

**UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF PRESTIGE IN THE INDIAN  
AND IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAMMES**

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**DECLARATION**


I declare that the thesis entitled “**Understanding the Role of Prestige in Indian and Iranian Nuclear Programmes**” submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.


  
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**CERTIFICATE**

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

  
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# Table of Contents

	Page Number
Declaration and Certificate	i
Acknowledgement	i
<b>CHAPTER I- Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background	2
1.2 Review of Literature	6
1.2.1.Prestige in International Relations	
1.2.2.India’s Nuclear Programme	
1.2.3.Iranian Nuclear Programme	
1.3 Definition, Rationale and Scope	16
1.4 Research Questions	18
1.5 Hypotheses	18
1.6 Research Methods	19
1.7 Chapters	20