delhi shunned the long political adolescence that its counterparts in Ottawa and Sydney had accepted earlier. Under the guidance of Nehru, India asserted its position as a major power that could chastise its former master and deny both the US and the USSR ascendancy over the subcontinent.”²⁰ It is possible that the dominance of the conventional narrative has prevented scholars from paying heed to the not-so “good international citizen” aspect of Indian foreign policy. In order to put the revisionist argument in perspective, we need to judge India’s capabilities and behavior in the context of the capabilities and behavior

¹⁹ http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/peace_keeping/history_india_UN_peace_keeping.htm

²⁰ Wainwright, *Inheritance of Empire*, 1.

which great powers have possessed and demonstrated, respectably, in history. The next section will lay out Bull's typology of great power capabilities and behavior.

2.3 Great Powers in the International Society

The Anarchical Society, authored by Hedley Bull, has distinguished itself as being a seminal piece of English School scholarship.²¹ Not only does it show why we need to conceive of international relations as a social phenomenon, but it also outlines and explains the mechanism by which the international society ensures that the relationship between states does not become purely Hobbesian.²² *The Anarchical Society* also examines the great powers and their role in international relations – a concept which this dissertation closely examines in order to account for India's great power behavior. It is noteworthy that Bull provides us not only with a list of great power attributes, but that he also meticulously outlines their behavior. The strength of Bull's scholarship is that rather than focusing on the individual great powers or their strategic interactions, he focuses his attention on developing and refining the concept of the great power. According to Bull, only the top ranking military powers may be considered as great powers. He believes that all the great powers of an age are comparable in military power, with there being no category of states superior to them. A state is also considered a great power if it asserts its right, and is accorded the right, to play a part in determining issues that impinge on the peace and security of the international society. He points out that states which are militarily powerful but are not considered by their own

²¹ It has been referred to as "the foundational text for the English School approach to international relations." John Williams and Richard Little, "Introduction," in *The Anarchical Society in a Globalized World*, eds., Richard Little and John Williams (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 1.

²² The theoretical contribution of Bull's scholarship will be examined in detail in the next chapter.

leaders or by other states to have special rights and responsibilities “are not properly speaking great powers.”²³ This social understanding of great powers overlaps with the claims of scholars such as K.J. Holsti who believe that a state’s self-understanding or “role conception” is an important aspect of its behavior.²⁴

Having gained a sense of what a great power is, we shall now turn our attention to the elements that go into the making of a great power and also the major activities of the great powers in the international society.

2.4 Material Attributes of the Great Powers

While Bull identified military power as a key material attribute of a great power, it is Hans J. Morgenthau who provides us with a comprehensive list of material attributes that contribute to what he terms the “elements of national power” approach.²⁵ According to Morgenthau, the basic factor for a state to be considered a great power is geography. As great powers need to prevail in wars, it is imperative that they have enough space to absorb the blows inflicted upon them by their enemies. To threaten other states and maintain their ascendancy, great powers need ample space to disperse their assets to prevent their annihilation through an enemy attack. The premise is that even after being attacked first, the state should have enough resources at its disposal to inflict unacceptable damage to the

²³ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 200-2

²⁴ K.J. Holsti, “National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy,” *International Studies Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (September 1970): 242-43.

²⁵ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 5th ed., rev. ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 117.

enemy.²⁶ Hence, a state like Israel, which is militarily robust, cannot be considered a great power as it suffers from a lack of strategic depth.²⁷ On the contrary, the “quasi-continental size” of states such as the US and Communist China provide them with tremendous strategic depth. This makes them formidable members of the international society.

The second element that goes into the making of a great power is population. Population plays a central role in a state’s great power prospect in three ways. First, as great powers need to be able to coerce other states, they require large armies, which can only be raised by states having large populations. Observing that states with small populations cannot be great powers, John J. Mearsheimer argues that it would be naive to imagine that Sweden, with a population of 8.9 million, can attain great power status, when existing great powers such as the US and Communist China have populations of 281 million and 1.24 billion each.²⁸ Second, as wars require the production of large quantities of war material, a healthy and productive populace is vital. It is a fallacy, however, to think that a large population is sufficient in itself to enhance a state’s chances of attaining great power status. A large population which is impoverished and unproductive is more a hindrance on a state’s resources than an asset. If population itself were a determining factor, without taking into consideration its qualitative dimension, Communist China would have been a more capable

²⁶ Ibid., 119.

²⁷ While this observation holds true for a majority of the great powers, one does come across exceptions. For instance, in spite of lacking a large land mass, Great Britain was the pre-eminent great power for a considerable period of time. For most of the “ingredients” of a great power pointed out in the subsequent pages, exceptions will invariably present themselves. However, it needs to be kept in mind that such examples are rare.

²⁸ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2001), 61.

and formidable great power than the US.²⁹ Third, the possession of a sizeable population enhances a state's potential to attain great power status as larger amounts of wealth can be generated through the collective productive capacity of the people.³⁰ Wealth is essential for producing and maintaining a large military.

The third prerequisite for the making of a great power is self sufficiency in food. A country which is not self sufficient in food has to divert its national energy and foreign policy towards the same, thereby denying it the ability to pursue "more forceful and single-minded policies."³¹ Morgenthau avers that a permanent scarcity of food is the source of permanent weakness. Delving into the early modern era, he argues that a decline in agricultural output adversely impinged upon Spain's national power, thereby paving the way for its fall from great power status.³²

The fourth element is natural resources, which can be diverted towards industrial production and for the purposes of waging wars. Morgenthau draws a direct connection between the possession of abundant raw materials by the US and the USSR and their preponderance in international relations. While he cites access to coal, iron ore, oil, and uranium as being essential for a country's national power,³³ he asks one to be mindful of the temporal

²⁹ Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 130.

³⁰ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 61.

³¹ Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 121.

³² *Ibid.*, 121.

³³ *Ibid.*, 123.

dimension, stating that the salience of such minerals depends on the era. For instance, access to coal and iron ore were vital for a state's great power prospect in the 19th century. In the 20th century, while these minerals are important, the possession of uranium could be deemed equally, if not more important, for attaining great power status.

A fifth element innately connected to the possession of raw materials is industrial capacity. Industrial plants are pivotal in converting raw materials into final products, which in turn are needed for waging wars at the highest level of intensity. Industrial products enable a state to develop infrastructure such as highways, railways, and various other hardware needed in augmenting its fighting ability. As Paul Kennedy has observed, "...there is detectable a causal relationship between the shifts which have occurred over time in the general economic and productive balances and the position occupied by individual powers in the international system."³⁴

The sixth element in the "elements of national power approach" is military preparedness. According to Morgenthau, it consists of three factors. The first one is the technological prowess of a state's military hardware. For a state to be at the top-most echelons in the hierarchy of states, it needs to possess state-of-the-art equipment and also be abreast of recent innovations in military technology. As great powers occasionally need to intervene in the politics of distant locales, they have to be able to project their power over a long distance. Hence, large naval vessels with offensive capabilities and heavy lift aircrafts are

³⁴ Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987), 17.

essential for a state to become a great power. European states from the 15th till the 19th century managed to stay ahead of other parts of the world in the realm of military hardware. Europe's incorporation and effective use of firearms and artillery enabled it effectively to project power and dominate states from other parts of the world.³⁵ The second factor is the quality of military leadership of a state. Good leadership allows for the effective use of hardware and personnel in battles. Despite the fact that the number of French troops in the years after the French Revolution was a lot less than those of France's neighbors, Napoleon Bonaparte's leadership gave the French remarkable victories in the face of much larger armies. On the other hand, the lack of innovation and creative thinking by the French General Staff in the inter-war period led to France's defeat at the hands of Germany during the onset of the Second World War. The third factor that constitutes military preparedness is the quantity and the quality of troops. Since it is the average soldier who will be fighting battles on the ground, it is imperative that s/he be well trained and motivated.³⁶

Mearsheimer stresses that since force is the *ultima ratio* in international relations, what really matters in attaining great power status is "effective power," which is military power. He notes that the state with the most formidable army is the most powerful actor in the international society. He distinguishes "effective power" from "latent power." The latter refers to the resources present in society that the state can draw upon to build military

³⁵ Given how jealously states guard their cutting edge military technology, one could add to Morgenthau's argument by noting that possession of the latest technology by a state also reveals its self-sufficiency. The most potent states are those who not only possess hi-tech weapons but also those who monopolize the technology. It is no accident that some of the greatest powers on earth such as the US, USSR, and Great Britain have not had to rely on others for their latest military hardware and gadgets.

³⁶ Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 126-30.

power. He identifies wealth and population as constituting “latent power.”³⁷ While Mearsheimer privileges the military might of a state above all other elements of national power, Morgenthau argues that such an analytical approach is illustrative of the “Fallacy of the Single Factor,” which refers to the tendency of assigning overriding importance to one element at the cost of the others.³⁸ Kenneth Waltz agrees with Morgenthau when he underlines the need to include all elements in evaluating a state’s potential to be a great power. He is against according great power status to states on the basis of their preponderance in select categories such as military power. He comments that those who try to identify great powers by focusing on just one or two factors adopt a rather “strange” methodology.³⁹ He justifies his comprehensive approach to power by invoking the anarchic nature of the international society: as states are in a self help system without having recourse to calling upon a higher authority in times of crisis, they have to use their combined capabilities in order to survive. As a result, the military, economic, and other capabilities cannot be sectorized and weighed separately.

While material capabilities are usually seen as the most reliable indicators of great power status, Jack S. Levy provides a cautionary note by stating that we should incorporate more factors, since relying solely on material capabilities can sometimes lead to counter-intuitive

³⁷ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 60. In fact, Zakaria goes a step further than Mearsheimer when he divides “latent power” into “national power” and “state power.” While the former term refers to the resources available in society in general, the latter term refers to that portion of the national resource which can be used by states (governments) in their foreign policies (and not just for militaristic purposes). Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power*, 9.

³⁸ Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 164.

³⁹ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1979), 130.

assessments. For instance, in the mid 19th century, while Turkey ranked higher than Prussia in material capabilities, scholars routinely identify Prussia and not Turkey as a great power.⁴⁰ Hence, we need to be cognizant of other factors besides material capabilities that go into the making of a great power. Keeping this point in mind, it would be necessary to examine the non-material aspects in the making of a great power.

2.5 Non-Material Attributes of the Great Powers

As far as the non-material attributes of the great powers is concerned, we can divide them into two categories: non-material attributes which impart internal cohesion to a state (necessary for a state to be an effective great power) and non-material attributes which imbue a state with great power identity. Morgenthau focuses on the former category and identifies a state's national character, its national morale, the quality of its society and government, and also the quality of its diplomacy, as being crucial to its great power prospects. These factors are a part of his "elements of national power" approach. Bull focuses on the issue of great power identity and observes that "Great powers are powers recognized and conceived by others to have, and conceived by their own leaders to have, certain special rights and duties."⁴¹ By arguing that the attainment of great power status is conditional upon factors such as recognition and perception, he points at the relevance of the "softer" elements in international relations – something which is often neglected by scholars.

⁴⁰ Jack S. Levy, *War in the Modern Great Power System, 1495-1975* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1983), 16.

⁴¹ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 202.

The national character of a country consists of “certain qualities of intellect and character” which “occur frequently and are valued more highly in one nation than in another.”⁴² Morgenthau believes that national character associated with authority and militarism is closely connected with the war-making capability of a state. Pointing at the Russian and German examples during the 19th and early 20th centuries, he argues that their approval of militarism, standing armies, and compulsory military service enabled them to fight wars more effectively than countries that did not value these traits, as was the case in the US and Great Britain.⁴³

National morale is the “degree of determination with which a nation supports the foreign policies of its government in peace or war.”⁴⁴ While it is understood that the national morale of a country has a breaking point during times of war, the threshold differs, based on the country concerned and also the circumstances prevailing within and also around it. While Germany’s morale broke down in 1918 when the situation was not very dire, its morale did not collapse till the very last stages during the Second World War.⁴⁵ Morgenthau believes that national morale, like national character, is a very elusive concept and given its highly subjective quality, it is difficult to ascertain how exactly it impacts on the great power prospect of a state.

⁴² Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 134.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 140.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 140-41.

The existence of fissures and widespread discrimination in society lead to many citizens being denied the chance to participate effectively in the life of the nation. This causes a sizeable number of people to withdraw their support to the initiatives of their government. Autocratic governments that do not take the people into confidence can find the execution of policy initiatives to be a difficult task. For instance, the neglect of the demands and well-being of the Ukrainians and Tartars in the USSR before and during the Second World War led to many of them joining the Germans in their war against the USSR. A government that is truly representative has a much better chance of commanding the respect and the support of its people. Such support is invaluable in times of war.

The quality of diplomacy is another important non-material element that goes into the making of a great power. Diplomacy combines all the elements of national power into an integrated whole and gives a state its direction in foreign policy. According to Morgenthau, "The conduct of a nation's foreign affairs is for national power in peace what military strategy and tactics by its military leaders are for national power in war."⁴⁶

The self-identity of a state is another important non-material factor that goes into the making of a great power. "Constructivists" are scholars who pay a great amount of attention to the role of ideas and identity in International Relations and how they impinge upon the behavior of a state. Unlike scholars working within the materialist paradigm, Constructivists believe that ideas and identity help determine how states behave. While materialists conceive of structure in a tangible sense, Constructivists believe that ideas can also form structures.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 146.

According to Christian Reus-Smit, “Systems of shared beliefs, ideas and values have structural characteristics, and that they exert a powerful influence on social and political action.”⁴⁷ Structures, once established, are strong enough to shape the identities of the states, which in turn determine their interest, and consequently, their behavior. The fact that state identity can determine behavior is a significant departure from Realist teaching, which stresses that behavior is based on a cost-benefit calculation, where states are motivated to act on the basis of relative gains.⁴⁸ As Alexander Wendt points out, “identity shapes interests,”⁴⁹ thereby implying that states act on the basis of their understanding of themselves.

Wendt observes that in much of International Relations scholarship, the state is shown to have a “corporate personality,” which means that states are treated as though they are persons.⁵⁰ That being the case, it is understood that states are more than mere automatons that function simply on the basis of cost-benefit calculations. States have consciousness, where they are able to learn from “first hand, subjective experience.”⁵¹ Lessons are not learned just through the medium of “objective” national leaders who dispassionately survey the scene from a certain vantage point. The lessons drawn from subjective experiences play a

⁴⁷ Christian Reus-Smit, “Constructivism,” in *Theories of International Relations*, eds., Scott Burchill, et al., 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 216.

⁴⁸ According to Realists like Waltz, states act on the basis of developments in the international system, namely the balance of power; hence, state interests are exogenously generated.

⁴⁹ Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics,” *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 398.

⁵⁰ Alexander Wendt, “The State as Person in International Theory”, *Review of International Studies* 30, no. 2 (April 2004): 289.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 295-96.

part in the formation of a state's identity. Rodney Bruce Hall suggests that focusing on self understandings of "national agents" is important, where states view themselves as "national" actors. States see themselves as "communities of shared ethnicity, or language, or history or heritage."⁵² K.J. Holsti points at a similar thing when he argues that "role conception" – which refers to the state's own understanding of what it is, has a bearing on the state's behavior.⁵³ These self understandings play a vital role in the way states behave on the world stage.

One cannot complete an examination of the non-material attributes of great powers without looking at what Joseph S. Nye refers to as "soft power."⁵⁴ He defines "soft power" as the ability to attract, which usually leads to acquiescence on the part of the other actor. Thus, soft power may be likened to "attractive power." He highlights the fact that one should not confuse such a form of power with influence, for influence sometimes depends on the element of bargain. Nye opines that soft power, while having some commonalities with influence, is different⁵⁵ in that it does not require coercion or convincing. Soft power is co-optive in nature as it has the ability to shape what others want as they are attracted to your power, as a result of which your values and ideals become theirs. This sort of power is based

⁵² Rodney Bruce Hall, *National Collective Identity: Social Constructs and International Systems* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 27.

⁵³ Holsti, "National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy," 242-43.

⁵⁴ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

⁵⁵ For explication of influence in International Relations, see D.G. Kousoulas, *Power and Influence: An Introduction to International Relations* (Monterey: Cole Publishing Co., 1985), 12; Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 30-31; and Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration in International Politics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1962), 103-08.

on the values a country expresses in its culture, by the examples it sets with regard to domestic politics, and in the way it conducts its relations with others.⁵⁶ While soft power adds to the power base of a state, it is not a “must have” for great powers. One may thus observe that to be a great power, it is desirable that a state possess soft power, for it entails less opposition from others towards its actions and policies.

2.6 Activities of the Great Powers

In addition to possessing specific material and non-material attributes, great powers also exhibit certain forms of behavior and undertake activities that are not usually witnessed among other states. On this aspect, Bull provides the reader with one of his most comprehensive insights that is outlined below.

The maintenance of the *balance of power* is one of the most important activities which the great powers undertake. Two types of balance of power dynamics may be discerned in international relations. The first one is seen through the lens of competition, where states, in an attempt to balance the power of their rivals, increase their power through internal balancing or external balancing. While the former refers to building up one’s military and industrial power, the latter refers to the formation of alliances by a state in order to match its rival’s power and reach. The second interpretation of the balance of power sees it as more of a “contrivance” by the great powers,⁵⁷ where they undertake policies not only to bring about parity between them, but also to provide stability to the international society. As opposed to

⁵⁶ Nye, Jr., *Soft Power*, 8.

⁵⁷ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 208.

the first interpretation of the balance of power, this view asserts that leaders of the great powers affect a balance through discussions and negotiations and not by dispassionately assessing their rivals' strength and taking appropriate balancing actions. As per the second interpretation, balance of power is more social and is seen as a public good which only the great powers are capable of providing at the systemic level.

The great powers also seek to *avoid and control crises* among themselves as much as possible.⁵⁸ With the introduction of nuclear weapons in the post Second World War era, Bull observes that great powers have been aware of the need to avert crises. As a result, we see a total absence of the type of adventurism that Russia had embarked upon in 1904 when its leadership, reeling from growing domestic upheavals, undertook what was thought to be a “small victorious war” against Japan in order to galvanize the populace behind the monarchy. It is noteworthy that in spite of the deep animosity that existed between the US and the USSR during the Cold War, not once did these states allow a single shot to be fired in the opponent's direction. While the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 is seen as a near miss, one needs to appreciate that the fear of a war did restrain them.

With the onset of the nuclear age, it has been seen that the attempt on the part of the great powers to *avoid or limit wars* – among themselves and among lesser powers – has significantly increased.⁵⁹ For instance, efforts by great powers to reduce misunderstandings among themselves and steps taken to contain political disputes between them by negotiation are

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 208-12.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 212.

clear illustrations of the stability promoting activities of the great powers. Not only have they entered into arms limitation talks and agreements between themselves so as to control their competition, the great powers have also sought, through agreements such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), to prevent the spread of deadly weapons to the international society and avert disastrous wars. While the NPT may be viewed by some as being discriminatory on account of the fact that it allows only the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council to possess nuclear weapons, the treaty also ensures that such deadly weapons do not become the common currency of international relations.

The great powers also exercise their *preponderance* unilaterally in one of three ways – dominance, hegemony, and primacy.⁶⁰ Through “Dominance,” the great powers ensure that the interests of the weaker states are aligned with theirs and it is characterized by the use of force. It involves the undermining of the weaker power’s sovereign rights, equality, and independence. This type of great power behavior was in vogue in the period between the 17th and 19th centuries. The position of the US with regard to the Central American and Caribbean countries in the late 19th century and early 20th century is a good example of dominance.

A second way of establishing great power preponderance is through “primacy,” which differs significantly from dominance as it involves minimal amount of coercion and a near absence of force or the threat of use of force. According to Bull, “the position of primacy...which the great power enjoys is freely conceded by the lesser states...” and

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 213-18.

“...bargaining takes place without coercion and within the confines of a normal degree of acceptance of basic norms of international behavior.”⁶¹ The position of Great Britain in relation to the Commonwealth and that of the US within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are pertinent examples of dominance.

In between primacy and dominance lies “hegemony.” In order to establish and maintain its ascendancy among a group of states, great powers may resort to force or the threat of use of force; however, such acts are not common at all and are far from habitual. There is awareness among the great powers that using force carries with it significant political costs and thus it is used only in very extreme cases. As a result, hegemony has been referred to as “imperialism with good manners.”⁶² The relationship that the USSR had with the countries of eastern Europe is a good example of hegemony. The “Brezhnev doctrine” of 1968 formalized this arrangement where it limited the sovereign rights of the Eastern European states by asserting that a threat to any of them was a threat to the Soviet bloc as a whole.

By establishing dominance, primacy, or hegemony, what the great powers create in a larger sense is their *sphere of influence* over a region or a group of states. Whereas the first three essentially define the relationship between the great powers and the lesser states, the sphere of influence defines the relationship between the great powers, where they agree to honor each others’ preponderance in select regions. Such an arrangement contributes to

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 215.

⁶² Georg Schwarzenberger quoted in *Ibid.*, 216.

international order as it establishes clear limits on great power interventions and mitigates friction among them by doing away with overlapping claims over territories.

The last great power behavior is their tendency to establish “concerts” or “condominiums.” This refers to regular meetings and summits among the great powers to jointly stabilize and give a central direction to international affairs. The heyday of great power concerts was the 19th century when the great powers often met to confer with each other. Bull concedes that in the 20th century, especially the post Second World War period, the world has not witnessed anything as formal or substantive as the Concert of Europe.

2.7 India and its Material Attributes: 1947-62

In this section, we will situate India’s capabilities within the framework that we have laid out earlier as regards the great powers and assess whether the country qualified for great power status. As the great powers of the mid 20th century set the benchmark in terms of capabilities, we will undertake comparative assessments between India and the great powers wherever necessary. Since the revisionists argue that India’s great power behavior was the outcome of it possessing key great power capabilities, we need to verify this line of reasoning. Hence, two questions that will be answered in this section are: did India indeed possess key great power capabilities and did India really behave like a great power? If both the answers are in the affirmative, then one should acknowledge that the revisionist claim holds – that because India possessed key great power capabilities, it pursued great power status under Nehru and thus demonstrated great power behavior. This will show that there existed symmetry between India’s capabilities and its behavior. In that case, our claim that

India had demonstrated deviant behavior will be proved erroneous. However, if this section reveals that India behaved like a great power but did not possess great power capabilities, then we will have to put forward an explanation as to why India demonstrated deviant behavior between 1947 and 1962.

As far as India's geography is concerned, India was indeed a suitable candidate for great power status. Possessing 3267567 square kilometers of territory,⁶³ the country had ample "strategic depth." India was also strategically placed whereby it could control shipping between Europe and the eastern parts of Asia such as China and Japan. India's favorable standing in terms of land mass in comparison with the great powers is shown below.

Table 2.2: Size of Country



Source: Russett et al., *World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators*, 139-40.

As far as population is concerned, India again compared favorably in relation to the great powers. In 1961, it had the second largest population in the world, behind Communist China. As a result, one may surmise that this would be an asset, as its populace would have enabled the country to have a high industrial capacity as also the ability to establish a large

⁶³ Russett et al., *World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators*, 139.

military. However, as Morgenthau has pointed out, having just a large population does not suffice, for the quality of the population also matters. Once one moves beyond the sheer numbers, it is apparent that the large population, rather than being an asset, was a hindrance to India's great power prospect.⁶⁴

For a proper appraisal of the potentials of the Indian population for the period 1947-62, we will analyze some statistics that shed light on the qualitative dimension of India's population. The data on infant mortality rates are a good indicator of the standard of living of a country. Being unable to look after themselves for a significant period after their birth, the welfare and survival prospects of infants is an appropriate reflection of the overall system that a state manages to develop. If a state is unable to develop a proper system, a child's prospects for survival at the time of birth will be adversely impacted. The table below gives us an indication of the qualitative aspect of the Indian population.

Table 2.3: Infant deaths per 1000 live births



Source: Russett et al., *World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators*, 200-01.

♦ PRC's figures obtained from Subramaniam Swamy, *Economic Growth in India and China: A Perspective by Comparison* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1989), 48.

⁶⁴ Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 132.

The table above clearly demonstrates that India lagged far behind the established great powers in terms of the quality of life. As the table below demonstrates, the Indian state was also greatly challenged when it came to the question of protecting its own citizens from domestic group violence.

Table 2.4: Deaths from domestic group violence per 100,000 population (1950-62)



Source: Russett et al., *World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators*, 99-100.

India was also dependent on foreign assistance when it came to developing infrastructure or even feeding its people. For instance, as per the Point Four Programme signed with the US in 1950, India received \$1.2 million which was intended to develop agricultural and child welfare schemes. It was also dependent on loans from the US to purchase wheat in order to tackle a severe food crisis.⁶⁵ As a result, India was granted a loan of \$190 million in 1957 payable over a period of 30 years. Countries such as Norway also made available aid to India.

⁶⁵ One may wonder why it is that in spite of having serious apprehensions about India's intentions in Asia, the US was generous with aid. Since India was not in the communist camp, it was deemed essential that - notwithstanding its antipathy towards US security policy in the region - India be provided aid so as to prevent internal strife. Internal instability and poverty were seen as important factors in the rise of communist regimes.

In 1952, it gave India 10 million Norwegian Kroners under the auspices of the UN in order to aid the fishery, forestry, and wood industries.⁶⁶

The availability of minerals and raw material is another requirement for a state to attain great power status. On this aspect, India was quite favorably positioned. For instance, A.F.K. Organski notes that India had the world's third highest deposit of iron ore after Southern Rhodesia and the US. It was positioned at number eight in the list of states possessing coal deposits.⁶⁷ Morgenthau points out that India was also in possession of a huge amount of manganese, considered vital for the production of steel. In 1939, the country ranked second with an output of one million tons, with the USSR having the largest output.⁶⁸ India was also endowed with considerable amounts of monazite in the erstwhile Travancore state in south India. Thorium is extracted from monazite which is used in the production of atomic energy and atomic bombs.⁶⁹

As regards industrial capacity, India was lagging behind the great powers of the times. India lacked crucial elements such as a large industrial working force and electricity to convert its huge reserves of minerals into industrial products. As far as estimates of employment in industry as a percentage of working age population is concerned, Great Britain was ranked

⁶⁶ K. P. Karunakaran, *India in World Affairs 1950-53* (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1958), 228-30.

⁶⁷ A.F.K Organski, *World Politics* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 133.

⁶⁸ Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 124.

⁶⁹ Ramachandra Guha, *India after Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* (London: Macmillan, 2007), 45. In fact, the monazite deposits were coveted by Great Britain as they were seen as a crucial material in the Cold War. This led some politicians in London to "encourage" Travancore not to accede to the Indian union in 1947 and instead rely significantly on Great Britain as an independent state.

first with 35.2%, the USSR was ranked fourteenth with 23.9%, France was ranked sixteenth 23.4%, the US was ranked twenty-fourth with 19.2%, whereas India was at the sixtieth position, with just 8.3% of its workers employed in the industrial sector.⁷⁰ As regards electricity generation, deemed crucial for powering the industrial plants, India in 1951 produced 2.3 million kilowatts, as compared to Communist China's 2.8 million kilowatts (for 1952).⁷¹

As far as military preparedness is concerned, we shall evaluate India's case on the basis of the three parameters laid down by Morgenthau: technology, military leadership, and the quality and quantity of the armed forces. As far as the technological aspect is concerned, Wainwright has argued that the partition of British India into India and Pakistan in 1947 left India "with one of the largest defense-production establishments outside the Western world."⁷² This would lead one to assume that India was fairly self-sufficient as regards its military needs. However, this is not at all the case, for India lacked a military-industrial infrastructure. It also refused to invest in research and development – a key aspect of high quality indigenous military capability. According to the 1966 Education Commission of India, the average annual allocation to the field of research and development prior to 1960 was a mere 0.1% of the country's GNP, as compared to 2.8% in the US, 2.3% in the case of the USSR, 2.7% in the case of Great Britain, 0.7% in the case of France, and 0.7% in the case of Communist China. In the 1960s, only 1% of India's defense budget was channeled

⁷⁰ Russett, *World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators*, pp. 185-86.

⁷¹ Wilfred Malenbaum, "India and China: Development Contrasts," *The Journal of Political Economy* LXIV, no. 1 (February 1956): 8.

⁷² Wainwright, *Inheritance of Empire*, 77.

towards research and development.⁷³ Unable to develop indigenous technology, India had very little to show in terms of producing military hardware. India's indigenous weapons production was confined to rifles, light machine guns, mortars, howitzers, recoilless guns, anti aircraft guns, and explosives. It was dependent on Great Britain and France for its military aircrafts such as the Mystere, the Ouragan, and the Hunter MK-56. At best, it was able to undertake licensed production of aircrafts. Dependence on other countries meant that it was susceptible to "spare parts diplomacy."⁷⁴

As regards the nature of military leadership, Nehru's single-minded focus on subordinating the military to civilian rule meant that the military commanders had very little say in defense policies. The changes made to the Warrant of Precedence in the years after independence shows the declining status and prestige of the top military commanders.⁷⁵ In 1947, a Secretary in the Government of India ranked lower than a Lieutenant General; in a few years' time, the Secretary's rank was equal to that of a full general. In 1948, the Chief of Army Staff was at par with the justices of the Supreme Court and was senior to the Secretary General of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). By 1951, the Chief of Army Staff ranked lower than the justices of the Supreme Court, and by 1963, ranked lower than the Secretary

⁷³ Raju G. C. Thomas, *Indian Security Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 239.

⁷⁴ The phenomenon where "the delivery of parts for the weapons sold remains under constant threat of being withheld unless the recipient nation adjusts its foreign and defense policy to the liking of the supplier nation." *Ibid.*, 248.

⁷⁵ The legislative order that establishes the hierarchy of state functionaries.

General.⁷⁶ Since British India did not allow Indian military officers to rise very high in the armed forces, independent India suffered from a lack of strategic and organizational experience as regards the top military commanders. The disastrous result of this policy was witnessed during the Chinese aggression of 1962 when India's military commanders were overwhelmed by the occasion.

Table 2.5 sheds light on the quantitative aspect of India's military assets. Owing to the dearth of reliable standardized data for the global military balance in the 1950s, we have used the assessment of global military balance carried out by the *Institute for Strategic Studies*, London for the period 1965-66.⁷⁷

Table 2.5: Military Balance (1965-66)

Country	Army (Personnel)	Air Force (Aircrafts)	Navy (Vessels)
[Redacted Data]			

Source: *The Military Balance 1965-66* (London: Institute for Strategic Studies, 1965), 2-34.

NA: Figures available in terms of squadrons. Given the difference in the number of aircraft per squadron in each country, it was difficult to ascertain the actual number of aircrafts in each air force.

⁷⁶ Stephen P. Cohen, *The Indian Army: Its Contribution to the Development of a Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 172.

⁷⁷ It needs pointing out that after the defeat in the border war with Communist China in 1962, India upgraded its military capabilities and acquired new military hardware. The figures above reflect the post-1962 military balance pertaining to India. During the pre-1962 era, the gap between India and the rest was even greater.

As regards the qualitative dimension, the Indian army, under the British had gained invaluable combat experience during the Second World War in theaters as varied as Burma, Egypt, and Italy. India also had battle proven, high caliber troops such as the Gurkhas and the Rajputs. However, the army lacked adequate high quality hardware, as the bulk of its resources were spent on the pay and pensions of its huge military.⁷⁸ The navy, according to Nayar and Paul, “amounted to no more than a glorified fishing fleet.”⁷⁹ While this observation might be a tad bit exaggerated, there is no doubt that it lacked offensive capabilities. According to Lorne Kavic, the Indian Navy had been conceptualized in a defensive role, with the result that it developed mainly into an anti-submarine fleet over the span of a decade since 1947.⁸⁰ While possessing a few destroyers, cruisers, frigates, and even a light aircraft carrier, the navy was incapable of throwing the gauntlet to an enemy in distant shores. The air force, however, fared better than the other two arms of the military and managed to upgrade its assets. Starting with the purchase of Spitfires and Tempests in 1948, it proceeded to buy De Havilland Vampires between 1948 and 1950, followed by Dassault Ouragan fighter bombers in 1953, followed by Mysteres and Hawker Hunters in subsequent years.⁸¹ Even though qualitatively the Indian Air Force possessed superior quality machines, quantitatively it lagged behind the air forces of the other great powers.

⁷⁸ Chris Smith, *India's Ad Hoc Arsenal: Direction or Drift in Defense Policy?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 55. He argues that while over 75% of the defense budget was allocated to the Army, equipment modernization was perfunctory as the government was unwilling to draw on its limited foreign exchange reserves.

⁷⁹ Nayar and Paul, *India in the World Order*, 129.

⁸⁰ Lorne J. Kavic, *India's Quest for Security: Defense Policies, 1947-65* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 117.

⁸¹ Smith, *India's Ad Hoc Arsenal*, 57.

Having surveyed India's material capabilities, the table below assesses them in light of the great power criteria.

Table 2.6: India in relation to great power indices (material)

No.	Great Power Requirement	Fulfilled by India?

◆ While India did possess a large number of soldiers, it lagged far behind the others in the number of aircrafts and naval vessels. Hence it is problematic to come to a clear "Yes" or "No" answer on this matter.

From the above table, one can conclude that India clearly lacked in many key areas of the economy and the military and that there existed a pronounced gap between itself and the other great powers on many an index of national power.

2.8 India and its Non-Material Attributes: 1947-62

A comprehensive assessment of India's non-material attributes using Morgenthau's "elements of national power" approach necessitates the examination of five factors: national character, national morale, the quality of society, the quality of government, and the quality of diplomacy. This dissertation will not undertake the examination of India's character and morale for the following reasons: (i) to undertake a truly competent analysis of these factors, one has to delve deep into the history and society of India. This runs the risk of distracting us from the study of India's foreign policy to other aspects like the workings of its society,

and causing the dissertation to deviate from its core focus; (ii) nonetheless, if one were to undertake such an exercise, our understanding of India's national character and morale would be superficial at best. Any assessment which lacks rigor will provide us with a very tentative understanding of India's character and morale; (iii) since Morgenthau himself admits that national character and morale are highly elusive factors, one wonders if this dissertation will gain anything by attempting to incorporate them into our study. In fact, one runs the risk of essentializing by seeking to identify THE national character and national morale. Hence, our attention will be focused on the last three factors as identified by Morgenthau.

As regards the quality of society, the initial years of independence were perilous considering the numerous divisions existing in the Indian society. According to the historian Ramachandra Guha, conflicts in society ran along the following axes: caste, language, religion, class, and gender. The term "caste," a Portuguese word, conflates two Indian words: *jati* or the group into which one is born into and *varna* or the place into which a *jati* locates itself in the social hierarchy as outlined in the Hindu system. The 3000 plus *jatis* divide themselves into five *varnas*.⁸² As far as language is concerned, India recognizes 22 languages as being "official," while in terms of religion, the country is home to Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Zoroastrians, and Jews. While such a diverse array of religions has led to the development of a composite culture, it has also led to tensions in society. The presence of massive social and economic disparities has led to the existence of deep class divisions in

⁸² Guha, *India after Gandhi*, xix.

the country, while gender inequality is also to be encountered.⁸³ Given such divisions and heterogeneity, Winston Churchill believed that India had no national essence. During Nehru's lifetime, these divisions manifested themselves in various forms such as the Naga insurgency in the North-East which was based on ethnicity; and deep unrest in South India in the form of resistance to Hindi, the dominant official language. While none of these problems had the potential to overwhelm the country, given its diversity, they nonetheless could render national cohesion tenuous at times. Hence, on paper, the odds were against India when it came to the question of national cohesion.

A central achievement of the Indian state was to embed democratic ethos in the country with the help of the Constitution, which was adopted on January 26, 1950. The federal nature of the polity ensured that the divisions within society were brought under control and that the provinces were made partners in the process of national development. Affirmative action policies, termed as "reservation" meant that jobs in the central government and seats in educational institutions were set aside for the disadvantaged sections in society. These aspects of the Indian polity have led to India being seen by Guha as an "outlier case," where in spite of lacking the "must haves" of a democracy, India has survived and thrived as a democracy, and where it has been able to give representation to its myriad peoples.

The British colonialist had entrenched their rule in India with the help of the civil service, which was referred to as the "steel frame" of the country. In addition to the British, Indians were also recruited to help in the imperial enterprise. This meant that independent India was

⁸³ *Ibid.*, xix-xx.

able to employ their services in diplomacy. Being well acquainted with the English language, as well as law and the classics, Indian diplomats were well equipped to forcefully argue their country's case in various international platforms such as the UN. India's non-aligned policy and its salience owed a lot to the diplomats who managed to engage other countries and evolve consensus on issues such as anti-colonialism and non-intervention. It has been noted that by September 1950, India had 193 diplomats posted in 43 sovereign nations and thus were "well placed to press Indian interests abroad."⁸⁴

With regard to the self-identity of India as a great power, Constructivists claim that a state's self perception has a significant role in shaping its identity, which in turn influences its behavior. This self perception is composed of two parts: the opinion of the country as held by its own leaders and the opinion of the country as held by members of the society of states. If it can be demonstrated that India's leaders considered India to be a great power, then India's deviant behavior can be attributed to its self-identity.⁸⁵ The following pages examine whether India viewed itself as a great power in spite of being materially weak.

When assessing the stand of the Indian leadership on the question of India as a great power, one needs to pay close attention to Nehru's views on the matter, given his central role in the formulation of the country's foreign policy. However, this task is made difficult due to the

⁸⁴ Wainwright, *Inheritance of Empire*, 124.

⁸⁵ This dissertation will focus on just India's self-image as a great power. It will not explicitly focus on other states' perception of India as a great power since the latter aspect is already reflected in the Indian leaders' image of their country.

fact that Nehru was inconsistent in his assessment of India as a great power – while at times he left people with the impression that India was a great power and that it was up to the international community to acknowledge this “fact,” at other times he summarily dismissed any talk of his country as a great power, instead highlighting that India had a long way to go before it could consider itself a serious contender to great power status.⁸⁶ We will initially highlight certain statements and policy directives on the part of Nehru and the Indian leadership which validate the opinion of those who claim that India saw itself as a great power. For, such statements are abundant in the utterances of its prominent leaders and have, along with its great power behavior, played an important role in creating the illusion that India was pursuing great power status. Thereafter, it will be argued that such statements need to be viewed within their context and that they are not indicative of the pursuit of great power status by India. Crucially, it will be shown that more than anyone else, Nehru was very aware of the fact that military capabilities still constituted the basic foundation of the great powers and that lacking such capabilities, India could at best seek an “influential” role in international relations, which is different from seeking great power status.

India’s attitude towards the Security Council and its oft expressed desire to be a part of it has been cited as evidence of its fervent great power self-identity. India’s fixation with the Security Council and the desire to secure for itself a prominent role therein is revealed by a

⁸⁶ Nehru’s habit of thinking aloud during public talks and lectures sometimes confused the listener. As Willard Range writes, “With both the written and spoken word, he [Nehru] has had tendencies to be so verbose and so vague that it is often difficult to cut through the flood of words and ambiguities to get at his meaning. What he seems to enjoy most in the way of expression is sheer intellectual rambling. He appears to have an aversion to speaking or writing systematically.” Willard Range, *Jawaharlal Nehru’s World View: A Theory of International Relations* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1961), viii.

resolution of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress (INC) (“San Francisco Conference and Indian Representation”) in July 1945 where it stated that

...the committee have noted that the delegates from India to the San Francisco Conference represented the alien government and in no way the people of this country...the fact of dependence on foreign authority has resulted in giving her an anomalous and degrading position in an era of sovereign states and deprived her of a permanent seat in the Security Council of the new organization which is her rightful due. Both for national and international reasons, India must attain the status of an independent and sovereign state having a place in the highest councils of the nations, and in a position to contribute to the maintenance of peace, security and freedom.⁸⁷

A note written by Nehru in 1946 observed that, “whether we succeed in getting into the Security Council or not, I think we should take up this attitude at the beginning and throughout that India is the centre of security in Asia and that, therefore, India must have a central place in any council considering these matters,” has been cited as clearly revealing its interest in the great power body.⁸⁸ Why would India be convinced of its rightful place in the apex body if it did not consider itself deserving of great power status? Such type of posturing leads Ashok Kapur to believe that, “Under Nehru...the management style was to convey a sense of Indian entitlement of great power status...”⁸⁹

Other Indian leaders also seemed to harbor a great power self-image. Aruna Asaf Ali, the deputy leader of the ruling party, envisaged an independent India as functioning as the

⁸⁷ Quoted in All India Congress Committee, *The Background of India's Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: Navin Press, 1952), 86-87.

⁸⁸ Nayar and Paul, *India in the World Order*, 133.

⁸⁹ Kapur, *India: From Regional to World Power*, 198.

“policeman and the arsenal of the East.”⁹⁰ In fact, the tendency to view the country as an arsenal goes back to 1919 when the orthodox nationalist Hindu leader, B.G. Tilak, saw India as a “power steward’ of the League of Nations, responsible for maintaining the peace of the world and the stability of the British Empire.⁹¹ Similarly in 1928, the INC adopted a motion for the creation of a Pan Asian Federation in which India should be the leader of a renascent Asia. The country was envisioned as the “mistress of the Indian seas, leader of an Asiatic Zollverein, upholder of the right of the colored races throughout the world.”⁹²

The belief that India was no ordinary state and that it had an important role to play in international relations arose from the unique form of anti-colonial struggle carried out by India. This struggle, ably led by M.K. Gandhi and Nehru, had certainly captured the imagination of many people, Indians and non-Indians, during the mid 20th century. The effective use of non-violence as a weapon of the weak against British colonialism had imbued the Indian leadership with a sense of pride. After gaining independence in 1947, there was an intense desire to project this “force” on the international realm, which was seen to be beset by amoral *Realpolitik*. In fact, India’s anti-colonial struggle had been a source of inspiration for many African and Asian states. It has been noted that 1947, the year of India’s independence, was hailed as the “capital event” in the history of post-war Asia even

⁹⁰ He made this statement in early 1946, a year before the country’s independence. Kavic, *India’s Quest for Security*, 26.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁹² Werner Levi, *Free India in Asia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1952), 33.

though the Philippines had attained independence a year earlier.⁹³ As Sankaran Krishna observes, the anti-colonial struggle contributed to the idea that the new India was a vastly different entity in international relations and that others could benefit by adopting an ethical approach in their foreign policy.⁹⁴ Hence, India emerged on the scene with a tremendous amount of “soft power.” This was an important element in India’s self-identity as a unique member of the international society.

India’s “civilizational identity” and a sense of destiny were also ingredients which played a role in its self-identity in the post independence era.⁹⁵ This is abundantly evident in Nehru’s *The Discovery of India*.⁹⁶ The understanding was that India had been an influential player in the international society in the middle ages. India’s nationalist leaders believed that with the departure of the British from India’s shores in 1947, the country would regain its past splendor. To that extent, India’s past was its future; its past glory, its destiny.

It can also be surmised that given the indispensability of India to the British Empire and Britain’s great power status, many thought that once India became independent, it would play the role that was played by Britain in the wider region. The genesis of the “Arsenal of the East” thesis may be traced to India’s contribution to the British Empire. In the late 19th

⁹³ Thien, *India and South East Asia 1947-1960*, 16.

⁹⁴ Sankaran Krishna, “Inscribing the Nation: Nehru and the Politics of Identity in India,” in *The Global Economy as Political Space*, eds. Stephen J. Rosow, Naeem Inayatullah, and Mark Rupert (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994), 197.

⁹⁵ See Muppidi, “Postcoloniality and the Production of International Insecurity.”

⁹⁶ Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (New York: The John Day Company, 1946).

century, the Indian Army was given the responsibility of protecting Imperial Britain's vital interests throughout the world, but especially in the region covering North Africa to East Asia. The Indian Army was instrumental in putting down the Mahdi uprisings of 1885-86 and 1889 in Sudan, and also the Boxer Rebellion of 1899-1900 in China. Indian troops saw action in Britain's intervention in Egypt in 1882 and also in the Afghan Wars of the late 1870s and early 1880s. Nearer home, the British Indian Army was used in the final conquest of Burma in the late 19th century and in establishing British influence in Tibet in 1902-03.⁹⁷ Indian soldiers also made their mark in the World Wars. The historian Sugata Bose points out that in the First World War, nearly 60,000 Indian soldiers died fighting for their British colonizers in Mesopotamia (modern day Iraq) and France.⁹⁸ In fact, so vital was the British Indian Army in promoting British interests world-wide, that it has been referred to as the "international fire brigade."⁹⁹

So profitable was the political and economic control over India that Lord George Nathaniel Curzon, who became the Viceroy of India in 1899, stated that, "without India the British Empire could not exist." "The possession of India," he wrote, "is the inalienable badge of sovereignty in the eastern hemisphere."¹⁰⁰ In 1901, in a memorandum on the "Military Needs of the Empire in a War with France and Russia," the British Military Intelligence

⁹⁷ Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 124-25.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 122-23.

⁹⁹ Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture and Political Economy*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 79.

¹⁰⁰ Bose, *A Hundred Horizons*, 58.

noted that, "...the loss of India by conquest would be a death blow to our prosperity, prestige and power...next in importance, then, and second only to the security of the United Kingdom itself, concerns the question of the defense of India."¹⁰¹ British adversaries noted this aspect of the relationship between the colony and its master when in 1908, the German Kaiser wrote to the Tsar that, "...the loss of India is the death stroke to Great Britain."¹⁰²

All four ideational factors – India's unique anti-colonial struggle, its civilizational identity, its sense of destiny, and its historical role within the British Empire – played a role in the development of a sense of entitlement in international affairs. However, the crucial question is – did Nehru conceive of India as a great power? As has been pointed out in the initial section of this chapter, great powers are intricately linked to warfare and military capabilities. Did Nehru share this view? Or did he disregard military power and consider the ideational aspect sufficient for India to make a bid for great power status?

Nehru's public utterances make it clear that he did equate material capabilities with the strength of a country. He clearly argued that the real strength of a country lay in its industrial power, which implied the capacity to make weapons.¹⁰³ At a speech in New Delhi in April 1953, he expanded on this theme when he stated that, "We do not have large armies which can confront the big powers, though our armed forces are very good. But there is no comparison between our army and air force and those of the United States and the Soviet

¹⁰¹ Sneha Mahajan, *British Foreign Policy 1874-1914: The Role of India* (London: Routledge, 2002), vii-viii.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁰³ *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches*, vol. 3, March 1953 – August 1957 (New Delhi: The Publications Division, 1958), 41.

Union. As against fifty or hundred planes, they have ten thousand.”¹⁰⁴ Even when he did use the term “great power” in connection with India, he was careful to point out that he used the term in a different sense.¹⁰⁵ Durga Das, a prominent Indian journalist who had close access to Nehru and the author of *India: From Curzon to Nehru and After*, came to the same conclusion after extensive interaction with Nehru and his officials.¹⁰⁶

The fact that Nehru was not overly enamored with great power status is evident from the fact that India refused to pursue informal offers in the mid 1950s that it replace China as a Permanent Member of the Security Council. In reply to the Soviet Premiere Bulganin’s query as to what India made of the US proposal to replace China as Permanent Member, Nehru stated that

Perhaps Bulganin knows that some people in the USA have suggested that India should replace China in the Security Council. This is to create trouble between us and China. We are, of course, wholly opposed to it. Further, we are opposed to pushing ourselves forward to occupy certain positions because that may itself create difficulties and India might itself become a subject of controversy. If India is to be admitted to the Security Council it raises the question of the revision of the Charter of the UN.¹⁰⁷

Shashi Tharoor, a career UN diplomat and a former Under Secretary General at the UN (2001-07), writes that Indian diplomats who have been privy to secret files “swear” that

¹⁰⁴ Nehru’ speech in New Delhi, April 13, 1953. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 22

¹⁰⁵ For instance, he pointed out that (as regards India being a great power), “...In saying so, I was not thinking in terms of what were called ‘great powers’, nor had I any intention of comparing India with the great nations of Europe or elsewhere.” Nehru at a press conference in Calcutta, October 15, 1954. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 27, 3.

¹⁰⁶ Durga Das, *India: From Curzon to Nehru and After* (London: Collins, 1969), 321.

¹⁰⁷ Nehru’s talks with N.A. Bulganin, June 1955. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 29, 231.

Nehru had declined a US offer to replace China at the Security Council.¹⁰⁸ This assertion is given further credence by Trygve Lie, the first Secretary General of the UN. In his book, *In the Cause of Peace: Seven Years with the United Nations* (1954), he opines that India's candidacy for the post should be "seriously considered," even though he questioned whether increasing the number of Permanent Members from five to six would be a practical step.¹⁰⁹ It needs to be emphasized that the offer to assume the Permanent Member's seat at the Security Council was informal. However, the fact that Nehru simply did not pursue this matter or enter into any sort of discussion on the matter reveals his lack of interest on the subject. If India did have a self-image as a great power and was determined to attain it, Nehru would not have turned down such a proposal but would have at least kept the issue alive by furthering talks on the matter. As regards assertions by Indian leaders before independence that it was denied the right to take up the Permanent Member's seat at the Security Council, one may view such impassioned statements as tactics by the leaders to highlight the injustice of the colonial rule and rally the people to harden their stand against the British.

Judith Brown resolves the conundrum as regards India's self-image when she points out that Nehru saw India as a world power in its right, as an entity of major influence in international affairs, though not as a military power.¹¹⁰ While Nehru did try to point this out (through his assertion that India could not play a secondary role but downplaying talk of great power status), the subtlety was lost on many a leader as also scholar. As Werner Levi pointed out in

¹⁰⁸ Tharoor, *Nehru: The Invention of India*, 183.

¹⁰⁹ Trygve Lie, *In the Cause of Peace: Seven Years with the United Nations* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1954), 433.

¹¹⁰ Judith M. Brown, *Nehru: A Political Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 246.

1952, "...talk of leadership has grown more customary, though much to the annoyance and embarrassment, apparently, of some of India's responsible statesmen."¹¹¹

It would be pertinent to point out that Nehru's attempt at distinguishing between power and influence is reflected in the extant literature on International Relations theory. Some see a close connection between power and influence, where influence is viewed as emanating from power.¹¹² Political interest, according to this schema, can only be acquired abroad if a state has sufficient power. Hence, influence is dependent on power. However, others like Morgenthau do not subscribe to such a symbiotic relationship and view the two as being separate elements. Morgenthau gives us an example to illustrate this difference

The Secretary of State who advises the US President on the conduct of the US foreign policy has influence if the President follows his advice. But he has no power over the President; for he has none of the means at his disposal with which to impose his will upon that of the President. He can persuade but cannot compel. The President has power over the Secretary of State.¹¹³

It is clear that influence is of a lesser potency than power, and that it usually "comes out second best in its competition with power."¹¹⁴ While power has the ability to move others through threat or infliction of deprivations, influence is the ability to move others through promises or grants or benefits.¹¹⁵ Clearly, Nehru's ploy was to gain as much influence for India as possible. Aware of his country's material weakness, he made no bid for great power

¹¹¹ Levi, *Free India in Asia*, 31.

¹¹² Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power*, 13.

¹¹³ Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 31.

¹¹⁴ Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration*, 108.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 103.

status, for which he would have had to possess power. This fine point has been lost on many.

Hence, it can be stated that India did consider itself a prominent player in international relations. However, it is also discernable that Indian leaders, especially Nehru, did not see India as a great power and also did not want to be drawn consciously into traditional great power politics. While Nehru sought to highlight this distinction between influence and power, many failed to grasp the nuance. In an era in which worldviews were polarized, thereby encouraging many to see the world through an exclusively black or white lens, Nehru's desire to operate in the grey zone was a casualty. His utterances, as those of many Indians, regarding India playing an influential role in international affairs, did play a part in generating the conviction in many that India was pursuing great power status.

2.9 India and its Great Power Activities: 1947-62

Using Bull's list of great power activities, we will analyze India's actions and determine if they resembled those of the great powers. It may be recalled that the activities are: maintenance of the balance of power, avoiding and controlling crises among the great powers, avoiding or limiting wars, displaying unilateral preponderance, establishing spheres of influence, and taking part in concerts and condominiums.

As far as *balance of power* is concerned, it has been noted that India did play the balance of power strategy, albeit in a political and diplomatic sense.¹¹⁶ Not only did it develop very strong ties with many Asian states but it also managed to informally emerge as their leader, so much so that it was variously viewed as a “Big Brother” (in relation to Burma) or an “Elder Sister” (in relation to Laos). Nehru’s insistence on staying away from the bipolar politics of the times saw many Asian countries shunning overtures from the Western camp and following a non-aligned policy instead. India’s activism in forming an anti-Western alliance bloc led some leaders to ask Nehru to lead a “Third Bloc” of countries. Foreign ambassadors stationed in New Delhi reported back to their capitals stating that Nehru was intent on emerging as the leader of Asia and that all his actions were part of what they referred to as the “Nehru Plan.”¹¹⁷ It is striking that in spite of lacking military power and the ability to project power, Nehru convinced many states in South and South-East Asia to turn down tangible inducements from the great powers in return for entering into alliances. Hence, Nehru’s actions clearly led to the emergence of a group of states in international society which demonstrated that it had a mind of its own and that it did not simply follow the diktats of the great powers. This group could not be used in the West’s policy of containment.

While not a great power, it is noticeable that the country involved itself with many of the major crises of the times, such as the Korean War, the Indo-China war, and the Congo crisis of 1960. Given that middle powers have routinely associated themselves with such activities,

¹¹⁶ Nayar and Paul, *India in the World Order*, 130, 148-49.

¹¹⁷ K.P.S. Menon, *Memories and Musings* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1979), 164.

one cannot view India's conflict resolution activities as constituting great power behavior. Since India's involvement in Korea, Indo-China, and Congo has already been examined in the section dealing with India's middle power behavior, we shall not examine them here.

India did display unilateral preponderance behavior in relation to its immediate northern neighbors like Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim. A notable aspect was its penchant to enter into unequal treaties with the Himalayan states, which undermined their sovereignty and at times, territorial integrity. Through these treaties, India placed its civil servants in positions of power. The Prime Minister of Sikkim and the Secretary to the King of Nepal were Indian civil servants deputed by the Government of India. It also deployed armed personnel to maintain security in countries like Nepal causing public demonstration against their presence. So unequal was the relationship between India and Sikkim that the latter was officially designated as India's "protectorate." India left no stone unturned to regulate each of the above mentioned state's foreign and security policies. While this will be examined in detail in Chapter 5, suffice it here to observe that India's relation with these states demonstrated marked traits of "hegemony" and "primacy."

India made it clear that the Himalayan states were its "sphere of influence" and communicated this message in clear terms to the leaders and diplomats of all the great powers – the US, USSR, Great Britain, and Communist China. So intent was India on maintaining these areas as its "sphere of influence" that the great powers were not allowed to establish embassies in the capitals of the Himalayan states. India insisted that their ambassadors based in New Delhi be accredited to Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim. While India

did not use the term “sphere of influence” in relation to the South-East Asian states, it did designate them as “areas of peace.” Given India’s considerable influence in relation to those states, great powers found it difficult to enlist them for their Cold War activities. It has been claimed that the “area of peace” formula employed by India was nothing short of a “sphere of influence” policy.

In spite of not being part of a great power concert or condominium, Nehru was seen as an important Asian leader who was consulted by leaders of the great powers. So influential was he that the US Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, considered India to have had a virtual veto over British policies in Asia.¹¹⁸ However, it was not part of any institutionalized great power body and to that end, it cannot be considered to have been a part of any great power concert or condominium.

Table 2.7: India’s behavior in comparison to great power behavior

No.	Great Power Behavior	Fulfilled by India?

◆ India’s policies did impinge on the balance of power strategy of the US in South and South-East Asia. However, Nehru’s policies in countering US policies had a very limited material dimension.

After having surveyed the literature on India’s foreign policy during Nehru’s years, two things stand out. The first noticeable aspect is that the assertion by certain observers to argue

¹¹⁸ Kevin Ruane, “SEATO, MEDO, and the Baghdad Pact: Anthony Eden, British Foreign Policy and the Collective Defense of South East Asia and the Middle East, 1952-1955,” *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 16, no. 1 (March 2005), 178.

that India was pursuing great power status is not wholly misplaced. Not only did the country demonstrate unmistakable great power behavior, it also possessed a few attributes of the great powers such as a large army and natural resources. On “combining” the behavioral and internal attributes, one may be tempted to think that India was actively pursuing great power status.

The second point is that a very careful study reveals that India’s preponderance on certain counts is misleading. While the large army would have been adequate for the defense of the land, it was not suited for power projection, an important quality of a great power. More importantly, Nehru did not want to claim great power status for India since he clearly recognized the great challenges which his country faced domestically. Absent great power motivation, India’s behavior cannot be interpreted through the prism of great power politics, as many revisionists try to do. It becomes clear that an “inside-out” explanation cannot explain India’s foreign policy between 1947 and 1962.

These observations lead us to ask the following question: if India’s great power behavior was not motivated by the desire to pursue great power status, what was it borne of? What explains India’s deviant behavior, understood as the phenomenon where India demonstrated great power behavior while possessing middle power capabilities? The next chapter will explain the concept of deviant state behavior and then lay out the theoretical framework that will explain why India demonstrated such behavior. It will argue that an “outside-in” approach, which looks at the developments in the international realm, can provide an explanation of India’s foreign policy during the Nehru years.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework

3.1 Overview

The previous chapter empirically demonstrates that there was a marked disjuncture between India's capabilities and its behavior. It shows that between 1947 and 1962, Indian foreign policy was exhibiting what we refer to as deviant state behavior. However, for this dissertation to make a scholarly contribution, it is not sufficient to simply highlight such behavior. It is necessary to conceptualize and theoretically account for it. Hence, while the initial part of this chapter will explicate the concept of deviant state behavior, the subsequent sections will lay out the theoretical approach which will allow us to understand the reason why India behaved in such an unusual manner.

3.2 The Concept of Deviant State Behavior

The conceptualization of "deviant state behavior" as a way of analyzing the relationship between the capabilities of a state and its behavior is a novel one in International Relations.¹

¹ This does not mean that the term does not appear in the existing scholarship. Miles Kahler uses the term to refer to states such as Germany and Japan, whose foreign policies were marked by aggressive territorial expansionism and which led to the outbreak of the Second World War. He, however, does not expand on the term, other than observing that states displaying deviant behavior are "rogue" states. On the other hand, Sonia Cardenas uses the term to refer to those states whose behavior displays a lack of respect for international law. Miles Kahler, "Global Governance Redefined," in *Challenges of*

This section will outline the manner in which this dissertation has arrived at such a formulation of state behavior and explain how this concept helps us better understand the dynamics of state behavior.

The extant literature in International Relations reveals that there exists a directly proportional relationship between the capabilities of a state and its behavior. The increase in the capabilities of a state usually causes a change in its intentions, leading to its behavior expanding in its scope and displaying a greater degree of engagement with the wider world.² It is because of this understanding that rising powers attract so much attention. Since they have witnessed a definite increase in their capabilities, observers know that they will change their behavior. The crucial question often posed is: how will this change in behavior impinge on the status quo?³

In his engaging book, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role*, Fareed Zakaria engages with this relationship between capabilities and behavior, and focuses specifically on states with preponderant capabilities. He points out that states which have

Globalization: Immigration, Social Welfare, Global Governance, ed. Andrew C. Sobel (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), 180; Sonia Cardenas, "Norm Collision: Explaining the Effects of International Human Rights Pressure on State Behavior," *International Studies Review* 6, no. 2 (June 2004), 220.

² David M. Edelstein, "Managing Uncertainty: Beliefs about Intentions and the Rise of Great Powers," *Security Studies* 12, no. 1 (Autumn 2002); Benjamin O. Fordham, "Who wants to be a Major Power? Explaining the Expansion of Foreign Policy Ambition," *Journal of Peace Research* 48, no. 5 (September 2011).

³ See *inter alia* Dale C. Copeland, *The Origins of Major War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); David C. Kang, *China Rising: Peace, Power, and Order in East Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); and G. John Ikenberry, "The Rise of China and the Future of the West: Can the Liberal System Survive?" *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 1 (January/February 2008).

attained preponderant capabilities soon redefine their interest abroad, which refers to the fact that they invariably involve themselves with politics well beyond their borders, and seek international influence.⁴ Turning to history, he argues that prior to a marked increase in its capabilities, a “second rank power” such as Prussia demonstrated limited political interest and engagement abroad; however, upon witnessing a significant rise in its capabilities in the 1850s, it soon redefined its political interest abroad, and in the process, demonstrated behavior befitting first rank powers or the great powers. History reveals that such a change in state behavior in relation to enhanced capabilities is witnessed on a regular basis: Netherlands in the 16th century, Sweden in the 17th century, Great Britain in the 18th century, and Japan in the 19th century.⁵ When states with preponderant capabilities fail to redefine their political interests abroad, and as a result fail to demonstrate a marked change in their behavior, they are said to suffer from the “Dutch Disease.” Zakaria argues that in the second half of the 19th century, the US suffered from the Dutch disease: in spite of being a powerful industrial state, and being one of the richest nations in the world, it simply did not behave like a great power. To that end, its behavior did not change in proportion to the change in its capabilities; put differently, there was a clear asymmetry between its capabilities and its behavior.

On the basis of Zakaria’s study, which highlights that at times there is a disjuncture between a state’s capabilities and its behavior, it is apparent that scholars are aware of the so-called “Dutch Disease.” However, the phenomenon where a state’s behavior expands in its scope

⁴ Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power*, 3.

⁵ *Ibid.* 4.

and starts showing a much greater engagement with the wider world in spite of the fact that its capabilities have not increased is rarely witnessed in international relations. We hardly come across a case of a Dutch disease in reverse, where the behavior of a state far exceeds its capabilities.⁶ This dissertation identifies such a phenomenon through its analysis of Indian foreign policy between 1947 and 1962 and terms it as a case of deviant state behavior. The term “deviant” refers to “a person or thing which deviates from the normal.”⁷ The term should not be interpreted through a normative lens; this dissertation does not argue that such behavior is unethical or asocial. Instead, it argues that deviancy highlights the fact that there exists an asymmetry between state capabilities and behavior, and that such behavior deviates from the usual trend in international relations where the behavior of a state is proportionate to its capabilities.

The concept of deviant state behavior differs from existing concepts such as Status Inconsistency and Revisionism, which also focus on state behavior that is unusual and given to generate curiosity amongst observers of foreign policy. Status inconsistency refers to the phenomenon where a state is dissatisfied due to the fact that it is not attributed the status

⁶ Here, we are not referring to cases of states that decide to enter into a war with a much stronger state in spite of possessing limited capabilities. For instance, the Falklands War between Great Britain and Argentina was an unequal war. We consciously exclude unequal wars from our formulation as it is a narrow domain of inquiry and also as history is no stranger to weaker states taking on stronger states in wars. As a result, we have theories that can explain such occurrences (such as “Diversionary War” theory and the “Preventive War” theory). This dissertation examines a much broader set of state behavior: bilateral ties, multilateral ties, participation in decision-making at the highest levels, and the taking on of leadership roles by states that lack adequate capabilities.

⁷ Barber, ed., *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, 384.

which its capabilities dictate it deserves. For instance, a state which possesses great power capabilities and is not recognized as a great power by the other states in the international society is said to suffer from status inconsistency. This generates dissatisfaction in the state in question and can lead to the outbreak of war.⁸ Revisionism, on the other hand, refers to the conviction of a state that the existing international system is inimical to its national interest. Usually, a state demonstrates revisionist tendencies when its capabilities expand and it considers the existing system as incapable of meeting its new interests and ambitions. As a result, it adopts a foreign policy that seeks to change or overhaul the system.⁹ Again, such a policy can lead to the outbreak of wars.¹⁰ The above accounts point at a basic difference between deviant state behavior on the one hand and status inconsistency and revisionism on the other. While the former concept points at a clear disjuncture between the capabilities of a state and its behavior, the latter concepts do not.

Having identified the concept of deviant state behavior, we shall now focus on the operational aspects of the concept – namely, how can one identify deviant state behavior? Three salient aspects can be pointed out in this regard. First, we have already argued in the previous chapter that a particular category of state, such as a middle power or a great power,

⁸ Manus I. Midlarsky, *On War: Political Violence in the International System* (New York: The Free Press, 1975); Thomas S. Volgy and Stacey Mayhall, "Status Inconsistency and International War: Exploring the Effects of Systemic Change," *International Studies Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (March 1995); and Michael David Wallace, *War and Rank among Nations* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1973).

⁹ See Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*; Randall L. Schweller, *Deadly Imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler's Strategy of World Conquest* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

¹⁰ Jason W. Davidson, "The Roots of Revisionism: Fascist Italy, 1922-39," *Security Studies* 11, no. 4 (Summer 2002)

will demonstrate a specific type of behavior. Such behavior can be identified with the help of a set of behavioral indicators. For instance, great power behavior is marked by balancing against other great powers and the creation of spheres of influence. For a state to demonstrate deviant behavior, it must replicate at least half the indicators of the behavior of another category of states, while not possessing the capabilities of that category of states. For instance, India, a middle power, demonstrated deviant behavior as it mirrored the behavior of the great powers on at least half the specified set of behavioral indicators. The stress on the need to replicate at least half the indicators is crucial for us to bridge the theoretical and the “real” world of international relations. For analytical purposes, we often develop schemas and guidelines to better understand international affairs. However, in the “real” world, state practice does not strictly follow such schematizations and we might find a middle power doing something that great powers usually do, such as displaying preponderance in relation to its neighbors. Similarly, it is very possible that a small power does something that only middle powers usually do. As such occurrences might be expected from all categories of states to some extent, it is necessary for us to set a minimum threshold for a state to be regarded as displaying deviant behavior. Without such a threshold, there will be no limit to claims of states behaving in a deviant manner.

Second, timeline is another crucial factor in identifying deviant state behavior. It is possible that a state may demonstrate the behavior of another category of states, while not possessing the capabilities of that category of states, for a brief period. For instance, a small power that assumes a non-Permanent seat at the UN Security Council may become active in peace-

keeping, conflict resolution, and mediation activities, and in the process demonstrate typical middle power behavior. However, such activism will be time bound, and the given state's behavior will revert back to a more inward looking orientation once the term expires. In order to rule out the identification of such temporary occurrences as deviant behavior, it should be stipulated that the state demonstrate deviant behavior for a considerable period of time for the phenomenon to be identified as constituting deviant state behavior. Given the complexity of international relations, it is difficult to operationalize "considerable period of time" in the abstract. The country in question, its position relative to other countries, and the overall milieu need to be taken into consideration in order exercise judgment on whether sufficient time has lapsed for the behavior to be identified as being deviant.

The final indicator of deviant state behavior is the reaction of the other states. Given that states are social actors that observe and interact with others, when the behavior of a particular state appears to be out of the ordinary, it draws the attention of the other states. Hence, in the case of India between 1947 and 1962, it was observed by many, and on quite a few occasions, that its policies demonstrated a marked sense of entitlement to great power status. However, for states to make such an observation, the previous two conditions have to be met: the state in question has to demonstrate the behavior of another category of states on at least half the behavioral indicators and it has to have done so for a considerable period of time. Only then will other states consider the behavior to be deviant. Given the experience that states gain in dealing with each other over time, they are very unlikely to take note of another state's deviant behavior if it is fleeting in nature and narrow in scope.

Having gained a comprehensive understanding of the concept of deviant state behavior, we will now seek to account for it through the English School framework. This will be done in the following sections.

3.3 The Case for the English School Approach

India's great power behavior was not the outcome of unrealistic appraisals of the country's material capabilities on the part of its leaders. Nor was it occasioned by the existence of a great power self-image that India harbored on account of its understanding of its own history. The prime mover of India's deviant behavior – the phenomenon where the country demonstrated great power behavior while possessing middle power capabilities - cannot be attributed to factors inhering within the country. Instead, it was developments among the great powers and the fear that it generated in India which spurred the latter to undertake policies that led to its deviant behavior, and which gave rise to the illusion among observers of Indian foreign policy that the country was pursuing great power status. Hence, contrary to the opinion that an “inside-out” explanation can account for India's deviant behavior, this dissertation argues that in fact an “outside-in” approach can help us understand the country's deviant behavior.

The prevalence of significant tension between the great powers and the resultant precarious state of order in Asia disconcerted Nehru a great deal. Given the saber-rattling among the US on the one hand, and the USSR and Communist China on the other hand, and their threats of using nuclear weapons against each other, Nehru was convinced that unless drastic

measures were taken, Asia would be engulfed in a cataclysmic nuclear war that would inevitably affect India. Absent viable signs of great power rapprochement, the only means of ensuring India's safety was to deny the great powers a foothold in the region and keep instability at bay. Nehru was of the opinion that a war in one part of Asia was bound to spread all over the continent. Compelled to act in light of the gravity of the situation, yet lacking the capabilities to force the great powers to change course, India adopted an obstructionist approach consisting of two broad strategies. First, it used coercive policies in relation to the Himalayan states and entered into unequal treaties with them with the purpose of controlling their foreign and security policies, and denying the great powers a foothold in the immediate neighborhood. Second, it exploited nationalist sentiments, memories of colonialism across Asia, and its soft power, to forge a consensus against intervention by the great powers in the South and South-East Asian region. Collectively, these strategies limited great power activities around India and the wider region. India made it clear that these regions were its sole "sphere of influence." By establishing a *cordon sanitaire* and getting countries as far as Cambodia and Laos to align their policies with India's, and also establishing its status as a "Big Brother" in the region, it led many to believe that India was playing a subtle balance of power game and thereby pursuing great power status in Asia. Such a view is patently erroneous. While outwardly India did seem to have been pursuing a balance of power strategy (as pointed out in the previous chapter), it lacked the essential motive of actually wanting to balance the capabilities of the great powers.¹¹ By neither

¹¹ One does realize that a balance of power strategy can be adopted by a non-great power also, especially in the regional context. However, as revisionist scholars aver that India's balance of power strategy is

building up a strong military nor entering into military alliances with other Asian states, India's behavior therefore cannot be seen as constituting a balancing mechanism. Instead, India was motivated by the desire to prevent great power intervention in its neighborhood and keeping Cold War politics away from the region. The intrusion of great power rivalry in Korea in 1950 had clearly demonstrated that besides being the architects of order, the great powers could also severely imperil order. To that end, by keeping the great powers and their rivalries away from the region, India sought to uphold order in the region.

Based on this argument, the English School is best qualified to theoretically account for India's foreign policy between 1947 and 1962. There are two reasons that justify this claim. First, as Nehru's foreign policy was concerned with upholding order in the society of states,¹² this dissertation needs to adopt a theoretical approach which fulfils the following criteria: (a) it must examine the concept of order in depth so that it can inform us what it is that causes states (like India) to take order in international relations so seriously; and (b) it should explain why non-great powers (such as India) have been so concerned with adopting a proactive policy to uphold order in the region. In other words, what do non-great powers have to do with international order other than simply being the consumers of its benefits?

An examination of the various theories and approaches in International Relations reveals that many of them do not pay sufficient attention to the concept of order and that it is treated simply as the residue of great power politics. While the term is invoked regularly,

evidence of its pursuit of great power status, this dissertation places a high value on the linkage between India's balance of power behavior and its association with great power status.

¹² This will be established in detail in the next chapter.

there is very little attempt at theorizing it. Some of the theories that do concern themselves with international order tend to focus only on the great powers. Order creation is viewed through the lens of inter-state competition where a great power – usually the dominant or victorious one – is believed to “engineer” order so as to stave off challenges to its authority by institutionalizing its dominance.¹³ One finds no mention of the non-great powers on the issue. As a result, we are left wondering if the non-great powers see international order as nothing but an imposition from above or if they in fact desire its creation and maintenance? If it is the latter, then what sort of a stake do they have in order? It is here that the English School proves to be helpful since it argues that international order is not just the creation of the great powers but of the society of states which includes *all* the member states. If there is no international society, there will be no international order. By invoking the term “society of states,” the English School establishes the link between the non-great powers and international order. This chapter and the ones following it will shed more light on the issue. It will demonstrate that non-great powers, such as India, did have a say and a stake in the creation of order, as opposed to having been mere observers. To that end, we will argue that non-great powers need to be viewed as subjects and not objects in the study of order formation in international relations.

¹³ An excellent example of such scholarship is G. John Ikenberry’s book on international order, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001). The latter part of this chapter will examine his work in greater detail.

Since Nehru was so troubled by the brittle nature of order in international relations in the post Second World War years, he undertook policies which resulted in India's deviant behavior. A large body of International Relations theory is incapable of explaining such behavior, let alone identifying order as a central element in Nehru's foreign policy. However, the English School devotes significant attention to the concept of international order and the role of the non-great powers in upholding it. Given that both for Nehru and the English School, order is a key component of international affairs, we argue that Nehru - the international statesman, and the English School - the theoretical approach, ought to enter into a dialogue with each other.

Second, there has been a growing consensus over the years that Nehru's world view was neither wholly Realist nor wholly Idealist in nature.¹⁴ Attempts to typecast him as one of the two have proven to be less than convincing, with such exercises having been akin to fitting a square peg in a round hole. Given Nehru's appreciation of the role of power and also the importance of ideas in international relations, it is now increasingly believed that Nehru occupied a middle ground in the materialist-idealist continuum. Given the *via media* orientation of the English School,¹⁵ where it acts as a bridge between the much divided materialist and ideational worlds, this dissertation argues that there exists a basic similarity between Nehru's world view and the essential tenets of the English School. This congruence is in need of further investigation.

¹⁴ Kanti Bajpai, "Nehru and Disarmament," in *Nehru Revisited*, ed. M.V. Kamath, 353; Nayar and Paul, *India in the World Order*, 116; Srinath Raghavan, *War and Peace in Modern India*, 320.

¹⁵ See Richard Little, "The English School's Contribution to the Study of International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations* 6, no. 3 (September 2000).

3.4 The English School – An Introduction

Before examining some of the pivotal concepts and ideas of the English School – especially relating to order - it will be useful to examine the history of the approach and also some of its core principles. Adherents of the approach point out that the English School represents a tradition of thought on international affairs that is as old as the Westphalian state system itself.¹⁶ Scholars working within this tradition identify themselves with the ideas of Hugo Grotius, a 17th century Dutch jurist and thinker. This has led the English School scholars being also referred to as “Grotians.”¹⁷ However, until about the middle of the 20th century, prominent scholars in this tradition such as Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight, did not view themselves as collectively constituting a distinct tradition of enquiry. It was only in the late 1950s when scholars established the British Committee on the Theory of International Politics to examine the basic tenets of international thinking that the Grotians started viewing themselves as being part of a particular tradition of thought.¹⁸ According to Tim Dunne, the first formal meeting of the British Committee, in January 1959, marks the “symbolic origins” of the English School.¹⁹ It is from this juncture that the English School can be considered to have become a “historical tradition.” The term refers to “a pre-

¹⁶ Andrew Linklater and Hidemi Suganami, *The English School of International Relations: A Contemporary Assessment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 12.

¹⁷ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 26-27. They are also referred to as “Rationalists.” This will be explained in the following pages.

¹⁸ Tim Dunne, *Inventing International Society: A History of the English School* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 1998), 6.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, xi.

constituted and self-constituted pattern of conventional practice through which ideas are conveyed within a recognizably established and specified discursive framework.” It “can entail continuity as well as innovation within a fairly well-defined realm of discourse.”²⁰

The London School of Economics has played a pivotal role in serving as a “hub” where Grotians have collaborated with each other, thereby developing and refining their views on the workings of the international society. Given the approach’s association with England and English institutions, one would think that the label “English” School would be accepted without reservations.²¹ However, this is not the case. Since some of the approach’s leading scholars were not British – Charles Manning was a South African, Hedley Bull was an Australian – a number of writers prefer to use other terms like “the classical approach,” or the “international society tradition.”²² A common thread that unites all English School scholars is their belief that the international domain is predominantly a social sphere, where states constantly seek to harmonize their policies and values by transcending their narrow parochial interests. This world view has led the English School to being referred to as the “International Society Perspective.”²³ Besides being united by their firm belief that inter-state

²⁰ Brian C. Schmidt, *The Political Discourse of Anarchy* (Albany: SUNY, 1998), 25.

²¹ Roy Jones is credited with coining this term. See Roy E. Jones, “The English School of International Relations: A Case for Closure,” *Review of International Studies* 7, no. 1 (January 1981).

²² Dunne, *Inventing International Society*, 4. Given that the term “English School” has gained widespread currency (as evidenced, for instance, by the use of the term in the *International Studies Association’s* annual meetings), this study will continue using this term, while being mindful of the lack of absolute unanimity on the issue.

²³ Suganami, “British Institutionalists, Or the English School, 20 Years On.”

relations is a social activity, English School scholars are united by some additional methodological and philosophical predispositions.²⁴

A core trait of English School scholarship is its explicit disavowal of “behavioralism” or “scientific” methodology, which involves designing game theories and models to address issues in international relations. Such a methodology is most commonly witnessed in peace research and conflict studies. According to Bull, this approach aspires “...to a theory of international relations whose propositions are based either on logical or mathematical proof, or upon strict, empirical procedures of verification.”²⁵ The problem with such an approach, according to the English School, is that obsession with the methodological aspect prevents scholars from addressing the very core issues in the discipline, which are profoundly philosophical and historical in nature. One should instead rely upon the exercise of judgment, which itself is an art that is perfected by immersing oneself in legal, historical, and philosophical treatises. According to Bull, “...general propositions must therefore derive from a scientifically imperfect process of perception or intuition.”²⁶

²⁴ Some examples of scholarship using the English School framework are, *inter alia*, Bull and Watson, ed., *The Expansion of International Society*; Ian Clark, *Legitimacy in International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of ‘Civilization’ in International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984); Jackson, *The Global Covenant*; Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and Shogo Suzuki, *Civilization and Empire: China and Japan’s Encounter with European International Society* (London: Routledge, 2009).

²⁵ Hedley Bull, “International Theory: The Case for a Classical Approach,” *World Politics* 18, no. 3 (April 1966): 362.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 361.

As a result, English School scholarship relies on sociological methods such as “ideal-type” analysis and *Verstehen*, meaning “understanding.” Given that developing a keen perception of the subject matter is called for, it is essential that one develops a good understanding of the issues involved and also their context. Only by immersing oneself fully in the subject matter and developing an ability to “feel” the issue under study can one better understand international relations. Hence, English School scholars are consistently engaging with not only the issue under study, but also the overall socio-historical context within which the issue is situated. The English School is against scholarship which uses models to examine issues across different areas and regions under a convenient deductive logic. It is felt that such an exercise does little in providing a competent explanation of events and motivations in international relations, which are profoundly influenced by local conditions and dynamics. The use of a deductive model also imparts a linear bias on the issue being studied which prevents the scholar from appreciating the fact that international relations is as much the realm of unintended consequences as it the realm of purposeful action.²⁷ The employment of *Verstehen* allows us to identify “irony over certainty” in international relations and reminds us that developments in the social world are not always wholly purposive or linear.²⁸

²⁷ As has already been pointed out, the use of a deductive logic leads revisionist scholars to infer, based on India’s great power behavior, that the country was motivated by the desire to attain such a status. Stepping away from such a covering-law approach allows one to see that a motivation other than the desire to attain great power status actually led to India’s deviant behavior.

²⁸ The term “irony over certainty” is used by Dunne in characterizing the nature of R.J. Vincent’s scholarship. Dunne, *Inventing International Society*, 162.

As regards the nature of international relations, the English School scholars view international relations as being the domain of three co-existing dynamics – Realist, Rationalist, and Revolutionist. Each of these dynamics is reflective of a particular tradition of international thinking.²⁹ Hence, the Realist dynamic is reflective of Hobbesian thought, the Rationalist dynamic is reflective of Grotian thought, and the Revolutionist dynamic is reflective of Kantian thought. While the Realist and Revolutionist dynamics have been acknowledged by scholars as constituting the essential nature of international relations for a considerable period of time, the salience of the Rationalist dynamic has not been adequately acknowledged. Grotians such as Wight and Bull argue that it is Rationalism which best captures the essence of international relations. They are careful to point out that the existence of Rationalist dynamics is not at the cost of the Realist and Revolutionist dynamics. Rather, while Rationalism may be considered as being the “default” dynamic, Realism and Revolutionism do attain significant prominence at certain junctures in history.³⁰ Given that Rationalism occupies a middle position between Realism and Revolutionism, we shall examine the two extreme dynamics before having a closer look at Rationalism.

Realism emphasizes the competitive nature of international relations, where states are seen as being the main actors. Owing to the fact that the international realm is anarchic, with there being no “government of governments,” trust is in short supply among states. This

²⁹ Martin Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions*, eds. Gabriele Wight and Brian Porter (London: Leicester University Press, 1996).

³⁰ An effective way to understand this schematization is to think of the average person and her various moods. While a person at times displays signs of exuberance or despondency, most of the time, she is situated somewhere in between these two extremes. While our basic nature reflects a mixture of despair and happiness on most occasions, at times either one of these extreme moods manifests itself forcefully.

makes states fearful of each other and causes them to adopt a zero-sum mindset in dealing with other states. As a result, the existence of states is nasty, brutish, and short, and cooperation among them is very limited. Realists believe that conflict is an integral aspect of international life and that periods of peace are merely interregnums between wars: peace ensues when states are either recovering from having fought wars, or when they are preparing for future wars. They believe that areas of agreement among states are few and far between. It is pointed out that the moral framework which guides a person's behavior as being a member of the human society does not apply in international relations. The morality of a state is based on political expediency and whatever a state does to ensure its survival is considered ethical in international relations. To that extent, Realists point at a dual moral standard, where there exists one moral standard for individuals living inside states – which is based on humanism - and another moral standard for states in the international system that is based on *Raison d'Etat*.³¹ Given the pessimistic outlook of Realists, who believe that wars are a recurring feature among states, Wight refers to them as the “blood and iron and immorality men.”³²

Revolutionism points at the co-operative nature of international relations. Unlike the Hobbesians, Kantians believe that human beings, and not states, ought to be the referent units in international relations. While states may appear to be the main actors on the world

³¹ Tim Dunne and Brian C. Schmidt, “Realism,” in *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, eds. John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 92-93.

³² Quoted in Tony Evans and Peter Wilson, “Regime Theory and the English School of International Relations: A Comparison,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 21, no. 3 (December 1992): 334.

stage, in reality, it is the transnational links which exist among human beings that potentially define the essential nature of international relations. This potentiality is constantly undermined by states, which are dominated by “ruling cliques,” and whose vested interests prevents the citizens from establishing robust relations with citizens of other states.³³ States cause people to circumscribe their moral boundaries and define themselves as citizens and not as members of humanity at large. Such compartmentalization of individual identity has dangerous portents as it prevents people in one part of the world from developing empathy towards people living in another part of the world. It is this apathy which emboldens states to carry out acts of genocide against their own citizens, as they know very well that others will not come to the rescue of the victims. Kantians believe that the highest moral endeavor of each person should be to overthrow the society of states and establish a community of mankind.³⁴ Given their penchant of rejecting the salience of the state in international relations, owing to its propensity to undermine morality, Wight refers to Kantians as the “subversion and liberation and missionary men.”³⁵

Rationalists believe that international relations is neither as conflict-ridden as Realists contend, nor as co-operative as Revolutionists claim. Rationalists, like the Realists, consider concepts such as the great powers, wars, and the balance of power as being essential to their understanding and interpretation of international relations. Like the Realists, Rationalists also agree that states are the main actors and that they exist in an anarchical environment.

³³ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 25.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 25-26.

³⁵ Quoted in Evans and Wilson, “Regime Theory and the English School of International Relations,” 334.

Rationalists, however, do not agree that the lack of a “government of governments” necessarily leads to mistrust and conflict among states. In fact, the lack of a centralized authority notwithstanding, it is believed that states - being rational actors - consider it very necessary to enter into co-operative relations with each other and avoid narrow, zero-sum thinking. One can go as far as to claim that for the Grotians, the anarchic nature of international society is a strong motivation for co-operation among states. This rational approach to the question of anarchy and co-operation has led the Grotians being labeled as “Rationalists”³⁶ and their approach as “Rationalism.” The fact that anarchy is believed to promote the societal dimension of international relations explains why Bull looks at the international domain as the “Anarchical Society.”

Although Rationalism demonstrates that it is capable of going much beyond Realism (by acknowledging and engaging with the societal aspect of international relations) in spite of sharing similar concepts with it, one would do well to remember that the approach is not transformative in nature, and thus is not really concerned with immanence.³⁷ Since scholars working within this tradition do not place a high value on examining changes in the basic anarchical nature of international society, they are seen as being status quo-ist in their disposition. They are considered to be located on the conservative side of the political

³⁶ The term “Rationalism” in the context of the English School is not the same as the term in the context of the “American political science of international relations.” Rationalism in the American context refers to the understanding that states are rational utility maximizers and are prone to making decisions on the basis of hard headed cost-benefit analysis of a particular situation. In the English School context, the term points at the ability of states to transcend narrow self-interest and view their interests and well-being on a broader basis. States are believed to have “common sense.” Linklater and Suganami, *The English School of International Relations*, 28-29.

³⁷ Little and Williams, eds., *The Anarchical Society in a Globalized World*, 23.

spectrum. Their penchant for giving pride of place to the state as the unit of analysis is seen as reifying the existing character of international relations. To that end, Rationalists clearly differ with the Revolutionists. Since Rationalists view international relations as being the domain of co-operation while having a pronounced conservative outlook, Wight labels them as the “law and order and keep your word men.”³⁸

Notwithstanding the fact that Grotians locate themselves on the conservative side of the political spectrum, there exists a debate among them on the question of how dominant the state ought to be in international relations, and whether individual rights can be allowed to trump the rights of states in certain situations. This debate is to be witnessed between two sub-sets of Grotians – the Pluralists and the Solidarists. Pluralists believe that on the basis of state practices over the ages, there is enough empirical evidence to conclude that states routinely agree with each other on certain fundamental principles, such as the upholding of sovereignty and non-interference in each other’s territories.³⁹ The efficacy and resilience of such practices has led to their formalization in the guise of international law as evidenced by the principle of non-intervention as enshrined in the UN Charter (Article 2(7)). Hence, customary state practices have led to the enactment of Positive Law, or law that has been brought about through a careful empirical study and codification of the behavior of states.

³⁸ Quoted in Evans and Wilson, “Regime Theory and the English School of International Relations,” 334.

³⁹ The term “pluralism” is derived from the understanding that international relations is marked by the existence of a plurality of independent governments. While each government has a different understanding of what the “good life” is and how domestic politics and society should be arranged, they demonstrate no such divergence as to what principles should determine relations between them. For a more detailed explication of the term “pluralism,” see Robert Jackson, “Pluralism,” in *Encyclopedia of International Relations and Global Politics*, ed. Martin Griffiths (Oxon: Routledge, 2005), 651-53.

Such areas of agreement in inter-state relations lead Pluralists to believe that there exist certain minimum objective laws among all types of states. Such laws allow for a “minimum order” in international relations. Given the anarchical nature of international society and how difficult it is to create consensus among states, Pluralists are loath to weaken this fragile order that results from the agreements of states.

Pluralists view appeals to place individuals on the same pedestal as states by according individuals with rights and duties under international law as being “subversive of international society itself.”⁴⁰ This is because there does not exist any objective notion of what exactly constitutes the rights of individuals. Given that the rights of the individual has been formulated and viewed differently in different parts of the world, the notion of universal human rights is riddled with subjectivism. Why should one allow such subjectivity to shape international relations, when we already have an objective body of rights and duties for states under international law, which provides us with order and stability? As a result, in situations where Pluralists have to decide between the rights of the individual versus the rights of the state, they invariably favor the latter. Pluralists are against the promotion of the practice of humanitarian intervention in international relations as the act of providing justice to individuals necessitates the violation of the integrity of the state within whose boundaries the individuals are located.

⁴⁰ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 83.

Bull, a key Pluralist,⁴¹ couches this debate in terms of order versus justice. He argues that owing to the need to maintain order, and the consensus among the states on this issue, “the framework of international order is inhospitable...to demands for human justice.”⁴² Not only in relation to human or individual justice but also with regard to inter-state justice, Bull argues that order should and does take precedence.⁴³ He goes on to categorically underline that order is desirable and that it is prior to other goals. With reference to Ali Mazrui, who argues that African and Asian states are willing to promote justice at the cost of international order, Bull claims that this is not true and that non-Western states also value order. We shall argue in the next chapter that with specific reference to India, Bull is correct, and notwithstanding Nehru’s image as an Idealist, he clearly valued order and sought to uphold it, even at the cost of justice.⁴⁴

Solidarists are those Grotians who take a much greater interest in the rights of the individual.

While they view states as the most important units in the international society, Solidarists

⁴¹ It has been claimed that in his later works, Bull became more sympathetic towards human justice and that before his death, his commitment towards Pluralism had weakened slightly. See Dunne, *Inventing International Society*, 136. Other prominent Pluralists are Robert Jackson and the early R. J. Vincent.

⁴² Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 88.

⁴³ Bull conceptualizes justice in three ways: human justice, international justice, and cosmopolitan justice. See *ibid*, 78-86.

⁴⁴ It is interesting to note that Wight regarded Nehru as a “soft Revolutionist.” It is indeed ironic that while this dissertation argues that Nehru and the English School have a lot in common in terms of their international thinking, Wight, one of the pivotal figures of the English School, relegated Nehru to the Revolutionist category. As Chapter 1 argues, it is only by accessing the Nehru Papers that one can truly appreciate Nehru’s Rationalist tendencies. Wight, not being a scholar of Indian foreign policy, would no doubt have formed his opinion of Nehru from conventional Indian foreign policy scholarship which suffered from a dearth of “inside knowledge.” Wight, *International Theory*, 267.

believe that in the event of gross violation of human rights within a state, other states are morally bound to intervene and uphold the rights of the victims. Even though this undermines the principle of non-intervention, Solidarists believe that action needs to be taken to safeguard the oppressed. While Pluralists lay emphasis only on Positive Law, Solidarists also pay a great deal of attention to Natural Law. This means that they believe that Nature bestows humans all over the world with certain inalienable rights and that states cannot violate these rights. In cases of gross violation of human rights, Natural Law should take precedence over Positive Law, with the implication that the individual's rights attain greater salience. Hence, as per the Solidarists, human beings are not objects, but rather the subjects of international law.⁴⁵ Solidarists are much more enthusiastic about humanitarian intervention as compared to the Pluralists. Among the English School scholars who have demonstrated their Solidarist leanings are Nicholas Wheeler and Tonny Brems Knudsen. According to Knudsen, Wight too demonstrated pronounced Solidarist orientations. Knudsen supports his claim by pointing at Wight's recognition that individuals have rights and his interest in Natural Law.⁴⁶ For the purpose of this dissertation, we shall adopt a Pluralists framework, given that it accords closely with Nehru's understanding of international relations - something that will be made manifest in the next chapter.

⁴⁵ Nicholas Wheeler, "Pluralist or Solidarist Conceptions of International Society: Bull and Vincent on Humanitarian Intervention," *Millennium Journal of International Studies* 21, no. 3 (1992): 468

⁴⁶ Tonny Brems Knudsen, "International Society and International Solidarity: Recapturing the Solidarist Origins of the English School" (paper presented at the workshop *International Relations in Europe: Concepts, Schools and Institutions*, April 14-19, Copenhagen). Available at <http://www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr/events/jointsessions/paperarchive/copenhagen/ws11/knudsen.PDF>

Having gained an appreciation of the basic orientation of the international society perspective, the dissertation shall now examine why it is that states are believed to constitute a society, and how this is related to international order – something which served as stimulus to Nehru's policies.

3.5 The Concept of International Society

Rationalists believe that states in the international realm collectively constitute a society. In making such a claim, they underline the need to distinguish a society of states (international society) from a system of states (international system). According to Bull, a system of states is formed when states are in regular contact with each other, and where the policies of a state are determined by its expectation of how others will react to these initiatives. Hence, state behavior is strictly a function of the logic of consequences, bereft of non-strategic impulses such as recognition and legitimacy.⁴⁷ The contact that the states have with each other may be direct (for instance, as immediate neighbors) or indirect (through a third party).⁴⁸ A society of states, on the other hand, is formed when states are conscious of common interests and values, and consider themselves bound to each other by a common bond of rules and

⁴⁷ The term "logic of consequences" refers to the belief that a state will take decisions based on how others will react to its actions, and whether their reactions will further or hamper its national interest. It is the belief that states' decisions are not based on morality. Furthermore, any agreement among states is the result of bargaining and negotiations which are intended to fulfill the needs and objectives of the states in question. For a more detailed explanation, see James G. March and Johan P. Olson, "The Institutional Dynamics of International Political Orders," *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (Autumn 1998).

⁴⁸ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 10.

expectations. They also collectively contribute to the working of common institutions. Under this formulation, it is presupposed that an international system predates an international society, for only an awareness of each others' existence and a basic level of interaction enables states to make common cause with reference to institutions and values.⁴⁹ The society that states form is a "second order society," which is different from a society formed by human beings as primary members. Hence, the international society may be seen as a "society of societies."

It needs to be noted that it is not just the English School that believes in the existence of the society of states. Constructivists also believe in its existence. However, there exist fundamental differences in the way these two approaches conceptualize and understand international society. Three salient differences may be pointed out. First, for the Rationalists, concepts such as wars, the balance of power, and the great powers are integral for the existence of the society of states. To that extent, the Rationalist case for international society is built on the "classic" features and concepts of International Relations. Constructivists do not depend on such concepts to make the case that international society exists; they believe that international society is constituted by the ethical behavior of all types of actors – states, individuals, and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Hence, Constructivists do not depend on the "classic" aspects of international relations to make their case for the existence of the society of states. Second, for the Rationalists, the international society does not have an "emancipatory" connotation, and in no ways is it seen as a crucible for expected changes. As Jackson observes, "The society of states has no greater goal or final destination: it is not

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

going anywhere.”⁵⁰ In stark contrast to such a view, Constructivists believe that the existence of the society of states is reflective of, and the source of, expected changes in international relations. In other words, the society of states is a site from where progress can be made - it is a site from where moral deficits in international relations can be addressed. Third, Rationalists believe that states are the only salient actors in international relations and that it is subversive to create space in international relations for non-state actors such as NGOs. Constructivists do not believe in ascribing the state with so much importance and are not averse to recognizing the important part that NGOs and other transnational actors play in international relations. They do not view non-state actors as being a danger to the existence of international society.

The assertion of the Rationalists that an international society exists is supported by the actions and observations of prominent personalities in international relations. According to the noted Austro-Hungarian diplomat of the 19th century, Klemens von Metternich, isolated states exist only in the abstraction of the philosophers. In a society of states, he underlines, the states are connected to each other by common interests.⁵¹ The 19th century British diplomat, Lord Castlereagh, pointed out that as the states were closely bound to each other through common values and interests, the notion of security had to be viewed in a larger, collective sense. Given that Great Britain’s peace and stability was intimately linked with that of the rest of Europe, it had to do everything possible to promote equilibrium among the

⁵⁰ Jackson, “Pluralism,” 651.

⁵¹ Henry A. Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh, and the Problems of Peace 1812-1822* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1957), 13.

different states in the continent.⁵² It was the desire to give expression to this aspect of international relations that the United Nations was formed in 1945 at San Francisco. The fact that Stephen Krasner argues that international relations is nothing but “Organized Hypocrisy” shows that even when the powerful states are capable of dictating terms to the others, they feel a need to at least pay heed to the wishes of the larger society of states and uphold the norm of sovereignty.⁵³ Absent a society, the need to keep up appearances is hardly warranted. In contemporary times, the decision of the George Bush administration to approach the Security Council of the UN for getting its stamp of approval for armed action against Iraq in 2003 is significant. The decision shows that even a state as dominant as the US and led by a President whose commitment to norms was not as strong as his predecessors felt compelled to approach the global body for legitimacy and expend invaluable diplomatic energy.⁵⁴ While the seeking of legitimacy may be viewed in instrumental terms, the fact that it is nonetheless sought shows that it is a factor in

⁵² Henry A. Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 90.

⁵³ Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).

⁵⁴ In an insightful article in *Foreign Affairs*, Robert Kagan shows how the post 9/11 unity and meeting of minds between the US and its European partners was severely strained on the question of the legitimacy of the US policy as regards Iraq. Eminent leaders of the US allies, such as German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer and French Foreign Minister Dominic de Villepin, believed that the debate on Iraq had outlined the differences in “first principles” within the Atlantic alliance. The disappointment of the allies and their questioning of US legitimacy no doubt played a key role in goading the US to approach the Security Council. Robert Kagan, “America’s Crisis of Legitimacy,” *Foreign Affairs* 82, issue 2 (March/April 2004).

international relations. As Ian Clark argues, legitimacy as a concept is meaningless in the absence of a society.⁵⁵

Through their scholarship, English School thinkers have shown how the society of states has evolved over time, and that the society which exists today is a culmination of a long historical process. In *The Expansion of International Society*, Bull and Watson demonstrate that the earliest society of states was the Christian International Society which existed till about the 14th century.⁵⁶ The society was underpinned by the general adherence to Christian values, where for instance, the signing of treaties was accompanied by religious oaths. However, authority was not fully vested in the political units as the Holy Roman Empire and the Pope exerted a considerable amount of influence over them. Hence, early societies were marked by overlapping political claims, thereby indicating that sovereignty – the foundation of the modern state system – was still in its rudimentary stages. Such a proto-society gave way to the European International Society where the political units started taking the form of modern sovereign states. By the 17th and 18th centuries, the role of Christianity declined and in its place, positive international law mediated the relations between the states. Sovereignty was seen as an important factor, as a result of which the principle of non-intervention started gaining salience. The 20th century saw the rise of World International Society, which came about when the European International Society spread to places beyond Europe, and subsumed most of Africa and Asia. Given that non-European and non-Christian states were members of the new society, the unifying element was provided by what Bull calls the

⁵⁵ Clark, *Legitimacy in International Society*, 2.

⁵⁶ *The Expansion of International Society*, eds. Bull and Watson.

“culture of modernity,” which he refers to as the culture of the dominant Western powers.⁵⁷ Hence, what started out as a society of a few states in the heartland of Europe has expanded to cover the entire world, bringing an ever larger number of countries within the folds of modern state-craft and its attendant ethos and dynamics.⁵⁸

In addition to overt statements and tacit acknowledgements of world leaders that point towards the existence of a society of states, it has been argued by Rationalists that the prevalence of order itself is indication of the existence of international society. We shall therefore discuss this concept in greater detail in the section that follows.

3.6 International Order - Alternative Explanations

According to the Rationalists, the prevalence of international order is not accidental or fortuitous. Rather, it is the expression of states’ desire and their need to provide themselves a stable foundation from which day to day affairs may be carried out. To that end, order is a contrivance – the result of a tacit agreement among states. Before proceeding further, and in

⁵⁷ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 28-52.

⁵⁸ While the more orthodox English School scholarship has tended to view the expansion of the society of states as a linear process, where tolerance has followed the march of international law and diplomacy, more recent scholars have questioned this narrative. Suzuki shows how states such as Japan, which were relatively later additions to the society of states, internalized not the “dynamics of tolerance,” but rather the “dynamics of civilization.” In order to be accepted as legitimate members of the new society, they aggressed upon their neighbors, in the belief that colonizing and aggressing upon weaker states was an essential trait of joining the privileged circle of states. Hence, revisionist English School scholars have questioned the linear bias in previous English School scholarship. See Suzuki, “Japan’s Socialization into Janus-Faced European International Society.” For a proper account of the “dynamics of tolerance” and the “dynamics of civilization,” see Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society*.

order to truly appreciate the novelty of their argument, it would be instructive to examine alternative conceptions of order and contrast them with the Rationalist schema.

Realism is a good starting point to examine the concept of order, given its status as one of the foremost approaches to understanding international relations. Given the different varieties of Realism, it is instructive to look at three different ways that Realists conceptualize order.⁵⁹ Offensive Realists such as John Mearsheimer view international order as a byproduct of the self-interested behavior of the great powers. He clearly underlines that order is not created by states that act collectively to bring about stability in their relations. Rather, its creation is wholly unintentional. For instance, the post-war order that came into existence in Europe after the ravages of the Second World War was simply the residue of the great powers' bids to establish their ascendancy on the European continent. The order in Europe was shorn of any element of purpose and was simply a condition created by the rivalry of the great powers.⁶⁰

Others within the Realist pantheon have a slightly different understanding of order and how it comes into being. Classical Realists such as Morgenthau and Henry Kissinger view the balance of power as a mechanism that is used by the great powers to maintain equilibrium, and as a corollary, promote stability in their relations. Kissinger, in particular, shows that in

⁵⁹ To gain an appreciation of the different strands within Realism, and how this variation effects Realists' understanding of International Relations, see *inter alia* Stephen G. Brooks, "Dueling Realisms," *International Organization* 51, no. 3 (Summer 1997); Jack Donnelly, *Realism and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and Brian C. Schmidt "Competing Realist Conceptions of Power," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 33, no. 4 (June 2005).

⁶⁰ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 49.

the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars, there was a realization that equilibrium had to be maintained among the great powers for the cause of peace.⁶¹ The Concert of Europe is shown to be one of the best examples of the steps taken by the great powers to maintain order. To that end, order is seen as a conscious creation, albeit only of and for the great powers. Classical Realists believe that such a purposeful exercise at order creation and maintenance came to an end in the late 19th century, when purely mechanical power politics purged inter-state relations of their ideational imperatives (namely, commitment to aristocratic ideals). Given their pessimism about common ideals in the post World War One era, it is difficult to ascertain how Classical Realists could explain the existence of order in the mid 20th century without subscribing to a much more materialist framework.

Structural Realists such as Robert Gilpin explain the prevalence of international order through the “Hegemonic Stability Theory.”⁶² According to Gilpin, order can only be brought about by a great power or hegemon who is able to impart a central direction to international political and economic affairs. In the 19th and early parts of the 20th century, it was Great Britain that provided stability to the international society through the creation of a liberal international order. Subsequently, it has been the US which has taken on the mantle of the hegemon and maintained order. Since the hegemon supplies public goods such as security which benefits all, non-great powers support the hegemon or the great power in maintaining order. It is notable that Gilpin does not tell us if the non-great powers play or have played a role in the actual deliberations as regards designing international order and whether they

⁶¹ Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, 77-79.

⁶² Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

have a say as to what it should look like. Gilpin portrays the non-great powers as simply taking advantage of the stability that is provided by the hegemon.⁶³

Charles P. Kindleberger, a political economist who also subscribes to the hegemonic stability theory, sheds further light on the role of the non-great powers. He argues that small and middle sized countries are very unlikely to contribute to the production of the public goods as they are aware that their efforts will have little impact on the probability that the good will be produced.⁶⁴ Hence, the ability to “free-ride” allows states to be consumers as opposed to being producers of public goods, and as a corollary, international order. A reading of the scholarship on hegemonic stability theory gives one the distinct impression that the role of the non-great powers is non-existent and that they are effectively relegated to the position of objects sans agency.

Turning our focus away from Realism, we see that the Neo-Liberal Institutional scholar, G. John Ikenberry, places international order at the center of his study. He sees order creation as the handiwork of the victorious power at the end of a great power war. Order is created with the help of institutions – both political (such as the Security Council) and economic (such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank). Hence, the US is viewed as being the “prime mover” in the creation of the international order after the end of the Second World War. One may therefore conclude that order is but a reflection of the distribution of power in the international society and also reflective of the ideological

⁶³ Ibid., 145.

⁶⁴ Charles P. Kindleberger, *The World in Depression* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 205.

disposition of the dominant power.⁶⁵ Since the US was a liberal state, it created a liberal order with the help of international institutions that it built. In order to sustain its ascendancy in international relations, avoid the “imperial overstretch” syndrome, and minimize enforcement costs, the victorious power decides to “lock” its power by creating institutions that in turn establish and maintain order. The promise of being able to “tame” the victorious power’s might and influence its policies leads the other great powers to join the institutions. This leads to the establishment of “political order,” which is defined as the “governing arrangements among a group of states, including its fundamental rules, principles and institutions. Political order is established when the basic organizing arrangements of the system are setup.”⁶⁶ When this arrangement is solemnized by international law, it is referred to as a “constitutional political order.”⁶⁷

The shortcoming of Ikenberry’s thesis is that order is viewed as an arrangement and not a condition. Hence, while he adroitly describes how order is brought about, he fails to give the reader a sense of what order actually is. Since he views institutions and order through the prism of cost-benefit calculation only, he misses out on the deeper aspects of international relations. For instance, intense diplomacy and bargaining marked the creation of institutions like the IMF and the Security Council. But what allows diplomacy to function? Long before formal institutions were in vogue in international relations, informal institutions such as diplomacy helped shape the landscape. How does one account for the vibrancy of

⁶⁵ Ikenberry, *After Victory*, 21.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

diplomacy? Hence, while Ikenberry certainly makes an important contribution to our understanding of institutions and order, he misses out on the deeper underlying structures.

Also, like some of the other authors mentioned previously, he sees order creation as an exercise carried out between the great powers, with little role for the non-great powers. While, as per his framework, it is understandable why the lesser great powers agree to cooperate with the victorious power in creating and maintaining institutions (so as to “tame” its power and also to be able to have a “voice” in the running of the institutions), it is not clear what the role of the non-great powers are in the creation of the institutions. While he implies that the creation of institutions, and as a corollary international order, benefits everyone, one gets the feeling that in operationalizing “everyone,” he is focused mainly on the lesser great powers. In his study on order, the conversation is between the dominant great power and the lesser great powers, with the shadow of the non-great powers lurking on the fringes. Thus, while he goes a step beyond scholars such as Gilpin by focusing not just on the dominant power, but also on the role of the lesser great powers, he does not tell us much about the non-great powers. It is of course true that he theoretically involves the non-great powers when he argues that the creation of a constitutional order allows all states to have a “voice opportunity” and play a role in taming the hegemon’s powers. However, this dissertation argues that by focusing on a narrow conception of order (formal institutions) and invoking the non-great powers at a minimal level, his overall framework forces the reader to concentrate on a very narrow domain of international relations. In comparison, the English School, by focusing on a broader understanding of order, provides us with a wider

base to examine the role of the non-great powers and their role in creating and maintaining order. The next section will address the English School's view of order.

3.7 International Order according to the English School

In contrast to the already outlined depictions of order – either as a residual aspect of great power relations or a formal institutional arrangement among the great powers – Rationalists view order as a far more fundamental yet pervasive condition that is implicated by, and implicates, all the states, and not just the great powers. According to Bull, international order is “a pattern of activity that sustains the elementary or primary goals of the society of states, or international society.”⁶⁸ The primary goals refer to the preservation of the international society, the maintenance of the external sovereignty of the individual states, the mutual recognition of sovereignty among states, the establishment of peace (interpreted as the absence of wars and the limitation of violence) and the honoring of pledges through the principle of *pacta sunt servanda*.⁶⁹ It can be discerned that the primary goals help in imparting stability and providing a basic framework to the relations between states. They enable states to build a foundation from which other goals may be achieved. The absence of a stable foundation creates uncertainties, unpredictability, and obstructions in the conduct of meaningful inter-state relations. Liselotte Odgaard encapsulates this aspect of international order well when she observes that order is an intermediate goal pursued to achieve other

⁶⁸ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 8.

⁶⁹ Suganami, “British Institutionalists, Or the English School, 20 Years On,” 16-19.

goals; hence it should be seen as a means towards an end, rather than being an end by itself.⁷⁰ As shown earlier, Bull clearly points out that order is not necessarily compatible with justice. Andrew Hurrell too shares this view and adds that, “The correct question with regard to the study of world order was not: how might human beings create forms of international society or schemes of international cooperation that embodies all their aspirations of justice...but rather: how might states and other groups do each other the least possible harm and, in an age of total war and nuclear weapons, survive as a species? So the core goals of international social order were survival and coexistence.”⁷¹ Since order has been envisioned in such minimalist terms, the Rationalist understanding of order is also referred to as “minimal order.”⁷²

Of course, order is not something that is uniform in its robustness, for it varies based on the locale and historical era. A breakdown in order, as witnessed during the First and Second World Wars, reveals a weakening in the ability of the states to forge a consensus as regards the need to sustain the primary goals of society. However, even in the midst of such breakdown, the societal element in international relations is not wholly undermined. For

⁷⁰ Liselotte Odgaard, *The Balance of Power in Asia Pacific Security* (Oxon: Routledge, 2007), 25.

⁷¹ Andrew Hurrell, *Order and Justice in International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 26.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 26. It is important to underline that based on a cursory reading, the Rationalist understanding of order may seem similar to a Realist understanding of order, for, both seem to view order in minimalist terms. However, this similarity hides fundamental differences. While Realists view the prevalence of order as being a function of material dynamics, Rationalists view order as an outcome of material and social dynamics. This means that while Realists ascribe little or no sense of purpose in the creation and maintenance of order, Rationalists believe that order is a deliberate creation of states. The next section will further outline the specific understanding of order that Rationalists subscribe to, which sets their understanding of order on a different plane as compared to other conceptions of order.

instance, the honoring of basic diplomatic norms and the adherence of the armies (or attempts to be seen as adhering) to the Geneva Convention on the treatment of the POWs is testimony to the presence of the element of society among states. Notwithstanding the drawbacks, a basic theme in international relations is the constant effort of states to avert wars and build on the common interests and values which they share. Indeed, it is noticeable that given the armed capabilities which the modern nation state possesses, the periods of warfare are greatly overshadowed by periods of calm. Lest the critic point out that such periods of peace are the outcomes of nothing but the balance of power, and hence are accounted for by conventional Realist theories, it would be pertinent to note that contemporary Realists (especially the Neo-Classical Realists) agree that power is extremely difficult to gauge owing to the fact that international anarchy is “murky and difficult to read.”⁷³ They agree that assessing power is largely a subjective affair. In such a condition, one wonders how effective the balance of power mechanism actually is and how much it truly contributes to the absence of wars on a frequent basis.⁷⁴ Given the element of imprecision built into the balance of power dynamic, it would need more than just a mere “balance” to preserve international society and uphold order.

⁷³ Gideon Rose, “Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy,” *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (1998): 152.

⁷⁴ Rose further adds that the inability to gauge power means that “States...have a hard time seeing clearly whether security is plentiful or scarce and must grope their way forward in twilight, interpreting partial and problematic evidence according to subjective rules of thumb.” Ibid, 152. In fact, Aaron Friedberg goes a step further and argues that gauging power capabilities is not only a challenge at the inter-state level, but also within a state. See Aaron L. Friedberg, *The Weary Titan: Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline 1895-1905* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).

3.8 International Order and Institutions

International order, according to the English School, is not the outcome of pious wishes on the part of states who seek harmonious and cooperative relationships among themselves. It is the result of conscious efforts on their part, where rules play a seminal role in its maintenance. Rules establish how order is to be maintained and they reflect the desires and interests of the society of states. Rules have arisen over centuries of interaction among states and have constantly been modified over the ages. Thus, the English School understanding of rule is essentially based on customs and traditions, and not simply the result of instrumental bargaining among the great powers. These rules have been identified by international lawyers and codified in the form of Positive Law. Bull sees the role of states as being central in the making of rules, in their legislation, in communicating them, and in their enforcement. He points out that in carrying out these functions, states give rise to institutions.⁷⁵ According to Suganami, institutions are “clusters of social rules, conventions and practices that provide the members with a framework for identifying what is the done thing and what is not in the day-to-day management of their interactions.”⁷⁶ It is believed that institutions form a base that is used by states to further their desire for stability.⁷⁷ Five institutions have been identified as being central in the maintenance of international order – the great powers,

⁷⁵ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 72-74.

⁷⁶ Suganami, “British Institutionalists, Or the English School, 20 Years On,” 253.

⁷⁷ Odgaard, *The Balance of Power in Asia Pacific Security*, 25.

diplomacy, wars, the balance of power, and international law.⁷⁸ We will briefly examine the role of institutions in the maintenance of order below.

It has been noted that the existence of international order is a reflection of common interests and values that are held by states in the international society. However, in the absence of effective communication, it is difficult to act on such commonalities and coordinate action. This is where diplomacy as an institution plays an important role. In fact, so important is its role that Wight insists that it is the “master institution” of international relations.⁷⁹ Diplomacy enables efficient communication between states, relay of intelligence among the various actors (an important means of averting worst case assumptions), and minimizing “friction” between the states which could otherwise lead to conflicts.⁸⁰

International law as an institution identifies and enunciates the common values and interests of the states in a formal manner. It ensures that states are able to conduct their relations with each other in a predictable manner, rather than in the midst of uncertainty and chaos.⁸¹ In that sense, it seeks to provide the otherwise anarchic international realm with a semblance of the rule of law. In a careful study of the relation between international law and international

⁷⁸ Buzan distinguishes between two broad understandings of institutions in International Relations. The first refers to organizations or establishments founded for a very specific purpose. Regime theory is concerned with these types of institutions. The second type of institutions is established through custom, law, or relationship in a society or a community. It is the second type that we are dealing with in this study. Barry Buzan, “Rethinking Hedley Bull on the Institutions of International Society,” in *The Anarchical Society in a Globalized World*, eds. Little and Williams, 76.

⁷⁹ Suganami, “British Institutionalists, Or the English School, 20 Years On,” 113.

⁸⁰ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 170-71.

⁸¹ Bull and Watson, eds., *The Expansion of International Society*, 24-25.

politics, Simpson argues that there are two established ways of looking at the relevance of international law. The first approach is to view international law as a distinct domain, purged of power politics. It is seen as being located above power politics where its tenets have great salience in the conduct of states. On the other hand, international law is also seen as cover for power politics, where it reflects the interests of the dominant states. Simpson avers that it is unrealistic to view international law as a domain separated from power politics and that the interests of the dominant states are certainly reflected in its postulates. However, the very act of creating such laws is a compromise between the interests of the weak and the strong states, and it is incorrect to view international law as simply being the weapons of the strong.⁸² To that end, international law has a definite impact on the conduct among states.

The balance of power ensures that no one state is in a position to dominate others and reign supreme in international affairs. Ideally, an effective balance of power among the states ensures that institutions such as diplomacy and international law have ample space and freedom to operate.⁸³ Given the fact that order necessitates the curtailment of violence to the greatest degree possible, disagreements that arise among states ought to be resolved in a non-violent manner, meaning that diplomacy play a substantial role. For diplomacy to be

⁸² Simpson, *Great Powers and Outlaw States*.

⁸³ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 106-07.

effective, a balance of power is necessary, avers Bull. The aim of the balance of power is the preservation of the society of states.⁸⁴

War, according to Bull, is a “settled pattern of behavior” that promotes common goals. It has a destructive and a constructive aspect to it. As regards the former aspect, it is a manifestation of disorder, which has the potential to tear the fabrics of the society of states. This is the aspect that we are most familiar with. This interpretation also clearly illustrates the Hobbesian nature of international relations where states are seen as predatory entities. On the other hand, at times war is seen as vital in maintaining the efficacy of institutions like international law and the balance of power. When all other measures fail to bring about a greater harmony among states, wars help in “disciplining” the recalcitrant elements. From the perspective of international order, war plays a crucial role in enforcing rules.⁸⁵ The war unleashed by the coalition forces in 1990-91 against Iraq is a pertinent illustration of this fact. In order to uphold the sanctity of sovereignty in the region and to reinforce the principle of non-intervention, the coalition forces undertook armed action against Saddam Hussein’s regime. The violence was viewed as a necessary evil. When a rampant Nazi Germany undermined the sovereignty of its neighbors and challenged their territorial integrity, other powers such as Great Britain and France declared war on it as it was undermining some of the core rules of the society of states. Hence, where conventional

⁸⁴ A perusal of history demonstrates that not always has the balance of power been that effective. In such circumstances, diplomacy has in fact played an invaluable role in averting wars.

⁸⁵ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 187-88.

commentaries consider wars a “tragedy,” the English School highlights their less tragic and functional aspects.

The fifth institution is that of the great powers in international society. Given the fact that we have already examined the concept and its definition in the previous chapter (by using Bull’s formulation), we shall not do so again here. Suffice it to recall that the term refers to a socially recognized status of a small number of powerful states that play a managerial role with regards to the society of states.⁸⁶

Each of the five institutions is the outcome of collaboration among *all* the members of international society. Take for instance diplomacy: it is not just the efforts of the great powers that allow diplomacy to be a central institution in international affairs. The fact that even the weakest states uphold diplomatic norms and privileges (such as diplomatic immunity and reciprocity) means that the institution contributes to stabilizing the relations among states. In turn, order is upheld. These institutions do not work in isolation; rather they reinforce each others’ efforts in providing order in international relations. Even violent inter-state affairs like wars are regulated by the Geneva Conventions and even the most powerful of states try to honor them.

Notwithstanding the symbiotic relationship among the institutions, one may infer that, as per Bull’s schema, the great powers are the *primus inter pares* in the Rationalists scheme of things. Since he views states as the most important actors in international society and since the great powers are seen by him as having been entrusted with giving a central direction to

⁸⁶ Linklater and Suganami, *The English School of International Relations*, 44.

the affairs of international society as a whole, one can assume that the great powers hold a special salience in Bull's world view. Indeed, it was the bitter enmity between two prominent states, the US and the USSR, and the polarization that it caused in international society, which led Bull in his later years to revisit his pluralist conviction and speculate if justice could be injected into the society of states without endangering order.⁸⁷ It must thus follow that discord among the great powers will especially worry the non-great powers, given that as an institution, the great powers have the greatest agency and that their actions profoundly impinge upon the workings of the other institutions. The next section will show how the non-great powers have contributed towards ensuring that this institution functions well and why the great powers seek non-great powers' collaboration.

3.9 Non-Great Powers and International Order

Great powers need the non-great powers in order to function effectively in international society. Since the great powers in the early years of the Westphalian system had to dominate a relatively small geographical area, they were not as reliant on the co-operation of the non-great powers. Due to the lack of synergy between these two categories of states and the fact that great power dominance lacked explicit non-great power consent, we see the great powers in the 17th and 18th centuries involved very frequently in wars between themselves and aggressing regularly against the non-great powers. With the growing complexity in

⁸⁷ Dunne, *Inventing International Society*, 136.

international relations and the widening of the geographical canvas, the great powers had to legitimize their dominance for the first time in the period immediately following the Napoleonic wars. As a result, we see the emergence of what Simpson calls “Legalized Hegemony,” which refers to “...the existence within an international society of a powerful elite of states whose superior status is recognized by minor powers as a political fact giving rise to the existence of certain constitutional privileges, rights and duties and whose relations with each other are defined by adherence to a rough principle of sovereign equality.”⁸⁸ Due to the fact that this arrangement had the consent of the non-great powers, great power dominance changed to great power hegemony.⁸⁹

It is noteworthy that the non-great powers had a role not only in giving recognition to the great power privileges but also in pressurizing the victorious powers that a defeated power like France be made a part of the great power concert following the Napoleonic Wars. When France became aware that it was not being considered as a member of the Concert of Europe system, and that the four great powers constituting the Quadruple Alliance intended to exclude it from becoming one of the managers of Europe, it protested strongly to the other great powers. Citing the illegitimacy of a post-Napoleonic order which ignored France, the French diplomat, Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Perigord “turned to Europe in an attempt to identify her interests with those of the Continent as a whole.”⁹⁰ Linking the

⁸⁸ Simpson, *Great Powers and Outlaw States*, 68.

⁸⁹ See Robert W. Cox, “Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 12, no. 2 (1983).

⁹⁰ Guglielmo Ferrero, *The Reconstruction of Europe: Talleyrand and the Congress of Vienna 1814-1815*, trans. Theodore R. Jaekel (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1941), 146.

stability of Europe and legitimacy, Talleyrand drove home the point that all of Europe had to agree in the establishment of the new order. As Henry Kissinger writes, Talleyrand threatened to make France an obstructionist force in Europe by becoming the advocate of the non-great powers.⁹¹ Sans France, the order would lack legitimacy.⁹²

The fact that France could use the weight of the smaller states to bring pressure upon the other great powers is noteworthy. Subsequent to its pressure tactics (and unrelated to them), a rift emerged between Great Britain and Austria on one side, and Russia and Prussia on the other. As a result of this rift, and due to the demand of France being included in the “inner council” of the great powers, the year 1815 saw France being accepted back into the great power league. Given that the international society was not fully evolved and that the great powers were used to dominating the non-great powers to a great extent, it is significant that Talleyrand even contemplated using them to force his way into the great power league. Kissinger points out that a notable strategy in French foreign policy has been to exploit its relationship with smaller states and use their support to pressurize the other great powers to accord it the status as a great power. Unable to convincingly dominate the others post-1814, and unwilling to accept the position as a non-great power, France has used its standing among non-great powers very effectively.⁹³

“Legalized Hegemony” and great power co-operation certainly contributed to averting major great power wars until the early part of the 20th century. It is of course true that great power

⁹¹ Kissinger, *A World Restored*, 152.

⁹² Ferrero, *The Reconstruction of Europe*, 160.

⁹³ Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, 120.

wars had not disappeared during the 19th century – the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 and the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 being but two examples. What matters is that there was no repeat of the great power wars matching the scale and duration of the Napoleonic Wars. However, by the end of the 19th century, it was evident that the great powers no longer saw themselves as partners in a common cause. This led to the outbreak of the First World War. The inability to forge a consensus and the unwillingness of the US to take part in the League of Nations system saw a repeat of great power war in the form of the Second World War. From the early 1940s, it was realized that the great powers had to forge a common view point and co-operate with the sole purpose of averting future tragic wars. To that end, between 1941 and 1945, the great powers sought to re-emphasize their commitment to common ideals and interests. More importantly, the non-great powers, after an initial period of vacillation, also supported this attempt on the part of the great powers. Due to the fact that the element of society had weakened and impinged negatively on international order, all members – great powers and non-great powers – sought to re-establish stability by highlighting the salience of order. This necessitated strengthening the institutions of international society. The best example of the non-great powers also aiding in the process of the great powers forging common interests is their willingness to allow the Permanent Members of the Security Council to have the power of veto. We shall examine this in greater detail below. However, before doing so, it is important to highlight a critical insight that Barry Buzan offers as regards the society of states and its salience in understanding the process of re-injecting the societal element in the relations among states after the Second World War.

Buzan points out that society can be formed in two ways, based on a classical distinction in sociology. The first is what he refers to as a *Gemeinschaft* society, which refers to societies that are organic and traditional, based on bonds of common sentiment, identity, and interest. According to this view, societies are natural products of historical evolution – they grow rather than being made. A second type of society exists, which is referred to as *Gesellschaft* society, which are considered to be contractual and constructed rather than being traditional and sentimental. As Buzan opines, “they are consciously organizational: societies can be made by acts of will.”⁹⁴ Without any doubt, this is a functional view of the development of societies.

The discussions among the various states as regards the creation of the UN and the Security Council as the great power directorate for promoting order may be seen through the prism of *Gesellschaft* society. The veto system was seen as the solution to great power mistrust. For the great powers to collaborate with each other and provide a central direction to international affairs through the mechanism of the UN Security Council, it was imperative that they protected their core interests. The victorious great powers, with an eye on the future, deemed vital that they not commit themselves to any enforcement measures which they themselves had voted against.⁹⁵ Given the tremendous degree of power which the great powers sought to arrogate to themselves, Morgenthau observed that the imbalance between the powers of the Security Council (the great power body) and the General Assembly

⁹⁴ Barry Buzan, “From International System to International Society: Structural Realism and Regime Theory Meet the English School,” *International Organization* 47, no. 3, (Summer 1993): 333.

⁹⁵ Ian Hurd, *After Anarchy: Legitimacy and Power in the United Nations Security Council* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 86.

(representing the interests of the non-great powers) was a “constitutional monstrosity.”⁹⁶ However, the great power prerogative had to be recognized and solemnized by the rest of the states. In the absence of such consent, the great powers would have to resort to domination - a coercive and inefficient way to impart order to the society of states.

Presented with the “constitutional monstrosity” at the San Francisco conference in 1945, the non-great powers initially recoiled and protested. According to the delegate from Chile, “the procedure devised...is not in accord with the sovereign equality of all peace loving states.”⁹⁷ However, the great powers were unwavering in their belief that the veto and the privileges it accorded to them was essential for the great powers to co-operate and maintain order in the post war environment. It was pointed out that without unanimity – which the veto helped foster – the great powers would be repeating the mistakes of the League of Nations. Faced with the choice of order or justice, the rest of the states chose the former. More than the sense of inequality fostered by the great power privileges in the Security Council, the smaller states were worried about the great powers reverting to their isolationist policies and the world having to deal with the “suicidal consequences.”⁹⁸ The desire of the non-great powers for a world body that provided them order and stability led them to support the creation of a

⁹⁶ Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 502.

⁹⁷ Stephen C. Schlesinger, *Act of Creation: The Founding of the UN* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2003), 100-01.

⁹⁸ Ruth B. Russell, with the assistance of Jeanette E. Muther, *A History of the United Nations Charter: The Role of the United States 1940-1945* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1958), 133.

“virtual world dictatorship.”⁹⁹ As will be seen in Chapter 4, Nehru himself justified the great power privileges by framing the issue in terms of order and justice.¹⁰⁰ Ian Hurd underlines the consent factor in the process when he writes that the “ability to mobilize massive coercive resources is unprecedented among international organizations, and almost all states in the system have consented to it in a highly public way.”¹⁰¹ The great powers need not have approached the non-great powers, but they did so as it enabled them to function more efficiently and elicit the co-operation of the others. The non-great powers did not have to give their stamp of approval to the great powers, but they did so as they wanted the great powers to function as an order-generating and maintaining institution.¹⁰²

It is seldom mentioned that the non-great powers had a tacit role in deciding the constitution of the Security Council. While the US and USSR selected themselves (and Great Britain to an extent) based on their power and standing in international affairs, it is not adequately acknowledged that the need to assuage the sentiments of the members of the international society led France and Nationalist China to be inducted as Permanent Members (and as a corollary, great powers) too.

⁹⁹ Schlesinger, *Act of Creation*, 172.

¹⁰⁰ See Chapter 4, 164-65.

¹⁰¹ Hurd, *After Anarchy*, 13.

¹⁰² As is well acknowledged, the Security Council remained a divided house for large periods of the Cold War and failed at various points to live up to its original ideals. In fact at times, critical decisions and policies as regards peace and security were taken outside the Security Council framework. The ABM Treaty and the creation of NATO are pertinent examples. However, the fact that the non-great powers assented to giving the Permanent Members great power privileges needs to be appreciated. It clearly showed their desire for order.

As far as France is concerned, we find that material factors played a very small role in its incorporation as a Permanent Member. Till 1944, the US was totally opposed to its inclusion. However, the fear that France could become the leader of the smaller European states in the General Assembly and obstruct the functioning of the UN played a role in it being co-opted as a Permanent Member.¹⁰³ This is reminiscent of the fear that the members of the Quadruple Alliance had as regards the ability of France to use the non-great powers to hinder the great power directorate. It was also felt that if the victorious powers such as the US, USSR, or Great Britain were to manage the affairs of mainland Europe, it might be construed as their desire to take advantage of their position and “put Europe under their tutelage.”¹⁰⁴ The inclusion of France would indirectly be seen as giving voice to the other European states and represent continental European interests and sentiments. Considerations of political legitimacy had to supplant cold calculations. The non-great powers had to be convinced that the newest great power body was a legitimate entity.

As regards China’s inclusion as a great power, we find that different factors were involved, ranging from the ones based on *Realpolitik* to those based on notions of legitimacy and ethics. As regards the purely strategic reason, it was considered that China, though weak in the early 1940s, could prove to become an asset to US interests in Asia in the subsequent years.¹⁰⁵ Hence, the key lay in including the Chinese in the great power league and allowing them to develop into a powerful state in the region. However, there also were important

¹⁰³ Simpson, *Great Powers and Outlaw States*, 173.

¹⁰⁴ Russell, *A History of the United Nations Charter*, 273.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 55.

non-strategic reasons at play. The US State Department was sensitive to the rise of Asian nationalism and was wary of antagonizing the de-colonized states by appearing to dominate their continent. Hence, inviting China to the Security Council would send a powerful message that the Western powers had no desire to dominate the world, and would allow non-Western states to be stake holders in the apex body.¹⁰⁶ The demographic dimension also figured in the decision, as it was imperative to have one of the most populous countries in the world represented at the highest echelons of international relations.¹⁰⁷ To Roosevelt, China meant 400 million people whose views simply could not be ignored.

The creation of non-Permanent seats at the Security Council was also an acknowledgement of the right and desire of the non-great powers to be institutionally and officially involved in contributing to peace and stability. One wonders if, in a purely Hobbesian world, the great powers would allow non-great powers to even share a seat with them at the highest tables in international relations. For, the non-Permanent members can collectively create obstacles for the great powers and their ambitions.

We have examined how the non-great powers can influence the shaping of a new order by invoking the “softer” aspects of international relations such as legitimacy and the need for representation. We have also established the fact that order is something that is of great value to states – weak and strong alike. The next section will show how the non-great powers play an important role in maintaining international order. Specifically, we will

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 129.

¹⁰⁷ Susan Butler, *My Dear Mr. Stalin: The Complete Correspondence between Franklin D. Roosevelt and Joseph V. Stalin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 5.

examine how they react to threats to order. It will be pointed out that given that order is by itself an abstract notion, it is noteworthy that non-great powers do react to perceived threats to order. Even when their interests and security are not directly affected, they part with their personnel and resources to ensure that order is maintained.

3.10 Threats to Order and the Non-Great Powers

This dissertation claims that the attempt by India to mitigate the threat arising from the international society caused it to undertake measures which led to its deviant behavior, understood as the country behaving like a great power while possessing middle power capability. This claim is rather unusual, as it asserts that India was responding to a threat arising from the destabilizing effect of the great power rivalry; India's response was not to a threat from a particular source. Is there a theory or an approach that can account for India's unconventional understanding of threat and its response to this threat? And if not, can the English School help us understand India's policies?

A perusal of the Realist literature - the approach most interested in the concept of threat and its effect in international relations - reveals that it focuses predominantly on "dyadic threat" and the steps that states take to counter it. By dyadic threat, we mean the conventional understanding of threat where a state perceives another state or a group of states to be a direct source of danger. It is this particular notion of threat that helps us understand important inter-state dynamics such as the Security Dilemma. Security Dilemma refers to the phenomenon where an increase in the power of State A is a direct cause of insecurity to

State B. In order to counter the increase in State A's power, State B increases its own power by arming itself or by entering into an alliance with another state. The measures taken by State B in turn threaten State A. This cycle of enhancing power by the parties involved can generate deep mistrust and even lead to the outbreak of conflicts and wars.¹⁰⁸ The important point to note is that the threat is direct: State A can clearly identify State B as its source of threat and vice versa. As will be evident to the reader, this dyadic notion of threat, which informs the bulk of the studies on state behavior, cannot explain India's deviant behavior. Since India was responding to a threat that was not direct, the conventional notion of threat cannot be employed to explain its behavior.¹⁰⁹

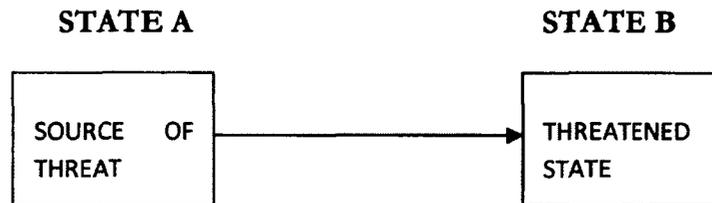


Figure 3.1: Dyadic/Conventional Threat

¹⁰⁸ For an excellent explication of the Realist understanding of threat and how it affects state behavior, see Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987).

¹⁰⁹ An exception would seem to be the strident measures taken by states like the US to counter terror in different parts of the world. Terrorism after all is nebulous in character and it is difficult to trace its exact source. However, it is also true that that US actions (such as strikes against the Al Qaeda installations in Afghanistan and Pakistan) are in response to specific attacks on US assets and personnel. Hence, one can convincingly argue that actions against terrorism are triggered off by attacks against sovereign territory of the US, such as the attack on the USS Cole in the late 1990s. India was responding to a threat that was not specifically targeting India.

India's conceptualization of threat under Nehru may be termed as being "non-dyadic," where the term refers to a threat that is emanating from the society of states in an amorphous and indirect manner and whose source cannot be directly attributed to a particular state. In India's case, the greatest threat to its security emanated from the dangerous competition between the great powers, namely the USA on one hand, and the USSR and Communist China, on the other hand. The fact that the great powers were actively undermining each others' interests and increasing influence at the cost of the others was a very worrying development for Nehru. It indicated an unacceptable level of instability in the international society and signaled a severe compromise of the basic courtesies that great powers have accorded to each other. This was having a very negative impact on order. While Nehru's innate inclination was to view peace and security as being indivisible, the possession of nuclear weapons by the great powers convinced him that the margin of error in their competition was minimal and that wars between them could no longer be contained to just a particular part of the world. According to Nehru, this technological development had made it more imperative than ever before to view security in a holistic manner.

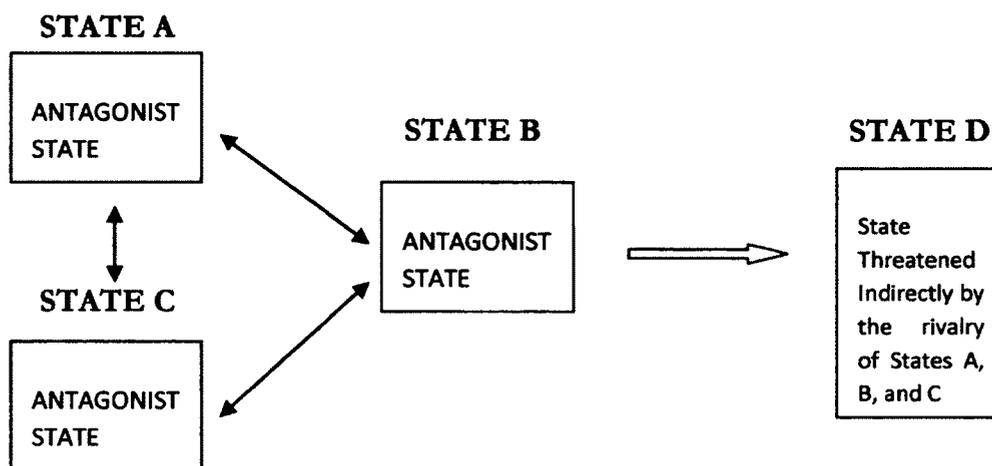


Figure 3.2: Non-Dyadic/Unconventional Threat

While the dyadic notion of threat and its impact on state behavior has been examined extensively by scholars, as evidenced, for instance, by Walt’s impressive “balance of threat” thesis, very little work exists that explains non-dyadic notions of threat. However, the English School does allow us to establish a link between tension in international society and a state’s reaction to it, through its concept of order. While the English School does not offer us a theory of threat or a focused account of threat, it does tell us that order is absolutely critical for the security and survival of the states, and that absent order, states cannot look after their core interests such as the protection of their sovereignty and territorial integrity. Hence, a destabilization of order may be viewed in terms of a threat to states. In fact, the integral nature of order had led the non-great powers to give the veto rights to the great powers in 1945 at San Francisco, thereby undermining their own standing.

When order has clearly been threatened, states – great powers and non-great powers alike – have mobilized resources to meet the challenge. The participation of a large number of

states, who were not directly threatened, in the First Gulf War in 1990-91, and also in Afghanistan in 2001, shows that states do act decisively when facing a threat that is deemed as truly endangering order that is not at their borders. It is also significant that in each case, the actions had the backing of the UN and thus was reflective of the general opinion of the international community. Lest one claim that their participation was only due to the fact that they were alliance partners of the US or were bandwagoning with it at a time when the US was the dominant great power, one only needs to look at the controversy surrounding the 2003 war against Iraq when the US did not manage to convince everyone that international order had been threatened by Iraq. Since the US could not convince the international community that order had been threatened by Hussein, the UN did not endorse the US attack on Iraq.¹¹⁰ However, when the same country (Iraq) had unambiguously endangered order in 1990, there was hardly any controversy on the issue and a large number of states threw in their lot with the US, with the backing of the UN. Going back in time, it is striking to count the number of states that were aligned with the US, Great Britain, France, and USSR in their fight against the Axis powers. The latter's penchant to disregard the basic rules

¹¹⁰ According to the *Pew Global Attitudes Project*, "majorities in five of seven NATO countries surveyed support a more independent relationship with the U.S. on diplomatic and security affairs. Fully three-quarters in France (76%), and solid majorities in Turkey (62%), Spain (62%), Italy (61%) and Germany (57%) believe Western Europe should take a more independent approach than it has in the past." "War with Iraq Further Divides Global Publics: Views of a Changing World 2003." <http://pewglobal.org/2003/06/03/views-of-a-changing-world-2003/>

of international society and thereby endanger order saw states from different parts of the world support the Allies.¹¹¹

What one can infer is that when order is seen to be clearly threatened, non-great powers do contribute, according to their capabilities, in thwarting the danger. One may take this logic a step further and argue that when the great powers themselves become the source of threat to international order, the non-great powers can, and do, respond to such a threat based on their capabilities. It is in this light that non-alignment may be approached - as a response to great power rivalry and the threat it posed to order; it is in this light that India's policies under Nehru may also be viewed.

3.11 Conclusion

We have demonstrated how the English School and its theoretical framework can be used to show how the non-great powers are intricately linked to the creation and maintenance of order. The approach can also account for India's (a middle power's) deep interest in the question of order, which led to its deviant behavior between 1947 and 1962. The same framework can be used to understand why other middle powers such as Indonesia sided with India and refused to align themselves with the antagonistic great powers. In doing so, this dissertation helps rectify two notable shortcomings of the English School approach.

¹¹¹ While many of these states were colonies, such as British India, it needs to be acknowledged that they too were appalled by Hitler's excesses. Identifying colonialism as a lesser evil, Gandhi asked his country people to assist Great Britain in its life or death struggle against Hitler.

The first shortcoming is its Eurocentric bias.¹¹² Given that the roots of the English School scholarship lie in Western political theory, and since writers working within this tradition are knowledgeable of, and have delved deep into European history and politics, there is a penchant to accord pride of place to Europe and its contribution to international relations. As a result, many of the central figures of the English School such as Hedley Bull and Adam Watson clearly believed that it was Europe that shaped the broad contours of the international society. A clear example of this belief is their account of the expansion of the international society, which is depicted as having originated in Europe, after which it expanded to cover the entire world.¹¹³ While such a view point is not wholly unfounded, it does have the effect of marginalizing the agency and role of non-European powers such as China, Japan, and India. While it is to the credit of the English School scholars that they examined the role of these states in their scholarship, the non-European states usually were depicted as being the recipients of European norms and rules.¹¹⁴ As a result, they were cast more as objects than subjects. The problematic aspect of such a bias is acknowledged by contemporary thinkers within the English School who not only recognize this bias, but also

¹¹² Barry Buzan and Richard Little, "World History and the Development of Non-Western International Relations History," in *Non-Western International Relations Theory: Perspectives on and Beyond Asia*, eds. Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan (Oxon: Routledge, 2010), 198-99; Sanjay Seth, "Postcolonial Theory and the Critique of International Relations," *Millennium – Journal of International Studies* 40, no. 1 (September 2011), 169; and Suganami, "British Institutionalists, Or the English School, 20 Years On," 260-66.

¹¹³ *The Expansion of International Society*, eds. Bull and Watson.

¹¹⁴ Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, "Why is There No Non-Western International Relations Theory? An Introduction," in *Non-Western International Relations Theory*, 8-9.

point out that this leads to the reproduction of "...a powerful Eurocentric myth that was established in the nineteenth century and then perpetuated in the twentieth century."¹¹⁵

By retaining the basic template of the English School and expanding on some of the pivotal theoretical postulates, this dissertation shows how the approach can in fact shed light on the order sustaining function of the non-European powers. This precludes the need to throw out the proverbial baby with the bath water. By establishing the link between the non-European powers and order, this dissertation captures the essence of Amitav Acharya's notion of "Norm Subsidiarity" which he refers to as "...the process whereby local actors develop new rules, offer new understandings of global rules, or reaffirm global rules in the regional context" when the dominant powers fail to honor the cherished global norms. By "local actors," Acharya is referring to Third World countries. He argues that what is missing from the general literature in International Relations is recognition of "...the agency role of Third World states in constituting the world polity and managing international order."¹¹⁶ While Acharya puts forth his views on the agency of the non-European states from within the Constructivist tradition, this dissertation shows how the English School too can shed light on the agency of the non-European powers.

The second shortcoming in the English School scholarship is an outgrowth of the first one. Since Europe has traditionally been the site of the great powers in international society, the

¹¹⁵ Buzan and Little, "World History and the Development of Non-Western International Relations History," 199.

¹¹⁶ Amitav Acharya, "Norm Subsidiarity and Regional Orders: Sovereignty, Regionalism, and Rule-Making in the Third World," *International Studies Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (March 2011), 96, 118.

English School, by virtue of its focus on Europe, has developed a tendency to focus on the great powers more than the other categories of states such as the middle powers. It is noteworthy that in spite of the fact that Wight paid attention to the other categories of states and some of their characteristics in *Power Politics*,¹¹⁷ subsequent English School scholarship, especially of the Pluralist persuasion, has not developed further insights pertaining to them. This is surprising given that the middle powers have traditionally played an important role in international relations. In the especially strained milieu of the Cold War years, the middle powers played an important role in ensuring that the international society did not get engulfed in the flames of a great power war. This dissertation not only highlights the salience of the middle powers as regards order but also shows how they complement the great powers, and if needed, bypass them so as to sustain order.

It is the task of the next chapter to show that the insights which have been developed in this chapter apply to India. Specifically, it will be demonstrated that India did make an association between its security and order, and also that it viewed threat in a non-dyadic manner. Once these basic aspects of its world view have been established, the dissertation will be able to account for its deviant state behavior by examining its interaction with the Himalayan states and the states in South-East Asia.

¹¹⁷ Wight, *Power Politics*, Chapter 5.

Chapter 4

The Basic Determinants of Nehru's Foreign Policy

4.1 Overview

Nehru's understanding of international relations does not mirror a purely Realist or a Constructivist paradigm - one cannot state with absolute confidence that Nehru belonged entirely to the materialist or the ideational "camp." Nehru had an appreciation for both realms, and his actions were spurred by, and also reflected in, materialist and ideational imperatives. While he acknowledged the centrality of power in international relations, as evidenced by his belief that the great powers had an important managerial role to play, he also believed that the great powers, along with the other states, worked together to create and maintain order. Order was seen as a contrivance by him. Therefore a *via media* approach such as the English School is well suited for interpreting Nehru's foreign policy and the resultant deviant behavior on the part of India. The term deviant state behavior refers to the phenomenon where the behavior of a state is not reflective of its capabilities and where there exists an asymmetry between a state's capabilities and its behavior. With particular reference to India, in spite of possessing middle power capabilities, it demonstrated unmistakable great power behavior – something which is rarely seen in international relations.

The previous chapter outlined the basic tenets of the English School. It also highlighted particular arguments of the approach which are relevant for this study. In this chapter, we demonstrate that there exists a similarity between what the English School argues are the dominant factors in international relations and Nehru's world view. What has been posited theoretically in the previous chapter will be shown to have empirical resonance with regard to Nehru's foreign policy. Once the validity of this approach is established in relation to the issue at hand, one can see how it explains India's great power behavior with regard to its immediate neighbors and India's pro-active role in shaping the security architecture of South-East Asia.

The structure of the chapter will proceed as follows. First, we shall focus on Nehru's understanding of threat. Since the dominant theories of International Relations claim that states are goaded into action in order to reduce threats to their security and survival, it is necessary to closely look at this aspect of Indian foreign policy between 1947 and 1962. As this dissertation claims that in contrast to standard accounts, India's strategic calculus was not informed by a dyadic notion of threat, we will provide the necessary evidence to prove this point.¹ India's relations with Communist China will be closely examined to make the case that India did not subscribe to a dyadic conceptualization of threat. Thus, the initial part of the chapter will prove that conventional threat perceptions did not inform the Indian decision-making apparatus. Second, we will show that while India did not subscribe to a

¹ This does not mean that a dyadic notion of threat was entirely missing from India's strategic calculus. Rather, it is argued that the non-dyadic understanding of threat was more dominant.

conventional understanding of threat, it did view threat in a non-dyadic manner. As has been argued earlier, a state subscribes to a non-dyadic notion of threat if:

- (i) It takes the concept of order very seriously.
- (ii) It sees a direct relation between the efficacy and stability of order and its own security.
- (iii) It takes robust action (to the extent that its capabilities allow it to do so) to uphold order when order is believed to be in danger.

In order to “convert” these theoretical postulates into empirics in the case of India between 1947 and 1962, we will:

- (a) Demonstrate that Nehru did take order very seriously. His views on empowering the great powers with the power of the veto in the UN Security Council so as to competently uphold order will be scrutinized. This will show that notwithstanding his tendency to come across as being idealistic, he clearly recognized the need for stability, and thus was given to privilege order over justice.² This aspect of Nehru’s world view will demonstrate that the previously outlined postulate (i) holds true for the study of India’s deviant behavior.

² This is a significant point. As the reader will recall, India had been a colony of Great Britain for more than a century and many of its nationalist leaders were imbued with a great amount of disdain for structures and symbols in international relations which revealed the prevalence of a hierarchical relationship among states. Often, erstwhile colonial powers continued to occupy the upper echelons of the international society. Nehru’s rationalization of this arrangement and his justification of the continued institutionalized dominance of a group of states in international relations (the great powers) just go to show how seriously he viewed the question of order.

(b) Demonstrate that when the rivalry between the great powers became intense, and conflict in Korea broke out as a result, Nehru unambiguously drew a direct connection between the threat to order and India's security. This aspect of Nehru's world view will demonstrate that the previously outlined postulate (ii) holds true.

(c) Demonstrate that India did react to the instability through its mediatory and peace-keeping activities. While in this chapter India's middle power activities will be briefly highlighted to show India's commitment to order,³ the following chapters will show the more deviant aspects of its order-upholding initiatives and actions that led observers to conclude that the country was pursuing great power status. This aspect of Nehru's world view will demonstrate that the previously outlined postulate (iii) holds true.

4.2 India's Non-Dyadic Conceptualization of Threat

At the very outset, we need to demonstrate that the conventional notion of threat does not apply in this study. Therefore, we will provide examples to show that Nehru did not accord the highest of importance to challenges from another state. What better way of establishing this point than examining India's handling of the challenge posed by Communist China from its northern borders? Unlike other neighbors, Communist China was militarily strong, was a force to be reckoned with in international politics, and had a difference with India as regards their common border. Also, right from the emergence of Communist China as an independent state in 1949, its leaders displayed a degree of distrust towards India – reasons enough for India to have taken note of the peril confronting it. As will be seen, Nehru's

³ India's middle power behavior has already been outlined in Chapter 2.

stand as regards the challenges from its neighbor reveal a great deal about India's understanding of threat and justify our claim that he accorded pride of place to a non-dyadic notion of threat.

One of the first indications of trouble between India and Communist China occurred on the issue of Tibet. According to the talks held between the new Chinese government of Yuan Shikai, the government of Tibet under the 13th Dalai Lama, and British India in 1913-14 (resulting in the 1914 Simla Convention), British India recognized Tibetan autonomy albeit under Chinese suzerainty. This arrangement came about at a time when the Chinese government was at its weakest in a long time and at a time when Tibet was experiencing *de facto* independence from Chinese rule as a result.⁴ By recognizing China's notional overlordship by employing the term "suzerainty," the British brought Tibet under its influence without openly rebutting China's control over the region.⁵ From the Chinese point of view, the agreement was illegitimate as the Chinese government did not ratify it. As Steven Hoffmann points out

China's policy toward Tibet remained within the framework of a certain "Manchu notion" that the Tibetans were one of the minority populations sharing the Chinese state with the Han people, and therefore that Tibet was an integral part of China. This is not to say that the Chinese intended to treat Tibet as having no political identity. Some form of internal Tibetan autonomy under a Dalai Lama-centered government could exist. But no Chinese

⁴ Steven Hoffmann points out that that the desire to establish a buffer area between British India and China and also the need for adequate political space between British India and Russia occasioned this arrangement. Steven A. Hoffmann, "Rethinking the Linkage between Tibet and the China-India Border Conflict: A Realist Approach," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 8, no. 3 (Summer 2006): 168.

⁵ The term "suzerainty" implied a low level of Chinese political presence in Tibet, a high level of autonomy for Tibet, and a marked degree of British Indian influence in Tibet. Garver, *Protracted Contest*, 35.

government...interpreted such “autonomy” as requiring China to assent to diplomatic and other arrangements made by Tibet with British India.⁶

Independent India made no changes to this arrangement and continued to maintain its political influence over Tibet, as British India had done. However, with the emergence of Communist China in October 1949, things started taking a different turn. In fact, a little before the emergence of Communist China, its leaders had accused the Indian leadership of “openly engineering a cleavage between the different peoples in China, undermining their unity and interfering in China’s internal affairs...” and accused India of harboring imperialist designs.⁷ In keeping with its desire to free itself of external influence, Chinese troops entered Tibet in October 1950 killing approximately 5000 Tibetan soldiers and signaling the re-establishment of Chinese control over Tibet. The Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of the Tibetans, had little option but to accept a 17 Point Agreement with China in May 1951, the highlight of which was that it offered Tibet a “national regional autonomy under the unified leadership of Peking.” This concretized Communist China’s control over Tibet by according the takeover of Tibet with a legal basis.⁸ The Agreement also allowed Communist China to do away with the much despised notion of “suzerainty” – a relic of its “Century of Humiliation”⁹ – and replacing it with sovereign authority over Tibet.

⁶ Hoffmann, “Rethinking the Linkage between Tibet and the China-India Border Conflict,” 175.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 176.

⁸ Garver, *Protracted Contest*, 50.

⁹ See David Scott, *China and the International System 1840-1949: Power, Presence, and Perceptions in a Century of Humiliations* (New York: SUNY Press, 2008).



Map 4.1: Tibet Autonomous Region in relation to India

Source: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/china_admin_91.jpg

Note: Map has been adjusted to fit page

Officials within the Government of India took note of this development. The Deputy Prime Minister, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, wrote to Nehru that Communist China's action in Tibet was "little short of perfidy."¹⁰ Ever the Realist, Patel, in fact had pointed out the danger

¹⁰ Patel to Nehru, November 7, 1950, in *Sardar Patel's Correspondence 1945-50*, vol. X, ed., Durga Das (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1974), 336.

emanating from the North *before* the occupation of Tibet and had suggested that India reconsider its relation with the West with the emergence of Communist China. Given that US-Communist China relations were becoming increasingly acrimonious in the summer of 1950, courtesy of the conflict in Korea, and the commencement of the Korean War in June 1950, India could - argued Patel - consider using US power to contain Communist China.¹¹ Nehru replied indirectly to Patel's letter (which had accused Communist China of perfidy) by circulating a note (dated November 18, 1950) to senior officials, including Patel. In the note, Nehru observed that it was highly unlikely that India would face military aggression from the Chinese side and that there was "far too much loose talk about China attacking and overrunning India." Chiding Patel elliptically, Nehru observed that the notion that Chinese communism would expand towards India was "naïve."¹²

With reference to India's reaction, it has been observed that while Nehru "gently criticized"¹³ Communist China for occupying Tibet, "he failed to realize the true importance of the geographical and strategic consequences flowing from China's incorporation of the land of Lamas into its vast domain."¹⁴ The Government of India did set up the North and North-Eastern Border Defense Committee in November 1950 (also referred to as the Himmatsinhji Committee), based on whose recommendations check posts were established

¹¹ Garver, *Protracted Contest*, 47-48.

¹² "Prime Minister Nehru's Note on China and Tibet," in *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, ed., Das, 344-45.

¹³ As evidenced by Nehru's letter to the Chinese leader, Chou Enlai in October 1950. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 15 II, 332.

¹⁴ Sameer Suryakant Patil, "India's China Policies in the 1950s: Threat Perceptions and Balances," *South Asian Survey* 14, no. 2 (December 2007): 288.

along the Indo-Tibetan border region, the administrative network was expanded in certain border areas, and frontier constabularies were re-organized.

What is note-worthy is that there was no attempt on the part of Nehru to seriously take on board the advice of those who suggested that India build effective defense assets and infrastructure to counter the threat from the northern borders. As Kavic points out, in 1950-51, the Army Headquarters suggested that material be obtained from the Americans and the British to help India prepare a manual on Chinese infantry tactics, organization, and equipment. This proposal was turned down by Nehru. It was also proposed that a small specialized force be set up to maintain constant surveillance on the Himalayan frontier; this too was turned down by Nehru.¹⁵ In fact, Nehru went a step further and in April 1954 signed a treaty with Communist China on Tibet whereby India surrendered all the privileges it had in Tibet.¹⁶ Significantly, in October-November 1950, the US approached India with the proposal of aiding the Tibetan resistance movement.¹⁷ Overriding both Patel's and the US suggestion, Nehru refused to take any action on the issue, thereby turning down even the minimum opportunity of containing Communist China by keeping its attention firmly on domestic affairs.

¹⁵ Kavic, *India's Quest for Security*, 95-96.

¹⁶ India and Communist China signed the *Panchsheel* Agreement as per this treaty, which embodied the Five Principles of Co-Existence. As will be seen in Chapter 6, this was India's unique contribution to the international relations in Asia and it sought to organize relations among states on these principles.

¹⁷ Garver, *Protracted Contest*, 48.

In the period after the 1954 Treaty, the Chinese built roads and infrastructure inside Tibet and also in areas close to the Indian border. The year 1957 saw the inauguration of the Sinkiang-Tibet Highway which passed through Aksai Chin, a large tract of land claimed by India in the extreme North. The Chinese also built airbases in Tibet from which aircrafts could strike at India. The period following 1954 also saw the rise of “border incidents” – encroachments by Chinese troops into Indian claimed territory and the occasional stand-off between the Indian and Chinese troops.

Rather than countering these worrisome developments by augmenting forces along the border areas, and paying greater attention to the advice of his military personnel, Nehru sought to justify and rationalize the Chinese actions to his own officials. In a note to the Defense Minister, K.N. Katju, Nehru wrote that he was not at all perturbed by the building of airfields in Tibet as this was the only way possible for the Chinese to develop communication in Tibet.¹⁸ Nehru forwarded a similar logic to his close confidante, V.K. Krishna Menon,¹⁹ when he observed that such building activities were “natural” and that they did not necessarily indicate “any hostile or aggressive intention against India.”²⁰ He did however admit that they created a sense of disquiet within India. A week after having aired his view to Menon, Nehru communicated the same to the Foreign Secretary of the MEA, Subimal Dutt, and also the Joint Secretary of the MEA, T.N. Kaul, when he wrote that he

¹⁸ Nehru, July 28, 1956. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 34, 203.

¹⁹ India’s High Commissioner to Great Britain (1947-52); Minister without Portfolio (1956-57); Minister for Defense (1957-62).

²⁰ Nehru, “Chinese Maps of the Frontier with India,” May 6, 1956. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 33, 477.

ruled out any kind of physical or aerial attack on India.²¹ A report by the Ministry of Defense on the 1962 war clearly indicates that while the Government of India was fully aware of the road building activities close to its borders, it chose not to pay attention to them and refused to view them as a warning regarding Chinese intentions.²² Nehru explained the incursions by Chinese troops as resulting from the zeal of local Chinese troops and their officers.²³ To him, the growing Chinese capabilities were not an indicator of their hostile intentions.²⁴

By the latter half of the 1950s, relations between the two countries took a turn for the worse,²⁵ so much so that Nehru was forced to make an address to the Indian Parliament apprising the people of the divergence of views of the two countries with regard to the border question. The government also showed a greater interest in infrastructure building activities in the border regions. In January 1960, the General Reserve Engineer Force (GREF) was set up to expedite road building projects on the Indian side of the disputed border. Between 1960 and 1962, when India clashed with Communist China, 1500 miles of roads had been built in the border regions.²⁶ A Jungle Warfare School at Dehra Dun, at the foothills of the Himalayas, was established and a course on guerrilla warfare was started in the Infantry School at Mhow in 1958. The above measures may be seen as Nehru's

²¹ Nehru, "Countering Chinese Moves on the Frontier," May 12, 1956. *Ibid.*, 477.

²² Patil, "India's China Policies in the 1950s," 289.

²³ Hoffmann, *India and the China Crisis*, 35.

²⁴ Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, 34.

²⁵ This was mainly due to the Kongka Pass incident of October 21, 1959.

²⁶ Patil, "India's China Policies in the 1950s," 292.

concession to those in India who demanded some action as regards Communist China. They do not reveal a paradigmatic shift in his strategic calculus as he was unwilling to undertake more effective measures, as is shown below.

In 1960, after a visit to Europe, the Chief of Army Staff, General Thimayya recommended that India shore up its mountain warfare capabilities, in response to the threat posed from the North. He recommended a comprehensive upgradation of India's Himalayan defense system by requesting the raising of mountain divisions that would be lightly equipped but backed up by a strong contingent of the armed forces in the plains. He made specific requests about the troops' organization, training, and equipment. The suggestion was summarily rejected by the government as it would have negative consequences for the country's foreign policy and also as the cost would be too high.²⁷ In the summer of 1962, a few months before the border war, the army once again urged upon the government to seriously take on board its recommendations. The army was worried by its weakness in men, materials, and logistics. Nehru once again refused to entertain the request.²⁸ As Kavic points out, the defense of North India's cities and its heavy industries simply did not exist while no provisions were made to put in place air power to counter aerial threats from Tibet.²⁹ After the attack by the Chinese in late 1962, Nehru admitted in the Indian Parliament, in the face of severe criticism, that his government had acceded to only one-tenth of what the military

²⁷ Kavic, *India's Quest for Security*, 96.

²⁸ Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. 3, 218.

²⁹ Kavic, *India's Quest for Security*, 115.

had asked for, to counter the threat from the North.³⁰ The mindset of the government is revealed by a letter written by the Indian Foreign Secretary to S.N. Ray, the Chief Secretary of the West Bengal government (a province south of the Indo-Tibetan border). In it, Dutt does acknowledge that there was quite a sense of unease regarding the recent developments in the border. However, he viewed the threat as being the influx of refugees from Tibet into India and not Chinese aggression aimed at India per se. He underlined the necessity of strengthening the border check posts, with the express purpose of controlling the inflow of refugees into India and not for the purpose of demonstrating India's resolve to the Chinese side.³¹

The lack of a sense of crisis and urgency is also reflected in the government's handling of troops and also the allocation of funds for defense matters. It is instructive to note that during the period 1959-60, when tension in the border area was rising, the Defense Minister, Krishna Menon, in fact proposed a *reduction* of more than 250 million rupees (\$ 52.6 million) in defense expenditure.³² To the question put forward in an interview by Michael Brecher as to why, given the turmoil in Tibet and the growing friction with Communist China, Menon had not suggested a substantial increase in expenditure instead, Menon replied that, "I make

³⁰ Krishna, "India and the International Order," 283.

³¹ S. Dutt to S.N. Ray, March 26, 1959. Subject File no. 57, Subimal Dutt Private Papers, Nehru Memorial Library Archives, New Delhi, India.

³² Conversion of rupees into US dollars based on historical rates available at <http://fx.sauder.ubc.ca/etc/USDpages.pdf>

no secret of the fact that we were not prepared for a war against China.”³³ In fact, the percentage share of defense expenditure of national revenue fell from 28% (in 1960-61) to 24.9% (in 1961-62).³⁴ At a time when the number of troops was far from adequate in the eastern borders, keeping in mind the growing acrimony with the Chinese, Nehru sent a brigade consisting of five elite battalions to the Congo under the UN umbrella.³⁵ More tellingly, by the fall of 1962, when the border dispute was entering a critical phase, the Defense Minister left for the annual UN General Assembly session in New York City, justifying his abandoning station by declaring that there was no need for a feeling of crisis.³⁶

What accounted for the reticence displayed by Nehru in reacting to the Chinese threat? What gave him the conviction to regularly override the recommendations of his colleagues about the threat from the North? Was it his awareness that being militarily weaker than the Chinese and being threatened by them, he considered it imprudent to provoke its northern neighbor, as has been pointed out by Garver and Hoffmann? We argue that this possibility can be ruled out as there was not even the *acknowledgement* of the threat from China. If one can establish that Nehru felt threatened, then the logical inference may be drawn that

³³ Michael Brecher, *India and World Politics: Krishna Menon's view of the World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 150.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 151.

³⁵ Vertzberger, *Misperceptions in Foreign Policymaking*, 129. India's attitude is further evidenced by Nehru's reaction to a request by the President of India that the number of soldiers in the Indian Army be reduced. While Nehru did not completely agree with the President, he did point out that there was no harm in reducing the numbers "somewhat," at the rate of about 10,000 per year. He was against a substantial reduction in the number of soldiers. Nehru to K.N. Katju, September 22, 1955. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 30, 346.

³⁶ Maxwell, *India's China War*, 129.

Nehru's reticence was a function of the threat perception. However, as the section below clearly demonstrates, there existed no such sense of threat.

In a note to the Secretary General of the MEA – the highest ranking Indian diplomat - in July 1949, Nehru had observed that even if there was a change in the leadership in Tibet and the Chinese came to power, there would be no military threat to India.³⁷ In wake of the Chinese action in Tibet in 1950, Nehru again observed that in connection with the question of the security of the border areas, while it was desirable to have a military appreciation, there was absolutely no danger of military operations on the part of the Chinese in those parts. He went on to add that military action would take place only if there was a world war and only if India, under the circumstances, was opposed to Communist China.³⁸ In the period following the 17 Point Agreement between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese, Nehru made a similar observation by writing that, “The possibility of a regular invasion of Nepal or India by Chinese forces through Tibet can be ruled out as a remote contingency...in the present state of affairs, it is not a proposition which we need consider.”³⁹ Sarvepalli Gopal, Nehru's semi-official biographer, points out that between 1959 and 1962, the period when India-China relation was getting increasingly difficult, Nehru consistently played down the threat from Communist China. At least on two occasions in 1959, once in 1960, and twice again in 1961, Nehru categorically declared that the possibility of Communist China aggressing against its neighbor or an outbreak of a war between the two states was

³⁷ Nehru, “Indian Mission at Lhasa,” July 9, 1949. *SWJN*, vol. 12, 410.

³⁸ Nehru, “Recent Developments in East and South Asia,” November 8, 1950. *SWJN*, vol. 15 II, 409.

³⁹ Nehru, “The Threat from Tibet,” October 5, 1951. *SWJN*, vol. 16 II, 560.

unthinkable.⁴⁰ When pointed out that the Chinese had openly criticized India, Nehru cautioned against the tendency of following their “brave words” very closely⁴¹ and noted that the Chinese notes displayed a “characteristic ambivalence,” where they breathed fire and advocated negotiations and discussions at the same time.⁴² B.K. Nehru,⁴³ a relative of Jawaharlal Nehru, and a senior Indian diplomat, noted that, “as for China...he [Jawaharlal Nehru] refused to accept till the last moment that there was any military threat from it at all. If he bent backwards in accommodating China it was not out of fear.”⁴⁴

The fact that many of these observations were made by Nehru in private and were meant to be read solely by senior government officials leads us to believe that there can be no second guessing Nehru’s views and intentions.⁴⁵ Nehru’s lack of urgency on the matter does not mean that there was no alarm domestically as regards Communist China’s actions in Tibet.

⁴⁰ Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. 3, 94, 100, 138, 206, 207.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 209.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 203.

⁴³ B.K. Nehru was a strong contender for the UN Secretary General’s post following the death of Dag Hammarskjöld in 1961. The *New York Times* writes that he was an “Indian diplomat who nearly succeeded Dag Hammarskjöld as UN Secretary General.” Paul Lewis, “B.K. Nehru, 92, Indian Envoy, and Cousin of Prime Minister,” *The New York Times*, November 9, 2001. Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/11/09/business/b-k-nehru-92-indian-envoy-and-cousin-of-prime-minister.html>

⁴⁴ Quoted in Singh, *Defending India*, 35.

⁴⁵ Other senior functionaries also seconded Nehru’s view with regard to Tibet. A senior government official, Sir Narayana Raghavan Pillai, writing under the pseudonym “P” in the January 1954 issue of *Foreign Affairs* disregarded Western warnings about the dangers posed by communist countries and pointed out that, “We may be stupid or completely blind but where we do not see the menace we cannot pretend to do so, merely because we are advised by no doubt wiser people.” P, “Middle Ground between Russia and America: An Indian View,” *Foreign Affairs* 32, no. 2 (January 1954): 261.

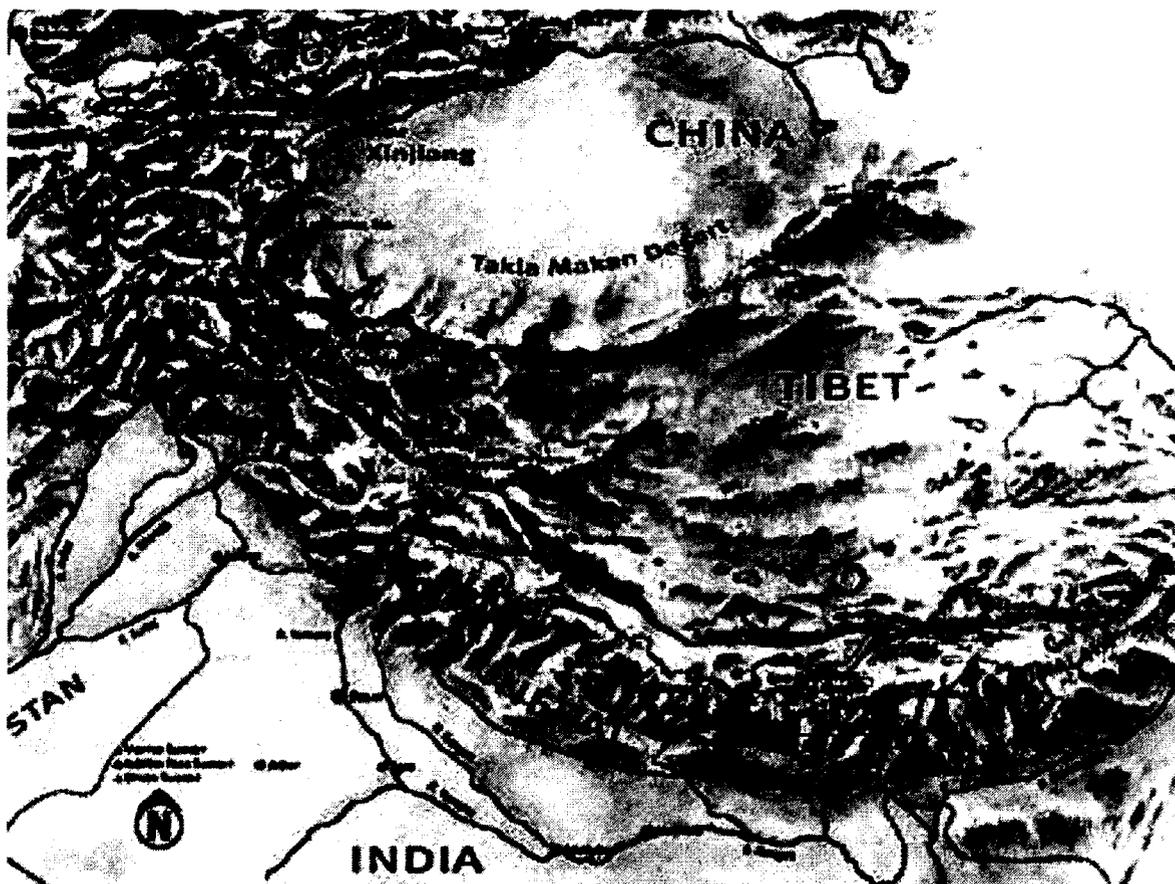
As Neville Maxwell points out,⁴⁶ critics attacked Nehru's China policy as one of appeasement and pointed out that the Chinese presence on the northern borders had most certainly exposed the country to a significant threat. Therefore, the minimal measures taken by the government in the border region, such as setting up check posts, can be seen as Nehru's concessions to those advocating a harder line. After all, being a democrat, the Prime Minister simply could not turn a deaf ear to the protestations of his fellow citizens. The significant point to note is that such measures did not demonstrate a re-orientation of Nehru's conceptualization of threat.

What explains the lack of a dyadic threat perception? Five factors may be detected in Nehru's rationale to explain his lack of alarm and haste: geography, Tibetan domestic politics, Communist China's perceived material weakness, the balance of power, and the nature of warfare in the post Second World War era.

Geography has been invoked by Nehru as a reason why he did not foresee a threat from the North. According to him, the Himalayas – located between India and Tibet - formed a robust physical barrier, thereby forestalling any kind of military adventurism by the Chinese towards the South. In a letter to the Defense Minister, Nehru wrote that India had one of the best defenses to its North and the North-East. This defense consisted not only of very high mountains and difficult terrain but also formed some of the most inhospitable places in

⁴⁶ Maxwell, *India's China War*, 92.

the world.⁴⁷ Surely the Chinese would not gather in such places to launch an assault on India?



Map 4.2: The Himalayas as a barrier between India and Tibet Autonomous Region

Source: <http://www.jagged-globe.co.uk/exp/asia.html>

Note: Figure has been adjusted to fit page and text has been inserted by the author.

Domestic politics in Tibet was another reason why Nehru refused to take action when Chinese troops moved into Tibet. To him, the Chinese military buildup and infrastructure

⁴⁷ Nehru to Katju, July 28, 1956. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 34, 203.

building activities were related to quelling the Tibetan uprising and had nothing to do with India.⁴⁸ Being a young state, Communist China was knee-deep in the process of nation-building. India too had had the experience of consolidating its polity by resorting to heavy-handed measures in the period following its independence from British rule. India's incorporation of princely kingdoms like Junagadh in the West and Hyderabad in the South had shown that states did resort to coercion in the initial phases of their statehood. Hence, Communist China's actions in Tibet, while not appreciated, were understood.

A third reason was that Nehru saw Communist China as a weak country, which, in the 1950s, would have needed a long time to strengthen itself for an attack on India. Nehru verbalized his thought on the matter to Escott Reid, the Canadian High Commissioner to New Delhi in 1953 by observing that, "...the Chinese are a very cold-blooded, unemotional, rational people – a little too cold-blooded for my taste." Because they were rational, they could be relied upon to follow a level headed and prudent policy. A military attack by Communist China on India was not rational, according to Nehru.⁴⁹ In an interview to Robert Turnbull, a *New York Times* correspondent, on the 11th of August 1950, Nehru argued that he did not fear an attack by Communist China as the country was still recovering from the devastations of the civil war and would take, "...in the best of circumstances...a generation to recover."⁵⁰ Nehru's discussions with Chinese leaders like Mao Tsetung and Chou Enlai undoubtedly shaped this belief, given the numerous instances where the latter indicated that

⁴⁸ Vertzberger, *Misperceptions in Foreign Policymaking*, 230.

⁴⁹ Reid, *Envoy to Nehru*, 55.

⁵⁰ *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 15 I, 365.

they were lagging behind India economically and industrially. This point was conveyed by Nehru to his colleagues and acquaintances through his correspondence.⁵¹

A fourth reason for Nehru's belief that India would not be attacked by Communist China (or any other country for that matter) was his belief in the logic of the balance of power. According to him, being endowed with plenty of natural resources, India - in theory - was a prime target for covetous behavior on the part of others. However, the realization that intruding into India or invading it would get the other powers to swiftly act against the aggressor (and deny the aggressor India's resources) served as a deterrent against aggression by any power. According to Nehru, "...this mutual rivalry would in itself be a guarantee against any attack on India."⁵² Also, India's non-violent struggle against the British colonialists had earned it admiration and a great degree of goodwill from many in the international community. An aggression against it would result in outrage globally.

The fifth and last reason is a combination of the previous two points. Certain of the fact that India was a "good citizen" in the international society, Nehru believed that an attack by Communist China on India would cause other powers to stave off the attack, which in turn would result in an all out war.⁵³ For Communist China to hold its own, it had to be ready to

⁵¹ See, for example, Nehru's letter to Krihsna Menon, June 27, 1954. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 26, 410; Nehru's letter to Katju, August 28, 1954. *Ibid*, 520; Nehru's letter to Edwina Mountbatten, November 2, 1954. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 27, 68.

⁵² Kavic, *India's Quest for Security*, 23.

⁵³ This is reflective of a Collective Security mindset on Nehru's part. It reveals that Nehru saw states as being able to conceive of security in broad societal terms, in keeping with the core argument of the

fight a protracted high intensity war like World War One and Two, which necessitated a strong economic and industrial base. As Communist China was lacking such a base, and being a rational people, Nehru opined that the Chinese would not attack India in the first place. This is illustrated by Nehru's statement in Parliament in December 1961 when he observed that, "war between India and China would be one of the major disasters of the world...for it will mean world war. It will mean war which will be indefinite."⁵⁴ According to Vertzberger, Nehru was incapable of imagining wars that were regional and limited in scope. Nehru had not learnt anything from the Korean and Indo-China wars (in which India had involved itself closely), which had remained limited in nature. Nehru's underlying assumption – that crisis management was possible only up to the actual outbreak of violence and not afterwards, when events took a life of their own – had proven to be false in his lifetime itself. "This omission," according to Vertzberger, "points to some faults in Nehru's basic assumptions."⁵⁵

The aforementioned discussion clearly shows that Nehru simply could not contemplate any sort of attack on India. Even when close aids counseled caution, Nehru's innate faith in India's security prevailed. This leads to the conclusion that India, during the Nehru years, did not have a very strong dyadic conception of threat.

English School that states, owing to their commitment to common interest and values, constitute a society.

⁵⁴ Vertzberger, *Misperceptions in Foreign Policymaking*, 78.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 81.

Before concluding the discussion on India's threat perception, one needs to ask whether the lack of haste and alarm displayed by India was a function of misperception? For instance, Vertzberger claims that misperception was to blame for India's lack of preparedness in facing the Chinese in 1962. He defines misperception as the gap between the objective reality and the policy maker's subjective perception of that reality. According to him, the degree of distortion between the objective reality and the subjective perception of it by the policy maker reveals the quality of the decisions taken by the policy maker.⁵⁶ It is certainly noticeable that Nehru did not act on the advice of his advisers who counseled stronger measures against Chinese actions in the North. As a result, some element of misperception was undoubtedly built into Nehru's thinking. However, a few cautionary notes as regards the application of the concept of misperception to Nehru's strategic calculus need to be made.

A perusal of the scholarship on Nehru's misperception of the threat posed by Communist China reveals that very little Chinese archival material and primary documents have been used by scholars such as Vertzberger and Hoffmann.⁵⁷ The "objective reality" - the benchmark for assessing the quality of decision-making - has been constructed with decent knowledge of Indian sources but very little knowledge of actual Chinese attitude towards India.⁵⁸ Hence, from a scholarly point of view, for one to claim that misperception was the

⁵⁶ Vertzberger, *Misperceptions in Foreign Policy Making*, 3.

⁵⁷ A look at Hoffman's *India and the China Crisis*, which makes the case for misperception on India's part, reveals the paucity of Chinese primary sources. G.S. Misra, review of *India and the China Crisis* by Steven A. Hoffmann, *China Report* 28, no. 3 (August 1992): 297-300.

⁵⁸ We consciously use the term "decent" knowledge. While Vertzberger and Hoffmann do engage with primary documents, these are mostly government publications. In no ways do the documents inform one of the conversations going on within the Indian decision-making apparatus. This point leads us to the

definitive reason for Nehru's lack of haste and enterprise, one needs to have access to a greater amount of material, especially from the Chinese side. We argue that using the term "misperception" in relation to Nehru's approach towards Communist China is problematic and that more work needs to be done on the matter. It is better to view his approach towards Communist China and other states as being informed by a non-dyadic threat conception. Given Nehru's penchant of analyzing an issue from a holistic point of view, it is doubtful if a simple miscalculation of Chinese strength and intention on Nehru's part led to India's non-response to Communist China's policies in the Himalayan region. Instead, Nehru built his understanding of his neighbors and their intentions towards India on the basis of a gamut of factors such as their level of development, their internal dynamics, and the alignment of global forces and its impact on the neighbors' policies.

4.3 The Prevalence of Non-Dyadic Threat Conception

4.3.1 Great Power Harmony and International Order

Nehru's inability or unwillingness to conform to a conventional dyadic conceptualization of threat does not mean that threat as a concept was totally lacking in his, and as a result, India's geopolitical paradigm. For India, threat presented itself in a non-dyadic manner, in the guise of the competition among the great powers for influence and strategic foothold on the Asian landmass. One finds numerous instances of the country responding to threats of this kind in a robust manner. Being privy to Nehru's inner most thoughts, courtesy of his

critique we made earlier of scholarship on Indian foreign policy during the Nehru years in general: that Nehru's private papers have not been adequately utilized. To be fair to Vertzberger, his book was published in 1984, just before the Nehru Papers were made (selectively) public. Hoffmann's book was published in 1990, when some of Nehru's papers had been made public.

extensive correspondences and musings, one can competently trace the logic behind Nehru's threat assessment and response.

We have already underlined that the security of a state and the stability of order are intimately connected with each other. The concepts and insights offered by the Grotians allow us to make this claim. We shall now apply this understanding to Nehru's world view. We shall first have to establish that order was integral to his world view – something that simply could not be allowed to weaken. The challenge lies in the fact that order is an abstract concept - how does one show that order, an amorphous concept, mattered to Nehru greatly? We turn our attention to the UN Security Council, the great power body in the post Second World War era that was specifically tasked by the international society to take the lead role in maintaining order. The argument will be made that for Nehru, the great powers were seen as a key institution for maintaining order. To that end, he had no problems in recognizing their hallowed and elevated status in international relations, and in the process, compromising on his Gandhian ideals of equality. By acquiescing to the great powers' special status, Nehru was in effect demonstrating his appreciation of order. Once it is established that the relevance of the great powers for Nehru was in connection with their order maintaining role, it can also be shown that once great power relations started deteriorating alarmingly in the late 1940s, Nehru associated this deterioration with a clear threat to order, and as a corollary, a threat to India itself. It may be recalled that as per the schema laid down earlier, once order is imperiled, states tend to take remedial measures based on their capabilities. Here, it will be shown how, when faced with a breakdown of order owing to bitter great power rivalry,

Nehru took an active part in mediating among the great powers and dousing international conflagrations through mediation and peacekeeping activities.

It has often been claimed that Nehru was an idealist, for he had little or no appreciation of the role of power in international relations. His active international campaign against the “amoral” bipolar politics of the times and his desire to transcend it through the policy of non-alignment have led many to conclude that Nehru saw great powers and their politics as problematic facets of international relations. According to such a narrative, power and great powers were anathema to Nehru’s utopian world view. Nothing can be further from the truth. Nehru was not against great powers and their politics; he was against the *nature* of great power politics of the times. In his thinking, great powers were central institutions in international relations and needed to co-operate with each other so as to uphold order. He was more than aware that, given their preponderance, the great powers had to undertake an effective managerial role in the international society. Thus, for Nehru, the institution of great power, and order, were closely linked with each other.

Nehru’s thoughts on the merits of the veto power accorded to the great powers as Permanent Members of the UN Security Council at the end of the Second World War illuminates an aspect of his world view not analyzed sufficiently by most of the Indian foreign policy scholars. What strikes the reader is Nehru’s appreciation of power and his willingness to reconcile himself to the distribution of power in the post Second World War era. According to Nehru, the veto provision was a practical recognition of the world “as it

was and as it is.”⁵⁹ The fact that some states were more powerful, dominating, and relevant than the others necessitated giving them great power status as compared to according such peremptory powers to “half a dozen nations which have no importance in world affairs.”⁶⁰ Nehru made it a point to note that while the veto provision did very little to inject democracy into the international governing edifice, it was a practical arrangement.⁶¹ He also viewed the veto provision as allowing the great powers to work with each other to promote order, keeping in mind the strains that were showing among them even before the Second World War had ended. Without such a provision, the great powers would not be able to uphold their core interests at a political and diplomatic level, and they would be wary about partaking in the functioning of the Security Council – the great power directorate. The unwillingness of the great powers to co-operate would pave the way for conflict. For, if the “Big Powers” fell out with each other, there would be trouble which the smaller powers would not be able to check.⁶² As a result, though the veto system was “not a happy system,” it was definitely a “lesser evil.”⁶³

⁵⁹ A. Appadorai, ed., *Select Documents on India's Foreign Policy and Relations: 1947-72*, vol. II (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1985), 626.

⁶⁰ Nehru, “Election of the Secretary General, UNO,” May 6, 1953. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 22, 493. A few months later, in September 1953, Nehru made a similar observation about the need for great power unanimity in a parliamentary debate. According to him, “...very few countries dominate the world today by virtue of their military or other strengths. It is a fact. It is no good telling those two or three powerful countries, whatever they may be, that you should abide by the majority votes of 20, 30, or 40 countries.” *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 23, 410-11.

⁶¹ Appadorai, ed., *Select Documents on India's Foreign Policy and Relations*, 626.

⁶² Nehru in a note to the Foreign Secretary, September 7, 1946. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 1, 442.

⁶³ Nehru, “Election of the Secretary General, UNO,” May 6, 1953. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 22, 493.

Nehru's understanding of the veto and its ability to allow the great powers to manage the international society, without the fear of having their core interests challenged by the other great powers, reminds us of Buzan's concept of a *Gesellschaft* society. According to Buzan, such a society is one that is created out of an act of will and is contractual in nature. Thus, at a time when the world was emerging out of a ruinous World War, Nehru saw the veto as the tool to allow the great powers to put aside their fears of each other and focus on regenerating the societal element in international relations.

Nehru stressed that in light of these practical considerations, the term "veto" was negative and technically incorrect and failed to project the constructive dimension of the provision. Rather, the veto provision had to be viewed as the unanimity principle of the five powers.⁶⁴ His sister, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, a distinguished diplomat and the first woman President of the UN General Assembly, also underlined the need of viewing the great power privilege in a positive fashion. According to her, "I would myself prefer to look upon the so-called veto in a positive way and as the necessary device for securing that vital decision by the great powers rest on unanimity and not on disregard of the total opposition to any proposal by one of them."⁶⁵

India's absolute opposition to the "Uniting for Peace" Resolution, passed by the UN General Assembly during the Korean War, is a good illustration of its steadfast adherence to the principle of great power unanimity. The resolution was adopted in the context of the

⁶⁴ Appadorai, ed., *Select Documents on India's Foreign Policy and Relations*, 626.

⁶⁵ T. Ramakrishna Reddy, *India's Policy in the UN* (New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1968), 50-51.

Korean War which had broken out in June 1950 when North Korean forces had crossed the 38th Parallel into South Korea. In light of the aggression, the UN Security Council had passed resolutions condemning the aggression and had asked member states to provide troops to help fight back the aggressors. Owing to the fact that Communist China was not allowed to occupy China's seat at the Security Council (it was occupied by the nationalists led by Chiang Kai Shek who were based in Taiwan), the USSR had boycotted the Security Council and its proceedings from January 1950. Hence, all Security Council resolutions following the aggression were passed sans Soviet assent. This greatly vexed India for it undermined the principle of great power unanimity.

When the USSR returned to the Security Council in October 1950, it made use of the veto to offset and obstruct draft resolutions introduced by the others in the Security Council that sought to severely indict Communist China whose troops had entered the war that very month. As a result, stalemate and total paralysis ensued in the apex body. In order to circumvent this impasse, the US urged the General Assembly to pass the Uniting for Peace Resolution, which the latter did on November 3, 1950. Through this resolution, the General Assembly gave to itself the authority to consider issues that had witnessed stalemate in the Security Council. Its express aim was to prevent the USSR from impeding the UN's efforts in Korea. Nehru saw this as furthering the Western agenda of not stopping the war but merely ostracizing the Chinese and severely weakening any chance of great power rapprochement. He observed that the resolution had converted the UN into a larger version

of the Atlantic Charter.⁶⁶ At a time when the world seemed to be on the verge of a great power war, Nehru clearly favored an all out attempt to forge a great power rapprochement as compared to aiding the development of a rigid alliance of one group of great powers against another.⁶⁷ In his worldview, the great powers had to function as a Concert, where all of them were committed to the basic rules of international society such as the upholding of sovereignty and non-intervention. By creating a decision-making process within the UN which isolated the USSR and Communist China, Nehru feared that the great powers would be aligned against each other, in the same way that the great powers formed mutually exclusive alliances prior to the outbreak of the First World War. While the world was reeling under the strains of having antagonistic groups like the NATO and the Warsaw Pact, it could ill afford to have similar groupings as part of the UN system itself.

Based on Nehru's views on great power unanimity, one cannot but draw a parallel with some of Bull's thoughts on the great powers in the society of states. Like Bull, Nehru saw the great powers as essential components of the society of states, giving it the necessary direction and stability. Like Bull, Nehru privileged a co-operative dynamic among them, and not a conflict-ridden one. Rather than resigning himself to the fact that great power relations were going to be "amoral" (in light of the tensions between them in the mid 1940s) and based purely on a

⁶⁶ S.M. Burke, *Mainsprings of Indian and Pakistani Foreign Policies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1974), 128.

⁶⁷ It would appear that Great Britain was also uncomfortable about USA's attempts to circumvent the UN Security Council. While it threw its weight behind the "Uniting for Peace," Resolution, its leaders feared that such a ploy could drive the USSR out of the Security Council, which would cause some Arab and Asian countries to also leave the UN. P.N. Haksar, "A Note on Anglo-American Differences," June 12, 1953. P.N. Haksar Private Papers, Nehru Memorial Library Archives, New Delhi, India.

balance of power understanding, Nehru underlined that they needed to overcome their differences through dialogue and collaboration. The great powers *had* to evolve a basic consensus – the veto would lay the foundation for that. If the great powers could not evolve consensus, an institutional contrivance would serve as a catalyst. Like Bull, Nehru fully grasped the contradiction between order and justice in the society of states. By further empowering the strong, there would be a “democratic deficit” in the society of states. However, in an imperfect world, this was necessary. His observation that while it was not a happy system, it was a lesser evil, clearly establishes this fact.

Nehru forged the connection between great power relations and the security of the smaller states through his notion of the indivisibility of peace and security, which manifests itself in different guises in his writings and speeches. In an address to the Indian Journalists Association in Calcutta in January 1949, Nehru drew the audience’s attention to the fact that recent history had taught him that peace and security could not be viewed in local or regional terms. Referring to the Japanese aggression on Manchuria in the inter war period, he observed that while the League of Nations had attempted to address the problem in East Asia, it could not mend Japan’s ways. This incident set in chain a series of developments that ultimately culminated in the outbreak of the Second World War in Asia. If aggression was allowed to take place in any part of the world in the 1950s, it would have a much worse impact.⁶⁸ According to him, the problems of the contemporary times could not be contained in “water tight compartments.” Employing his pronounced rhetorical skill, he observed that, “Events in the deserts and waste lands of East Africa echo in distant chancelleries and cast

⁶⁸ Nehru, *SWJN*, vol. 9, 164.

their heavy shadow over Europe; a shot fired in eastern Siberia may set the world on fire.’⁶⁹ The existence of interlocking systems of military alliances such as the NATO alliance created the perfect scenario for local conflicts to turn into international tragedies.⁷⁰ Nehru had reached the conclusion that a war was capable of destroying the whole world and whether India was involved in it or not, the country was bound to be gravely affected by it.⁷¹ In such matters, India simply could not be a by-stander and allow events to unfold. As a result, conflagrations in different parts of the world – be it Korea or Indo-China - drew Nehru’s attention and discomfited him greatly.

Two major developments in the post Second World War era led Nehru to turn his attention to international events more than he would have under normal circumstances.⁷² One had to do with the progressively deteriorating relations between the great powers. This led him to believe that the equilibrium of the society of states – a necessary condition for the security of all states - was being gravely undermined. The other had to do with the introduction of nuclear weapons and its very real potential of tearing the fabric of not only the international society but endangering the existence of the human kind as a species in general.

⁶⁹ Sarvepalli Gopal, ed., *Jawaharlal Nehru: An Anthology* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980), 340.

⁷⁰ Proceedings of the Conference of the Heads of Indian Missions in Europe, Salzburg, June 28-30, 1995. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 29, 243.

⁷¹ *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 36, 18.

⁷² These events had two distinct effects: (1) They indicated to Nehru that his basic assumptions as regards international stability were being eroded at a rapid rate, and (b) they resulted in the concretization of his concept of threat. While earlier, Nehru had drawn the red lines as to what constituted instability and threat, these events marked the proverbial crossing of the Rubicon.

4.3.2 Great Power Disharmony, Disequilibrium, and Nuclear Weapons

The understanding that peace and security were indivisible led Nehru to support great power privilege in the form of the veto. However, notwithstanding the fond hope held by many that the great powers would be able to play a constructive role in international relations, the early years of the Cold War period witnessed a progressive deterioration in great power relations. Nehru watched the unfolding events with an acute sense of dread and foreboding. Given the association he made between the great powers and order, it was clear that great power disharmony would undermine order and threaten India. It is perhaps not sufficiently acknowledged how strongly the fear of a Third World War caught Nehru's imagination, and how it dictated not only his policies towards the great powers, but also towards India's immediate neighbors. This section will outline the threat emanating from great power discord, as perceived by Nehru.

One finds the term "equilibrium" invoked by Nehru at various points in his discussion on the contemporary state of affairs. In line with the thinking of the English School, Nehru believed that in spite of the rivalry between the great powers, the period till the outbreak of the First World War was marked by the prevalence of a stable balance of power, which had injected a sense of equilibrium into the international society. While wars were fought in the 19th century, they did not upset the overall balance of power.⁷³ The First World War had upset the old political and economic order. Notwithstanding the best intentions of some prominent statespersons in founding the League of Nations, harmony and stability did not

⁷³ Nehru, "Changing Scenario in the Afro-Asian Countries," June 4, 1953. *SWIN*, Second Series, vol. 2, 469-70.

strike deep roots in the inter war period. In fact, instability only gathered further momentum.⁷⁴ In spite of the mammoth losses to life and property in the Second World War, good sense seemed to have eluded the great powers and their lack of co-operation had resulted in no new equilibrium being established in the post war years.⁷⁵ The cause of the disequilibrium was the struggle between the US and the USSR for supremacy, which was “hardly the proper role in this world for those great powers.”⁷⁶ It becomes clear that in Nehru’s scheme of things, the gap between disequilibrium (occasioned by great power disharmony) and world war was very narrow. The Korean War, briefly touched upon by this study in the previous pages, merits a closer look, for it reveals Nehru’s thinking on great power disharmony and its perceived impact on the larger society of states.

In August 1950, Nehru informed the Indian Parliament that there were three points which guided his country’s policies vis-à-vis the Korean War: (a) that aggression had taken place by North Korea over South Korea and that this had to be condemned, (b) that war should not spread beyond Korea, and (c) the need to explore ways to end the war.⁷⁷ In consonance with its broad objectives, India voted in favor of the UN Security Council Resolution 82 of June 25 that called for the immediate cessation of hostilities, the withdrawal of North Korean troops from South Korea, and also the request that member states render every type of

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 469.

⁷⁵ *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 34, 246; *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 38, 529.

⁷⁶ Nehru in the *New York Times* magazine on November 11, 1951. Cited in *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 17, 569.

⁷⁷ Ross N. Berkes and Mohinder S. Bedi, *The Diplomacy of India: Indian Foreign Policy in the United Nations* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), 107.

assistance to the UN in the execution of the resolution.⁷⁸ India also supported a subsequent Resolution (83) of June 27 that asked members to provide assistance to the Republic of Korea (South Korea) in order to expel the armed aggressors. Hence, in the early part of the Korean War, Indian thinking aligned with the general thrust of the UN Security Council.⁷⁹ From the Indian perspective, the Security Council resolutions rightly emphasized the need to re-instate the principle of non-intervention in the Korean peninsula.

The break came in July when India surmised that the absence of Communist China from the Security Council was a hindrance to bringing about peace in Korea and that it was against the spirit of great power unanimity as envisioned by the international society. Also, given that Communist China was located right next to the conflict, it needed to be made part of the solution, and not part of the problem. The absence of Communist China had caused the USSR to leave its seat at the Security Council empty, further imperiling great power unanimity. If this state of affairs persisted, "...there can be no other outcome than a world war."⁸⁰ This sense of unease had led Nehru to write to Stalin and the US Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, in mid July, asking them to accept Communist China in the Security Council and jointly resolving the problem in the peninsula. Acheson replied to Nehru's appeal by

⁷⁸ Karunakaran, *India in World Affairs*, 100.

⁷⁹ It is interesting to note that as soon as the North Korean troops crossed the 38th parallel on June 25, 1950, an Indian Cabinet Minister, C. Rajagopalachari wrote to his colleague that he feared that the aggression could lead to a "world burst up." Hence, while Nehru was forever alive to such apocalyptic possibilities, his Cabinet colleagues too seem to have shared his apprehensions. C. Rajagopalachari to Sardar Vallabhai Patel, June 30, 1950 in *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, ed., Das, 361.

⁸⁰ Nehru's statement in Parliament, August 3, 1950. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 15 I, 342.

stating that the admission of Communist China could not be dictated by an “unlawful aggression... which would subject the United Nations to coercion or duress.”⁸¹

Within a short period of time, the objective of the UN had changed from expelling the aggressors to unifying the whole of Korea under a democratic system. This was an unfavorable change in emphasis on the part of the US and its allies from India’s point of view as it entailed that their aim was not to stop the war and re-instate the principle of non-intervention but rather to extend and prolong the war. Writing to the Indonesian leader, Soekarno, Nehru noted that, “The world sits precariously on the edge of a precipice. Ever since the Korean War started, events have taken a more and more dangerous turn.”⁸² To keep the focus on the termination of hostilities, India’s representative to the Security Council, Sir B. N. Rau called for the creation of a special committee “to discuss any proposal for a peace settlement based on a cease fire and the withdrawal of communist troops.”⁸³ It was his desire that if the proposal was supported, it would be offered as a formal resolution. In the absence of such support from the Western powers, he decided not to introduce it.

The General Assembly had temporarily taken over the issue in October when the return of the USSR to the Security Council and its use of the veto paralyzed the Council’s functions. As a result, the General Assembly passed Resolution 376 V (“The Problem of the Independence of Korea”) on October 7 which stressed the need to unify the two Koreas as

⁸¹ Berkes and Bedi, *The Diplomacy of India*, 110.

⁸² Nehru to A. Soekarno, August 31, 1950. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 15 I, 387.

⁸³ Berkes and Bedi, *The Diplomacy of India*, 111-12.

compared to underlining the need to stopping the war.⁸⁴ Nehru responded to this resolution by stating that he considered it wrong to carry on military operations and that he did not think that the UN forces should go beyond the 38th parallel⁸⁵ until all other means of settlement of the problem had been explored.⁸⁶ Writing in 1958, Ross Berkes and Mohinder Bedi opined that, “To this day, the major Indian statesmen ... remain convinced that the US-influenced majority in the United Nations was more interested in authorizing the United Nations Command to establish its power over North Korea...than in trying to stop the war.”⁸⁷

With the General Assembly emerging as the center of activities, and Communist China becoming an active participant in the war towards the end of October when its troops crossed into North Korea, the onus shifted to condemning Communist China’s actions in the UN. In such an atmosphere, Indian efforts contributed to the creation of a three-person committee composed of India, Iran, and Canada “to determine the basis on which a satisfactory cease-fire in Korea can be arranged and to make recommendations to the General Assembly as soon as possible.”⁸⁸ In contrast to previous times when Indian efforts

⁸⁴ See <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/059/74/IMG/NR005974.pdf?OpenElement>

⁸⁵ Berkes and Bedi, *The Diplomacy of India*, 114.

⁸⁶ India’s Ambassador to Communist China had conveyed the message that the Chinese would be forced to intervene should the UN forces cross the 38th parallel. This was based on his conversation with China’s Prime Minister. Karunakaran, *India in World Affairs*, 104.

⁸⁷ Berkes and Bedi, *The Diplomacy of India*, 114-15.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 120.

were stymied by the US, this time it was the Chinese who threw a spanner by insisting on the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korea and Formosa (Taiwan) as a prior condition to negotiations.⁸⁹ Those critical of India's approach of not calling a spade a spade and condemning the Chinese, point at its "peace at any price" outlook.⁹⁰

Much to India's horror, the General Assembly passed a resolution on February 1, 1951 naming Communist China as a party to the aggression in Korea. Rau reacted to this by stating that the Resolution would "prolong hostilities in Korea indefinitely and may extend the area of conflict, may even lead ultimately to global war."⁹¹ Rau's apprehensions were seconded by Nehru who observed that India had to think in terms of the war extending to Communist China and the possibility of large-scale bombings of the Chinese mainland and Manchuria, as advocated by the Commander-in-Chief of the UN Command, General Douglas MacArthur. In such an eventuality, it was not difficult to think of the war spreading to other parts of the world – the prelude to world war.⁹² The War in Korea clearly was assuming a worrisome international dimension.

By the middle of 1951, a series of attacks and counter attacks by the combatants had brought about a condition of stalemate. Although the two sides kept fighting until 1953, not much

⁸⁹ Karunakaran, *India in World Affairs*, 108.

⁹⁰ Berkes and Bedi, *The Diplomacy of India*, 120.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁹² Nehru, "Recent Developments in East and South Asia," November 8, 1950. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 15 II, 408.

territory changed hands, thereby creating a World War One-like stalemate scenario. The removal of General MacArthur by President Truman in April 1951 and the statement by Secretary Acheson in June 1951 that the UN did not seek to unify Korea by force opened much needed political space for compromise. A few days later, the Soviet Permanent Representative to the UN, Jacob Malik, declared that the conflict could be settled.⁹³ The main stumbling block to a successful armistice was the repatriation of the POWs. While the US led 21-Power Resolution advocated the rights of all POWs to an unrestricted opportunity to be repatriated, the Soviet delegation opposed this and called for a commission to decide on the repatriation of soldiers who did not wish to return to their respective sides. In November 1951, these contentious issues were discussed in the UN, with little headway being made. Aware that the failure to make headway as regards repatriation was an obstacle to the conclusion of a successful armistice, India introduced a resolution which called for the establishment of a Repatriation Commission. While the US initially had reservations, it finally dropped its 21-Power Resolution in favor of the Indian resolution. However, the USSR found fault with the Indian resolution. When the resolution was finally adopted by the General Assembly, the Chinese and North Koreans rejected it, leading to no progress being made as regards the ceasefire.

To Nehru, the endless rounds of negotiations and deadlocks in relation to the repatriation issue meant that war in Korea would be prolonged. This implied that the possibility of things spiraling out of control at any moment was very real. It was this fear that led him to write to Walter Francis White, a prominent black leader that, "The world is so tense at present and

⁹³ Karunakaran, *India in World Affairs*, 111.

drifts almost with the force of something like a Greek tragedy towards disaster, that it becomes difficult to be academic and philosophic...”⁹⁴ When India’s resolution was being opposed at the UN, which Nehru viewed as leading the path to an armistice, he noted to his sister that there was no common ground between the American and Chinese side, and that the world was “determined to commit suicide.”⁹⁵

Notwithstanding the many setbacks, an agreement on repatriation was finally reached in June 1953 and an armistice was signed on July 27, 1953. A five nation Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission chaired by India began its work in September 1953. India also provided the soldiers for the custodian force of the Commission.

Nehru’s efforts at localizing conflicts and forestalling the possibility of great powers getting involved and setting off a larger conflagration saw him sending a large contingent of Indian troops to the Suez in 1956 as part of the of UNEF I mission. At one point of time, India had the second largest troop contingent in the region.⁹⁶ India also contributed an infantry battalion every year on a rotational basis between 1954 and 1970 as part of the ICSC in Indo-China.⁹⁷ India also played a lead role in peacekeeping in the Congo as part of its commitment to ONUC. As part of the mission, it lost 36 troops and sustained 124

⁹⁴ Nehru to Walter Francis White, April 17, 1952. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 18, 568.

⁹⁵ Nehru to Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, November 25, 1952. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 20, 429-30.

⁹⁶ Bullion, “India and UN Peacekeeping Operations,” 100. India contributed a battalion every year to UNEF I on a rotational basis till 1967.

⁹⁷ Anil Shorey, “Indian Army in UN Peacekeeping Operation,” *Indian Army through the Ages: A Glorious History*, <http://www.indianarmythroughtheages.com/site/page111.html>

casualties. Between 1960 and 1964, India contributed two infantry brigades consisting of almost 12000 troops.⁹⁸ Gopal points out that the fear of the great powers taking up an active role in the conflict motivated Nehru to help the UN efforts.⁹⁹

Nehru's "peace at all costs" attitude was reinforced by his awareness that the introduction of nuclear weapons in the great power relations was a recipe for disaster. In today's context, one might scoff at Nehru's sense of alarm and foreboding when discussing the role of nuclear weapons in international relations. It needs to be remembered that the understanding that these were weapons of last resort and not conventional weapons emerged only in the 1960s. In the initial years of the Cold War, the "nuclear taboo" had not developed and many considered them legitimate instruments of warfare. An avid follower of international events and debates, Nehru came to the conclusion that nuclear weapons were bound to be used by the great powers in their disputes with each other. To provide the reader an appreciation of the very real fear in Nehru's mind, the remaining pages will outline just how "normal" the use of nuclear weapons was considered to be by prominent leaders in the early years of the Cold War.

In the immediate aftermath of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the "Hiroshima Syndrome" gripped the US administration. The term refers to the "intense belief" within the US administration that atomic weapons should never be used in Asia

⁹⁸ Bullion, "India and UN Peacekeeping Operations," 113.

⁹⁹ Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. 3, 146, 148, 152.

again.¹⁰⁰ However, in the face of the acute rivalry developing with the USSR, such moral scruples were fast abandoned, with the US developing military policies envisaging their use from 1948 onwards¹⁰¹ and with Truman approving the Hydrogen Bomb project in 1949.¹⁰² The Soviets became active participants in the weapons race when they tested their first atomic weapon in 1949. It was during the Korean War that the US made clear its willingness to use such weapons when President Truman left the impression at a press conference that the use of atomic weapons were “under active consideration” in November 1950.¹⁰³ He also ordered transfer of 9 Mark IV nuclear bombs from the custody of the US Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) to Strategic Air Command bases in Guam and Okinawa.¹⁰⁴

The “conventionalizing” of the weapon was indicated by Gordon Dean, the Chairman of the AEC, when in a speech in October 1951 at the University of Southern California, he pointed out that the US could use atomic bombs both strategically and tactically. Eisenhower, who succeeded Truman as the President of the US in 1953, “deplored and disparaged” the nascent nuclear taboo, and viewed tactical nuclear weapons as an efficient way to end conflicts.¹⁰⁵ Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles (who succeeded Acheson in

¹⁰⁰ Nina Tannenwald, *The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons since 1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 139.

¹⁰¹ For instance, the 1948 Harmon Report pointed out the advantages of an “early use” policy by the US as regards the USSR. *Ibid.*, 109.

¹⁰² T.V. Paul, *The Tradition of Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 44.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 46; Tannenwald, *The Nuclear Taboo*, 122.

¹⁰⁴ Paul, *The Tradition of Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons*, 47.

¹⁰⁵ Tannenwald, *The Nuclear Taboo*, 140.

1953), displayed great zeal in promoting tactical nuclear weapons and considered them the lynchpin of his doctrine of “Massive Retaliation.” The US military doctrine, NSC 162/2 of October 1953 clearly viewed nuclear weapons as conventional weapons and considered them “...as available for use as other munitions.”¹⁰⁶ In 1954, NATO allowed tactical nuclear weapons to be used as a retaliatory measure in the event of a conventional attack by the Soviets.

Strikingly, US military doctrines also challenged international law in its bid to “conventionalize” the use of nuclear weapons. As Nina Tannenwald points out, the US Army’s “Law of Land Warfare” (1956) stated that “The use of explosive ‘atomic weapons,’ whether by air, sea, or land forces, cannot as such be regarded as violative of international law in the absence of any customary rule of international law or international convention restricting their employment.”¹⁰⁷ By the mid 1950s, both the US and the USSR had produced a large number of thermonuclear weapons, and had refined their delivery systems in the form of long distance bombers and Inter Continental Ballistic Missiles.¹⁰⁸ Also, 231 atmospheric nuclear tests had been carried out between 1953 and 1958 by the US, the USSR, and the latest entrant in the nuclear race – Great Britain.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ James S. Lay, Jr. “A Report to the National Security Council.” NSC 162/2, October 30, 1953. Available at <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-162-2.pdf>

¹⁰⁷ Tannenwald, *The Nuclear Taboo*, 170-71.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 141.

¹⁰⁹ Paul, *The Tradition of Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons*, 58.

It needs to be underlined that in both Tannenwald's and Paul's scholarship on the nuclear issue – theirs being the most recent and comprehensive works on the subject – Nehru's is one of the only non-great power leaders' names to figure prominently. Aware of the perilous state of affairs and its disastrous implication for his own country, Nehru took a leading role in staving off the possibility of a nuclear exchange between the great powers.¹¹⁰ His writings and thinking apart, Nehru requested the Defense Science Organization of the Indian government to undertake a study to ascertain the consequences of nuclear, thermonuclear, and other weapons of mass destruction in 1955.¹¹¹ In the same year, India presented a draft resolution in the UN General Assembly on the cessation of testing and managed in subsequent years to have their ideas approved by the General Assembly, although in an amended form and as part of West-sponsored resolutions.¹¹² In fact, from 1954 onwards, India introduced the issue into almost every bilateral and multilateral discussion in which it participated.¹¹³ The Bandung Conference of April 1955, of which India was a very prominent player, issued an appeal for a moratorium on nuclear testing.¹¹⁴ India's sense of haste was no doubt further fuelled when the belligerents used India as a conduit to convey nuclear threats to their opponents. As Paul writes, Dulles, after moving atomic weapons in Okinawa, told Nehru in May 1953 that the US should not be held responsible for using atomic weapons if

¹¹⁰ See, for instance, Tannenwald, *The Nuclear Taboo*, 122, 158; Paul, *The Tradition of Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons*, 48, 51, 59.

¹¹¹ *SWIN*, Second Series, vol. 33, 154.

¹¹² Charles H. Heimsath and Surjit Mansingh, *A Diplomatic History of Modern India* (Calcutta: Allied Publishers, 1971), 93.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹¹⁴ Tannenwald, *The Nuclear Taboo*, 158.

a truce could not be arranged. The message, according to Paul, was deliberately planted so that it would reach the Chinese, given India's prominent mediatory role in the conflict.¹¹⁵ It is no surprise that we find instances of Nehru's thinking dominated by visions of a nuclear apocalypse. It is ironical that while visions of a nuclear exchange among the great powers goaded Nehru to play an important part in the Korean conflict, his role as a *via media* necessitated his team to convey veiled threats from one party to the other, thereby further reinforcing India's non-dyadic conceptualization of threat.

4.4 Conclusion

The Korean War revealed to Nehru that the Chinese, in addition to the Soviets, were an important part of the Cold War equation. In fact, in the struggle for supremacy and influence in East Asia, the US and Communist China emerged as the principal antagonistic forces. It was also revealed to him that the Chinese would not hesitate to enter into an armed conflict with the US in spite of the latter possessing nuclear weapons. The nonchalance of the Chinese leadership about the prospect of being on the receiving end of a nuclear strike was made clear by Mao who told Nehru when the latter visited Communist China in 1954 that "The atom bomb is nothing to be afraid of. China has many people. They cannot be bombed out of existence...the death of ten or twenty million people is nothing to be afraid of."¹¹⁶ The reader may well surmise that such an attitude did nothing to soothe Nehru's frayed nerves which were on tenterhooks ever since the start of the Korean War.

¹¹⁵ Paul, *The Tradition of Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons*, 51.

¹¹⁶ Quoted in Claude Arpi, *Born in Sin: The Panchsheel Agreement; the Sacrifice of Tibet* (New Delhi: Mittal Publishers, 2004), 157.

The fact that the USSR and Communist China were on the same side of the Cold War divide meant that in the event of a nuclear strike by the US on Communist China (which did not possess such weapons till October 1964), there was every chance of the USSR joining in the conflict.

As a result, Nehru took it upon himself to use India's credential as a fellow Asian state sharing with Communist China a common history of colonial subjugation and civilizational antiquity, to impress upon its northern neighbor the need to exercise supreme restraint. In pursuance of establishing influence and exercising restraint on Communist China, Nehru was willing to compromise on an important issue such as Tibet. To Nehru, the bilateral issues with Communist China were less consequential than the larger issue of keeping the great powers from fighting each other. Reading Nehru's numerous correspondences with his officials, it becomes clear that while he approached issues related to Communist China's activities in Tibet and the Himalayan region with a sense of confidence and self-assuredness, his attitude towards the issue of great power rivalry betrays a distinct element of fear, alarm, and despondency. This observation is reinforced by Garver who writes that, "Nehru believed...that preferences regarding global alignments should determine preferences regarding local geopolitical issues."¹¹⁷ To Nehru, questions of India's prestige and standing on the global stage were less important than the need to restrain Communist China and avert a Third World War. This is clearly demonstrated by India's refusal to take China's seat as a Permanent Member of the Security Council when indirectly offered the position by notable

¹¹⁷ Garver, *Protracted Contest*, 48.

world leaders.¹¹⁸ It explains Nehru's self-appointed position as Communist China's "elder brother" on the world stage, which many mistook as a clear sign of India's arrogance and desire to dominate Asian politics.¹¹⁹

Given the challenges and constraints posed to India by Cold War politics, on the one hand, Nehru adopted classic middle power strategies of mediation and peace-keeping to uphold order. Such activities placed India in the same league as Canada and Australia in terms of their commitment to global issues and events. On the other hand, when and where geography and history permitted, Nehru did not hesitate to go beyond conventional middle power strategies and adopt more unconventional measures to uphold order. For instance, Nehru adopted a policy of denying the great powers a foothold in the immediate neighborhood. Aware that the presence of one great power had a tendency to draw in the others in order to offset the disequilibrium, Nehru sought to place obstacles in their attempts at establishing a foothold in the region. The occupation of Tibet by Communist China in October 1950 had attracted the attention of the US, where it sought to fuel the Tibetan resistance movement. To do so, the US tried to establish a presence in the Himalayan region. Aware that this had ominous possibilities, Nehru played a lead role in limiting Western powers' activities in Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim. Also, given Communist China's interest in extending its influence in other parts of Asia, namely South-East Asia,

¹¹⁸ Sample the following words of Nehru to his sister: "In your letter you mention that the State Department is trying to unseat China as a Permanent Member of the Security Council and to put India in her place. So far as we are concerned, we are not going to countenance it. That would be bad from every point of view. It would be a clear affront to China and it would mean some kind of break between us and China." Nehru to Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, August 30, 1950. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 15 I, 381.

¹¹⁹ This issue will be looked in detail in Chapter 6.

which no doubt would attract US intervention, Nehru adopted a strategy of restraining Communist China by using all the diplomatic cards at his disposal. These issues will be examined in detail in the next two chapters.

Chapter 5

India's Relations with Neighbors: A Hostage of Great Power

Disharmony

5.1 Overview

A manifestation of Nehru's acute unease about the existing great power rivalries was his policies towards the states bordering India. Aware that the US-Communist China antagonism was taking a turn for the worse, he feared that the states around its giant northern neighbor would become the hotbeds of international intrigues and a potential flash-point of the Cold War. As India and Communist China had a few historical "buffer states" between them that had the potential of becoming the sites of Cold War contestation, Nehru sought to bring them under Indian influence and forestall a conflagration. He explicated his policy in a meeting of the Prime Ministers of the Commonwealth countries in London. The minutes of the meeting note Nehru's conviction that war would be unprofitable to would-be aggressors, and that "India would permit no incursion into its territory *or into the regions around it* [emphasis mine]."¹ According to Charles H. Heimsath and Surjit Mansingh, Nehru's definition of a security zone, where he would brook no external intervention, closely resembled the American Monroe Doctrine, and India often drew on that analogy.² Nehru made it very clear to foreign leaders that India's neighbors came within

¹ Minutes of the 12th meeting of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers, October 20, 1948. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 8, 283.

² Heimsath and Mansingh, *A Diplomatic History of Modern India*, 202

India's "sphere of influence." The attempt by India to get the neighboring states to devise their policies in such a way that they did not run counter to its national interest has been referred to as "Finlandization."³

It is in this context that India's relations with its Himalayan neighbors – Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim – need to be examined. As far as Nehru's foreign policy is concerned, there is a marked tendency (especially in contemporary scholarship) to ignore India's relations with its immediate neighbors (barring Pakistan). In an implicit division of labor, it is usually the "area study" specialists who focus on India's relations with countries such as Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim. A consequence of this is that there has not been an adequate attempt at explicitly theorizing India's relations with them. As A.P. Rana and K.P. Misra correctly note, the basic thrust of the area studies scholarship is to produce "chronologically-oriented relational studies."⁴ Those who are interested in theorizing Indian foreign policy tend to focus on India's relations with either the great powers or exploring the various facets of the global North-South relations. This study posits that valuable insights regarding India's foreign policy motivations can be gleaned by closely scrutinizing its relation with the Himalayan states. The logic that determined India's interaction and relation with the larger states – premised on upholding order and based on the dominance of a non-dyadic understanding of threat - also decisively shaped its interaction with the smaller neighbors.

³ Just as Finland could not, in its external relations, be allowed to threaten the national security of the USSR. A. Jeyaratnam Wilson, "The Foreign Policies of India's Immediate Neighbors: A Reflective Interpretation," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 25, nos. 1-2 (1990): 43.

⁴ A.P. Rana and K.P. Misra, "Communicative Discourse and Community in International Relations Studies in India: A Critique," in *International Relations in India: Bringing Theory Back Home*, eds., Kanti Bajpai and Siddharth Mallavarapu (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2005), 74.

The shadow of Communist China has loomed large in studies that have examined India's relations with the immediate neighbors in the North. More often than not, these states have been viewed through the prism of the India-Communist China border dispute.⁵ In other words, India's relations with Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim have been subsumed within the master narrative of India-Communist China relations. Such an approach injects a marked bias into the scholarship and prevents one from ascertaining if a dynamic other than the India-Communist China relationship shaped India's relations with the smaller Himalayan states. Scholars writing with the benefit of hindsight, and cognizant of the present day "China threat thesis" that informs India's strategic calculus, project such a rationale back to India's relationship with its smaller neighbors in the 1950s. While it is true that Communist China did figure in the relations, other factors also played an equally pivotal role. The declassifying of the private papers of India's decision makers reveal in no uncertain terms that the desire to keep foreign powers - like the US, USSR, and Great Britain - out of the region, was a major priority of their policy initiatives. It is remarkable that hardly any work on India's relations with the neighboring states has exploited the wealth of information available in the form of these correspondences. It is the aim of this chapter to bring new and hitherto untapped information to the discussion.

The following pages will examine India's relations with Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim on a bilateral basis. Special attention will be paid to the treaties that India signed with each of the Himalayan states and how these treaties compromised the sovereignty of the smaller states. The reason for the signing of the treaties and the operationalizing of the treaty provisions

⁵ Garver, *Protracted Contest*; Heimsath and Mansingh, *A Diplomatic History of Modern India*, 202.

Source: <http://kids.britannica.com/comptons/art-117568/A-map-of-British-India-from-1947-shows-the-major>

Note: Status of Sikkim and Bhutan indicated

5.2 India-Nepal Relations

5.2.1 Background

Nepal is a Himalayan state which is located to the North of India. Prithvi Narayan Shah was responsible for uniting the various principalities in the region in the 18th century and establishing Nepal as a sovereign state that had a monarchical form of government. His contribution ensured the establishment of the Shahs as the hereditary royal family. In 1846, Jang Bahadur Rana arrogated a considerable degree of political power in his hands by becoming the Prime Minister and forcing the King to become a nominal head of state. As a result, the Ranas became the hereditary Prime Ministers of the country and held sway in Nepal's politics till 1951. The emergence of the British in the sub-continent led to the signing of the 1923 Anglo-Nepal Treaty of Friendship between the two sides in which Nepal assumed a secondary position. However, the British did not absorb the country within British India, as they had done with numerous other kingdoms in the Indian sub-continent.

Signs of a simmering discontent with the monopoly of the Ranas emerged in the 1940s, spurred significantly by India's fight for freedom and democracy. With the establishment of the nationalist government in 1947, India adopted a "sympathetic" attitude towards the anti-Rana movement.⁶ Things took an unsavory turn for the Ranas with the establishment of the Nepali Congress in 1947 – a party that was inspired by the INC. Jolted by the challenge to

⁶ Braj Kishore Jha, *Indo-Nepalese Relations 1951-1972* (Bombay: Vora and Co., 1973), 4.

their position in Nepalese politics, the Ranas looked outwards in their attempt to strengthen their position. This resulted in an Agreement of Commerce and Friendship with the US in April 1947.⁷ While a delegation had also been sent to Nationalist China, nothing emerged from that particular trip. Ties with the West were further consolidated when Nepal established diplomatic relations with the US in 1948 and with the French in 1949. Press reports of the time also indicated that the Ranas had been “sounded” by the Western countries for military bases or facilities in Nepal as part of the Cold War dynamics.⁸

Given Nehru’s aversion regarding the presence of the great powers in the region, it comes as no surprise that he wasted little time in taking note of Nepal’s quest to engage the US. In a letter to a Cabinet Minister, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Nehru noted that while India’s Ambassador to Nepal, Surjit Singh Majithia, may not have been the ideal Ambassador, the redeeming part was that he was very much against American presence in Nepal and did not hesitate to inform New Delhi when required. Nehru also approved of the Ambassador’s attempt at pointing this out to the Government of Nepal.⁹ The Indian premier also did not have the highest of opinions of the Nepalese authorities and believed that they lacked a full grasp of both India and of international affairs in general. It had to be pointed out to them that if foreign powers like the US or Great Britain approached Nepal, the powers-that-be in that country would be very much mistaken in thinking that the Western powers genuinely sought friendship with Nepal. The message had to be conveyed to them that though India

⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁸ S.D. Muni, *India and Nepal: A Changing Relationship* (Delhi: Konark Publishers, 1992), 37.

⁹ Nehru to Kidwai, December 21, 1948. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 9, 475.

sought friendship with Nepal, it also could be firm and unwavering.¹⁰ To assert India's authoritative figure which could be relied upon to provide wise counsel, Nehru pointed out to the Nepalese Prime Minister that as India was already playing a major role in Asian politics, others too had no qualms in seeking "friendly guidance" from India. Nehru further averred that while India had no desire to adopt a leadership role or the burden of others, fate and circumstances did compel it to shoulder some of the burden.¹¹

India's attempt at influencing Nepal's foreign policy was boosted significantly by the emergence of Communist China in October 1949. The communist regime's ideological dislike of feudal polities alarmed the Ranas, whose dominance of Nepalese politics had ensured the continued hold of feudalism in that country. By the middle of 1950, it had become evident that Communist China would reassert its claim over Tibet based on the logic that Tibet needed to be emancipated from the outdated feudal rule of the Dalai Lama. As a result, the Ranas looked towards India as a guarantor of its security.¹² This led to the signing of the 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship, a subject of controversy and the occasional disagreement between the two countries till this day. The treaty had a precedent in the form of the Anglo-Nepal Treaty of Friendship of 1923. Upon attaining independence, India had entered into a "Standstill Agreement" with

¹⁰ Nehru to C.P.N. Singh (India's Ambassador to Nepal 1949-52), June 9, 1949. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 11, 376.

¹¹ Nehru to Mohan Shumsher Jung Bahadur Rana, June 9, 1949. *Ibid.*, 379.

¹² Muni, *India and Nepal*, 33.

Nepal, pending the signing of a new treaty between India and Nepal. The Chinese activities in Tibet provided a good rationale for the two countries to negotiate the 1950 Treaty.

Braj Kishore Jha, a scholar of Indo-Nepalese relations, outlines four factors that led India to seek influence over Nepal after India's independence and these no doubt played an important role in the signing of the bilateral treaty. The first factor was the desire to keep Nepal sheltered from Cold War politics. The second was to help Nepal achieve political stability and economic prosperity as an instrument against interference by the foreign powers. The third motive was to protect Nepal from the threat posed by Communist China from the North. The last reason was to promote the democratization process in that country.¹³

5.2.2 The 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship

The 1950 Treaty was signed between the Indian Ambassador to Nepal, C.P.N. Singh, and the Nepalese Prime Minister and its Supreme Commander-in-Chief, Mohan Shamsher Jung Bahadur Rana. The provisions, as articulated in the treaty, appear to be quite uncontroversial and do not betray any overt signs of inequality. Some of the salient features are: the pledge of everlasting peace and friendship between the two countries and mutual respect for each others' sovereignty and territorial integrity (Article 1); the imperative to inform each other of any serious friction with any neighboring state that may strain relations between the two (Article 2); the pledge to continue diplomatic relations and the granting of the representative of each country diplomatic immunity as enshrined in international law (Article 3); agreement

¹³ Jha, *Indo-Nepalese Relations*, 3.

on appointing Consuls-General, Consuls, Vice-Consuls, and consular agents in each other's territory (Article 4); permission for Nepal to import from and through India ammunitions and war material for its security (Article 5); and to allow each others' nationals the chance to participate in industrial and economic development activities by way of concessions (Article 6).¹⁴

Some critics have opined that since the treaty bore a close resemblance to the unequal Anglo-Nepal Treaty of 1923, there was sufficient ground to infer that India did not seek to change the basic dynamics of the bilateral relationship. It was alleged that the 1950 Treaty merely re-stated the Treaty of 1923 with the addition of the words “complete sovereignty” attached to Nepal's status.¹⁵ Hence, while the actual provisions of the 1950 Treaty might not have undermined Nepal's status, the fact that India retained the main aspects of the 1923 Treaty, which had fostered an unequal relation, has been found to be of interest to critics of the treaty. Others have pointed out that the unequal status of the officials of the two governments – the Ambassador in the case of India and the Prime Minister in the case of Nepal – indicated the lop-sided nature of the agreement.¹⁶ Such accusations are examined by S.D. Muni, who argues that they lack conviction. For instance, with reference to the unequal status of the representatives, he argues that what matters is that the officials signed the documents on behalf of their governments and not as individuals acting in their own

¹⁴ For the full text of the Treaty, see Appendix 1.

¹⁵ Heimsath and Mansingh, *A Diplomatic History of Modern India*, 203.

¹⁶ Muni, *India and Nepal*, 32.

capacity.¹⁷ Hence, individual status did not matter very much. He also points out that the insertion of the term “complete sovereignty” is notable and steeped in meaning. If India indeed wanted to signal Nepal’s secondary status, it need not have agreed to the insertion of the term in the treaty document. Also, the 1923 Treaty had tangentially mentioned a previous agreement between the East India Company and Nepal (the 1815 Segowli Treaty) that had clearly established the Company’s (and as a corollary, Britain’s) dominance over Nepal. Muni points out that as per Article 8 of the 1950 Treaty, all previous treaties dating back to the British times (like the 1815 Treaty) stood cancelled. Hence, the scope for undermining Nepal’s position through semantic chicanery was very limited.¹⁸

Notwithstanding the unspectacular terms of the treaty, Nehru did not wait long to indicate to the world of India’s special interest in the Himalayan state. In December 1950, he declared in the Indian Parliament that India had an intimate relationship with Nepal and that it would not tolerate any kind of foreign intervention in that country. He pointed out that

When we came into picture, we assured Nepal that we would not only respect her independence but see...that she developed into a strong and progressive country...Nepal began to develop other foreign relations and we did not hinder the process. Frankly, we do not like and shall not brook any foreign intervention in Nepal. No other country can have as intimate a relationship with Nepal as ours is. We would like every other country to appreciate the intimate geographical and cultural relationship that exists between India and Nepal.¹⁹

¹⁷ Ibid, 32.

¹⁸ Ibid., 35.

¹⁹ Jha, *Indo-Nepalese Relations*, 5.

India's statements and behavior towards Nepal fuelled already existing rumors that stronger security provisions had been agreed upon between the two sides which had been kept away from the eyes of the public.²⁰ In December 1959, Nehru revealed "an essential, operative" part of the 1950 Treaty.²¹ According to him, an exchange of letter between the two countries had taken place in 1950, where the two sides had been more forthcoming and specific as regards the bilateral security provisions. From the view point of this study, two articles may be pointed out as being important. Article 4 stated that, "If the Government of Nepal should decide to seek foreign assistance in regard to the development of the natural resources of, or of any industrial project in Nepal, the Government of Nepal shall first give preference to the Government or the nationals of India..." This article is notable in that it does not hint at mutual responsibilities and obligations but lays the onus squarely on Nepal. According to Article 5, "Both Governments agree not to employ any foreigners whose activity may be prejudiced to the security of the other. Either Government may take representations to the other in this behalf, as and when required."²² One may surmise that often there exists a pronounced gap between word and deed, and that what is explicated in treaties may not always be strictly adhered to in practice. However, the following account will conclusively demonstrate that Nehru was more than eager to implement the provisions of the letter and left no stone unturned to deny foreign powers a firm foothold in Nepal.

²⁰ Amresh Kumar Singh, "Nepal's Political and Security Relations with Special Reference to India," in *Role of Japan and Nepal in Asian Politics*, ed., M.D. Dharamdasani (New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2005), 89; Heimsath and Mansingh, *A Diplomatic History of Modern India*, 203-04.

²¹ Heimsath and Mansingh, *A Diplomatic History of Modern India*, 203-04.

²² See Appendix 2.

More importantly, Communist China was not the predominant focus of his attention, as those subscribing to the “China threat thesis” would no doubt have us believe.

5.2.3 Indo-Nepalese Relations in Practice

In the period between 1950 and 1955, the political dispensation in Nepal was mindful of India’s sentiments and interests. As a result, India was able to establish a considerable degree of influence, evidenced by the fact that King Tribhuvan’s Secretary was an Indian civil service officer, the presence of Indians in consultative positions within the Nepalese bureaucracy,²³ and the fact that Indian security personnel helped man the check posts on the Nepal-Tibet border. It is also worth noting that the only post and telegraph office through which Nepal communicated with the outside world was the one operated by the post and telegraph department of India, located in the Indian embassy in Kathmandu.²⁴ Given that there was an uneasy balance in Nepal’s domestic politics owing to the struggle between conservative and liberal forces, unrest and political instability threatened the country. As a result of quite a few internal uprisings in Nepal in the early 1950s, the King requested India to help Nepal in the reorganization and modernization of its army. Acceding to the King’s request, Nehru dispatched an Indian military mission in 1952 headed by a senior army officer. While the duration of the mandate was a year, it stayed on in Nepal till 1958. India also bore the cost of the reorganization of the Nepalese army, given its stake in that country’s political stability.²⁵

²³ Heimsath and Mansingh, *A Diplomatic History of Modern India*, 205-06.

²⁴ Jha, *Indo-Nepalese Relations*, 51.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 36.

In spite of having close relations with Nepal, it was not possible to fully regulate that country's relations with the outside world. In this regard, Nepal's interaction with the US in the early part of 1950 posed a problem to Nehru. Driven by its desire to keep a close eye on Chinese activities in Tibet, the US started developing a great deal of interest in Nepal. According to Muni, the "Point Four Agreement" signed between the US and Nepal in January 1951 for the exchange of technical knowledge and skill was aimed at establishing a stronger US presence in Nepal. To wean Nepal away from US influence, India offered to help Nepal in "technical and other spheres" in June 1951.²⁶ It has been noted that sometimes there was open competition and even hostility between the US and Indian aid missions in Nepal.²⁷ When the US offered technical assistance to Nepal for the construction of roads and factories, India looked askance at the American outreach effort. Aid, according to Nehru was a delicate matter. A large country like India, with a relatively stable political and economic system, could afford to accept aid. However, smaller states like Nepal could not afford to accept aid as it was a very risky venture. Given its internal unrest and fragile security apparatus, the implications of allowing foreign officials in its territory could be grave. Nehru believed that the presence of Americans in Nepal was undesirable as there was a feeling among the Chinese that Nepal was "swarming" with Americans. While this was not true, if the present trends continued, the Chinese would be absolutely convinced of this "fact" and this would have far reaching consequences.²⁸ Nehru was also uneasy about Soviet

²⁶ It is believed that the Point Four Agreement was part of the US plan to establish closer ties with Nepal in response to the occupation of Tibet by China in October 1950. Muni, *India and Nepal*, 98.

²⁷ Heimsath and Mansingh, *A Diplomatic History of Modern India*, 208.

²⁸ Nehru to Foreign Secretary, May 28, 1952. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 18, 489-90.

reactions to the presence of American personnel as he had got to know that Moscow newspapers had been publishing exaggerated accounts of Americans establishing bases in Nepal.²⁹

In order to bring the activities of foreign personnel in Nepal under control and dissuade them from expanding their work, Nehru adopted a two-fold strategy, which he employed for the better part of the decade. First, he impressed upon the Nepalese to reduce their dependence and interaction with foreign officials to the greatest extent possible. Second, he let it be known to leaders of other countries that they needed to exercise restraint in their dealings with Nepal and reminded them of India's special role in Nepal. Needless to say, these initiatives did play a role in demonstrating to the world that India was not exactly an embodiment of Gandhian values in international relations. India's use of the term "sphere of influence" (in conversations with foreign dignitaries) with reference to its relation with Nepal no doubt invoked images of 19th century great powers who, unshackled by notions of political correctness, openly drew their red lines and communicated the same to others.

In his correspondence with the King of Nepal in November 1952, Nehru pointed out that the presence of Americans in Nepal had to be viewed with a very critical lens. In spite of their professions of doing their bit to help Nepal develop, the results of their work was hardly obvious, leading one to surmise that the purpose for their being present in Nepal was anything but related to genuine developmental work. He also informed the King that the

²⁹ Nehru to Indian Ambassador in Nepal (B.K. Gokhale), November 5, 1952. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 20, 480.

locals had been instructed by foreigners to bring them information from the interiors. Keeping in mind their dubious activities, Nehru advised the King not to attend the functions organized by international actors.³⁰ Nehru also saw it fit to advise the King that Communist China's Ambassador to Nepal did not need to be located in Kathmandu; the Chinese Ambassador to New Delhi could be accredited to Nepal.

While Nehru did point at international developments and the Cold War dynamics to dissuade the King from getting involved with foreign powers, he also made it a point to remind Nepalese officials of India's credentials and competence.³¹ On the issue of economic and industrial growth, Nehru informed the King that in some important respects, India had reached or exceeded the targets of the Five Year Plan in a mere three years. Pointing out that the Indian economy was sound, he declared that India was "on the eve of rapid industrial growth."³² Gentle hints apart, Nehru did not hesitate to underline that Nepal could neglect Indian interests only at its own peril. Pointing at the role of geography in Indo-Nepal relations, Nehru argued that distant powers could intervene in Nepal for a while at best, but ultimately geography would prevail. Geography had a powerful influence in Indo-Nepal relations and this fact could not be ignored by the Nepalese decision makers.³³ The message

³⁰ Nehru to the King of Nepal, November 7, 1952. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 20, 481-82.

³¹ Nehru to the King of Nepal, May 5, 1955. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 28, 269.

³² Nehru to the King of Nepal, September 11, 1954. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 26, 499.

³³ Nehru to M.P. Koirala. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 23, 461.

was clear: outside forces could be itinerant visitors at best; in the long run, Nepal had to acknowledge the proximity and role of India and align its policies with India's accordingly.³⁴

India did not hesitate to remind other countries that as far as Nepal was concerned, Indian sensibilities had to be accorded utmost respect. When reports reached Nehru that the British Embassy in Kathmandu was involved in activities deemed harmful to Nepal and the region, Nehru did not hesitate to ask his Foreign Secretary to summon the British High Commissioner and inform him that India viewed with great dismay any development that could imperil Nepal's stability. The British High Commissioner had to be reminded that India and Nepal had agreed to co-ordinate their foreign policies and that the employment of foreign personnel in Nepal had to be with the express consent of the Government of India.³⁵

Based on the conversations between Nehru and the Chinese Prime Minister and also its

³⁴ Nepal, being the site of the Himalayas and Mt. Everest drew mountaineering enthusiasts from all over the world. It also attracted scientific teams that wanted to study the mountains. Nehru interpreted these activities through a Cold War prism. In a meeting with the Nepalese Ambassador, he let it be known that he found it astounding that all mountaineering and scientific expeditions wanted to go to Nepal. According to him, a recent Japanese mountaineering team did very little mountaineering, understandably so as it was financed by the US. He advised the Ambassador to deny foreigners such opportunities citing the fact that Nepal was unnecessarily burdened with their security and other arrangements. Nehru to Secretary-General, MEA, August 25, 1954. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 26, 493-94. In his effort to keep foreigners away, Nehru did not spare royalty either. In a letter to Lord Mountbatten, he expressed his displeasure that Prince Peter of Greece sought India's permission to climb mountains in eastern Nepal. Nehru observed that, "I have myself been unable to understand the anxiety of a number of mountaineers to go to East Nepal, which is a border area with Tibet. There are plenty of mountains elsewhere to be climbed." Nehru to Mountbatten, March 18, 1956. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 32, 360-61.

³⁵ Nehru to Foreign Secretary, June 21, 1952. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 18, 496.

Foreign Minister, Chou Enlai, India was able to get Communist China's express acknowledgement that Nepal was an exclusive Indian sphere of influence.³⁶

One might dismiss India's attitude towards the US and Great Britain in Nepal as being reflective of India's anti-imperialist stance, something which scholars believe influenced India's stand on international issues.³⁷ However, what is surprising is that, even when it came to the issue of the USSR and its presence in Nepal, Nehru displayed his characteristic sense of unease regarding a foreign presence. In the battle for supremacy and influence among the US and the USSR, there is no doubt that Nehru leaned on the side of the Soviets.³⁸ While Nehru was not a communist, he admired communism as "an ideal society," and looked favorably upon the USSR as the embodiment of communist values. The fact that the USSR had given voice to the Indian nationalists at the General Assembly of the UN in 1946 by condemning the deplorable treatment meted out to people of Indian origin in South Africa had further bolstered its image in Indian eyes.³⁹ Nehru admitted his sympathy for the USSR when he wrote to his sister that, "Personally I think that in this world tug-of-war there is on

³⁶ Garver, *Protracted Contest*, 145.

³⁷ Michael Brecher, *India's Foreign Policy: An Interpretation* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1957), 3; V.P. Dutt, *India and the World* (New Delhi: Sanchar Publishing House, 1990), 12-13.

³⁸ This was demonstrated by Nehru's delay in chastising the USSR over its intervention in Hungary in 1956. Critics claim that while Nehru wasted no time in criticizing the Anglo-French forces for their role in the Suez crisis of 1956, he did not display a similar degree of alacrity in critiquing the USSR.

³⁹ A. Appadorai and M.S. Rajan, *India's Foreign Policy and Relations* (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1985), 259-61.

the whole more reason on the side of Russia, not always of course.”⁴⁰ What is striking is that notwithstanding this bias and soft corner with respect to the USSR, Nehru did not hesitate to keep a hawk-like eye on Soviet activities in the region and was unwavering in his pursuit of establishing a veritable *cordon sanitaire* around India.

In 1956, the Soviets were contemplating establishing diplomatic contact with the Nepal government. Aware of India’s sensitivities, the Soviet Ambassador in a meeting with Nehru broached the topic and sought Nehru’s “advice.” It was pointed out to him that the Nepalese “were a little shy about adding to their diplomatic contact with other countries. They were a little afraid that one step led to another and other countries would crowd in.”⁴¹ In spite of India’s best efforts, the Soviets and the Nepalese did establish diplomatic contact. Not only that, the USSR also was looking to establish its embassy in Nepal’s capital. India viewed this with a great amount of displeasure and, as with the other great powers, reminded the Soviet foreign office of the special relationship that India had with Nepal. It was underlined that should the USSR setup an embassy in Nepal, other powers too would follow suit.⁴² When New Delhi learnt that there was talk of a possible Soviet aid to Nepal in 1957, the Indian Foreign Secretary, Subimal Dutt, in a letter to an unnamed Indian official, pointed out that the Soviets needed to be told that Nepal had not been able to fully utilize the assistance given to them in the past and thereby imply that they should revisit the decision of

⁴⁰ Nehru to Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, November 14, 1946. “Correspondence with Nehru,” 1st Installment. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit Private Papers, Nehru Memorial Library Archives, New Delhi, India.

⁴¹ Nehru’s note to the Secretary-General, MEA and Foreign Secretary, March 19, 1956. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 32, 342.

⁴² Foreign Secretary to K.P.S. Menon, July 27, 1956. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 34, 389.

giving aid to Nepal. As the Americans and the Chinese had drawn up their aid programs in consultation with India, the USSR should do the same, if it wanted to go ahead with its plan. Such consultation was needed ostensibly to prevent any “overlap” between Indian and other assistance initiatives.⁴³ Given how the Indian decision makers viewed foreign aid in Nepal, there is no doubt that such technical objections were but a mere eyewash.

It was only a matter of time before India’s role in Nepalese politics and security started attracting criticism from the Nepalese. A new spirit of nationalism was developing in the country based on resentment against the extensive role of India in Nepal.⁴⁴ Black flag demonstrations greeted the Indian Parliamentary delegation visiting Kathmandu in June 1954. The Nepalese Prime Minister pointed out that the unrest was the handiwork of foreign agencies who were responsible for instigating certain elements within Nepal. He asked why was it that only India was being pilloried and marked out for protests when nationals of other countries also were stationed in Nepal?⁴⁵ Indian embassy members also stepped in to offer their explanation. They alleged that the demonstrations were malicious in nature and the handiwork of disgruntled opposition leaders. To that extent, the demonstrations had no real political significance and that the general popular attitude towards India continued to be of the friendliest nature.⁴⁶ Political organizations like the Gurkha Parishad raised the demand that Indian military personnel be removed from Nepal. While this was not the official

⁴³ Subimal Dutt to unnamed official, November 11, 1958. Subject File no. 56, Subimal Dutt Private Papers.

⁴⁴ Heimsath and Mansingh, *A Diplomatic History of Modern India*, 206.

⁴⁵ Muni, *India and Nepal*, 57.

⁴⁶ Rajan, *India in World Affairs 1954-1956*, 237.

Nepalese demand, it does indicate that there was discontent brewing with the Indian presence. According to Nehru, if significant pressure were brought to bear on the Government of Nepal by the protests and the latter were to ask India to remove its personnel, he would consider what needed to be done. Hence, he would cross the bridge only once it had been reached. However, Nehru added that the fact that elements within Nepal were vehemently opposed to the Indian presence on their soil did not have the slightest effect on him.⁴⁷ This clearly reveals that Nehru, at certain junctures, privileged security issues more than the demands of a people.

The anti-Indian sentiment was further intensified by the death of King Tribhuvan in 1955. Prince Mahendra became the King of Nepal and decided that he would preside over the Cabinet and that there would be no Prime Minister. He entrusted Tankha Prasad Acharya with looking after foreign policy. One of the first steps of the new administration was to improve ties with Communist China by establishing diplomatic contact with it. Like other Ambassadors to Nepal, the Chinese Ambassador was also to be based in New Delhi. Ominously from India's point of view, Acharya made it clear that he would look to strengthen ties with other countries too and that he wanted to modify the "special relations" with India. He desired direct trade relations with others, instead of conducting foreign trade through India, as was indicated in the Treaty of 1950. The new mindset saw Nepal establishing diplomatic contact with Ceylon, Egypt, and Japan.

⁴⁷ Nehru to B.K. Gokhale, July 6, 1954. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 26, 490-91.

While the King no doubt approved of these changes, he was nonetheless mindful of Nehru's displeasure. When it became apparent that Nepal's foreign policy was deviating a bit too much from the path as charted out by the 1950 Treaty, Acharya was removed from his post and K.I. Singh was made the new Prime Minister. Acharya alleged that his removal was the result of his foreign policy initiatives. He claimed that it was the Indian government that leaned on the King for his removal as it did not like his reaching out to Communist China and the USSR.⁴⁸ While it is a matter of speculation as to what role India actually had in his removal, a confidential report by India's Intelligence Bureau in May 1957 noted that Acharya was increasingly coming round to the view that it was no longer possible to remain uncommitted in the conflict of ideologies.⁴⁹ Acharya was eased out on July 27, 1957, two months after the report was circulated.

The first general election in Nepal was held in 1959. It saw the election of B.P. Koirala, a notable leader of the Nepali Congress, as Prime Minister of the country. Unlike Acharya, Koirala's worldview was in harmony with Nehru's. An internationalist, he followed international developments and was opposed to the bi-polar politics of the times. He raised Nepal's international stature and balanced its relation with different countries. When Communist China showed increased interest in its southern region, Nehru declared that "any aggression against Bhutan or Nepal would be considered by us as an aggression on

⁴⁸ Jha, *Indo-Nepalese Relations*, 67.

⁴⁹ P.V. Bhaskaran (Deputy Director, Intelligence Bureau) to B.K. Acharya (MEA) and A.V. Pai (Ministry of Home Affairs), May 23, 1957. Subject File no. 50, Subimal Dutt Private Papers.

India.” This has been referred to as the “Nehru Doctrine.”⁵⁰ It is a pity that the Government of India has not de-classified the Nehru papers from the late 1950s onwards, for they would have revealed the reason for the announcement. Was it occasioned by an actual change in Nehru’s thinking as regards Communist China? Or did he believe that Chinese entry into Nepal would immediately draw the US and its allies into Nepal and lead to a conflagration next door to India - hence the warning to Communist China?

In spite of the fact that Koirala’s world view was in general agreement with Nehru’s and that Koirala was close to the Indian leaders,⁵¹ India unambiguously presented itself as an unwieldy neighbor. Koirala notes that as Prime Minister, he had to constantly fight against three forces: the royal palace, the landed elements, and India. While Nehru might have been polite and considerate, his government had no qualms in adopting the “Big Brother” attitude. So frustrated was Koirala with the Indian Ambassador that he remarked, “the Indian ambassador wishes that our country be like his district board, and he regards himself as chairman of that district board”. Summing up his exasperation with India, Koirala observed that “they just did not understand clean diplomacy.”⁵² If someone so attuned to

⁵⁰ Jha, *Indo-Nepalese Relations*, 80.

⁵¹ Due to his anti-Rana activities, Koirala had been exiled in India. As a student of the Banaras Hindu University, he became friends with some of the stalwarts of Indian politics – Jayaprakash Narayan, Acharya Narendra Dev, and Ram Manohar Lohia. Due to his involvement in the Quit India Movement, he was imprisoned by the British. It is in prison that he became friends with Rajendra Prasad, the future President of India.

⁵² Ramachandra Guha, review of *Atmabrittanta: Late Life Recollections*, by B.P. Koirala, *The Hindu*, July 29, 2001, <http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/2001/07/29/stories/13290171.htm>

India's sensitivities could have such misgivings, one may well imagine what other Nepalese leaders made of India and its role in Nepal's affairs.

In December 1960 Koirala's government was dismissed by the King. It is believed that his radical land reform measures provoked the powerful landed elements to lobby for his ouster. It is also speculated that given Koirala's standing in Nepalese politics and his growing stature internationally, the King grew insecure. As Koirala was seen as having the capacity to become a powerful figure in Nepal's politics, the King was forced to dismiss him.⁵³ The early 1960s saw the King adopt a marked "tilt" towards Communist China and relations with India remained awkward leading up to the border war between India and Communist China in the fall of 1962.

From the above accounts, it becomes very clear that from Nehru's perspective, Nepal was a site from which all the great powers had to be kept away to the greatest extent possible. At various points of time, Communist China, the US, Great Britain, and the USSR were informed by Nehru that their involvement in Nepal, beyond a point, was not welcome. It is also noteworthy that in communicating his unease to Indian officials about the presence of US officials in Nepal, Nehru cited the negative reaction of the Chinese and the Soviets. This clearly shows that Nepal was being viewed from a broader, Cold War prism, and not from a narrow, India-Communist China perspective. Since Nehru viewed the struggle for influence by the great powers as a recipe for disaster, as evidenced by the developments in Korea in the early 1950s, he considered it prudent to deny them the real estate on which they could

⁵³ *Ibid.*

play out their Cold War politics and imperil order. If Nepal's sovereignty were to be compromised, it was a small price to pay in the larger interest of order. We thus see order trumping justice in Nehru's scheme of things, just as outlined by Bull in *The Anarchical Society*. The gravity of the situation was further underlined by the fact that order was being threatened by one of the key institutions of the international society – the great powers. Given the disastrous potential of this development and the need to remove the source of the disorder – the great powers – from the region, Nehru adopted policies towards Nepal that were in stark contrast to his professions of egalitarianism and equal respect for all. Given the threat posed to order, Nehru had to cast aside his sympathy for the USSR and view it as being a part of the problem and not being a part of the solution.

5.3 India-Bhutan Relations

5.3.1 Background

Bhutan, like Nepal, is situated north of India, along the foothills of the Himalayas. As with Nepal, so too with Bhutan, the British played a pivotal role in establishing ties that formed the basis of independent India's relation with its neighbor. The 1772-73 Anglo-Bhutan war marked the beginning of the unequal relationship between the British, in the form of the East India Company, and Bhutan. Subsequent treaties saw Bhutan ceding territory to the British and allowing them to use Bhutanese territory as a trade route to Tibet which lay to the North. In return for Bhutan's "good behavior" and in lieu of Bhutan's loss of revenue owing to the role of the British, the latter paid the Bhutanese an annual subsidy of 50,000

rupees which was subsequently increased to 100,000 rupees.⁵⁴ The 1910 Treaty between British India and Bhutan further defined the relationship in favor of the former. According to the treaty, Bhutan became a “protectorate” of the British as its foreign policy came to be shaped by the colonial power.⁵⁵ However, Bhutan’s internal sovereignty was maintained, evidenced by the fact that the British did not insist on the establishment of a “Residency” in the capital of Bhutan, as had been done with Nepal and Sikkim. The British Political Officer in Gangtok, the capital of neighboring Sikkim, was accredited to the capital of Bhutan. While this was a unilateral act on the part of the British, the official in question undertook but a few occasional tours of Bhutan.⁵⁶ What is notable is that the British “never made any effort to add substance to their claims of suzerainty in Bhutan.”⁵⁷

When India attained independence in August 1947, it did not sign a “Standstill Agreement” with Bhutan as it had done with Nepal and Sikkim but both states interacted with each other as though they had signed such an agreement.⁵⁸ The Bhutanese also let it be known to India that they wanted to put the bilateral relations on a new footing and demanded the return of territory which they had lost to British India in 1865. In return, Bhutan indicated that it was willing to forego the annual subsidies that it was receiving from India. While India was

⁵⁴ Leo E. Rose, *The Politics of Bhutan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 64-66.

⁵⁵ T.T. Poulse, “Bhutan’s External Relations and India,” *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 20, no. 2 (April 1971): 203.

⁵⁶ Leo E. Rose, “Bhutan’s External Relations,” *Pacific Affairs* 47, no. 2 (Summer 1974): 192.

⁵⁷ Rose, *The Politics of Bhutan*, 67.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 72.

willing to accept Bhutan's demands, it was not in favor of turning its back to the basic dynamics that had been established between the two states during British times.

T.T. Poullose points out the dilemma facing India when he notes that though stepping into the shoes of an Imperial power and inheriting the rights and privileges that the British had enjoyed vis-à-vis Bhutan was "embarrassing" to Nehru's India, one could not overlook the broader strategic and political context. In the national interest, India favored continuity in its relations with Bhutan. It was a difficult choice to balance its anti-colonial stance and national interest.⁵⁹ As a result, the two countries signed the Indo-Bhutanese Friendship Treaty in 1949. The fact that Bhutan was apprehensive of Communist China's designs in the Himalayan region⁶⁰ made it easier for India to enter into a treaty arrangement with it. For India, the fact that it could have a say in Bhutan's contacts with the outside world and prevent external forces from playing undesirable roles was a major motivation. While Communist China was a part of the calculation, it is problematic attributing India's eagerness to just Communist China. This has been corroborated by Leo Rose who points out that the treaty with Bhutan predated the overtly aggressive gestures towards Tibet by the new

⁵⁹ Poullose, "Bhutan's External Relations and India," 198.

⁶⁰ Members of the Bhutan royal family were educated in India and had been socialized into the basic norms and trends in India from an early age. While India was different from Bhutan in many ways, there was a basic level of understanding. After independence, India instituted policies to bring about land reforms and weaken the hold of the feudal elements in society. However, in their dealings with countries like Bhutan, where the landed class reigned supreme, Indian leaders were careful not to criticize and challenge their authority. In stark contrast, China's radical approach to feudalism and its handling of Tibet's polity was heavy handed. Bhutan's leaders found greater merit in moving closer to India than China. Nari Rustomji, *Enchanted Frontiers: Sikkim, Bhutan and India's North-Eastern Borderlands* (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1973), 179.

communist regime in China. The signing of the treaty, according to Rose, “was shaped by India’s comparative lack of concern over a potential Chinese threat on the Himalayan frontier.”⁶¹

5.3.2 The 1949 Indo-Bhutanese Friendship Treaty

Amongst the notable features of the treaty was Bhutan’s willingness to be “guided by the advice” of the Indian government in its foreign policy and the pledge by India that it would not interfere in the internal administration of Bhutan (Article 2). Bhutan would be free to import “with the assistance and the approval” of the Indian government – from or through India – arms and ammunitions as long as India was satisfied that the intention of Bhutan was friendly and that there was no danger to India through such imports (Article 6).⁶² Article 3 of the treaty stipulated that India would increase the compensation grant to 500,000 rupees per annum (\$105,000). Article 4 underlined the principles of equality in the relationship between the two states while Article 5 provided for free trade and commerce between the two.⁶³ As part of the negotiations leading up to the signing of the treaty, India also had agreed to return to Bhutan 32 square miles of territory.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Leo E. Rose, “India and Sikkim: Redefining the Relationship,” *Pacific Affairs*. 42, no. 1 (Spring 1969): 34.

⁶² For the full text of the treaty see Appendix 3.

⁶³ Rajesh Kharat, “Indo-Bhutan Relations: Strategic Perspectives,” in *Himalayan Frontiers of India: Historical, Geo-political and Strategic Perspectives*, ed., K. Warikoo (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), 140.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 139.

Unlike the 1910 treaty, the 1949 treaty did not use the word “protectorate” in referring to Bhutan, but instead recognized its status as a sovereign, independent entity in international relations. Kapileshwar Labh opines that even though Article 2 and its emphasis on India’s dominance of Bhutan’s foreign policy may hint at some form of protectorate status for Bhutan, the understanding that there would be mutual consultation between the two signatories ensured that India could not unilaterally impose its will on its smaller neighbor.⁶⁵ Besides, no state ever is totally independent, and by entering into bilateral or multilateral treaties, it has its sovereignty compromised to an extent.⁶⁶ However, Poulouse provides a dissenting note when he writes that Article 2 clearly was not only an infringement on the sovereignty of Bhutan but rather, under international law, when one state assumes control over another state’s foreign relations, the latter “ipso facto becomes a semi-sovereign state.”⁶⁷ Srikant Dutt also takes a critical view of the matter and argues that in addition to the purely technical aspect, one also needs to look at the overall context. He opines that, “While all treaties are, in a sense, unequal according to subjective judgment, what makes the inequality of the 1949 treaty a live issue is the present international climate in which new states have been highly sensitive to any restriction on their sovereignty, especially in context of memories of unequal and imposed colonial treaties of the past.”⁶⁸ This is an astute observation since evidence of inequality between states cannot always be obtained from a

⁶⁵ Provision for the negotiation and arbitration of disputes was included in Article 9 of the treaty.

⁶⁶ Kapileshwar Labh, *India and Bhutan* (New Delhi: Sindhu Publications, 1974), 229.

⁶⁷ Poulouse, “Bhutan’s External Relations and India,” 203.

⁶⁸ Srikant Dutt, “Bhutan’s International Position,” *International Studies* 20, nos. 3-4 (1981): 603.

careful reading of the provisions that are contained in treaties between states. One often has to step outside the confines of legalese to fully understand the dynamics among states.

Notwithstanding the interpretation of the provisions of the treaty, Nehru was absolutely clear in his mind that Bhutan and its policies had to be monitored carefully by India and aligned with its own policies and principles. He saw Bhutan as being “subordinate” to India, with the key to its autonomy lying in the hands of Indian decision makers. It is difficult to believe that the words “As a matter of fact, Bhutan remains autonomous only because we choose to allow it to remain so” were written by Nehru.⁶⁹ One might well be excused for thinking that they were written by the leader of a great power bent on asserting its authority on weaker powers. It is clear that Nehru sought the “Finlandization” of the states at the foothills of the Himalayas. The frank observation notwithstanding, Nehru adopted the following policy towards Bhutan: not to encourage it to get a sovereign or independent status in international relations, but without overtly referring to this fact in any way.⁷⁰

It is interesting to note Nehru’s desire to isolate Bhutan and keep it free from foreign influences in spite of the fact that the country already had a long standing reputation of being one of the world’s most remote kingdoms that could only be entered through two roads in the 1950s. Pointing out how cut off the country was from the mores of the times, Warner Levi notes that till about 1950, Bhutanese law dictated that murderers be punished by the imposition of a small fine, while criticism of the government attracted a much harsher

⁶⁹ Nehru to C.P.N. Singh, September 10, 1949. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 13, 258.

⁷⁰ Nehru to Secretary-General and Foreign Secretary, June 10, 1955. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 29, 312.

penalty – drowning in the nearest river.⁷¹ The practice of slavery was formally abolished only as late as 1957.⁷² Given that Nehru did not see a serious direct threat from Communist China – as evidenced by the muted role of the dyadic notion of threat and Nehru’s constant reminder to the great powers, including the Chinese, that the Himalayan states were India’s “sphere of influence” (which Chou Enlai readily acknowledged) - it may be inferred that the fear of great power politics influencing the affairs of the kingdom led Nehru to regulate its interaction with the wider world.

5.3.3 Indo-Bhutanese Relations in Practice

Given Bhutan’s isolated location, it is only natural that the country did not interact anywhere near as much as Nepal did with the outside world. As a result, till the late 1950s, there were not many issues that animated Indo-Bhutanese relations. Nonetheless, Nehru kept up a steady stream of correspondence with his officials which help us follow his thoughts on the relationship. In the years after the signing of the 1949 treaty, a number of Bhutanese migrated to the US. Nehru got wind of this fact and lost no time in sounding the alarm. He resolved to find out more about this unwelcome development: how did this issue arise, who initiated it – was it the Bhutanese themselves or were the Americans responsible for it? Nehru believed that such a serious matter ought not to be left uninvestigated. If India were to passively witness this event unfold, others might well follow. Nehru pointed out that he did not like this development one bit.⁷³

⁷¹ Werner Levi, “India’s Himalayan Border,” *The Comparative Review* 188 (July/December 1955): 44.

⁷² Dutt, “Bhutan’s International Position,” 609.

⁷³ Nehru’s note to Foreign Secretary, August 7, 1952. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 19, 666.

Apa Pant, the Indian Political Officer in nearby Sikkim, who had an eye on affairs within Bhutan, rationalized such an interventionist mindset in terms of India's genuine concern for Bhutan. Based on his understanding and insight of the region, Pant believed that it was in the interest of Bhutan not only to seek India's advice but also to have its cooperation at all times. As a country like Bhutan was "ripe for international intrigues," the losers inevitably would be the Bhutanese, were they not to heed India's wise warnings. While he did not believe that countries like Communist China, the USSR, or Great Britain would get involved in Bhutan, were they to propose sending delegations or representatives to visit Bhutan, the Government of India would "politely but firmly tell them not to be 'silly'!"⁷⁴ While Pant did not clarify why he thought that Bhutan was ripe for international intrigues, one can make an educated guess. After the occupation of Tibet by Communist China in 1949, western powers, especially the US, wanted to establish a presence in the nearby regions in order to monitor Chinese activities. As Bhutan shared its border with Tibet in the North, the country had the potential to become an observation and operational outpost for anti communist elements.

While the Indian administration was very alive to the possibility of interference by the great powers, it was not as alarmist when assessing Communist China and its role in the region. R.K. Nehru, a relative of Jawaharlal Nehru and a senior diplomat in the MEA (not to be confused with B.K. Nehru), had pointed out to his Prime Minister that China had twice (in 1910 and 1948) claimed that Bhutan was its vassal state and that India could not have a

⁷⁴ Apa Pant to Nari K. Rustomji, July 21, 1955. Subject File no. 5, Nari K. Rustomji Private Papers, Nehru Memorial Library Archives, New Delhi, India.

special relationship with Bhutan without its assent.⁷⁵ To that extent, India needed to have a closer look at Chinese designs. The Chinese had also distributed copies of a map in the Himalayan region in 1956 depicting Communist China and Tibet as the palm of a human hand and Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, NEFA, (North East Frontier Agency – the north-eastern most territory in India) and Ladakh (northern most territory in India) as its five fingers.⁷⁶ Nehru dismissed the diplomat's warning and observed that India did not have to worry about Chinese or Tibetan claims on Bhutan at all. While China may have made such claims in the past, he saw no reason why it would raise such a claim at the present.⁷⁷ Besides, any unsavory development by Communist China was attributed to the zeal of local officials that had nothing to do with the thinking in the Chinese capital.

Nehru was mindful of the fact that a socio-economically weak and vulnerable state provided the opportunity for outside powers to meddle in its affairs and pave the way for “international intrigues.” After all, just a few years earlier, the Marshall Plan had clearly demonstrated the link between socio-economic matters and geopolitics. Being an astute follower of international events, there is no doubt that Nehru derived lessons from it. As

⁷⁵ Srikant Dutt argues that a predominantly Western lens prevents one from acknowledging that China did have some sort of claim to Bhutan. According to him, both Westerners and Indians failed to adequately appreciate this fact. See Dutt, “Bhutan's International Position,” 604-06.

⁷⁶ Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, 33.

⁷⁷ Nehru to Foreign Secretary, July 17, 1955. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 29, 316.

Bhutan was a “backward” state, India had a clear interest in promoting its progress.⁷⁸ Apprehensive of the fact that outside forces would step in and offer aid to Bhutan, India discouraged direct economic aid pacts between Bhutan and others.⁷⁹ It was a recurrent aspect of Nehru’s foreign policy to provide assistance – in terms of money, technical expertise, and personnel – to neighboring countries so as to prevent outside forces from using aid as an excuse to gaining a strong foothold in the region and competing with each other for geopolitical space and influence.

It was left to the Indian Foreign Secretary to come up with a rationale that would deny others a role in Bhutan’s development while making sure that it did not ruffle too many feathers. In response to Bhutan’s increasing desire to avail of US aid under the Public Law 480 scheme, India’s Foreign Secretary, Subimal Dutt, observed that it was unfortunate that the Prime Minister of Bhutan, Jigmie Dorji, had been “talking loosely” about applying to foreign countries for aid. He doubted whether the Prime Minister or his close group of advisers understood the implications of their action. While the Indians had managed to put paid to such plans for a while, it was feared that the *Maharaja* (King) of Bhutan would broach the topic once again when he met Nehru. Dutt’s opinion was that in such an eventuality, the King had to be told that as his country lacked proper organization and

⁷⁸ Nehru to Secretary-General and Foreign Secretary, December 16, 1954. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 27, 203-04.

⁷⁹ Pradyuma P. Karan, “Geopolitical Structure of Bhutan,” in *Government and Politics of Asian Countries*, ed., Virender Grover (New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 2000), 210.

trained personnel it was not capable of “absorbing” large amounts of aid.⁸⁰ Thus, asking for foreign aid was impractical. It is worth noting that this was the same explanation provided by India to Nepal when that country wanted to benefit from international aid.

When the situation in Tibet worsened in 1959-60, culminating in the flight of the Dalai Lama to India, scores of Tibetan refugees streamed into India. Given Bhutan’s location, many of the refugees took refuge in that kingdom. Given the paucity of resources, the authorities sought India’s permission to avail of the expertise of international organizations to deal with the situation. Not only did the Indians not take too kindly to such requests, but rather, these requests were viewed as Bhutan’s ploy to “frighten” India.⁸¹ Desperate to prevent any external role, Dutt’s advice was that India itself should step in and help the Bhutanese government in rehabilitation plans.⁸²

In spite of the fact that India itself was receiving external aid for its own development, and faced with socio-economic challenges at home, it did not hesitate to part with its limited resources to maintain its sphere of influence. Cognizant of the fact that building

⁸⁰ Dutt, untitled, February 4, 1961. Subject File no. 47, Subimal Dutt Private Papers.

⁸¹ Dutt to Joint Secretary (East), April 5, 1961. Ibid.

⁸² Srikant Dutt avers that India “virtually dragged Bhutan into the twentieth century.” In this, India was motivated by its own strategic requirements where it wanted to develop Bhutan so as to meet its own defense and security needs. Dutt, “Bhutan’s International Position,” 612. While this argument is no doubt true, it would be wrong to neglect the fact that the Bhutanese authorities were aware that their country needed to develop. The basic desire to progress along with the attempt to balance India’s influence would no doubt have led Bhutan to seek external aid.

infrastructure was an essential part of progress, India in 1959 made available funds up to a ceiling of 150 million rupees (\$31.5 million) to the Bhutanese authorities. India also made available 700,000 rupees per annum (\$150,000) as a subsidy to Bhutan for developmental purposes, over and above the 500,000 rupees (\$105,000) that it was paying Bhutan annually. An Indian Planning Commission visited Bhutan in 1961 to study its economic conditions and natural resources and recommended a development plan.⁸³ This led to the execution of the first Five Year Plan in Bhutan, modeled on India's Five year plans which themselves were inspired by Soviet centralized planning. Rose argues that the Bhutan government had handed over primary responsibility for economic development to India. Bhutan's Development Secretariat was "virtually established as a Government of India enterprise."⁸⁴ While promoting Bhutan's development, India kept even the non-great powers at bay. India's refusal to Swedish and Japanese companies to set up paper factories in the early 1960s is a case in point.⁸⁵ What becomes evident is that even though the treaty provisions expressly laid down that India would not interfere in Bhutan's domestic affairs, by refusing to allow external organizations and states to contribute in a meaningful manner to Bhutan's growth, India was able to shape the pace and contours of the kingdom's progress. India's actions clearly constituted interference in the internal affairs on Bhutan.

Bhutan's autonomy was dealt a further blow when its relations with Communist China witnessed a considerable degree of strain in the late 1950s. In 1959, Bhutan had protested to

⁸³ Labh, *India and Bhutan*, 217.

⁸⁴ Rose, "Bhutan's External Relations," 203.

⁸⁵ Dutt, "Bhutan's International Position," 613.

Communist China on the issue of maps of the region published by that country which showed a realignment of the border with Bhutan. India quickly intervened and chastised Bhutan for violating the provisions of Article 2 of the 1949 Treaty which authorized India to mediate Bhutan's contact with the outside world.⁸⁶ India cited this very treaty in making representations to Communist China on behalf of Bhutan.⁸⁷

The flight of the Dalai Lama during the same time period saw a large number of Chinese soldiers approach the Bhutan-Tibet border. Given the new development on the border and the issue of Chinese maps misrepresenting the Tibet-Bhutan border, the Bhutanese Prime Minister grew worried. Lacking military capability, he visited India in August 1959 and sought a written guarantee from India that it would protect Bhutan in the event of a military aggression by Communist China. In response, Nehru made a statement in the Indian Parliament announcing that his country's commitment to protect Bhutan.⁸⁸ Following this incident, India's role in Bhutan's affairs was further entrenched with the Indian Army being entrusted with the task of training the Royal Bhutan Army. This resulted in the sending of the Indian Military Training Team to Bhutan in 1961. As a consequence, Bhutan was explicitly brought within the Indian security architecture.

⁸⁶ It is noteworthy that Gopal, Nehru's biographer, claims that India raised the matter at the request of Bhutan's national assembly. Such a depiction would not fully reveal the behind-the-scenes tactics employed by India in relation to its neighbor. Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, 206.

⁸⁷ Garver, *Protracted Contest*, 177.

⁸⁸ Labh, *India and Bhutan*, 212.

While the Chinese threat had caused the Bhutanese to seek India's help, it was perhaps realized that it did not bode well for its sovereignty. It made sense to establish ties with other states too and lessen the reliance on India. As a result, in the immediate aftermath of the plea for help, the Prime Minister of Bhutan sought to establish diplomatic contact with other countries and informed India of its decision. Nehru did not entertain this request, thereby perpetuating Bhutan's isolation from the rest of the world and also continuing its reliance on India.

It is difficult to say if Nehru's dispatch of troops to Bhutan was occasioned because he felt threatened by Chinese activities (Bhutan certainly was) or if he found it an opportune moment to bring Bhutan further under India's control. However, a few points may be noted on this issue. First, Dutt's private papers refer to his conversations with Nehru. They indicate that Nehru was not too worried about Chinese claims, especially in relation to Bhutan. Apparently Nehru was "not greatly perturbed by any possible Chinese intervention in Bhutan."⁸⁹ Second, India did not raise its defense expenditure during the period to indicate a change in its threat evaluation. This has been indicated in the previous chapter already. Third, given the deterioration of relations between India and Communist China, India had undertaken the Forward Policy, which was more symbolic than substantive. It consisted of India placing soldiers in disputed territory without adequate firepower and backup. It was clearly understood that these positions could not be defended in an actual firefight. According to the then Defense Minister, Krishna Menon, the Forward Policy

⁸⁹ Dutt to Joint Secretary (East), September 7, 1959. Subject File no. 37, Subimal Dutt Private Papers.

“...was one of building posts, showing the flag, and so on.”⁹⁰ Evidently, India did not see its policy as being risky since it believed it knew exactly what Communist China was capable and not capable of doing.

It might be recalled that given the fact India viewed its giant northern neighbor as a country facing various internal challenges, the location of the Himalayas as a barrier between the two countries, and the belief that the Chinese leadership was rational, it was thought highly unlikely that Communist China would do anything to upset the relations between itself and India. While strains might develop in the bilateral relations, it was felt that they were not capable of triggering a conflict. To that extent, Dutt's report on Nehru's threat assessment in the context of Bhutan is accurate. Based on this conclusion, one can conclude that (a) India sent its soldiers to Bhutan to bolster the flagging morale of the Bhutanese and prevent them from requesting for additional help from other quarters; (b) demonstrate India's resolve and send a message to Nepal and Sikkim that India could be depended upon to come to their aid, and that they need not turn outwards for help in panic; and (c) strengthen India's hold over Bhutan's affairs even further.

Notwithstanding the fact that India did pledge its support for Bhutan in the face of Chinese threats, there is no denying that many within Bhutan were dissatisfied by India's overarching role in their country's polity. This dissatisfaction can be traced back to the early 1950s, much

⁹⁰ Brecher, *India and World Politics*, 151.

before India stepped up its Bhutan activities. In a letter to the Indian Political Officer in Gangtok, Nari Rustomji, the *Dewan* of Sikkim had noted that

I had reported last year on the extreme suspicion and distrust towards India of the more influential elements in Bhutan and Sikkim. There is no question at all that there has been reduction of tension since then. But the tension is still there, and it will take some time yet, as well as patient handling, before it can be utterly relaxed...the prevailing feeling still is, "Why can't we be left alone to manage our affairs? India has enough to attend to putting her own house in order without having to go about advising other people how to manage theirs."⁹¹

The desire to revisit the skewed relationship between the two states was explicated at the highest levels when in May 1956 the Prime Minister of Bhutan, Jigme Dorji, announced that Bhutan considered itself independent and wanted to stay independent. In 1959, he went further and revisited Article 2 and its meaning. According to Dorji, while his government stood by the 1949 treaty and agreed to be "guided" by India in its external relations, Bhutan did not want India to conduct its foreign policy. He felt that Bhutan could directly contact other countries and establish diplomatic relations with them, including the seeking of military and economic aid.⁹² In fact it was India's policies that had prevented Bhutan from being represented at the UN till 1972.⁹³ D.K. Sen, the Constitutional Adviser to the Bhutan government (who was an Indian national), conveyed the message that Bhutan was looking to establish direct diplomatic relations with some of the big powers such as the US, the USSR, and Great Britain. It has been reported that two Western powers had been approached by Bhutanese agents for direct diplomatic relations. India "politely warned" those powers that

⁹¹ Rustomji to Pant, August 23, 1955. Subject File no. 5, N.K. Rustomji Private Papers.

⁹² Valentine J. Belfiglio, "India's Economic and Political Relations with Bhutan," *Asian Survey* 12, no. 8 (August 1972): 682-83.

⁹³ Dutt, "Bhutan's International Position," 603.

establishing ties with Bhutan would be seen as an unfriendly act.⁹⁴ Acting on Sen's report, Nehru wrote to the King advising him against initiating the process whereby his kingdom would come into direct contact with other states. While accepting the advice, the King also made it a point to state that "Bhutan must decide for herself in such matters."⁹⁵ It is perhaps in light of Bhutan's sensitivities as regards its status that when the *Maharaja* of Bhutan visited New Delhi in January-February 1961, Bhutan's flag was flown along with the Indian one for the first time.⁹⁶

This uneasy dynamic – dependence on India and disenchantment with this dependence – marked Bhutan's attitude towards India in the years leading to the border war between India and Communist China. During the war, the Government of Bhutan officially maintained strict neutrality between the two belligerents. In reality, it sympathized with India and provided food and medical care to those Indian soldiers who had entered Bhutan's territory during the course of fighting the Chinese troops. Post 1962, India loosened its hold over Bhutan and sponsored it as an observer of the Fourteenth meeting of the Consultative Committee of the Colombo Plan. India also backed Bhutan for membership of the Universal Postal Union.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Poulouse, "Bhutan's External Relations and India," 204-05.

⁹⁵ Belfiglio, "India's Economic and Political Relations with Bhutan," 682-83.

⁹⁶ Kharat, "Indo-Bhutan Relations," in *Himalayan Frontiers of India*, ed., Warikoo, 142.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 143.

Based on the account of India's relations with Bhutan, it becomes obvious that India saw its Himalayan neighbor as being implicated in the Cold War rivalry between the great powers. While geographically Bhutan was isolated and cut off from the rest of the world, in Nehru's world view, it was a potential site for great power contestation, in the same way that Nepal and Sikkim were. If India were not to keep a close watch on Bhutan and its leaders, there was every possibility of that country being swamped by the agents and representatives of the great powers. This explains why Nehru did not hesitate in parting with India's resources to keep Bhutan isolated from the rest of the world. If India indeed had been wary of Communist China's design in Bhutan and the possibility of Bhutan being made a base to aggress on India, would it not have been expedient for Nehru to in fact have encouraged countries like the US to have increased their presence in Bhutan, and thereby checking the aggressive and expansionist intentions of the Chinese leadership? If India was apprehensive of Communist China, yet unwilling to divert its limited resources to counter the threat, would it not have made sense to have passed the buck to the other great powers? This section has again showed that the shadow of the Cold War loomed large in Nehru's mind when he viewed the Himalayan states. A simple "China threat" narrative simply does not suffice. Before concluding this section, it would be instructive to highlight something that Nehru had written on a trek to Bhutan in 1958, for it clearly reveals the connection that he made between Bhutan and the Cold War. Enchanted by the beauty and tranquility of the Himalayan foothills, Nehru noted that

Somehow, the Himalayas give one a sense not only of peace but of permanence, and of something above and away from the follies of human beings. No doubt this is a false impression because nuclear warfare and radiation will not spare the Himalayas. In Hindu mythology, the gods had their abodes in these mountains; they chose well. But the old gods fade away and new gods of a fiercer kind take

their place. Even so the peace of the Buddha still prevails here and if we can have some inner peace within ourselves, perhaps we might be able to face the threat of the bomb which has been described to be brighter than a thousand suns.⁹⁸

5.4 India-Sikkim Relations

5.4.1 Background

The study of India's relation with Sikkim is challenging as Sikkim today is no longer an Indian protectorate but rather a state in the Indian Union. Given the fact that India no longer has to undertake periodic assessments of its relation with Sikkim, scholarly interest in this former bilateral relationship has also waned. As a result, there is a dearth of contemporary literature with reference to India and Sikkim, with most of the writing on the matter witnessing a sharp drop from the 1970s – the decade when Sikkim was incorporated into India (in 1975). Absent a pressing incentive to revisit and rethink the dynamics of the bilateral relation, the standard narrative remains hostage to the “China threat thesis.” While archival material on the bilateral relation is anything but abundant, whatever material is available tells us that there is more to the India-Sikkim story than the much invoked Communist China factor. As with the other cases that we have examined previously, the shadow of the Cold War is evident in this case too. By regularly underlining the fact that the shadow of the Cold War loomed large in Nehru's mind in relation to the Himalayan states, we do not for a moment suggest that Communist China was not a part of the Cold War dynamics. We instead argue that it was the rivalry between the great powers, including

⁹⁸ Quoted in Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, 81-82. For an excellent account of Nehru's trek to Bhutan, see Rustomji, *Enchanted Frontiers*.

Communist China, and its possible impact on the stability of the region that informed Nehru's decisions to engage with the Himalayan states in an overwhelming manner.

Like Nepal and Bhutan, the foundation for independent India's formal relation with Sikkim may be traced back to the British and the 19th century. The watershed event was the Anglo-Chinese Convention of March 17, 1890, which fixed the Sikkim-Tibet boundary. Article 2 of the Convention stipulated that Sikkim was henceforth a British protectorate whose internal administration and foreign relations would be controlled by the British. It forbade the ruler of Sikkim or any of its state officials to have contact, direct or indirect, with any outside power. In 1889, Claude White was appointed the Political Officer in charge of the administration in Sikkim.⁹⁹ From 1890 till 1947, when the British left the shores of India, there was no change in this arrangement. What marks the case of Sikkim as being different from Nepal and Bhutan is that the period between India's independence in 1947 and the signing of the Indo-Sikkimese Treaty in 1950 witnessed strong Indian involvement in Sikkim's affairs, thereby paving the way for the signing of a treaty much more unequal than those with Bhutan and Nepal.

With India attaining independence in August 1947, a controversy emerged regarding the status of its relation with Sikkim. The issue had to do with India inheriting paramountcy¹⁰⁰ -

⁹⁹ Lal Bahadur Basnett, *Sikkim: A Short Political History* (New Delhi: S. Chand and Co., 1974), 57-58.

¹⁰⁰ The practice of paramountcy had been started by the British in the 1850s. Even though a somewhat nebulous term, it included a system of placing British "Residents" in princely states, monopolizing their foreign policy and the regulation of succession within such states. Raghavan, *War and Peace in Modern India*, 26. From a more generic perspective, the term, according to Paul S. Reinsch, "presupposes two

was India entitled to such a right in its dealings with Sikkim in the mid 20th century? India argued that being the successor government to British India, it automatically enjoyed all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of British India. Sikkim disagreed and pointed out that since India was a “new juristic person,” it could not “claim to be subrogated to the rights and obligation of the British government.” Paramountcy had lapsed with the departure of the British from India.¹⁰¹

Notwithstanding this basic disagreement, a “Standstill Agreement” was signed between the two states in February 1948. According to the agreement “All agreements, relations and administrative arrangements as to matters of common concern existing between the Crown and the Sikkim State on August 14, 1947” were to continue between the Dominion of India (India became a Republic on January 26, 1950 when it adopted its constitution) and the Sikkim *Durbar* (Court) till a new agreement or treaty could be drawn up. The “matters of common concern” were currency coinage, customs, postal channels and regulations, telegraph, communications, external affairs, and defense measures. To the alarm of the Sikkimese authorities, India first offered the “Instrument of Accession” (to India) which was used by India to incorporate the princely states into the dominion. When Sikkim objected to this mode of agreement, India used the term “Standstill Agreement” which had been

separate states, the weaker of which places itself, by treaty, under the protection of the stronger, retaining its internal autonomy, but permitting the protecting state to exert a guiding influence in its foreign affairs.” Quoted in Schmidt, *The Political Discourse of Anarchy*, 139.

¹⁰¹ Leo E. Rose, “India and Sikkim: Redefining the Relationship,” 33.

suggested by the Sikkimese themselves.¹⁰² It was agreed that Sikkim would continue to have the status of India's "Protectorate."

Why did India not go ahead and coerce Sikkim to join the India union? After all, the initial offer of the Instrument of Accession by India betrays such a desire on its part. Also, India was significantly more powerful than Sikkim. B.S.K. Grover provides us with three reasons. First, having been the harbinger of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism among the post colonial states, India could not adopt the practices of those whom it had criticized so vehemently. Levi pointed this out when he wrote that, let alone the question of incorporating Sikkim, the mere act of continuing the imperial relation in the form of the Standstill Agreement was politically not easy for a newly emerged India.¹⁰³ Second, given the fact that a significant segment of the Sikkimese population wanted a separate status for their country, India did not consider it wise to push the case for Sikkim's absorption into India and cause instability in that country. Any form of instability would attract the attention of external powers. Third, coercion on India's part would have caused Bhutan and Nepal to develop cold feet in signing treaties with India. They would have considered their association with India as a prelude to their forcible incorporation with India.¹⁰⁴ This would have jeopardized India's desire to keep all external forces away from the region, as announced by Nehru in London in 1948.

¹⁰² B.S.K. Grover, *Sikkim and India: Storm and Consolidation* (New Delhi: Jain Brothers, 1974), 87.

¹⁰³ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 93.

In order to reinforce the message that Sikkim was independent, the Sikkim National Party – one of the two major political parties of that country – came out with a resolution in April 1948. The resolution stated that historically, socially, linguistically, and culturally, Sikkim had closer ties with Bhutan and Tibet. Being a Lamaist state, Sikkim was different from India in terms of religion too. When one looked at Sikkim from an ethnic and geographical point of view, it was evident that Sikkim was not a part of India. It had political relations with its much larger neighbor only due to imposition by India. It was the desire of the party to keep the indigenous character of Sikkim intact and uphold its integrity.¹⁰⁵ To that end, the Sikkim National Party highlighted that “Sikkim shall not, under any circumstances, accede to the dominion of India.”¹⁰⁶

Events from 1948 conspired against the desire of those in Sikkim who wanted to maintain a certain distance from India. The political struggle between the ruling dispensation and the Sikkim State Congress undermined the stability of Sikkim. The latter was a political party whose objective was to have a popularly elected government in Sikkim. As its name implies, the party had derived inspiration from the political struggle of the INC in its fight for freedom and democracy. Opinion is divided as to what role the Indian state may have had in supporting the activities of the Sikkim Congress. Some believe that it was the example and ideals of the INC that led its counterpart in Sikkim to demand popular representation and that India had very little direct role in helping it against the ruler of Sikkim. Others allege that India played a much more sinister role and that it actively goaded Sikkim Congress to

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁰⁶ P.P. Rao, *India and Sikkim 1814-1970* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1972), 148.

challenge the ruler's authority as the latter was not inclined to accede to the dominion of India or have Sikkim's sovereignty compromised. Calls by the Sikkim Congress for merger with India lead some to believe that it was supported by the Indian state, primarily by its Home Minister, Sardar Patel. It has been contended that Patel's use of the concept of "people's wrath" while negotiating with not only Sikkim, but also with Bhutan and Nepal, helped India strengthen its hold over these states.¹⁰⁷ In light of these divergent claims, no clear conclusion can be arrived at as regards India's role.

As part of the movement for greater representation, in May 1949, a large body of people marched to the Palace demanding the establishment of a popular government. Faced with an uncertain future and having limited resources, the ruler sought the help of the Indian Political Officer, Harishwar Dayal, who was stationed in Gangtok in accordance with the Standstill Agreement. Indian troops who were present there rescued the ruler and sheltered him in the Indian Residency. After discussions with Dayal, the *Chogyal* (King) of Sikkim invited the leader of the Sikkim Congress, Tashi Tshering, to form an interim government in May 1949. However, an uneasy relationship continued to exist between the Sikkim Congress and the *Chogyal*. This led Dayal to report to New Delhi that in light of the fact that neither party seemed capable of maintaining order, and due to the fear that instability would mount further, the Indian Deputy Minister for External Affairs be sent to Gangtok to take stock of the situation. This led to B.V. Keskar's trip to Gangtok in May whereupon he recommended

¹⁰⁷ Srikant Dutt, "Bhutan's International Position," 602.

that a *Dewan* or Prime Minister¹⁰⁸ be appointed to control the situation till normalcy was fully restored. Till the time that the *Dewan* took over, Dayal was to function as the administrator. On June 6, in the interest of law and order in Sikkim, the interim government was dissolved. In August 1949, an Indian civil servant, J.S. Lall was appointed as the *Dewan* of Sikkim.¹⁰⁹ Thereafter, all of Sikkim's Prime Ministers were Indian civil servants who were appointed by the *Chogyal* after discussions with the Government of India.

Representatives of the Sikkim Congress, led by Tshering, had visited New Delhi during the period of unrest to press India to back its bid for greater powers to the popular ministry. They were informed that India's sole aim was to ensure stability of government in Sikkim and that India, under no conditions, would brook any type of chaos and disorder in its neighborhood. To that end, India would help the people of Sikkim to associate themselves more closely with their government. The *Dewan* was being appointed keeping this in mind. As India and its ruling Congress Party – the inspiration for the Sikkim Congress – spoke in the language of law and order and cold pragmatism, the members of the delegation were “jolted.”¹¹⁰ This encounter reveals two things. First, that India was focused on the stability of its neighborhood more than anything else. Second, with the installation of the *Dewan*, India had established an institutionalized presence in the Sikkim body politic. While the *Chogyal* was initially averse to aligning Sikkim too closely with India, the access to him via the

¹⁰⁸ The *Dewan* has also been referred to as the “Chief Officer.” Heimsath and Mansingh, *A Diplomatic History of Modern India*, 217.

¹⁰⁹ Grover, *Sikkim and India*, 38-40.

¹¹⁰ Basnett, *Sikkim: A Short Political History*, 91.

Dewan no doubt gave India the opportunity to “soften” the *Chogyal’s* rigid stance. This is made manifest by the Indo-Sikkimese Treaty of 1950.

5.4.2 The 1950 Indo-Sikkimese Treaty

Article 2 of the Indo-Sikkimese Treaty, which was signed on December 5, 1950, identified Sikkim as a “protectorate” of India having internal autonomy “subject to the provision of the treaty.” Under Article 3, India undertook the responsibility of looking after the security of its neighbor and to that end arrogated to itself the right to station troops anywhere within the territory of Sikkim. As regards external affairs, Article 4 stipulated that Sikkim “shall have no dealing with any foreign power” and that its interaction with the outside world shall be “conducted and regulated solely by the Government of India.” Article 6 gave the Government of India the sole right to construct and maintain aerodromes, railways, post and telegraph, and wireless installations in Sikkim. According to Article 10, India pledged to provide Sikkim a sum of 300,000 rupees per annum (\$ 63,157) as long as the latter observed the terms of the treaty. Other notable aspects of the treaty included: in the event that the Sikkimese nationals travelled abroad, they would have the status of Indian protected persons and they would have the same facilities and safeguards as made available to Indian nationals; they would also be subject to the very strict foreign exchange regulations that Indian nationals had to adhere to; and Sikkim could not import arms, ammunitions, or military stores for whatever purpose without the permission of the Indian government.¹¹¹ Foreigners’

¹¹¹ See Appendix 4.

entry into Sikkim was restricted and they were required to obtain a permit from the Indian authorities to go to Sikkim. This practice had been initiated by the British.¹¹²

It is evident that the treaty provisions used the “strongest terms possible” to underline India’s interest and obligation in Sikkim.¹¹³ The use of the term “protectorate” also drew considerable attention and criticism. According to V.H. Coelho, the term is not reflective of any imperial design on the part of India; it is the symbol of the “voluntary association” between India and Sikkim where the latter willingly placed itself under India’s protection. The treaty was freely negotiated between the two sides, as a result of which the Sikkim Durbar had full autonomy with no scope for any interference by India. Sikkim’s stand was shaped by the country’s geographic and political position, and had nothing to do with Indian pressure.¹¹⁴ Basnett questions the voluntary nature of the treaty when he writes that the Bhutanese *Maharajkumar* (Prince) who had gone to New Delhi to bring back the letter with the treaty provisions found the “terms agreed upon” a “bit too tough.” Apparently, it took the *Chogyal* and his advisers months before they realized that they had little option but to accept the treaty, warts and all.¹¹⁵ It has been argued that the term “protectorate” is much more consonant with the 19th century concepts of international relations and that it does not reflect the ethos of the 1950s.¹¹⁶ Contending that the term was anathema to Sikkim, S.K. Rai

¹¹² Kavic, *India’s Quest for Security*, 53.

¹¹³ Heimsath and Mansingh, *A Diplomatic History of Modern India*, 215.

¹¹⁴ V.H. Coelho, *Sikkim and Bhutan* (New Delhi: Vikas Publications, 1971), 48.

¹¹⁵ Basnett, *Sikkim: A Short Political History*, 95.

¹¹⁶ Neville Maxwell quoted in Grover, *Sikkim and India*, 97.

writes that independent India, like the British, continued subjugating Sikkim and ‘tied down Sikkim and the Sikkimese to her apron strings.’¹¹⁷ While India advocated the freedom of the protectorates in the UN and various other global platforms, why did it hesitate to give freedom and autonomy to Sikkim? Rai points out that protectorates had gone out of vogue in the backward areas of Africa.¹¹⁸ Writing in *The Year Book of World Affairs* in 1956, C.H. Alexandrowicz noted that like their British predecessors, the Indians too had managed to enter into very unequal relations with the neighbors.¹¹⁹ Write-ups in influential publications would no doubt have informed many peoples’ view of independent India. It hardly comes as a surprise that leaders such as Mao and journalists such as Maxwell (who wrote for *The Times* and *The Guardian*) accused India of having stepped into the shoes of the British with utmost ease.

It has also been reported that India did not rely just on formal provisions in perpetuating its special status in Sikkim, for there were “informal understandings” between the two governments. It seems “letters of exchange” had accompanied the treaty process that further entangled Sikkim to India and its interests.¹²⁰ Though no such letters have been made public, keeping in mind that there existed such informal understandings between India and Nepal, one may assume that such allegations may not be wholly unfounded.

¹¹⁷ S.K. Rai, “Indo-Sikkim Arena,” *Sikkim* 5, no. 21 (22 November 1971): 3.

¹¹⁸ Grover, *Sikkim and India*, 183.

¹¹⁹ C.H. Alexandrowicz, “India’s Himalayan Dependencies” in *The Year Book of World Affairs*, Vol. 10, 1956 (London: Steven’s and Sons, 1956), 137.

¹²⁰ Rose, *India and Sikkim*, 34.

To impart a representative element in Sikkimese politics, elections led to the establishment of a 17 member State Assembly Council in 1953. It was equipped to enact legislations subject to the approval of the *Chogyal*. The President of this representative body was the *Dewan* who was empowered to cast his vote in the event of a tie. Issues that could be legislated and debated upon by the Council were included in the “Transferred Subject” while those that were the sole prerogative of the *Chogyal* were included in the “Reserved Subject.”¹²¹ The Council was debarred from asking questions or discussing the following matters: the *Chogyal* and members of the royal family, the foreign affairs of Sikkim including relations with India, and the appointment of the *Dewan* and members of the judiciary.¹²²

Some argue that as the treaty was mutually agreed upon, the Sikkimese had no real cause for grievance. Any discontent was seen as resulting from the fact that certain groups had been denied adequate power in the usual process of politicking (such as the Sikkim Congress). Sikkim, given its challenges, stood to benefit too as India was obliged to look after its security. However others have criticized the treaty from a theoretical point of view. The leaders of the Sikkim Congress have also made their displeasure known. In this melee, the views of the official Indian machinery have remained unknown and hardly any scholar has looked into what the *Dewan* or the Political Officer made of the situation. What were the compulsions and how did they seek to respond to the developments on the ground? The

¹²¹ The Reserved Subject included ecclesiastical affairs, external affairs, state enterprises, home and police, finance, land revenue, rationing, and Establishment.

¹²² Basnett, *Sikkim: A Short Political History*, 100-05; H.G. Joshi, *Sikkim: Past and Present* (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2004), 116-17.

private papers of Rustomji who was the *Dewan* of Sikkim from 1954 till 1959, and those of Apa Pant, the Political Officer in Gangtok, offer us a brief yet illuminating insight.¹²³

When Rustomji was informed that he was selected to be the *Dewan* by the Government of India, he wrote a letter to the incumbent *Dewan*, J.S. Lall, seeking information about his official role in Sikkim's politics. The quandary of the Indian administration as regards its policies not only towards Sikkim but also Nepal and Bhutan is in a sense reflected by Lall's reply. He wrote back that, "...the *Dewan*...is the Chief Executive Officer and the Chief Adviser to the Maharaja. The government of India's decision in the event of a difference of opinion is final. As you can imagine this provision is *unpopular in certain quarters but absolutely necessary* [emphasis mine]."¹²⁴ Seven months after having taken over as the *Dewan*, Rustomji wrote to Delhi outlining the challenges facing him. He was surprised to sense the degree of distrust towards India and sought to take steps to remove or at least reduce it. Not only were the Sikkimese unhappy with the state of affairs, they also believed that their ultimate fate lay in being incorporated into India. There was admission of the fact that India was behaving in exactly the same manner in which the British behaved towards Sikkim and that there was a feeling that India "talked down" upon the Sikkimese. As can be seen, this is very similar to the way the Nepalese felt, as evidenced by Koirala's musings.

¹²³ The *Dewan*, though an Indian civil servant, was Sikkim's Prime Minister and was expected to owe primary allegiance to the *Chogyal* and his colleagues. The Political Officer was also an Indian civil servant and akin to a "Resident" in Sikkim. He was clearly "India's man" and his loyalty lay firmly with India. Thus, in theory, though both were Indians, they had different political masters. They consulted each other often to exchange information and discuss policy matters so as to streamline relation between India and Sikkim.

¹²⁴ Rustomji to Lall, January 27, 1954. Subject File no. 3, N.K. Rustomji Private Papers.

The appointment of the *Dewan* was widely regarded as encroaching on the internal autonomy of Sikkim, something that had been guaranteed to them as per the 1950 treaty. Empathizing with such a sentiment, Rustomji pointed out that it was believed that the *Dewan* was acting in a very arbitrary manner with no regard for rules and protocol. It was also observed that under the prevailing rules, the *Chogyal* could not invite his non-Indian friends to visit him – even for a few hours – without the permission of the Political Officer or the Deputy Commissioner, who was based in Darjeeling, India.¹²⁵ Rustomji feared that the idea would gain ground very soon that India was using the “big stick” in its dealings with Sikkim, which would have adverse effects with other states like Bhutan.¹²⁶

By Rustomji’s own account, the situation had improved a bit by 1955 as the *Chogyal* felt less inhibited about India though he was still apprehensive of the fact that India could be harboring “deeper, underlying motives.”¹²⁷ The presence of Indian engineers and soldiers on Sikkim’s soil played a marked role in heightening its sense of insecurity. It was reported that the Prince had “expressed anti-Indian sentiments from time to time”¹²⁸

¹²⁵ In late 1961, the Crown Prince had got engaged to an American lady, Hope Cooke. So apprehensive was India of a foreigner being located that close to the source of authority in Sikkim that 6 months of negotiation ensued between the Sikkim and Indian government before the announcement relating to the engagement was made. Kavic, *India’s Quest for Security*, 76. For Cooke’s account of her life, and her experience in Sikkim, see Hope Cooke, *Time Change: An Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981).

¹²⁶ Rustomji to T.N. Kaul (Joint Secretary), November 30, 1954. *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Rustomji to Pant, March 17, 1955. *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ Pant to Subimal Dutt, December 2, 1960. Subject File no. 6, Apa Pant Private Papers, Nehru Memorial Library Archives, New Delhi, India.

The specter of foreign influence also makes itself manifest in the correspondences. The circulation of publications from Communist China, Great Britain, the USSR, and the US in Sikkim was seen as an unwelcome development by the Indian Political Officer. The prince had pointed out that in an age when “ideas have power,” the circulation of such material would have the undesired consequence of enlarging the “mental and emotional horizons” of the Sikkimese.¹²⁹ Rustomji implored upon the authorities in New Delhi to step up their aid and economic activities so that the Sikkimese did not feel that they had lost out as regards development and progress by their tie to India. He wrote

The more educated sections of the people in Sikkim and Bhutan are sometimes voicing the feeling that, while the materially richer countries of the world are all anxious to assist under-developed countries with technical equipment etc., Sikkim and Bhutan, by virtue of their treaty relations with India, are debarred from enjoying the benefit of such aid. Foreigners, who come into contact with Sikkim and Bhutan, tend to give the impression that, if only the appropriate machinery could be settled, there would be no difficulty in Sikkim and Bhutan receiving whatever technical equipment they might require for the implementation of their development programme. I have stressed...that *the surest means of keeping these areas away from foreign contacts and influences* [emphasis mine] is by creating a feeling that all their legitimate requirements can be best fulfilled by the Government of India...I would, therefore, suggest for the consideration of the Government of India that, wherever aid is received by India from foreign countries...some proportion, however small, should, wherever possible, be allotted to Sikkim and Bhutan, so that a feeling may grow that the control of their external affairs by the Government of India under the Treaty does not place them at a disadvantage in the matter of receiving assistance from other countries...¹³⁰

It is no coincidence that soon after Rustomji became the *Dewan*, the first Seven Year Plan of Sikkim was launched with an outlay of 32.36 million rupees (\$6.8 million), which was wholly

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ Rustomji to Joint Secretary-East, February 6, 1956. Subject File no. 5, N.K. Rustomji Private Papers.

distributed by India. After the first Seven Year Plan came to an end, India diverted a further 81.3 million rupees (\$17 million) for the second Plan.¹³¹

Unlike Bhutan, Sikkim did not demand a revision of its treaty with India before the India-China war of 1962. As long as the *Chogyal* was alive, official discontentment was expressed through private and informal channels, as evidenced by the correspondences cited earlier. It was in 1966 that the new *Chogyal*, Palden Thandup Namgyal, officially announced that his government desired a revision of the treaty. It was felt that the previous *Chogyal* had signed the 1950 under duress when the agitation by the Sikkim Congress had almost pulled down the monarchy. P.R. Rao, writing in 1971, pointed out that were Sikkim to take charge of its external affairs it would become the “hotbed of international intrigues.”¹³² Evidently, the Indian establishment’s fear of the Cold War conflict spreading in the region had affected even non-officials and scholars. The term “international intrigue” seemed to have gained a unique currency in India’s world view. Unlike Bhutan, Sikkim gradually lost its status as an independent state. In April 1975 Sikkim merged with India as a full state.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has showed that India’s attitude towards its Himalayan neighbors was not the outcome of a sense of “destiny.” Clearly, people like Nehru were hardly motivated by visions of grandeur and a seat at the highest tables while establishing their country’s relation with the neighbors. To that extent, India’s “Big Brother” attitude cannot be attributed to ideational

¹³¹ Basnett, *Sikkim: A Short Political History*, 107, 120.

¹³² Rao, *India and Sikkim*, 175.

imperatives. India was also not guided by a simplistic fear of Communist China, where it was supposed to hold the view that if the march of the communists was not checked in Kathmandu or Gangtok, India would be the next victim. The “China threat thesis” has definitely been overplayed and uncritically accepted. However, had it not been for the fear of Communist China that the smaller states harbored, it is difficult to imagine India being able to enter into unequal treaties with them and denying the great powers a foothold within their territories. Given the fact that Nehru did hold world opinion in high esteem, he would have been loath to unilaterally impose such terms on them in order to keep out foreign powers. The fact that the Himalayan states were compelled to turn to India as their protector as a result of Communist China’s ideological zeal helped Nehru immensely.

The above point is critical for our understanding of Communist China and its role in India’s behavior towards its neighbors. Since this dissertation argues that the salience of the “China threat thesis” needs to be questioned, one should not form the impression that the role of Communist China does not matter at all. It certainly does. What we are instead arguing is that the way in which Communist China’s attitude and policies impinged upon Nehru’s behavior towards the Himalayan states was less direct and more complex than is commonly understood. Communist China’s policies did not directly threaten India; Nehru did not believe that it would threaten Indian sovereignty and undermine his country’s territorial integrity. As has already been examined, a host of factors led Nehru to come to this conclusion. Instead, it was the Chinese Civil War, and the subsequent occupation of Tibet by Communist China that alarmed the Himalayan states. The US, eager to contain Communist China, started approaching the leaders of the Himalayan states with the purpose of

establishing a presence in their territories. Given their fear of the developments in the North, the leaders of these states were not averse to allowing Western personnel to establish a presence in their countries. Worried that this might provoke Communist China and lead to a conflict between the US and Communist China and their allies (such as the USSR and Great Britain), Nehru sought to “sanitize” the Himalayan states of *all* foreign presence. Hence, India’s policies towards the Himalayan states were motivated by the disharmony among the great powers.

As Nehru considered the leaders of Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim to be inadequately informed about contemporary developments, he took it upon himself to protect them and India from the Cold War dynamics. Gopal, Nehru’s biographer, gives us a specific example when he points that that in writing to the King of Bhutan in relation to India-Bhutan relations on a particular occasion, Nehru made it a point to set “the bilateral nexus in the wider context of the world situation.”¹³³ Given that Nehru viewed security to be seamless in nature (especially in the age of nuclear weapons), his penchant to keep his neighbors away from the grasp of the great powers was no act of charity or benevolence. Rather, it was seen as a necessity. It was this sense of necessity and also the realization that he was straying from his much cherished Gandhian ideals that led Nehru to observe on innumerable occasions that “fate” had led him to shoulder a burden much greater than he was willing to take. Nehru’s frequent allusion to fate had very little to do with metaphysics and much to do with the prevailing *Zeitgeist*. While scholars have pointed at India’s latent capabilities and soft power as emboldening it to pursue great power status, one can see that this really was not the case.

¹³³ Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol. 3, 205.

Nehru used these elements – for instance, when he told Nepalese officials of India’s impressive economic development and of India being sought by other states for its opinion and advice - as a means to convince the neighboring states that India ought to shape their security and foreign policies. It was simply a means for India to establish its credential as a wise counsel and rationalize its interventionist role. Stated plainly, it was Nehru’s attempt at showing off his relations with other countries so as to develop a better standing with the Himalayan states.

If one had to take a “snapshot” of India’s policies in the region, without looking into India’s motives, its unequal treaties and overt claims to spheres of influence would undoubtedly point in the direction of great power ambition. This, coupled with the apparent desire to emerge as the leader of Asia (as will be seen in the next chapter) have convinced leaders and scholars alike that there was more to Nehru’s policy than meets the eye. To Nehru’s detriment, in his desperation to keep foreign powers away, he habitually yet inadvertently conflated foreign powers’ routine engagement with the neighbors as foreign intervention. While Nehru was critical of the Cold War warrior, Dulles, of not being able to differentiate between communism and nationalism in Asia, he himself was guilty of not being able to differentiate between engagement and intervention.

Chapter 6

Great Power Rivalry in South-East Asia and India's Deviant Behavior

6.1 Overview

Revisionist scholars like K. Subrahmanyam have argued that India's policies in Asia during the Nehru years are a good illustration of its practice of balance of power politics.¹ With regard to this specific observation, Nayar and Paul note that if India was following a balance of power policy, it definitely must have considered itself to be a great power to assume playing the role of a balancer.² Based on this reasoning, one can discern two distinct ways in which India's balance of power revealed itself. On the one hand, by creating an "area of peace" in Asia, especially in South-East Asia,³ India was clearly establishing for itself a "sphere of influence" in the region. Its strident crusade against great power intervention had led to the coming together of like-minded Asian states that were against great power politics in their neighborhoods. India's actions clearly pointed at the creation of a "Third Bloc," consisting of de-colonized states.

On the other hand, it is also contended that India's balance of power politics manifested itself in the guise of a leadership tussle with Communist China.⁴ The "China threat thesis," examined in the previous chapters, was part of a larger competition between the two Asian

¹ Subrahmanyam, introduction to *Defending India*, ix.

² Nayar and Paul, *India in the World Order*, 115.

³ Thien, *India and South East Asia 1947-1960*, 351.

⁴ Garver, *Protracted Contest*, Chapter 4; Levi, *Free India in Asia*, 3.

powers to win over the masses in Asia. Given that India was challenging established great powers and not mere regional powers for influence and authority in Asia, India's policies were seen to catapult it to the giddy heights of great power politics. Even though its balance of power politics was more political than military in character, the fact that it possessed latent capabilities meant that it was a force that simply could not be ignored.⁵

Adherents of the "balance of power" thesis aver that not only India's actions but the reactions of the great powers lend credence to the fact that India was resolutely pursuing great power status. In a telegram in 1951, the US Ambassador to India, Loy W. Henderson, reported to Washington that Nehru was working on a master plan whereby he would play an important role in a united Asia.⁶ In fact, so strong an impediment did India become to US interests and the efficacy of its military alliance system in the region that Vice-President Richard Nixon regarded India and the US as rivals in the struggle for influence in Asia.⁷ Nayar and Paul go on to underline that the US "believed India to be audaciously engineering a gigantic realignment of political forces in the world to the disadvantage of the US as a hegemon."⁸ An assessment of the politics in Asia done by the CIA in 1949 clearly notes that with India seeing itself as the "natural power center of South-East Asia," it was necessary for

⁵ Nayar and Paul, *India in the World Order*, 130, 148-49.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 138. K.P.S. Menon alludes to the same thing when he writes that Dr. Henry F. Grady, the first US Ambassador to India, used to talk of a Nehru Plan for Asia which corresponded to the Marshall Plan for Europe. Menon, *Memories and Musings*, 164.

⁷ Nayar and Paul, *India in the World Order*, 146.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 137-38.

the Western countries to consider India as an important factor in formulating policies and strategies towards South-East Asia.⁹ Leaders of disparate Asian polities such as Saudi Arabia,¹⁰ Malaya, and Ceylon stated in no uncertain terms that they saw India forwarding its candidacy as the leader of Asia.¹¹ The fact that the nature of the leadership sought was not necessarily benign is revealed by the sustained fear in the minds of the Ceylonese leaders that their country would be absorbed by India.¹² The apprehension of India's neighbors with regard to India's plans in the region was noted and circulated within the corridors of power in the US.¹³

Those with an eye for the competitive nature of international relations note that notwithstanding Nehru's carefully cultivated stand that India did not seek leadership role in Asia, his less discreet colleagues let slip the fact that India was indeed staking its position as an Asian power.¹⁴ The Gandhian legacy was a convenient tool employed by India's leaders to

⁹ "Review of the World Situation," CIA 4-49, April 20, 1949. In *The United States and India: A History through Archives – The Formative Years*, eds., Praveen K. Chaudhry and Marta-Vanduzer Snow (New Delhi: Sage, 2008), 202.

¹⁰ Nehru to Secretary-General, MEA, May 5, 1955. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 28, 224.

¹¹ Levi, *Free India in Asia*, 38.

¹² Nehru to Secretary-General, MEA, June 10, 1955. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 28, 276.

¹³ See Chaudhry and Vanduzer-Snow, *The United States and India*, 221, 378-79.

¹⁴ K.M. Panikkar, a senior India diplomat (Ambassador to China between 1948-52, Ambassador to Egypt 1952-53, and Ambassador to France 1956-59) advocated that India undertake a robust policy of reaching out to other Asian states through the use of sea power. India's peninsular character and location proximate to major shipping lanes necessitated the erection of a powerful navy. K.M. Panikkar, *India and the Indian Ocean: An Essay on the Influence of Sea Power on Indian History* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1962), 92-93. Similarly, Sir G.S. Bajpai, another senior India diplomat (India's first Secretary-General of the MEA, 1947-52), underlined that India was too important to be considered a second class

allow a “thick fog to hang” over their country’s foreign policy.¹⁵ The Vietnamese scholar Ton That Thien avers that readers have always privileged the non-violent and moralistic dimension of Indian thinking and that they have not paid attention to the fact that India is also the inheritor of Kautilya’s *Arthashastra*, an ancient treatise on statecraft and military strategy, which preceded *The Prince* by 15 centuries and which talks of alliances and intrigues.¹⁶

This study rejects the “balance of power” thesis and stands by its assertion that India did not seek great power status in Asia. Neither did India want to trump Communist China and emerge as the leader of Asia, nor did it want to demarcate for itself a “sphere of influence” in South-East Asia. However, merely pointing at Nehru’s numerous statements disavowing great power status is not enough, for adherents of the “balance of power” thesis have reposed their faith in the dictum that “actions speak louder than words.” They forward their revisionist interpretation of India’s foreign policy based on India’s actual policies, notably with regard to its non-aligned stand. As a result, this chapter focuses on the actual policies undertaken by India and shows that a motivation other than that of seeking great power

power. G.S. Bajpai, *The Profession of Diplomacy* (New Delhi: India Information Service, 1958), 2. One needs to keep in mind that such views did not necessarily reflect India’s official position as it was unanimously acknowledged that Nehru was the country’s foreign policy tsar.

¹⁵ Thien, *India and South East Asia 1947-1960*, 64, 337. Panikkar too concurred with this observation. He was of the opinion that “Our vision has been obscured by an un-Indian wave of pacifism. The Hindu theory at all times, especially in the periods of India’s historic greatness was one of active assertion of right, if necessary through the force of arms. It is not for Ahimsa and pacifism that Ramchandra stands in Indian religion; it is for an active assertion of what is morally right. Nor does Krishna stand for non-violence.” Panikkar, *India and the Indian Ocean*, 16.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 351-52.

status spurred Nehru. It argues that while India indeed displayed deviant state behavior – where it behaved like a great power while possessing middle power capabilities – it was not with the intention of pursuing great power status. To that end, this chapter underlines the salience of “equifinality” in international relations – the phenomenon where an event or development can be caused by more than one factor. With regards to the issue under study, one needs to recognize that the demonstration of great power behavior by India was not caused by India’s desire to attain great power status. The “other motivation” was Nehru’s very real fear of a cataclysmic great power war. As in the case of India’s attitude towards its northern neighbors, so too in the case of India’s relations with the other Asian states, the fear of a war involving the US, the USSR, and Communist China shaped Nehru’s engagement with the region and imbued India’s foreign policy with its distinctive deviant characteristic.

To Nehru, Cold War politics in Asia had two main protagonists – the US and Communist China. In order to avert a war between the two great powers, it was necessary to restrain both of them. Communist China, given its agenda of furthering communism and gaining influence, drew the US into Asia in an attempt to contain the Asian great power. Since India and Communist China had certain commonalities such as an Asian identity and a history of being colonized by Western powers, India sought to influence the Chinese leaders by invoking history and stirring nationalist sentiments, and in the process, weakening their communist zeal. India undertook to “introduce” Communist China to other Asian states and bind it to pledges of good behavior and restraint. In certain instances, senior Indian officials accompanied Chinese leaders in their state visits with the express intent of making sure that

Communist China allayed the fears of the smaller countries. Since India had no such influence over the US, it convinced Asian states not to enter into military alliances with the US; hence, it denied the US a platform from which it could carry out its policy of containment. Thus, while India identified Communist China and the US as disruptive elements in Asia, it approached them in different ways, based on how much influence it wielded over them.

The attempt to regulate and influence Chinese behavior gave the impression that India was competing with Communist China for leadership in Asia. As a result, prominent Asian leaders noted that India was doing its best to emerge as the dominating power in Asia. The manner in which Nehru convinced Asian states to abjure security relations with the US led many leaders to think that India was pursuing great power status. On many occasions, India's method of persuading others verged on haranguing and diplomatic coercion – in marked contrast to its much vaunted pacifist Gandhian philosophy. This certainly played an important role in giving Indian foreign policy between 1947 and 1962 its deviant character.

India's role in the much discussed and studied Asian-African Conference at Bandung in Indonesia in 1955 and the resultant "Bandung Spirit" is frequently cited as a good example of India's fervent desire to emerge as an Asian great power. It is seen as the clearest example of India creating a "sphere of influence" for itself in the region. While the application of the "balance of power" thesis is clearly erroneous in this regard, given that India had no desire to emerge as an Asian great power, what many miss is that Bandung was simply the culmination of India's diplomatic efforts. The final communiqué at Bandung, stating that de-

colonized states desired no role in petty great power politics, was the result of the groundwork laid by, among others, Nehru. The arm twisting, cajoling, and playing hard-to-get that India resorted to before Bandung went a long way in convincing Asian leaders that India was pursuing great power status. Bandung was not an event; it was part of a process. This process was initiated in a seminal radio broadcast by Nehru in September 1946 when he stated that his country proposed to stay away from the power politics of groups that were aligned against each other which had led to world wars in the past and could lead to even bigger disasters in the future.¹⁷

The larger theoretical point which this chapter makes is that India viewed South-East Asia through the prism of order. With Communist China increasingly looking to exert its influence in that region, the US put in place policies to counter Chinese influence. India feared that this would lead to a destabilization of order as had been witnessed in Korea from 1950. Given the all-encompassing nature of twentieth century warfare and the possible use of nuclear weapons, India was convinced that a great power war in South-East Asia would inevitably affect India. Thus, its leadership established a clear connection between the threat to order in South-East Asia and a threat to its own security. This matches Bull's observation that states view their interests in broad terms, and that, driven by the need to protect their primary goals (such as protecting their sovereignty and territorial integrity), states do take an interest in affairs not directly affecting their national interest. For the Indian leadership, order was not an abstract concept – it was the basic foundation that ensured India's stability. If the great powers – one of the pivotal institutions of the international society – were

¹⁷ G.H. Jansen, *Afro-Asia and Non-Alignment* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), 116.

becoming the sources of disorder, their influence in South-East Asia had to be reduced to the maximum possible extent. By minimizing the disruptive influence of the great powers, it was believed that the breakdown of order could be arrested. While India did not engage with the South-East Asian states with the intention of emerging as a leader or an Asian great power, it did want to exploit the power of nationalism in Asia to keep the great powers away from the region. Since India was the exemplar of nationalism in Asia in the mid 20th century, its leaders sought to fully utilize its nationalist credentials and its soft power and convince other states to keep away from great power politics. India also used its limited material capabilities to coax other Asian states to keep the great powers away from their territories. This was witnessed when India provided arms, ammunitions, and subsidies to countries like Burma to prevent them from seeking assistance from the great powers.

6.2 The Asian Relations Conferences

Acharya writes that in the immediate post Second World War period, Asian states were faced with two basic options as regards the promotion of regional security and stability: non-intervention and collective defense. After a period of contestation about the merits of either strategy, it was found that non-intervention was preferable over military alliances. In fact, so strong did the conviction about non-intervention become that quite a few influential Asian states emerged as strong opponents of great power-led military pacts.¹⁸ Acharya makes it clear that Nehru was a leading figure in the promotion of non-intervention over collective defense in Asian politics. The platform from which he propagated his ideas to the others for

¹⁸ Amitav Acharya, *Whose Ideas Matter? Agency and Power in Asian Regionalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 6.

the first time was the Asian Relations Conference held in New Delhi in March 1947, at a time when Nehru was the leader of the interim government in India.

The conference was organized by the Indian Council of World Affairs and was represented by delegates from more than 30 Asian polities. Nehru was the prime mover of the event with the result that it reflected his hopes and apprehensions. On the technical and logistical plane too, India's imprint was strong - the agenda and membership were determined by an Indian committee.¹⁹ As Asian states had become isolated from each other with the advent of colonialism, it was felt that with colonialism on the decline, and Asian states once again emerging as autonomous entities on the world map, the time was ripe to re-establish age-old links and relations.²⁰ A notable aspect of Nehru's thinking during the conference was his emphasis on Asian unity and the imperative of keeping out foreign powers.²¹ Even though the term "non-intervention" had not been used in the agenda of the conference, it called on countries not to support "foreign domination" in any part of Asia.²²

¹⁹ Levi, *Free India in Asia*, 37.

²⁰ Itty Abraham, "From Bandung to NAM: Non-Alignment and Indian Foreign Policy, 1947-65," *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 46, no. 2 (April 2008): 199.

²¹ Ho Chi Minh, who was waging a liberation struggle against the French, attended the 1947 Conference seeking support for his cause. Nehru, as the main figure in the event, refused to entertain the request. This drew quite a bit of criticism, given Nehru's stand against foreign rule. It has been pointed out that as India was negotiating with France for the retrocession of 5 French settlements in India – a relic of 18th century colonialism – India did not want to embitter relations with France more than necessary. Clearly, Nehru's world view was not all about idealism. However, India did ban French military aircrafts on their way to Indo-China from overflying Indian territory, justifying its action by observing that it would make the "suppression of the national aspirations of the people of Vietnam" difficult. Boquerat, "India's Commitment to Peaceful Co-Existence and the Settlement of the Indo-China War," 212-13.

²² Acharya, *Whose Ideas Matter?*, 34.

Nehru emphasized the need to distinguish between Asian and Western conduct of inter-state relations. He used the bonhomie and sense of camaraderie forged during the conference itself to contrast Asian and Western practices of statecraft. He wondered aloud whether a similar conference conducted in Europe or America was capable of generating so much goodwill and amity. He had no doubt that there would have been conflict and much less understanding. The “mighty civilization of the West,” averred Nehru, “which has done so much to raise human standards, somehow occasionally has something which makes it sink to the level of the brute.”²³ Other delegates did not lag behind in pointing out the salient aspects of Asian practices and joined Nehru in observing that European politics had brought about conflict in the world. The consensus was that Asian countries could no longer be mere pawns in the politics of the great powers.²⁴ Outlining his deep-seated fear of a nuclear war, Nehru spoke of the very real possibility of wars in the atomic age and the fact that Asia, more than Europe, was going to be the likely site of any future war. According to him, if war were to break out on a big scale, Asia’s part in it would be “big.”²⁵ As a result, the message was sent loud and clear that there was a lot that Asian states could do to avert conflicts and wars and protect themselves in the process. The agreement regarding keeping foreign powers away from the Asian landmass was actualized even further in January 1949, when, on the initiative of the Government of India, the second Asian Relations Conference was held,

²³ Nehru’s speech at the closing plenary session of the ARC, April 2, 1947. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 2, 513-14.

²⁴ Nehru’s speech at the plenary session of the ARC, March 23, 1947. *Ibid.*, 507.

²⁵ Nehru’s speech at the closing plenary session of the ARC, April 2, 1947. *Ibid.*, 514-15.

again in New Delhi, to discuss Dutch “police action” in Indonesia. The conference was attended by 18 Asian states and was chaired by Nehru. The resolution called on the Security Council to take action on ending Dutch imperialism in Indonesia, failing which the Asian states would impose economic sanctions against the Dutch.

It would be a mistake to assume that Nehru’s actions were part of a well-crafted strategy to bring the Asian states explicitly and specifically within India’s fold. Nehru’s actions and views were very much the result of the zeal of a state that had attained independence and which sought to fraternize with its Asian counterparts. To that end, there was an element of idealism thrown into Nehru’s actions. However, his obsession with wars among the great powers led him to caution the other members and in effect suggest a road map for Asian politics. As the rigid ideological stance of the US and the USSR reminded many of past imperialist practices, it was not difficult for Nehru to find others in the conferences who shared his views. Nor was it difficult to come to a basic agreement about the need to stay away from great power politics. Given that many states were intent on jealously guarding their new found sovereignty, there was a common base from which the relations could grow. It was in tune with the prevailing sentiment of the Asian states of the times.

Nehru was careful to emphasize that there were no leaders and followers in the conferences.²⁶ In spite of initiating relations with the Asian states on a pronounced normative note and in spite of many states agreeing with Nehru, he could not dispel rumors of India’s bid to take over the leadership of Asia. This was no doubt helped by the fact that

²⁶ Jansen, *Afro-Asia and Non-Alignment*, 68.

China was caught up in a vicious civil war between the nationalists and the communists. In fact, India unintentionally fueled such rumors by its emphasis on shared Asian history and values. In order to highlight its age-old relations with the Asian polities, maps were installed in the 1947 conference showing India's reach and influence in the years gone by. The maps depicted India's presence and influence from the Himalayas in the North to the seas in the South, from Persia in the West and Central Asia in the North-West to South-East Asia in the East.²⁷ Such illustrations created disquiet in the minds of some of the delegates, who considered them indicative of India's desire to re-establish its "sphere of influence" in those regions. A delegate pointed out that while it was terrible to have been ruled by a Western power, it was worse to be ruled by an Asian power.²⁸ The fact that Indian troops had formed the backbone of the British Empire in Asia and had been deployed all over the continent kept alive memories of Indians as a people who partook in the occupation of Asian territories. Notwithstanding the reservation expressed by some delegates, Nehru was pleased with both the conferences and felt that the world had been made aware of Asia's importance in international relations.²⁹ The conferences had played an invaluable role in broadening people's horizons and had made them "Asia conscious."³⁰

²⁷ Garver, *Protracted Contest*, 12.

²⁸ Levi, *Free India in Asia*, 38.

²⁹ Nehru, "A Resurgent New Asia," *The Hindustan Times*, January 26, 1949. Cited in *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 9, 175.

³⁰ Nehru to K.P.S. Menon, *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 2, 523.

6.3 Conflict in South-East Asia and the Regional Security Architecture

The Korean War had vindicated Nehru's belief that conflict among the great powers would take the world to the brink of a nuclear war in the post Second World War era. This fear had seen India take on an active role in trying to defuse the tension in the Korean peninsula, as examined earlier. While a significant portion of India's diplomatic energy was directed towards Korea, another war was also raging in the region – the First Indo-China War.³¹ Between the years 1946 and 1954, the people of Indo-China, led primarily by the communist leader Ho Chi Minh, were waging a struggle to rid their land of the French colonial forces, who had occupied what was referred to as “French Indo-China,” consisting of present day Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. In contrast to the Korean War which was shorter but more intense, and which had witnessed the direct clash of American and Chinese troops, the war in Indo-China was mainly a French-Vietnamese affair with the most powerful states (US, USSR, and Communist China) providing indirect support to the disputants. The war came to an end courtesy of the Geneva Peace Agreement in July 1954 when it was decided that while North Vietnam would be governed by the communists led by Ho Chi Minh, the South would be governed by Bao Dai, a nationalist. This division was a provisional arrangement, pending a final resolution. The “Associated States” – Cambodia and Laos – which had had the status of “protectorates” under French rule were granted independence.³²

³¹ There were three Indo-China Wars. The first one was between the French and the Vietnamese (1946-54), the second one was between the Americans and the Vietnamese, also known as the “Vietnam War,” (1964–75) and the third was the one between Vietnam and China (1979).

³² India had a lesser role in the resolution of this war than in the case of the Korean War. It joined the peace process during the last stages of the conflict when Nehru made an address to the Indian Parliament in February 1954 calling for an immediate ceasefire. He also put forward the Six-Point Proposal in which he called for a “priority ceasefire,” a declaration of the termination of French sovereignty and the

Ominously, from the Indian point of view, the war in Indo-China and Korea had convinced the US Secretary of State, Dulles, that merely reacting to the conflicts was not enough and that preventive measures in the form of collective defense arrangements and military alliances had to be established to stop the march of communism in Asia. In 1952, Dulles made public his idea of an Asian collective defense organization. He made the case for such an organization not just on strategic but also on moral terms, arguing that it was “demanded by considerations of justice and morality.” Dulles also made it clear that he was more worried about the spread of communism in Asia than in Europe due to the fact that communists in Asia were much more prone to resort to violent action to further their interests. He believed that while recent measures taken to combat communism in Asia were relevant and important, there was a need to “go forward to achieve greater unity and greater strength.”³³ This confirmed Nehru’s fears, as stated by him in the 1947 conference, that Asia would be the scene of great power rivalry in the post war period. Dulles’ utterances were soon followed by whispers in December 1953 that the US was seeking to give military aid to

complete independence of Indo-China, direct negotiations “between the parties immediately and principally concerned” and “a solemn agreement on non-intervention denying aid, direct or indirect, with troops or war materials to the combatants or for the purposes of war, to which the US, the USSR, the UK and China shall be primary parties.” It was suggested that the UN be informed of the progress of the conference for the purposes of conciliation under the appropriate Articles of the UN Charter “and not for invoking sanctions.” These points were made part of the Resolution of the Five Power Colombo Conference (India, Burma, Ceylon, Pakistan, and Indonesia) which was held in April 1954 in Colombo, the capital of Ceylon (subsequent to this conference, the five states came to be known as the “Colombo Powers”). Nehru’s envoy, Krishna Menon, attended the Geneva peace process in an informal capacity and is believed to have played a constructive role. This was reflected by India being made the Chairman of the ICSC which was tasked with upholding the sanctity of the armistice agreements in each of the 3 states in Indo-China. See V.P. Dutt and Vishal Singh, *Indian Policy and Attitudes towards Indo-China and S.E.A.T.O* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1954), 1-13.

³³ Acharya, *Whose Ideas Matter?*, 43.

Pakistan, India's immediate neighbor to the West, as part of its strategy of fighting communism.

Speculations were laid to rest in September 1954 when SEATO was formed through the Manila Pact in the Philippines. It was aimed at providing security to South-East Asia and the South-West Pacific and had Australia, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, UK, and the US as its members. Article 4 of the Treaty stated that

1. Each Party recognizes that aggression by means of armed attack in the treaty area against any of the Parties or against any State *or territory which the Parties by unanimous agreement may hereafter designate* [emphasis mine], would endanger its own peace and safety, and agrees that it will in that event act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes. Measures taken under this paragraph shall be immediately reported to the Security Council of the United Nations.
2. If, in the opinion of any of the Parties, the inviolability or the integrity of the territory or the sovereignty or political independence of any Party in the treaty area *or of any other State or territory to which the provisions of paragraph 1 of this Article from time to time apply is threatened* [emphasis mine] in any way other than by armed attack or is affected or threatened by any fact or situation which might endanger the peace of the area, the Parties shall consult immediately in order to agree on the measures which should be taken for the common defense.

3. It is understood that no action on the territory of any State designated by unanimous agreement under paragraph 1 of this Article or on any territory so designated [emphasis mine] shall be taken except at the invitation or with the consent of the government concerned.³⁴

Article 8 of the Treaty defined "Treaty Area" as "the general area of South-East Asia, including also the entire territories of the Asian Parties, and the general area of the South-West Pacific not including the Pacific area north of 21 degrees 30 minutes north latitude." The significance of these Articles lies in the fact that countries in the region such as Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia who had neither been participants in the talks leading to the signing of treaty nor who were actual signatories to it were indirectly covered by the provisions of the treaty.³⁵ This was a marked departure from other such defensive pacts that clearly identified the members who were covered by the treaty provisions.

The scope for great power intervention in Asian affairs was further strengthened with the signing of the Baghdad Pact in February 1955. Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, and Great Britain were the signatories to this treaty and even though the US did not join it, its role in the organization and establishment of this arrangement was deemed pivotal.

³⁴ The full text of the Treaty is available at http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/usmu003.asp#art4para1

³⁵ Thien, *India and South East Asia 1947-1960*, 318.

6.4 India's Response to the New Security Institutions

There is a tendency to view Nehru's response to SEATO and the Baghdad Pact through the framework of imperialism and colonialism. Since India was a long time sufferer of Western colonialism, it is believed that Indian leaders were aghast by what they perceived was the return of the colonialists in Asia. After all, it was a British trading company – the East India Company – that had set in motion the colonization of the country in the 17th century. Through the mid 20th century security arrangements, the great powers would once again be in a position to manipulate the politics of the Asian states. To that end, India's reaction was seen as having a profound historical and economic dimension. This view point is fuelled by Nehru's own writings of the 1930s and early 1940s and the views of his confidante and "evil genius,"³⁶ Krishna Menon, who left no stone unturned to denounce the emergence of "neo-colonialism" from the pulpits of the UN.³⁷ A closer scrutiny of Nehru's writings when in

³⁶ B.K. Nehru uses this term for Menon. Quoted in Singh, *Defending India*, 27.

³⁷ Both Nehru and Menon denounced "neo-colonialism." While Nehru viewed the phenomenon through a political and strategic lens, Menon viewed it largely through an economic lens; however, given Menon's prominent role at the UN, many believed that Menon's overt leftist positions reflected Nehru's views *in toto*. One has to note that occupying a position of power had clearly tempered Nehru's hitherto fascination with Marxism as demonstrated in his suspicion of communist parties and groups in India as Prime Minister. It is interesting to note that in his discussions with the senior Soviet leaders in Moscow, Nehru drew a clear distinction between American commerce and politics. He argued that while the people in the Pentagon were aggressive, those who worked for profit were simply interested in trade, to the extent that they had no qualms in trading with Communist China. It was pointed out to the Soviets that (American) "Big business...is not so aggressive." Nehru's talks with Soviet leaders, June 21, 1955. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 29, 224. Nehru's view on the difference between US business and government was more than mere rhetoric, for he allowed US companies to operate inside India. In response to an Indian diplomat's view that US oil companies be prevented from functioning in India as they could "usurp political control to entrench their vested interests," Nehru opined that such views were "somewhat exaggerated" and that "American big financial interests today are relatively more reasonable and moderate in their outlook than the US government." As a result, 3 foreign oil companies - Burmah Shell, Caltex, and Standard Vacuum - were allowed to establish oil refineries in India, under agreements signed in 1951. Nehru to Secretary-General, MEA, in reference to Arthur Lall's (India's Consulate General in New

power reveals that his reaction was strategic in nature and drew on his understanding of the dynamics of the international society as prevailing in the post Second World War period (as outlined in Chapter 3). According to D.R. Sardesai, these treaties stood against the basic tenets of his foreign policy: they created spheres of influence, sought peace through military pacts, and provoked tensions in areas close to India.³⁸

Writing to the Pakistani politician, Mohammad Ali, Nehru reacted very strongly to reports of Pakistan having entered into a military alliance with the US. Stating that India would be powerfully affected by it, he underlined that such an alliance meant that the Cold War would reach “the very frontiers of India.” As a corollary, if a real war were to break out, India, in addition to Pakistan, would be grievously affected.³⁹ Nehru underlined the same fact when he wrote to the Burmese Prime Minister, U Nu, about the perils of Pakistan entering into an alliance with the US. He had no doubt that Pakistan would become a “possible theater of war.”⁴⁰ Thien makes a very significant observation when he notes that India was concerned not by the possibility of a war between Pakistan and itself but by the fact that the Cold War

York City) letter, October 11, 1954. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 27, 184-86. Menon’s thinking, on the other hand, did not witness any such compromise. In an interview to Brecher, Menon pointed out that neo-colonialism – the masked return of empire – was the real danger. He regretted that India had adopted “moderate and conservative postures in foreign policy” when he was in positions of power (the 1950s and early 1960s). Brecher, *India and World Politics*, 328.

³⁸ D.R. Sardesai, *Indian Foreign Policy in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam 1947-1964* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 58.

³⁹ Nehru to Mohammad Ali, November 10, 1953. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 24, 416.

⁴⁰ Nehru to U Nu, January 25, 1953. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 21, 448.

would reach the very doorstep of India.⁴¹ He was of the opinion that the US, mindful of the need to respect India's sovereignty and territorial integrity, would make sure that Pakistan did not attack India by using the weapons supplied by the US.⁴² This reinforces the claim of this dissertation that India was much more inclined to pay attention to non-dyadic threats as compared to dyadic threats. Even though Pakistan could use the weapons against India, Nehru chose to focus on the larger problem.⁴³

Nehru was fully aware of the implications of the provisions of SEATO and the novel element that it injected into the philosophy of collective defense. Since its members were responsible not only for their own security but also for the security of those areas which they designated as salient, without the approval of the people in those areas, it was deemed that

⁴¹ Thien, *India and South East Asia 1947-1960*, 315.

⁴² In a note to senior diplomats, Nehru, in response to the Joint Intelligence Committee's (JIC) assessment that US aid would endanger Indian security, observed that, "...I think that, on the whole, the JIC have taken too alarmist a view of the situation. It is true that Pakistan is facing internal troubles, both political and economic, and in fact is almost disintegrating slowly, and therefore there is always the risk of some wild adventure on its part. But I cannot conceive of even a wild adventure in the shape of a war against India without some kind of approval or acquiescence by the USA. Pakistan has a large number of American trained personnel...they are likely to come in the way and actually obstruct any such development...it (is) highly unlikely that Pakistan will think in terms of war against India in the foreseeable future...It is possible that the old threat of pushing across a large number of refugees from Kashmir or tribesmen across the ceasefire line might take shape...which might well embarrass us. This, however, does not involve war in the usual sense." Nehru to Secretary General, Foreign Secretary and Commonwealth Secretary, MEA, December 9, 1956. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 36, 639-40.

⁴³ There were occasions when Nehru focused on the repercussions of such alliances at the bilateral level. For instance, when Pakistan managed to include the Kashmir dispute in the Resolution of the 1956 SEATO conference, Nehru reacted strongly and expressed his displeasure to Dulles. Nehru's notes on talks with Dulles, March 10, 1956. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 32, 380. However, the trend was to place Pakistan's arming within a larger context, even in Nehru's confidential memos to colleagues.

the term “sphere of influence” had got a new meaning. The end result was that SEATO would only further aggravate hostility and tension, of which there was no paucity in the bipolar politics of the times.⁴⁴ Nehru’s thinking on the matter is made crystal clear in his reply to the British Deputy Prime Minister, Anthony Eden’s letter in which the latter had asked if Nehru wanted to be a part of the discussions that would establish SEATO. Nehru pointed out that the proposed alliance would not be a “collective peace system” under the UN Charter but a “military alliance” that would most probably result in a “counter military alliance.” Such an arrangement would render South-East Asia a “potentially explosive theater of the Cold War.”⁴⁵ The problem with interlocking alliances was that even if the larger powers were cautious and restrained, the smaller powers could cause a war due to their irresponsible policies and actions. As the great powers pledged to protect their lesser powerful partners through treaty commitments, they could be drawn into conflicts that they would not have ventured into otherwise.⁴⁶ Also, given the poor representation of Asian countries in SEATO specifically, Nehru observed that the term was hardly a correct designation for an arrangement that had very little to do with Asia.⁴⁷ Gilles Boquerat points out that India’s activism in the Indo-China region also coincided with the testing of the first hydrogen bomb in 1954 by the US.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Nehru’s statement at the Second Session of the Conference of the Prime Ministers at Bogor, December 29, 1954. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 27, 116.

⁴⁵ Acharya, *Whose Ideas Matter?*, 51.

⁴⁶ Rajan, *India in World Affairs*, 81.

⁴⁷ Boquerat, “India’s Commitment to Peaceful Co-Existence and the Settlement of the Indo-China War,” 224.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 215.

India was not the only state to have problems with SEATO. The Indonesian premier also expressed his dislike of this security arrangement when he stated that any “one-sided defense arrangement” had to be avoided as it could aggravate tensions and cause a war. He totally agreed with Nehru that SEATO’s offer of protection brought the much disliked Cold War to the region.⁴⁹

While SEATO gravely affected the security situation in South-East Asia, the Baghdad Pact was bound to adversely impinge on the stability in West Asia. Nehru opined that it would lead to a rift among the Arab states and result in the USSR taking an active interest in that region. In fact, the Pact had given the Soviets the excuse to interfere in West Asia. This was very unfortunate as the treaty came close on the heels of the USSR having settled its frontier dispute with Iran and having publicly renounced its claim to Turkey’s eastern provinces.⁵⁰ The supply of weapons by the Soviets to Egypt in 1955 was evidence enough of the destabilizing nature of such alliance arrangements.⁵¹

6.5 *Panchsheel* as a Weapon of Resisting Great Power Intervention

Cognizant of the fact that India lacked the material capabilities to thwart the designs of the US and its institution building zeal in the region, Nehru sought to leverage India’s soft

⁴⁹ Acharya, *Whose Ideas Matter?*, 51.

⁵⁰ Rajan, *India in World Affairs*, 90.

⁵¹ Nehru to Krishna Menon, December 6, 1955. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 31, 388; Nehru to Selwyn Lloyd, March 4, 1956. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 32, 376.

power and convince other states that it was in their interest to shun military alliances. While a basic understanding as regards resisting foreign powers had been arrived at in 1947 and 1949 through the Asian Relations Conferences, Nehru decided to “package” such a sentiment in the form of a set of diplomatic principles which could form the basis of inter-state relations. This took the shape of the “Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence” or the *Panchsheel*.⁵² This was Nehru’s brainchild and was officially enunciated for the first time in the preamble to the Sino-Indian Agreement “On Trade and Intercourse between Tibetan Region of China and India” in April 1954 and reiterated in the Nehru – Chou Enlai joint statement in June 1954.

The Five Principles consisted of mutual respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non aggression, mutual non interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence. A similar agreement was drafted between Nehru and his Soviet counterpart some time later. Even though the word “mutual” appears repeatedly in the Five Principles, it was understood that they would guide foreign relations with all states. According to Nehru, adherence to these basic principles would enlarge the “area of peace.” The *Panchsheel* was offered to all the countries as an ideal way of conducting relations.⁵³ Nehru claimed that this was a “psychological approach” and by

⁵² Also referred to as *Panch Sheela*, *Pancha Sheel* or *Panch Sila*. The term is derived from two Sanskrit words – *Pancha* meaning “Five” and *Sheela* meaning “Rule of Conduct.”

⁵³ Burke, *The Mainsprings of Indian and Pakistani Foreign Policies*, 145.

adhering to these principles, “We can create an environment wherein it becomes a little more dangerous to the other party to break away from the pledges given.”⁵⁴

As will be seen in the following pages, even though *Panchsheel* was nothing more than a set of normative principles, it played an important part in denying the US additional alliance partners in South-East Asia. By agreeing to be bound by these principles, the smaller states reaffirmed their commitment to non-intervention; while they themselves would not intervene in the affairs of neighboring states, they also would not allow their territories to be used for interventionist policies. *Panchsheel* was also used by India to extract pledges of good behavior from the Chinese leadership. Given that many a smaller nation turned to the Western alliance systems owing to their fear of Communist China and its zeal in propagating its ideals, Nehru sought to tone down Chinese rhetoric and impress upon them that its zeal would only further US presence in the region, and undermine its security. While in the early years of its existence, India had protested against great power pacts mainly in terms of principles, from 1954 onwards, the opposition became a matter of practical policy.⁵⁵

6.6 *Panchsheel* and Indo-China

In the summer of 1954, India had arrived at the conclusion that in the interest of peace and stability, the states in Indo-China had to be diplomatically and militarily “neutralized.”⁵⁶ Given that North and South Vietnam were firmly in the Communist and Western camps

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 150.

⁵⁵ Rajan, *India in World Affairs*, 79-80.

⁵⁶ Sardesai, *Indian Foreign Policy in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam 1947-1964*, 119.

respectively, India focused on Cambodia and Laos, which were not as yet aligned. Given their political setups, these states were extremely apprehensive of communism. As Communist China and North Vietnam were located next door, Cambodia and Laos looked towards the US for military support and protection. Between the two, Cambodia appeared more beleaguered and was believed to have been “angling” for a firm US commitment.⁵⁷ Between the time of its independence in November 1953 and the visit of its leader, Prince Norodom Sihanouk to India in March 1955, it was seriously contemplating joining the SEATO for protection. The fact that it was a designated area as per SEATO provisions, even though it was not a signatory to it, made the possibility of it joining the treaty even more probable. More significantly, the US was trying to entice Cambodia into joining SEATO by getting it to renege on its neutralist commitment which it had undertaken in Geneva in 1954.⁵⁸ However, considerations of domestic politics prevented the government from committing the country to SEATO, where security tie-ups with the West were considered acts of betrayal.⁵⁹

Given the ascendancy of India during the mid 1950s and its perceived influence over Communist China, Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia visited India just before the Bandung Conference. Sardesai notes that there were two choices facing the country as

⁵⁷ Thien, *India and South East Asia 1947-1960*, 201.

⁵⁸ It has been observed that there had been “unwholesome efforts by the US and the Philippines to draw Cambodia into SEATO and away from neutrality.” Sardesai, *Indian Foreign Policy in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam 1947-1964*, 134.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 123.

regards its security: the American approach or the Indian approach.⁶⁰ Till his trip to New Delhi, Sihanouk had an open mind, not knowing what exactly Nehru had to offer. In New Delhi, Nehru pointed out the basic principles of *Panchsheel* and mentioned that other Asian states such as Burma and Indonesia had also decided to adopt it as their foreign policy principle.⁶¹ During the course of the talks, Nehru touched upon two things that directly related to Cambodia's territorial integrity. First, he emphasized that the pledge of neutrality which Cambodia had taken at Geneva was correct. As aggression by one great power was spurred by its insecurity of the fact that its adversary would have a greater influence in the affairs of a third country, it was important to clearly proclaim one's neutrality and reduce the anxiety of the great powers. Hence, even though it was a smaller power, it had the ability to shape the behavior of the great powers towards it. Second, communism was best tackled by adopting progressive social and economic programs and not by joining a great power alliance system.⁶²

Prince Sihanouk made no secret of the fact that Nehru's vision had influenced him and acknowledged that "it is through contact with the great statesman, Pandit Nehru, that I have been able to develop a clearer vision of events and men."⁶³ It was further stated that the Cambodian people would further Nehru's bid to usher in peace and to that end, Cambodia fully believed in Nehru's *Panchsheel*. A month after his meeting with Nehru, Cambodia, in

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁶¹ Records of Nehru's talks with Norodom Sihanouk, March 17, 1955. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 28, 184.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 185-87.

⁶³ Thien, *India and South East Asia 1947-1960*, 202.

Sihanouk's own words, "proclaimed" its neutrality at the Asian-African Conference in Bandung, Indonesia. Sihanouk declared that his country was proud to have determinedly steered its national policy towards *Panchsheel*.⁶⁴ In September 1955, Sihanouk further stated that, "We are neutralists, we will fight the communists only if they attack us. If they invade our country, we will fight alone at first and then we will see later what else to do."⁶⁵ For a regime haunted by the specter of communism, the mere fact that it disavowed the thought of instinctively turning towards the US led alliance in the event of a communist invasion indicates the distance it had traversed in gauging the efficacy of the two approaches to security.

So firmly did the country embrace neutrality, that in September 1957, it was the first among the non-aligned states that passed a law making neutrality part of its national constitution.⁶⁶ From 1955 till about 1959, the country followed a neutralist policy before developing very close ties with Communist China. Cambodia's "tilt" towards Communist China had a lot to do with the inability of the ICSC to stop raids from neighboring Thailand.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 201.

⁶⁵ Sardesai, *Indian Foreign Policy in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam 1947-1964*, 132.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 134.

⁶⁷ Since 1956, relations between the two states had been deteriorating, so much so that in 1958 they snapped diplomatic ties and all other forms of communication. Given the frequent incursions into Cambodian territory by the Thai security personnel (as claimed by the Cambodian government), the ICSC was asked to prevent such occurrences. However, the Canadian member in the ICSC believed that this was beyond the body's mandate, even though India and Poland differed. While Canada preferred a literal interpretation of the terms of the Geneva Agreement, the other two were inclined to interpret them broadly so as to censure violation of Cambodia's territorial integrity and sovereignty by any country. The lack of unanimity prevented the ICSC from condemning the Thai incursions. India, with whom Prince Sihanouk was very close, could not play an independent mediatory role as it was the Chairman of the ICSC

India also influenced Laos' stand on its foreign policy. Shortly after pledging its neutrality in Geneva in 1954, the Laotian King, in his address to the country's National Assembly stated his desire to establish friendly and peaceful relations with the countries around it and help in the creation of a "small zone of peace...which certain nations in Asia were endeavoring to create". He declared that Laos could not help but provide its total support to the policy of *Panchsheel* as enunciated by the Government of India.⁶⁸ Declaring that the Five Principles were in accordance with the country's core values, it was pointed out that "the very essence of the Buddhist religion was embodied in the *Pancha Sheela*."⁶⁹ In acknowledging India's role, Laos went one step further when it stated that in India, the country had found an "elder sister" and looked to it for support and inspiration. The Laotian government also underlined that it looked to India for providing it protection and security against the Chinese and Vietminh dangers.

In 1957, the dispute between the Royal Laotian Government and the communist faction, Pathet Lao, had been brought under control. As part of the final agreement, the government pledged to follow a policy of peace and neutrality and "to apply sincerely Pandit Nehru's principles of peace and co-existence; to keep good relations with all countries, in particular

and sought to uphold its neutral standing. Sans any support, Cambodia found an unlikely ally in Communist China which strongly denounced Thai actions. It has to be noted that Thailand was part of SEATO and it has been claimed that the incursions were meant to coerce Cambodia into joining SEATO. Ibid., 145-48.

⁶⁸ Thien, *India and South East Asia 1947-1960*, 211.

⁶⁹ R.J. Vincent, *Nonintervention and International Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), 251.

neighboring countries; to desist from adhering to any military alliance; to allow no country to establish military bases in Lao territory apart from those foreseen in the Geneva Agreement.”⁷⁰

It is important to note that both the countries, shunning the US protective umbrella, adopted *Panchsheel* as their basic foreign policy orientation. At Bandung, both Cambodia and Laos furthered India’s attempt at engineering an anti-SEATO mindset by supporting the incorporation of the Five Principles philosophy in the final communiqué. According to Thien, on the advice of Nehru, these countries improved their relations with Communist China and North Vietnam. He also observes that as far as Laos and Cambodia were concerned, “SEATO could be considered buried and American and Western influence in those countries largely neutralized.”⁷¹ One cannot but be struck by the fact that presented with the possibility of tangible support from a great power, the two South-East Asian states instead opted to base their foreign policies on a set of principles propagated and championed by Nehru. It was not a question of simply supporting the Five Principles verbally; it was also about explicitly disavowing tangible material support and promises of military and political protection from the great powers. For countries that were located next door to some of the most fervent communist states, and whose territories were under attack by communist guerrillas, it is remarkable that they did not choose to throw in their lot with the US. Nehru’s role in this affair has not been inadequately appreciated.

⁷⁰ Rosemary Brissenden, “India’s Opposition to SEATO: A Case Study in Neutralist Diplomacy,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 6, issue 2 (November 1960): 226.

⁷¹ Thien, *India and South East Asia 1947-1960*, 321.

While many have accused Nehru of woolly-headed idealism, it needs to be recognized that he was very much alive to the power and potential of the latent anti-colonial and nationalist sentiment among the de-colonized states. In his interactions with the American officials, he left no stone unturned to stress the fact that nationalism was a much stronger force in Asia than was communism. In his meeting with Dulles, Nehru had pointed out that the conflict in Indo-China had started *before* the emergence of Communist China in 1949. While Communist China provided moral support, training and supplies, to the best of his knowledge, there were no Chinese soldiers fighting in the region. The conflict was an expression of Vietnamese nationalism, marked by the presence of communist ideology. Menon made the same point to the US Ambassador to Czechoslovakia, Alexis Johnson, who was also a US delegation member to the Geneva Conference. The Vietminh, it was reasoned, would not be “puppets of Moscow or the Chinese and that in the normal course of events, they would constitute a more or less ‘neutral’ group such as India, although they would be oriented towards Communists, just as India is oriented toward the West.”⁷² To that extent, the “Domino/House of Cards” theory which had motivated the US to action in Indo-China was erroneous. These observations were indeed prescient given that much later, Robert McNamara, the much celebrated US Secretary of Defense under the John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson administration, admitted that his government had seriously underestimated the power of nationalism in Vietnam.⁷³

⁷² Boquerat, “India’s Commitment to Peaceful Co-Existence and the Settlement of the Indo-China War,” 214.

⁷³ Bonnie Azab Powell, “Robert McNamara, Errol Morris Return to Berkeley to share lessons from ‘Fog of War.’” Available at http://www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2004/02/05_fogofwar.shtml

While the US chose to totally disregard Nehru's view, India fully exploited nationalism in Asian politics. Given that India itself had become the exemplar of nationalism through its non-violent campaign against British colonialism and had built up a significant reservoir of soft power, its decision makers were confident that they could "connect" powerfully with the post-colonial states. India's attempt was further aided by the fact that the period from 1947 till about 1958-59 is generally regarded as the "golden age" of Indian foreign policy by most commentators.⁷⁴ In Asia, there was hardly a leader who could talk and interact with a sense of authority and confidence that Nehru could with the leaders of the great powers. This enviable record added enormous credibility to India's actions and endeavors.

Another important reason was that Nehru managed to extract specific pledges of good behavior from the Chinese and the North Vietnamese. During the visit of Chou Enlai to India in June 1954 and Nehru's visit to Communist China in October 1954, Nehru sought an explicit pledge from his Chinese counterpart that his country would not interfere in the affairs of South-East Asia, specifically Cambodia and Laos. On both occasions, Chou Enlai assured Nehru that he was mindful of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of these states and would uphold the principle of non-intervention.⁷⁵ The pledge to uphold *Panchsheel* in the 1954 India-China treaty further reinforced the principle of non-intervention. In fact, the

⁷⁴ In the world of diplomacy, a good indication of a state's standing in international society is the frequency of senior foreign dignitaries visiting it as also the visits of its senior leaders to other states. In the case of India, between 1954 and 1956, there were 44 visits by foreign dignitaries having the designation of Prime Ministers, Kings, and Foreign Secretaries, among others. They represented a whole range of countries (US, UK, China, Canada, Australia, Yemen, Sudan, etc.). Nehru himself made 33 state visits during the same period. Rajan, *India in World Affairs 1954-1956*, 637-39.

⁷⁵ Noorani, *Aspects of Indian Foreign Policy*, 179-80.

Chinese went as far as to declare that they would not do anything in the South-East Asian countries without informing or consulting India.⁷⁶ Such assurances would no doubt have been conveyed by Nehru to the leaders of Cambodia and Laos leading to their adopting the Five Principles and staying away from SEATO.

Not only did Nehru manage to extract the promise of non-intervention from the Chinese, he also managed to get the North Vietnamese to make a similar pledge. In October 1954, on his way back from Communist China, Nehru visited Hanoi in North Vietnam. After having talks with its leader, Ho Chi Minh, a joint communiqué was issued by the two leaders. Through the communiqué, Ho Chi Minh declared that he fully supported the Five Principles and that he had no hesitation in applying them to his relations with the neighboring states – Cambodia and Laos. Nehru asked Ho Chi Minh to withdraw his support to the Pathet Lao, a communist movement in Laos, unless he was willing to give the Americans and the French an excuse to intervene.⁷⁷ During the visit of Pham Van Dong, the Deputy Prime Minister and also the Foreign Minister of North Vietnam to New Delhi, Nehru reiterated the need to uphold the policy of non-intervention. Nehru impressed upon him that while Cambodia and Laos wanted to follow a policy based on the Five Principles, the fear of “foreign pressure” prevented them from wholeheartedly embracing it and caused hesitation. India had a definite interest in ensuring that American influence be countered and neutralized in that region.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ This was conveyed by the Chinese to India’s Ambassador to Communist China, R.K. Nehru in 1956. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 35, 516.

⁷⁷ Boquerat, “India’s Commitment to Peaceful Co-Existence and the Settlement of the Indo-China War,” 226.

⁷⁸ Nehru’s talks with Pham Van Dong, April 9, 1955. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 28, 189-90.

The logic of this formulation was clear: to keep the Americans out, North Vietnam had to keep assuring Cambodia and Laos of its benign intention through its actions.

As will be seen in the section dealing with the Bandung Conference, in spite of pledges of good behavior by China at a bilateral level, Nehru still had his doubts. He thus used the event as a testing ground of his northern neighbor's sincerity.

6.7 *Panchsheel and India's Neighbors*

Nehru's foreign policy also played a central role in preventing Ceylon and Burma from signing onto the SEATO in spite of them harboring grave misgivings about communism. While in the case of Burma, India's persuasive skills and its influence over Communist China won its leaders over, in the case of Ceylon, the process was much less amicable.

Since Burma shared its northern border with Communist China, it was affected by the politics of its larger neighbor even before the victory of Mao's forces. During the Chinese civil war, when the nationalist and communist forces were fighting each other, Burma faced a danger in the guise of communist rebels, some of who entered northern Burma from China. When the communists attained victory in China, many Kuomintang (nationalist) soldiers escaped to northern Burma giving rise to the fear that Chinese communist soldiers would attack Burma. Given the fact that this could destabilize the Burmese government and possibly usher in a communist regime, India did not hesitate to provide arms, ammunitions,

and money to the embattled government.⁷⁹ M.A. Rauf, the Indian Ambassador to Rangoon, informed Nehru that there was widespread fear that the Chinese would launch an attack on Burma with the purpose of installing a communist government.⁸⁰ It was Nehru's belief that Communist China would not attack Burma. He also did not support the idea of a military alliance with Burma as it would fuel Communist China's distrust of India at a time when India was trying its level best to influence Chinese foreign policy.⁸¹ Instead, a treaty of peace and friendship was signed between the two countries in 1951 to reassure Burma that it would not be left alone in its problems. More significantly, to prevent Burma from turning towards other powers, India bought large quantities of rice in order to aid revenue generation and in turn promote Burma's self-sufficiency and enhance state capacity. This was done at a loss to the Indian exchequer. In September 1951, India signed a five year trade agreement with Burma whereby it promised to buy 300,000 tons of rice each year. In 1954, India signed a similar trade agreement with Burma.⁸² In the same year, India offered a very generous term of the settlement of debts which Burma owed to India when that country separated from British India.⁸³ In 1957, India also made available a loan of 200 million rupees to Burma for developmental purposes.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Garver, *Protracted Contest*, 251.

⁸⁰ Rauf to Nehru, December 25, 1950. Rauf's Correspondence with J. Nehru, M.A. Rauf Private Papers, Nehru Memorial Library Archives, New Delhi, India.

⁸¹ Nehru to Rauf, December 30, 1950. *Ibid.*

⁸² Thien, *India and South East Asia 1947-1960*, 167.

⁸³ Rajan, *India in World Affairs*, 233.

⁸⁴ Heimsath and Mansingh, *A Diplomatic History of Modern India*, 241.

The fact that India was buying enormous amounts of rice from Burma at very high prices did not go unnoticed within India. A communist Member of Parliament asked the Indian Food Minister whether it was true that the agreements with Burma had very little to do with economics and much to do with politics. *The Hindu*, a prominent Indian newspaper, reminded the Burmese of India's generous gesture when it pointed out that India kept importing rice at a high price at a time when there was an accumulation of unsold stocks of that crop in the country.⁸⁵ According to William C. Johnstone, India's trade policies and its steadfast support to the Burmese government went a long way in establishing its credential as a "Big Brother" in its relations with Burma.⁸⁶ U Nu, the country's first Prime Minister and a close friend of Nehru, had declared in 1949 that that his country needed to follow a foreign policy similar to India's.⁸⁷

The fact that the foreign policy priorities of the dominant party, the AFPFL, which was led by U Nu, was in line with what Nehru used to stress on, would have been comforting to India. In its relations with others, Burma was guided by three core imperatives: to focus on the export of surplus rice crop as this was considered essential for its economic development; to obtain foreign assistance in the form of loans, grants, credits, technical assistance, and the like so as to realize its aim of establishing a socialist policy; and to follow a policy of "friendship with all countries."⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Thien, *India and South East Asia 1947-1960*, 168.

⁸⁶ Johnstone, *Burma's Foreign Policy*, 88.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 249-50.

With tensions running high in Korea and Indo-China, and the US seeking to forge security alliances in Asia, Nehru stressed on the Burmese leadership the need to stay away from the war camps and instead declare an area of peace.⁸⁹ As in the case of Cambodia and Laos, we see Nehru advising the Chinese to enter into a *Panchsheel* agreement with the Burmese, in order to forestall Western intervention in its peripheries (and also India's). During Chou Enlai's stopover in New Delhi on his way back from the Geneva peace talks, Nehru suggested that Communist China take the lead and approach Burma on the issue. According to Nehru, Burma would gladly accept the offer.⁹⁰ A day after having met Chou, Nehru wrote to U Nu that "...You might issue a joint statement with Chou Enlai stating briefly that you agree with the broad approach of the joint statement issued by the Prime Ministers of China and India and further that you would like the relations of Burma and China to be governed by the five principles laid down in that statement."⁹¹ When Chou Enlai left New Delhi for Rangoon, he was accompanied by the Indian Secretary-General who travelled with the Chinese leader till Canton to ensure that there developed a good relationship between Burma and Communist China.⁹²

Given the careful orchestration on the part of Nehru, it comes as no surprise that the joint statement of June 29, 1954 between the Burmese and Chinese leaders affirmed that "...the

⁸⁹ Nehru to U Nu, January 25, 1953. *SWJN*, Second Series, 447.

⁹⁰ Nehru's conversation with Chou Enlai, June 25, 1954. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 26, 380.

⁹¹ Nehru to U Nu, June 27, 1954. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 26, 409.

⁹² Brissenden, "India's Opposition to SEATO: A Case Study in Neutralist Diplomacy," 229.

principles agreed upon between China and India...should also be the guiding principles for relationship between China and Burma.” It would be unrealistic to expect such pledges to have completely removed the fear of Communist China from Burma’s point of view. In fact, owing to the fear harbored by Burma, India was asked to mediate with the communist power in 1956.⁹³ Nonetheless it certainly stopped Burma from turning towards the West for military support or enlisting itself as a member of SEATO.

In marked contrast to the good understanding with Burma, India had a difficult relation with its smaller southern neighbor, Ceylon. Relations between the two states were especially strained between the years 1948 and 1956, when Sir John Kotelawala was the Prime Minister of Ceylon. While forced to stay away from SEATO by Nehru’s political and diplomatic maneuverings, he displayed a clear bias towards the Western camp and a distinct air of independence in foreign policy that greatly irked Nehru. In 1951, Ceylon entered into a defense agreement with Great Britain whereby the two countries agreed to provide each other “military assistance for the security of their territories, for defense against external aggression and for the protection of external communications.” Great Britain was allowed to station air, naval, and land forces in the island country and was allowed the use of air and naval bases.

While some argue that the lending of military bases to Great Britain was part of Ceylon’s bargaining strategy for its independence, others aver that it was intended as an insurance

⁹³ Nehru to Foreign and Commonwealth Secretaries, August 26, 1956. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 34, 385.

against India.⁹⁴ In fact Kotelawala had openly declared that the defense agreement was entered into in order to check India's imperialist ambitions on Ceylon.⁹⁵ In Nehru's own words, "This fear was not wholly unjustified," since senior Indian politicians such as C. Rajagopalachari, the country's Home Minister (1950-51), had stated that Ceylon should become part of India.⁹⁶ Notwithstanding such careless utterances on the part of his officials, Nehru opined that the size and strength of India also played a role in generating Ceylon's fear. To that end, it was necessary to remove the fear.⁹⁷ Given how much of a say India had in its relations with immediate smaller neighbors like Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim, it would not be surprising if this factor also impinged upon Kotelawala's decision in courting Great Britain.⁹⁸

In keeping with Kotelawala's distrust of communism, when the idea of SEATO was made public, he immediately entertained thoughts of joining it; however, two reasons prevented him from doing so. One was the fact that India, a much superior power was located right next door and Ceylon felt uneasy about going against its prescription on foreign policy. He

⁹⁴ Kodikara, *Foreign Policy of Sri Lanka*, 84-85.

⁹⁵ Rajan, *India in World Affairs*, 385.

⁹⁶ He had also launched vicious attacks on its Prime Minister, Kotelawala. A case in point was his observation that the Ceylon Premier "behaved like the jackdaw which imagined that it had the plumage of the peacock." *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 28, 211.

⁹⁷ Nehru's speech at a closed door session of the Congress Parliamentary Party, May 3, 1955. *Ibid.*, 155.

⁹⁸ The fact that Ceylon was nowhere near the Chinese mainland may explain why Nehru did not attempt to scuttle the defense pact with Great Britain. Another reason may be that as India itself had strong institutional links (even in the military sphere) with Great Britain, it was less alarmist of the presence of Great Britain in a place like Ceylon.

pointed this out in his letter to Eden who had written to him seeking Ceylon's stand on SEATO.⁹⁹ One wonders if, like in the case of Nepal, Ceylon too had been made to realize that it could not ignore geography and disregard India's interests. Second, Ceylon, along with the other states comprising the Colombo Powers,¹⁰⁰ had agreed not to take sides in the Cold War in a meeting in Colombo in 1954. As a result, Kotelawala could not turn his back on the pledge and join SEATO. Just before the Manila conference which led to the establishment of SEATO, Ceylon proposed a meeting of the Colombo Powers in Rangoon. While Pakistan and Burma agreed to meet, Nehru did not, citing domestic reasons. Nehru understood that this was Kotelawala's ploy to convince the others of either revisiting their stand on the issue of intervention or perhaps allowing Ceylon to join SEATO. Not deterred by Nehru's refusal, Kotelawala suggested that New Delhi be made the venue of the conference. Nehru replied saying that a conference close on the heels of the Colombo Conference would send the wrong signals to the international community and that such plans be shelved for the moment.¹⁰¹

His plans unsuccessful, yet not willing to close the door as regards SEATO membership, the Prime Minister of Ceylon publicly declared that it was too early for his country to take a stand on the matter. He needed time to think, review the situation, and consult his colleagues from the Colombo Powers. About two months after the signing of SEATO, there

⁹⁹ Kotelawala had stated that although he was "realistic about communist dangers," he "could not ignore the position of India." Acharya, *Whose Ideas Matter?*, 54.

¹⁰⁰ See 265, ft. 32.

¹⁰¹ Brissenden, "India's Opposition to SEATO: A Case Study in Neutralist Diplomacy," 222-23.

was a perceptible change in his stand when he let it be known that what Asia needed were not blocs with fixed rules, regulations, and objectives, but something like the Commonwealth, something like a family.¹⁰²

It was only when Ceylon had a new government in 1956 that relations with India improved significantly. The inauguration of the Bandaranaike led government saw the country emphasize its position as a neutral in the Cold War. It also entered into negotiations with the British government for the removal of foreign bases from its territories. As a result, as per a 1957 agreement, the British government transferred its naval base at Trincomalee and its air force base at Katunayake to Ceylon.¹⁰³

By the time of the landmark Bandung Conference, India had played a seminal part in preventing Cambodia, Laos, Burma, and Ceylon from joining SEATO. Indonesia had also whole heartedly supported India's call for following a non-interventionist policy and had pledged its adherence to the Five Principles. It needs to be remembered that India played a not-too-insignificant role in mobilizing opinion in Asia against Dutch presence in Indonesia in 1949. Among the Colombo Powers, only Pakistan refused to toe a non-aligned line and signed the SEATO in 1955. Its presence in the non-aligned camp, while being a member of SEATO, led to significant tension and acrimony with Nehru during the Bandung Conference.

¹⁰² Kodikara, *Foreign Policy of Sri Lanka*, 91.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 98-99.

One needs to note that when faced with the choice of SEATO or *Panchsheel*, most of India's neighbors opted for the latter. All sorts of inducements and tactics were brought to the table by India to keep them away from the embrace of the US security framework – economic aid, loss-incurring import policies, supply of arms and ammunitions, efficient diplomatic outreach, and veiled threats. In his memoir, *Full Circle*, Anthony Eden writes that Indonesia, Burma, and Ceylon followed India's lead in turning down his offer to join the Manila talks in September 1954.¹⁰⁴ To that extent, he saw India as the lead actor among them. Dulles bemoaned that so great was Nehru's influence over Eden that he wielded a veto power over British Asian policies.¹⁰⁵ It is reported that India became the subject of "bitter criticism" in Washington due to its non co-operative ways.¹⁰⁶ With specific reference to Cambodia, the US felt that India was a bad influence on Sihanouk. India's ideas on the attitudes and actions of the Cambodian Government had been powerful and against the interests of the US in the region.¹⁰⁷ The opposition to SEATO led Morgenthau, writing in 1958, to note that it was a useless military alliance. From a political and economic point of view, it was harmful as it alienated the broad masses of Asians.¹⁰⁸ While it is difficult to disagree with Morgenthau's observation, one clarification is in order. SEATO did not alienate the Asian masses; the Asian masses had largely been alienated *prior* to the signing of SEATO. Nehru had a notable

¹⁰⁴ Anthony Eden, *Full Circle* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), 162.

¹⁰⁵ Ruane, "SEATO, MEDO, and the Baghdad Pact: Anthony Eden, British Foreign Policy and the Collective Defense of South East Asia and the Middle East, 1952-1955," 178.

¹⁰⁶ Appadorai and Rajan, *India's Foreign Policy and Relations*, 355.

¹⁰⁷ Boquerat, "India's Commitment to Peaceful Co-Existence and the Settlement of the Indo-China War," 228.

¹⁰⁸ Hans Morgenthau cited in Kodikara, *Foreign Policy of Sri Lanka*, 93.

role to play in this process of alienation. The Bandung Conference, which was held six months after the Manila conference, merely stated the fact in formal diplomatic terms.

6.8 The Bandung Conference

From Nehru's view point, the Asian-African Conference held in Bandung in April 1955 had two primary purposes. The first objective had to do with Communist China. Even though that country had professed its adherence to the Five Principles in bilateral settings ever since April 1954, Nehru had some doubts as regards its sincerity.¹⁰⁹ Getting Communist China to commit itself to these principles in a multilateral setting was a slightly different matter and Nehru was intent on testing China on it. He also wanted to "socialize" Communist China with the other Asian states. From history, Nehru had learnt that great powers which were shunned by other states tended to become hostile and revisionist. He often used to cite the example of the USSR and point out that its acute hostility and suspicion as regards the West had a lot to do with the Western states ostracizing it.¹¹⁰ As a result, it was imperative that Communist China's diplomatic isolation be broken.¹¹¹ It was Nehru's intention to get its Prime Minister, Chou Enlai, to grace the occasion so he could convince the others that they had nothing to fear from his country and that they did not need to turn to alliances with the

¹⁰⁹ In a letter to the provincial leaders in India, Nehru had expressed some doubts about China's sincerity on the matter, especially its attitude towards the South-East Asian countries. Even as late as March 1955 – a month before Bandung – Nehru had opined that someone who pledged adherence to the Five Principles might not keep his word. However, he reasoned, non-adherence was possible in relation to any alliance, treaty, or pledge. Sardesai, *Indian Foreign Policy in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam 1947-1964*, 68.

¹¹⁰ Dutt and Singh, *Indian Foreign Policy and Attitudes towards Indo-China and SEATO*, 26.

¹¹¹ Heimsath and Mansingh, *A Diplomatic History of Modern India*, 234.

other great powers in order to seek protection. If Chou Enlai made a good impression, others would not hesitate to support the incorporation of the Five Principles in the final declaration. Nehru set before him the goal of convincing and helping Communist China establish itself as an Asian, rather than a communist power.¹¹² This was why Nehru proposed that Communist China be invited to Bandung at the Bogor Conference in December 1954.¹¹³

The second objective was to send a message to the international community that security alliances such as SEATO were not welcome in Asia. This was outlined by Nehru at a press conference in Bogor when, in reply to a press person's query, he stated that it was obvious that the delegates sought to deny the great powers their spheres of influence in Asia.¹¹⁴ In fact, just prior to the conference, Nehru had admitted that *Panchsheel* was a challenge by Asia to the rest of the world and that each country would have to give a direct answer. He stated "I hope the question will be posed at the Afro-Asian conference in all its straightness and that each country will be asked to say whether it stands for non-aggression and non-interference or not."¹¹⁵ It was thus imperative that all the delegates disregard whatever differences they might have and produce a final communiqué or declaration which would tell the world that the de-colonized states would not tolerate being dragged into the Cold War politics.

¹¹² Ibid., 234.

¹¹³ The Colombo Powers had met in Bogor to discuss and finalize the agenda of the Bandung Conference. Being the joint sponsors, they had an especially important task.

¹¹⁴ Nehru at a press conference, 30 December 1954. *SWJN*, Second Series, Vol. 27, 125-26.

¹¹⁵ Jansen, *Afro-Asia and Non-Alignment*, 191-92.

Nehru's wishes as regards Communist China were fulfilled with a great degree of satisfaction. Chou Enlai publicly stated his country's adherence to the *Panchsheel* principles and said that "China has no intention whatever to subvert the governments of its neighboring countries." In more private, closed door sessions, Chou Enlai, in the presence of Nehru, reassured Cambodia and Laos that their neutrality would be honored. He arranged a meeting between the Laotian and North Vietnamese delegates where the latter promised that North Vietnam would not interfere in the conflict between the Royal Laotian Government and the Pathet Lao.¹¹⁶ In fact so impressed were most of the delegates by Chou Enlai's constructive approach, his charm and restraint, that he earned the nickname of the "Bandung Gentleman."¹¹⁷ It is believed that even the delegates of pro-Western countries like Pakistan, Thailand, and the Philippines were taken in by Chou Enlai's personality and seemed to lower their guards quite a bit.¹¹⁸ According to Boquerat, Nehru was able to realize both his objectives as regards Communist China. He managed to elicit verbal guarantees from Chou Enlai that extended over a very wide area in Asia on the most public platform available and he managed to introduce his northern communist neighbor in a different light to Asia.¹¹⁹ Given the fact that Nehru took it upon himself to "introduce" Chou Enlai, it has been claimed that the latter found such behavior patronizing. This was admitted as much by

¹¹⁶ Brissenden, "India's Opposition to SEATO: A Case Study in Neutralist Diplomacy," 230-31.

¹¹⁷ C.S. Jha, *From Bandung to Tashkent: Glimpses of India's Foreign Policy* (Madras: Sangam Books, 1983), 70.

¹¹⁸ Sardesai, *Indian Foreign Policy in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam 1947-1964*, 72.

¹¹⁹ Brissenden, "India's Opposition to SEATO: A Case Study in Neutralist Diplomacy," 228, 232.

Krishna Menon in a series of interviews to Brecher. Ever the person not to allow an opportunity for taking credit go begging, Menon claimed that it was he who introduced Chou Enlai to everyone and that the Chinese leader played a “good liberal and useful role,” even though he did not take any initiatives. It was India that was making Communist China “acceptable.”¹²⁰ It is in this context that Carlos Romulo – a prominent diplomat from the Philippines - observed that Nehru “definitely played mother hen” to Chou Enlai.¹²¹

There was quite a bit of rancor and controversy as far as the second objective was concerned. As per the format of the conference, the main issues to be discussed were economic cooperation, cultural cooperation, human rights and self determination, problems of dependent peoples, and the promotion of world peace and cooperation. The Prime Ministers and other heads of delegations sat in the Political Committee of the conference and it is in this body that most of the “interesting discussions” were held, in the words of a senior Indian diplomat, C.S. Jha, who had accompanied Nehru to Bandung.¹²² The Political Committee ended up focusing predominantly on non-intervention and non-involvement in regional pacts, at the cost of other issues like the self-determination in relation to Palestine and West Irian.¹²³ Whereas culture and history were issues that were regularly invoked in previous gatherings like the Asian Relations Conferences, such matters were “banished” to

¹²⁰ Brecher, *India and World Politics*, 58, 165.

¹²¹ Garver, *Protracted Contest*, 118.

¹²² Jha, *From Bandung to Tashkent*, 66.

¹²³ Acharya, *Whose Ideas Matter?*, 55.

the sidelines at Bandung.¹²⁴ When the time came to write down the conclusion of the conference, especially as regards the section on World Peace and Cooperation, there was friction. It pertained to the question of military alliances and the Five Principles.

Countries that were allied to the West through alliances such as Philippines, Iraq, Turkey, and Pakistan sought to justify alliances under Article 51 of the UN Charter as a method of self-defense and tried to have it included in the final declaration. The Five Principles became a hostage in the ensuing tussle between the adherents of collective peace and collective defense. Ultimately, a 10 Point Declaration, referred to as the Bandung Declaration was arrived at. With regard to collective defense, a compromise formula was reached. The Declaration, while respecting the right of each state to defend itself singly or collectively added two caveats: first, that the exercise of such right should be in conformity with the UN Charter and second, that there should be “abstention from the use or arrangement for collective defense to serve the particular interests of any of the big powers or to exercise pressure on other countries.”¹²⁵

During the course of the debate with reference to military alliances, Nehru sought to admonish those countries that had made common cause with the West. Perhaps the purpose was also to hint that other states which joined treaties like SEATO would be similarly “named and shamed” on a major regional platform. In a speech at a closed session of the conference, Nehru laid the groundwork for the criticism by underlining the need for unity

¹²⁴ Abraham, “From Bandung to NAM: Non-alignment and Indian Foreign Policy,” 208.

¹²⁵ Jha, *From Bandung to Tashkent*, 66-71.

among the Asian states and the fact that while individually they were incapable of changing the actions of the great powers, collectively they could play a pivotal role in enlarging the “area of peace.” Anything that negated such a step inevitably led towards war. Nehru then fired his salvo by stating that

Has it come to this, that the leaders of thought who have given religious and all kinds of things to the world have to tag on to this kind of group or that and be hangers on of this party or the other carrying out their wishes and occasionally giving an idea? It is most degrading and humiliating to any self-respecting people or nation. It is an intolerable thought to me that the great countries of Asia and Africa should come out of bondage into freedom only to degrade themselves or humiliate themselves in this way.¹²⁶

Nehru specifically pointed at Iraq and noted that if the delegate from Iraq considered their stand to be the right one, then there was no doubting the fact that the world was going to ruin.¹²⁷ For Nehru, communism was a lesser danger as he felt he could influence the leaders of notable communist states. As a result, he simply refused to acknowledge the very genuine fears about communism harbored by some Asian states. Given that he had much less influence on the US, he shifted the onus of thwarting its policies on the other Asian states. When they refused to co-operate, Nehru ostracized them.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Nehru, April 22, 1955. *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 28, 109.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 113.

¹²⁸ Ramon Magsaysay, the President of the Philippines (1953-57), pointed out that his country people did not view those resisting communism as wanting to perpetuate the imperialism of the West. While he fully appreciated his neighbors’ reasons to align their foreign and security policies in other ways (even if he disagreed with them), he wanted others to appreciate his country’s stand and compulsions. He requested that his country’s policy to seek security through collective defense be understood in the right spirit rather than criticize the Philippines for creating tension in the region. According to him, such an argument was akin to putting the cart before the horse. Magsaysay definitely had India in mind, *avers Thien*. Given the distaste for Philippines’ alliance with the US, some Indians went as far as to question its democratic political system, arguing that being so closely tied with the US, it was hardly a “showcase of democracy.”

Given Nehru's aggressive approach, the "committed" countries hardened their stand and sought to focus on the role of communist expansionism and especially the role of Communist China in aiding communist movements in Asian states. Nehru was not in favor of doing so openly. Perhaps he feared that open criticism would cause China to turn its back on such platforms and become totally unapproachable. He would also have feared that if India was seen as supporting Communist China's denunciation, it would lose the ability to exercise influence on that country which it had diligently been building up for quite a while. Absent wise counsel from India, Communist China would jeopardize its relations with other Asian states and push them into the waiting hands of the Western powers. As a result, when the Ceylonese Prime Minister sought to draw attention to Communist China's role in refusing to rein in Cominform's propaganda activities and assistance to Ceylonese communists, Nehru looked the other way.¹²⁹

Given Nehru's strident denunciations of military alliances and his enthusiasm in "guiding" the trajectory of Asian politics, some delegates harbored a feeling that India sought to emerge as an alternative power in the Cold War. Fadhil Jamali, an Iraqi delegate, asked Nehru if he was prepared to bring all the states together as a third bloc in the nature of a military alliance. Such an idea had also been floated by some influential leaders in India who had suggested forming a "Multilateral Monroe Doctrine." In 1953, Aneurin Bevan, the

With an air of arrogance, it was declared that such democracy did not attract Asians. Thien, *India and South-East Asia 1947-1960*, 262-63.

¹²⁹ Acharya, *Whose Ideas Matter?*, 57.

British Labor Party leader, also had put forward such a proposal.¹³⁰ Nehru declined this offer. It is interesting that in spite of Nehru clearly declining to play the role of the leader of a “third bloc,” scholars in contemporary times believe that this is exactly what he was seeking to do. It cannot be stressed enough that while consciously he did not seek such a role, unconsciously he was replicating some of the core functions and roles of great powers. To that extent, his actions did suggest that India was pursuing great power status. From a conceptual view point, it further reinforces our claim that India’s behavior was deviant in nature. To those states whose world views were compatible with India’s, Nehru’s actions were understandable. Hence, Burma did not display any great discomfort with India’s proactive role in the region. However, those states that did not agree with India and who perhaps had an inadequate understanding of Nehru’s thoughts and motivations, viewed his actions in more sinister terms. India’s strident posture led Romulo to state that it was the fear of India and Communist China that led smaller countries like the Philippines to seek security through Western alliance systems. Even though he realized that this arrangement came at a cost to their new-found sovereignty, the need to protect themselves from the Asian giants led them to take a calculated risk.¹³¹ Countering Nehru’s view, Romulo provocatively stated that the Manila Pact had in fact lessened international tension.¹³²

The apprehensions of those suspicious of India’s intentions would have been heightened even further given that India had conspicuous military interaction with some Asian states.

¹³⁰ Sardesai, *Indian Foreign Policy in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam 1947-1964*, 66.

¹³¹ Abraham, “From Bandung to NAM: Non-alignment and Indian Foreign Policy,” 211.

¹³² Thien, *India and South East Asia 1947-1960*, 271.

For instance, in 1951, India started training Indonesian military officers in Indian bases. It is estimated that 3000 Indonesian air force pilots were trained by the Indians. In the same year, India provided military training to Burmese military personnel. India also played an important role in the training of the Malayan army officers. In 1959, an Indian Major-General was designated as the deputy general officer, commanding the Malayan Federation Army. Malayan military officers also attended advanced instruction courses in India.¹³³

While many tend to see the Bandung Conference as the high watermark of Indian foreign policy, it is also true that India's rigidity and inability to accommodate the views of other countries gave further fillip to the impression that India was using the event to make its bid as an Asian great power and that it would brook no opposition to its views and objectives. Critics observe that Nehru had gone to Bandung with the express intent of emerging as the star of the conference and that during the event, he exploited every chance to gain acknowledgment of his leadership.¹³⁴ However, as Noorani writes, "An intolerant sectarianism crept into our relations with other Asians who thought differently."¹³⁵ Jansen agrees with this view when he observes that Nehru's stand resembled Dulles' crusading zeal: either one accepted *Panchsheel* or supported aggression.¹³⁶

¹³³ Heimsath and Mansingh, *A Diplomatic History of Modern India*, 233, 241, 250.

¹³⁴ Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung, *Twenty Years of Indonesian Foreign Policy 1945-1965* (Paris: Mouton and Co., 1973), 242.

¹³⁵ A.G. Noorani, *Aspects of India's Foreign Policy* (Bombay: Jaico Publishing House, 1970), 8.

¹³⁶ Jansen, *Afro-Asia and Non-Alignment*, 191-92.

The negative dynamics of the conference aside, the “Bandung Spirit” did manage to prevent more states from joining the security alliances. The fact that 28 states representing two-thirds of the human population declared that they opposed intervention in their territories could not be ignored even by the most powerful states.¹³⁷ Heimsath and Mansingh shed further light on the importance of the Bandung Conference when they write that, “The Asia-African Conference was the greatest exploration of the possibility of Asian regionalism in our times.”¹³⁸ If international relations is the realm of “Organized Hypocrisy,” the imperative on the part of the powerful to put on an act of honoring states’ sovereignty and territorial integrity became that much more salient and pressing. Acharya, through his research, produces classified Western assessment which clearly states that the “Bandung injunction” made the expansion of SEATO impossible.¹³⁹ He has no doubts that not only was Nehru the most articulate opponent of military pacts, but that he was also the main figure behind early post war Asian regionalism. His views powerfully shaped the views of nationalist elites in other Asian nations.¹⁴⁰ Nehru is also credited with giving the term “non-intervention” a distinct flavor in the Asian context. Whereas in the European and Latin American context, the term refers to the resistance in the internal affairs of a state, in the Asian context, it also

¹³⁷ *SWJN*, Second Series, vol. 28, ft. 4, 97.

¹³⁸ Heimsath and Mansingh, *A Diplomatic History of Modern India*, 235.

¹³⁹ “[Any] hope that might have existed that additional states would be attracted to SEATO,” had “now vanished.” “The Afro-Asian Conference,” Foreign Office Research Department, May 5, 1955. FO 371/116986, TNA. Cited in Acharya, *Whose Ideas Matter?*, 59-60.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

refers to an injunction against participating in collective defense pacts sponsored by the great power.¹⁴¹

Table 6.1: Representation at Regional Conferences in Asia, 1947-55

ARC 1947	ARC 1949	Bandung 1955
Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Afghanistan*
Armenia	-	-
Azerbaijan	-	-
Bhutan	-	-
Burma	Burma	Burma*
Cambodia, Cochin-China and Laos	-	Cambodia*
Ceylon	Ceylon	Ceylon*
China	China (o)	China (Communist)
Egypt	Egypt	Egypt
-	Ethiopia	Ethiopia
Georgia	-	Gold Coast (o)
India	India	India*
Indonesia	Indonesia	Indonesia*
-	Iraq	Iraq
-	-	Japan**
-	-	Jordan
Kazakhstan	-	-
Kirghizia	-	-
Korea (South)	-	-
-	-	Laos

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 39-40.

-	Lebanon	Lebanon**
-	-	Liberia
-	-	Libya
Malaya	-	-
Mongolia	-	-
Nepal	Nepal (o)	Nepal
-	Pakistan	Pakistan
Palestine (Hebrew University)	-	-
Persia	Persia	Persia
Philippines	Philippines	Philippines**
-	Saudi Arabia	Saudi Arabia
-	-	Sudan
-	Syria	Syria
Tajikistan	-	-
Thailand	Thailand (o)	Thailand**
Tibet	-	-
Turkey	-	Turkey**
Turkmenistan	-	-
Uzbekistan	-	-
Vietnam (Viet Minh)	-	Vietnam (North)
-	-	Vietnam (South)**
-	Yemen	Yemen
Australia (o)	Australia	-
-	New Zealand (o)	-
Arab League (o)	-	Arab League (o)
UK (o)	-	-
USSR (o)	-	-
US (o)	-	-
UN (o)	-	-

Source: Acharya, *Whose Ideas Matter?* 39-40.

Notes: (o) = observer; * = neutralist nation at Bandung; ** = main pro Western nation at Bandung; a dash (-) indicates that the country in the row did not participate.

6.9 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that it was India's genuine fear of a great power competition in South-East Asia and the very real possibilities of a war breaking out between the US and Communist China that caused it to take an active interest in the affairs of that region. At a time when India did not possess a great amount of material capabilities and when faced with domestic challenges, it does strike one as odd that Nehru evinced such a great interest in South-East Asian politics. While revisionist scholars have interpreted this aspect of Indian foreign policy through the lens of balance of power politics, we argue that while India's policies did indeed mirror important aspects of balance of power politics, India did not seek to pursue great power status. It is an irony that without wanting to become a great power, India was demonstrating great power behavior. For a discipline that has made a virtue of establishing simple yet often effective ahistorical causal postulates as regards state motivation and behavior, it is little wonder that when presented with India's great power behavior, scholars draw the conclusion that India's desire to attain great power status produced its deviant behavior. We have clearly shown that is not the case.

It is noteworthy that for a person who despised the rigid world view of Dulles, Nehru ended up following a similar approach in his foreign policy. By 1955, it is clear that his fear of a cataclysmic nuclear war had led him to adopt an "either you are with us or you are against

us” approach towards his immediate and distant Asian neighbors. Some scholars choose not to focus on this extreme rigidity in Nehru’s world view and its application, as reflected in India’s foreign policy. Rather, they prefer to view his actions as sincere activism, guided by deep normative and humanistic impulses. Given India’s own colonial past, the mere thought of the process repeating in the mid 20th century was thought to shock Nehru’s sensibilities. Other scholars aver that such rigidity was reflective of his innate desire to attain for India the status of a great power. This dissertation argues that both approaches are off the mark. Nehru’s rigidity was grounded in his effort to stave off a great power war. In order to do so, he was at times prepared to sacrifice the goodwill and admiration that others had for India. In order to do so, he was also prepared to disregard suggestions by prominent world figures that India become a Permanent Member of the Security Council – one of the important markers of great power status. It is remarkable that in spite of these key aspects of Nehru’s foreign policy, it is still believed that either Nehru was an idealist par excellence or that he was nothing but a wolf in sheep’s disguise. Nehru was not an idealist or a realist – he was both without being reducible to either.

Given that India did not consciously want to adopt great power policies but ended up replicating some core great power functions, what was Nehru’s stand on the issue? Was he not aware that India’s policies were being questioned and that there were whispers that India was pursuing great power status? Nehru’s correspondences suggest that he was aware that there was talk of India pursuing great power status. While he stressed at every given opportunity that India did not seek great power status, it is true that he did not alter his policies to silence those who claimed that India sought the leadership of Asia. Even on the

issue of undermining the sovereignty of the Himalayan states, Nehru hardly ever showed any remorse or any sense of guilt. For Nehru, the threat posed by the great power rivalry was immediate and dire. Anything that could reduce this threat needed to be persevered with. If India's policies reduced this threat but gave others the impression that it was pursuing great power status, Nehru saw such a situation as being acceptable. His frequent reference to the fact that fate had thrust upon India a particular role during the Cold War is illustrative of this mindset. It was his belief that the sincerity of India's activism and foreign policy initiatives would soon become apparent to others and dispel murmurs of there being a sinister dimension to India's foreign policy. While Nehru realized that his policies were taking India further from its Gandhian mooring, he convinced himself that in the larger sense, by preventing a great power war, he was in fact upholding Gandhi's emphasis on non-violence.

In his book *Inventing International Society*, Tim Dunne speaks of the role of irony in international relations. Pointing at the eminent list of English School scholars, Dunne shows how the desire to step out of the bounds of the "recurrence and repetition" narrative of international relations and focus on irony informed the thinking of scholars like Wight and Vincent. For instance, Wight was motivated by the desire to point out the "tricks that history plays on those who shape its course, the tragedy which accompanies their ethical choices and the irony of unintended consequences."¹⁴² Similarly, Dunne notes that Vincent's work was focused on unearthing "irony over certainty" in international affairs.¹⁴³ By employing the methodological approach of the English School, it is seen how the role of irony can be

¹⁴² Dunne, *Inventing International Society*, 49.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 162.

discerned in Nehru's foreign policy between 1947 and 1962. India's deviant behavior was not the outcome of unbridled arrogance or confidence on Nehru's part; it was the outcome of a sense of deep vulnerability.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

7.1 Deviant State Behavior and the English School

This dissertation has examined an aspect of Indian foreign policy that has not attracted much scrutiny – its great power behavior between 1947 and 1962. Conventional accounts of Indian foreign policy tend to gloss over this issue, and when confronted with the country's disproportionate involvement with foreign affairs in relation to its capabilities, scholars explain India's behavior as being a result of the zeal that is typical of a neophyte. Such explanations give credence to the opinion held by a large number of people that Indian foreign policy, under Nehru, was utopian. Very seldom does one find acknowledgement of the fact that Indian foreign policy evoked apprehension and even fear in its neighbors. Hardly ever does one find an in-depth study of why India entered into unequal treaties with its Himalayan neighbors or recognize how much energy India expended in ensuring that South and South-East Asia were free from great power influence. Rarely is one told of how much arm twisting and inducement India applied in its relations with other Asian states with the purpose of keeping them away from great power alliances.

Revisionist scholars have sought to compensate for this deficiency in Indian foreign policy studies by looking at Nehru's engagement with the international society from a realist perspective. They have interpreted India's interest in foreign affairs through the prism of balance of power politics, and have argued that its willingness to play the balancing game with great powers such as the US and Communist China indicate that India was actively

pursuing great power status. Revisionists point out that India's possession of certain material and ideational attributes, such as a vast landmass, a large military, and the identity as an ancient civilization, enabled it to pursue great power status through its balance of power politics. Thus, the utopian characterization of Indian foreign policy has been replaced by a more realist narrative: as India possessed both material and ideational attributes, it was capable of pursuing great power status. Through such a formulation, the revisionists have argued that Nehru's foreign policy was the logical outcome of its basic attributes and hence was not utopian in character. Chapter 2 demonstrated that while India did possess important material and ideational attributes, Nehru was well aware that there existed a wide gap between its capabilities and the capabilities of the great powers. Hence, the argument that India's pursuit of great power status was a logical function of its material and ideational attributes is not convincing as, in the opinion of Nehru himself, India simply did not have adequate capabilities to play the balance of power game, or pursue great power status.

This dissertation finds merit in the revisionist claim that Indian foreign policy did have a strong element of balance of power politics.¹ While revisionists have been guilty of not establishing this point in an empirically robust manner, choosing instead to reinterpret India's foreign policy activism as a balance of power strategy, we have undertaken a detailed examination of Indian foreign policy in chapters 5 and 6. These chapters clearly demonstrate that India established spheres of influence in South and South-East Asia, it entered into

¹ However, it disagrees with them on the important issue of motivation. While revisionists claim that India was following a balance of power strategy with the intention of attaining great power status, this dissertation argues that while India's foreign policy had elements of balance of power politics, they were not a reflection of its desire to attain great power status. Rather, they were the outcomes of India's policies of keeping the great powers away from South and South-East Asia.

unequal treaties with the Himalayan states, and it managed to scuttle the US plans for putting in place a strategy of containing Communist China in Asia, and thereby significantly contributed to the failure of SEATO. India also played an important role in shaping Communist China's engagement with other states in Asia. Significantly, these aspects of Indian foreign policy match Bull's characterization of great power behavior, the latter having been clearly outlined in Chapter 2. This dissertation identifies the disjuncture between India's middle power capabilities and its great power behavior between 1947 and 1962 as deviant state behavior.

Chapter 3 demonstrated that the English School approach is well suited to explain India's deviant behavior. Building on the English School's argument that states are innately social actors, and that they are capable of making common cause with other states, we focused on its specific understanding of order. Extrapolating from the English School argument that the prevalence of order is an indication of the fact that all states value the primary goals of the international society - such as upholding sovereignty - and that order is not an accidental but a contrived state of affairs in international relations, we demonstrated that non-great powers play an important role in the creation and maintenance of order. We showed that after the end of great power wars, when international society puts in place measures to resuscitate order, non-great powers have played an important role in forwarding candidates for great power status based on the notions of legitimacy and representation. Hence, the institution of great powers has a marked imprint of the non-great powers, which enables it to function as an order maintaining instrument in international relations. We argued that since non-great powers show an avid interest in the creation and upholding of order, they must, by the

necessity of logic, show equal concern when order is imperiled. How non-great powers react to the threat of disorder, and the actions that they take as a result of the threat to order, are determined by their unique historical situation and the material and ideational attributes which they possess.

Chapter 4 demonstrated that as a non-great power, India did consider order as being vital for its own security. Importantly, it shows that India, as a non-great power, defined its security and stability in broad, societal terms, which is consistent with what Bull outlined in *The Anarchical Society*. As a result, when the instability created by the great powers threatened order, India repeatedly drew a direct connection between its well-being and order. To better understand the sense of threat experienced by India as a result of the great power rivalry in Asia, we introduced the concept of “non-dyadic threat.” This concept allowed us to show that states do perceive threat in non-binary ways and that this unconventional notion of threat can cause them to undertake robust measures to safeguard their security. India’s involvement in peace-keeping and mediation activities under UN auspices illustrates that it was responsive to non-dyadic threats. However, its unique historical situation allowed it to undertake more unconventional measures like convening conferences of the de-colonized states and convincing Asian states to abjure the advances made by the great powers. These steps were directly responsible for its deviant behavior.

7.2 Lessons for Contemporary India and its Foreign Policy

Although this dissertation focused on Indian foreign policy during the early Cold War years, we believe that it has more than just an antiquarian value. The insights that this dissertation

provides into India's relations with its neighbors during Nehru's times can help us better understand the dynamics between India and its neighbors in the present times. The insights also enable us to understand why India's relations with its neighbors have been less than amicable at various points of time and what needs to be done to help improve relations between India and its neighbors.

Today, the grand narrative in Indian foreign policy scholarship is that of the country's slow, but steady, rise to great power status. India's demand for a Permanent Member seat on the UN Security Council is frequently cited as evidence of its desire to attain great power status. India's increasing interest in attaining great power status is further evidenced by its rapidly developing and expanding relations with the great powers.² As a result, there exists a great deal of commentary on India's relations with the US and other great powers like Great Britain and France. One gets the distinct feeling that the sub-text in all this commentary is that India's relations with the great powers is the key to its own ascension to great powers status. On the other hand, scholarship on India's relations with its immediate neighbors (barring Pakistan) is scarce, thereby revealing that most intellectual and analytical energy is directed towards understanding the great powers and their policies.³

If India indeed wishes to play a larger role in international relations, it has to demonstrate that it can play a constructive role in its own region. If we accept Bull's formulation that

² See, for example, Ben Piven, "Five Top World Leaders Visit India," *Aljazeera*, December 20, 2010, <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia/2010/12/20101216144428454373.html>

³ For an insightful write-up as regards Indian foreign policy's neglect of the immediate region, see C. Raja Mohan, "Dangerous Neighbourhood," April 26, 2006, <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/dangerous-neighbourhood/3175/0>

great powers are required to play a managerial role in international relations, India needs to show that it can work with its neighbors to establish order in the region. A strong regional credential will enable the country to convince the international community that it can be entrusted with myriad responsibilities. While it is a fact that India is located in a “rough neighborhood,”⁴ as one is often reminded by scholars and commentators alike, one does not come across sufficient evidence that India and Indians are willing to acquire an in-depth understanding of the policies and attitudes of their neighbors. The bulk of the news and analysis generated about the neighboring countries is mainly through the prism of security. Hence, while Nepal is viewed as a base for left wing extremism whose activities profoundly affect the security in Indian states like Bihar and UP, Sri Lanka (Ceylon) and Myanmar (Burma) are seen as countries that are being used by Communist China to “encircle” India. This, at times, creates a sense of grievance and disgruntlement among the Indian public that its neighbors are not adequately sensitive towards India’s concerns. Such coverage of the region often leads to a feeling among Indians that their neighbors can be untrustworthy and fickle.

When confronted by the occasional disgruntlement and protest as regards Indian policies from its neighbors, Indians treat such protestations as signs of insensitivity and bias. Limited, and at times, skewed knowledge regarding India’s neighbors does not allow for a proper assessment as to whether these protestations have any basis whatsoever. If one can be enlightened about India’s historical relations with its neighbors, including the fact that unequal relations did mark the dynamics between India and its neighbors, it is possible that a

⁴ See “Chidambaram Says India’s Neighbourhood Most Difficult,” May 27, 2011, <http://www.firstpost.com/fwire/india-lives-in-most-difficult-neighbourhood-chidambaram-16620.html>

more balanced assessment can be made of the disgruntlement harbored by India's neighbors. Once it is realized that their acts of protestations have a deeper historical context, India's responses towards its neighbors' sense of angst can be better informed and formulated.

There is a danger that lack of knowledge as regards the neighbors and a sense of self righteousness could lead Indians to see themselves as the victim of insensitive neighbors, ever willing to turn a blind eye to India's concerns. Knowledge gleaned from the archives can shed light on the fact that even during Nehru's times – a Prime Minister remembered for his "idealism" – the country did adopt policies that can hardly be termed as equitable and idealistic. This is not to argue that India was Machiavellian or amoral; rather it is to stress that India, like many other states in international relations, did not hesitate to take robust measures, in relation to its neighbors, when faced with a threat, albeit an unconventional one. Once it is realized that a deep-seated fear of a cataclysmic nuclear war drove India to infringe upon its neighbors' sovereignty, one will appreciate that there are legitimate causes for grievance on the part of India's neighbors. Similarly, the archival insights can be used to communicate to neighboring countries, like Nepal, that the reason why India adopted unequal treaties towards them was not with the intention of dominating them per se, but rather to uphold order in the region.

For a very long time, foreign policy was a topic that had been the sole domain of select individuals in India. However, with the ascendancy of regional parties in India and the increasing role that the media is playing in the country's polity, there are signs that the average person is paying more attention to India's relations with the wider world. The heated

public debate in the summer of 2008 in connection with the Indo-US Nuclear agreement is a good example of this “democratization” of foreign policy discourse. Keeping this development in mind, it is the responsibility of foreign policy scholarship to bring hitherto neglected aspects of Indian foreign policy to the attention of people so that well informed debates can take place. For a country that has been termed an “argumentative” society, it is imperative that all aspects of Indian foreign policy be examined.⁵

This dissertation has highlighted the salience of empathy in foreign policy. In spite of the fact that Nehru was a keen student of international relations who drew important lessons from history - such as the need to engage recalcitrant powers and not isolate them and the need to recognize the role of nationalism in international relations – he was often guilty of not being able to appreciate the motivations and fears of the other Asian states. From the perspective of Indian foreign policy, it is a pity that leaders of countries like the Philippines, who respected Nehru, eventually ended up opposing him and his country’s policies, owing to the fact that Nehru simply could not appreciate its fears and motivations for allying with the US. Nehru’s inability to empathize with others, especially with the smaller states in the region, led them to feel vulnerable and apprehensive of India’s pressure tactics and haranguing. With India actively engaging a plethora of states in Asia and beyond in the present times, it is vital that it appreciates the motivations of the different states and formulates its policies in a flexible manner. At a time when India’s capabilities are expanding at a rapid rate, it can ill afford to repeat Nehru’s mistake by following a dogmatic foreign policy and alienating others.

⁵ Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian Culture, History and Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 2005).

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Appendix 1

TREATY OF "PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP" BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF NEPAL¹

The Government of India and the Government of Nepal recognizing the ancient ties which have happily existed between the two countries for centuries:

Desiring still further to strengthen and develop these ties and to perpetuate peace between the two countries:

Have resolved therefore to enter into a Treaty of Peace and Friendship with each other, and have, for this purpose, appointed as their plenipotentiaries the following persons, namely, THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, HIS EXCELLENCY SHRI CHANDRESHWAR PRASAD NARAIN SINGH, Ambassador of India in Nepal; THE GOVERNMENT OF NEPAL, MOHUN SHAMSHER JANG BAHADUR RANA, Maharaja, Prime Minister and Supreme Commander-in-Chief of Nepal, who having examined each other's credentials and found them good and in due form have agreed as follows:

¹ See Muni, *India and Nepal*, 188-90.

Article 1

There shall be everlasting peace and friendship between the Government of India and the Government of Nepal. The two Governments agree mutually to acknowledge and respect the complete sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of each other.

Article 2

The two Governments hereby undertake to inform each other of any serious friction or misunderstanding with any neighboring State likely to cause any breach in the friendly relations subsisting between the two Governments.

Article 3

In order to establish and maintain the relations referred to in Article 1 the two Governments agree to continue diplomatic relations with each other by means of representatives with such staff as is necessary for the due performance of their functions.

The representatives and such of their staff as may be agreed upon shall enjoy such diplomatic privileges and immunities as are customarily granted by international law on a reciprocal basis: Provided that in no case shall these be less than those granted to persons of a similar status of any other State having diplomatic relations with either Government.

Article 4

The two Governments agree to appoint Consuls-General, Consuls, Vice-Consuls and other consular agents, who shall reside in towns, ports and other places in each other's territory as may be agreed to.

Consuls-General, Consuls, Vice-Consuls and consular agents shall be provided with exequaturs or other valid authorization of their appointment. Such exequatur or authorization is liable to be withdrawn by the country which issues it, if considered necessary. The reasons for the withdrawal shall be indicated wherever possible.

The persons mentioned above shall enjoy on a reciprocal basis all the rights, privileges, exemptions and immunities that are accorded to persons of corresponding status of any other State.

Article 5

The Government of Nepal shall be free to import, from or through the territory of India, arms, ammunition or warlike material and equipment necessary for the security of Nepal. The procedure for giving effect to this arrangement shall be worked out by the two Governments acting in consultation.

Article 6

Each Government undertakes, in token of the neighbourly friendship between India and Nepal. To give to the nationals of the other, in its territory, national treatment with regard to

participation in industrial and economic development of such territory and to the grant of concessions and contracts relating to such developments.

Article 7

The Governments of India and Nepal agree to grant, on a reciprocal basis, to the nationals of one country in the territories of the other the same privileges in the matter of residence, ownership of property, participation in trade and commerce, movement and privileges of a similar nature.

Article 8

So far as matters dealt with herein are concerned, this Treaty cancels all previous treaties, agreements, and engagements entered into on behalf of India between the British government and the government of Nepal.

Article 9

This Treaty shall come into force from the date of signature by both Governments.

Article 10

The Treaty shall remain in force until it is terminated by either party by giving one year's notice.

Done in duplicate at Kathmandu this 31st day of July, 1950.

(Sd.) CHANDRASHWAR PRASAD

NARAIN SINGH

For the Government of India

(Sd.) MOHUN SHAMSHER JANG

BAHADUR RANA

For the Government of Nepal

Appendix 2

LETTER EXCHANGED WITH THE TREATY¹

KATHMANDU
Dated the 31st July, 1950

Excellency,

In the course of our discussion of the Treaties of Peace and Friendship and of Trade and Commerce which have been happily concluded between the Government of India and the Government of Nepal, we agreed that certain matters of details be regulated by an exchange of letters. In pursuance of this understanding, it is hereby agreed between the two Governments:

- (1) Neither Government shall tolerate any threat to the security of the other by a foreign aggressor. To deal with any such threat, the two Governments shall consult with each other and advise effective counter-measures.

- (2) Any arms, ammunition or warlike material and equipment necessary for the security of Nepal that the government of Nepal may import through the territory of India shall be so imported with the assistance and agreement of the government of India. The Government of India will take steps for the smooth and expeditious transport of such arms and ammunition through India.

¹ See Muni, *India and Nepal*, 191-92.

- (3) In regard for Article 6 of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship which provides for national treatment, the Government of India recognize that it may be necessary for some time to come to afford the Nepalese nationals in Nepal protection from unrestricted competition. The nature and extent to this protection will be determined as and when required by mutual agreement between the two Governments.
- (4) If the Government of Nepal should decide to seek foreign assistance in regard to the development of the natural resources of, or of any industrial project in Nepal, the Government of Nepal shall first give preference to the Government or the nationals of India, as the case may be, provided that the terms affected by the Government of India, or Indian nationals, as the case may be, are not less favorable to Nepal than the terms offered by any other Foreign Government or by any other foreign nationals.

Nothing in the foregoing provision shall apply to assistance that the Government of Nepal may seek from the United Nations Organization or any of its specialized agencies.

- (5) Both Governments agree not to employ any foreigners whose activity may be prejudiced to the security of the other. Either Government may take representations to the other in this behalf, as and when required.

Please accept Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Sd.) MOHUN SHAMSHER JANG

BAHADUR RANA
Maharaja, Prime Minister and
Supreme Commander-in-Chief of Nepal

To

His Excellency
Shri Chandreshwar Prasad Narain Singh
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of India
At the Court of Nepal, Indian Embassy,

Kathmandu.

Appendix 3

INDO-BHUTANESE TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP 1949¹

The government of India on the one part, and His Highness the Druk Gyalpo's Government on the other part, equally animated by the desire to regulate in a friendly manner and upon a solid and durable basis the state of affairs caused by the termination of the British government's authority in India, and to promote and foster the relations of friendship and neighbourliness so necessary for the well being of their peoples, have resolved to conclude the following treaty, and have, for this purpose named their representatives, that is to say, Sir Harishwar Dayal representing the Government of India, who has full powers to agree to the said treaty on behalf of the Government of India, and Deb Zimpon Sonam Tobgye Dorji, Yang-Lop Sonam, Chho-Zim Thondup, Rin-Zim Tandin and Ha Drung Jigmie Palden Dorji, representing the government of His Highness the Druk Gyalpo, Maharaja of Bhutan, who have full powers to agree to the same on behalf of the government of Bhutan.

Article I

There shall be perpetual peace and friendship between the Government of India and the Government of Bhutan.

¹ See Labh, *India and Bhutan*, 259-63.

Article II

The government of India undertakes to exercise no interference in the internal administration of Bhutan. On its part the government of Bhutan agrees to be guided by the advice of the Government of India in regard to its external relations.

Article III

In place of the compensation granted to the Government of Bhutan under Article 4 of the Treaty of Sinchula and enhanced by the treaty of the eighth day of January 1910 and the temporary subsidy of Rupees one Lakh per annum granted in 1942, the government of India agrees to make an annual payment of Rupees five Lakhs to the government of Bhutan. And it is further hereby agreed that the said annual payment shall be made on the tenth day of January every year, the first payment being made on the tenth day of January 1950. This payment shall continue as long as this treaty remains in force and its terms are duly observed.

Article IV

Further to mark the friendship existing and continuing between the said Governments, the Government of India shall within one year from the date of signature of this treaty, return to the Government of Bhutan about thirty-two square miles of territory in the area known as Dewangiri. The Government of India shall appoint a competent officer or officers to mark out the area so returned to the government of Bhutan.

Article V

There shall, as heretofore, be free trade and commerce between the territories of the government of India and of the Government of Bhutan; and the government of India agrees to grant the Government of Bhutan every facility for the carriage, by land and water, of its produce throughout the territory of the Government of India, including the right to use such forest roads as may be specified by mutual agreement from time to time.

Article VI

The Government of India agrees that the Government of Bhutan shall be free to import with the assistance and the approval of the government of India, from or through India into Bhutan, whatever arms, ammunition, machinery, warlike material or stores may be required or desired for the strength and welfare of Bhutan, and that this arrangement shall hold good for all time as long as the Government is satisfied that the intentions of the Government of Bhutan are friendly and that there is no danger to India from such importations. The Government of Bhutan, on the other hand, agrees that there shall be no export of such arms, ammunition, etc. across the frontier of Bhutan either by the Government of Bhutan or by private individuals.

Article VII

The government of India and the Government of Bhutan agree that the Bhutanese subjects residing in Indian territories shall have equal justice with Indian subjects, and that Indian

subjects residing in Bhutan shall have equal justice with the subjects of the Government of Bhutan.

Article VIII

- (1) The Government of India shall, on demand being duly made in writing by the government of Bhutan, take proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Indian Extradition Act, 1903 (of which a copy shall be furnished to the government of Bhutan), for the surrender of all Bhutanese subjects accused of any of the crimes specified in the first schedule of the said Act who may take refuge in Indian territory.
- (2) The Government of Bhutan shall, on requisition being duly made by the Government of India, or by any officer authorized by the Government of India in this behalf, surrender any subjects, or subjects of a foreign power, whose extradition may be required in pursuance of any agreement or arrangements made by the Government of India with the said power, accused of any of the crimes, specified in the first schedule of Act XV of 1903, who may take refuge in the territory under the jurisdiction of the Government of Bhutan, and also any Bhutanese subjects who, after committing any of the crimes referred to in Indian territory, shall flee into Bhutan, on such evidence of their guilt being produced as shall satisfy the local court of the district in which the offence may have been committed.

Article IX

Any differences and disputes arising in the application or interpretation of this treaty shall in the first instance be settled by negotiation. If within three months of the start of negotiations no settlement is arrived at, then the matter shall be referred to the arbitration of three arbitrators, who shall be nationals of either India or Bhutan, chosen in the following manner:

- (1) One person nominated by the government of India;
- (2) One person nominated by the government of Bhutan;
- (3) A judge of the Federal court, or of a High Court in India, to be chosen by the Government of Bhutan, who shall be Chairman.

The judgement of this Tribunal shall be final and executed without delay by either party.

Article X

This treaty shall continue in force in perpetuity unless terminated or modified by mutual consent.

Done in duplicate at Darjeeling this eighth day of August, one thousand nine hundred and forty nine, corresponding with the Bhutanese date the fifteenth day of the sixth month of the Earth-Bull year.

Appendix 4

THE TEXT OF THE INDIA-SIKKIM PEACE TREATY ISSUED IN GANGTOK ON DECEMBER 5, 1950¹

The President of India and His Highness the Maharajah of Sikkim, being desirous of further strengthening the good relations already existing between India and Sikkim have resolved to enter into a new Treaty with each other, and the President of India has, for the purpose, appointed as his plenipotentiary Shri Harishwar Dayal, Political Officer in Sikkim, and His Highness the Maharajah having examined Shri Harishwar Dayal's credentials and found them good and in due form, the two have agreed as follows:-

Article I

All previous treaties between the British Government and Sikkim which are at present in force as between India and Sikkim are hereby formally cancelled.

Article II

Sikkim shall continue as Protectorate of India and, subject to the provisions of this Treaty, shall enjoy autonomy in regard to its internal affairs.

¹ Rao, *India and Sikkim*, 208-12.

Article III

- (1) The Government of India will be responsible for the defence and territorial integrity of Sikkim. It shall have the right to take such measures as it considers necessary for the defence of Sikkim or the security of India, whether preparatory or otherwise, and within or outside Sikkim. In particular, the Government of India shall have the right to station troops anywhere within Sikkim.
- (2) The measures referred to paragraph (1) will as far as possible be taken by the Government in consultation with the Government of Sikkim.
- (3) The Government of Sikkim shall not import any arms, ammunition, military stores or other warlike material of any description for any purpose whatsoever without the previous consent of the Government of India.

Article IV

- (1) The external relations of Sikkim, whether political, economic or financial, shall be conducted and regulated solely by the Government of India; and the Government of Sikkim shall have no dealings with any foreign power.
- (2) Subjects of Sikkim travelling to foreign countries shall be treated as Indian protected persons for the purpose of passports, and shall receive from India authorities abroad the same protection and facilities as Indian nationals.

Article V

The Government of Sikkim agrees not to levy any import duty, transit duty or other impost on goods brought into, or in transit through, Sikkim; and the Government of India agrees not to levy any import duty on goods of Sikkimese origin into India from Sikkim.

Article VI

- (1) The Government of India shall have the exclusive right of constructing, maintaining and regulating the use of railways, aerodromes and landing grounds and air navigation facilities, posts, telegraphs, telephones and wireless installations in Sikkim; and the Government of Sikkim shall render the Government of India every assistance in their construction, maintenance and protection.
- (2) The Government of Sikkim may, however, construct, maintain, and regulate the use of, railways and aerodromes and landing grounds and air navigation facilities to such extent as may be agreed to by the Government of India.
- (3) The Government of India shall have the right to construct and maintain in Sikkim roads for strategic purposes and for the purpose of improving communications with India and other adjoining countries and the Government of Sikkim shall render the Government of India every assistance in the construction, maintenance and protection of such roads.

Article VII

- (1) Subjects of Sikkim shall have the right of entry into, and free movement within, India, and Indian nationals shall have the right of entry into, and free movement within, Sikkim.
- (2) Subject to such regulations as the Government of Sikkim may prescribe in consultation with the Government of India, Indian nationals shall have:-
 - (a) The right to carry on trade and commerce in Sikkim; and
 - (b) When established in any trade in Sikkim, the right to acquire, hold and dispose of any property, movable or immovable for the purposes of their trade or residence into Sikkim.
- (3) Subjects of Sikkim shall have the same right –
 - (a) To carry on trade and commerce in India, and to employment therein; and
 - (b) Of acquiring, holding and disposing of property, movable and immovable, as Indian nationals.

Article VIII

- (1) Indian nationals within Sikkim shall be subject to the laws of Sikkim and subjects of Sikkim within India shall be subject to the laws of India.

(2) Whenever any criminal proceedings are initiated in Sikkim against any Indian national or any person in the service of the Government of India or any foreigner, the Government of Sikkim shall furnish the Representative of the Government of India in Sikkim (hereinafter referred to as the Indian Representative) with particulars of charges against such person.

If in the case of any person in the services of the Government of India or any foreigner it is so demanded by the Indian Representative, such person shall be handed over to him for trial before such court as may be established for the purpose by the Government of India either in Sikkim or outside.

Article IX

(1) The Government of Sikkim agrees to seize and deliver up any fugitive offender from outside Sikkim who has taken refuge therein on demand being made by the Indian Representative. Should any delay occur in complying with such demand, the Indian police may follow the person whose surrender has been demanded into any part of Sikkim, and shall, on showing a warrant signed by the Indian Representative, receive every assistance and protection in the prosecution of their object from the Sikkim officers.

- (2) The Government of India similarly agrees, on demand being made by the Government of Sikkim, to take extradition proceedings against, and surrender, any fugitive offender from Sikkim who has taken refuge in the territory of India.
- (3) In this article, “fugitive offender” means a person who is accused of having committed an extradition offence as defined in the First Schedule to the Indian Extradition Act, 1903, or any other offence which may hereafter be agreed upon between the Government of India and the Government of Sikkim as being an extradition offence.

Article X

The Government of India, having in mind the friendly relations already existing between India and Sikkim and now further strengthened by this Treaty, and being desirous of assisting in the development and good administration of Sikkim, agrees to pay the Government of Sikkim a sum of rupees three lakhs every year so long as the terms of this Treaty are duly observed by the Government of Sikkim.

The first payment under this Article will be made before the end of the year 1950, and subsequent payments will be made in the month of August every year.

Article XI

The Government of India shall have the right to appoint a Representative to reside in Sikkim; and the Government of Sikkim shall provide him and his staff with all reasonable

facilities in regard to their residential and office accommodation and generally in regard to their carrying out their duties in Sikkim.

Article XII

If any dispute arises in the interpretation of the provisions of the Treaty which cannot be resolved by mutual consultation, the dispute shall be referred to the Chief Justice of India whose decision thereon shall be final.

Article XIII

This treaty shall come into force without ratification from the date by both the parties.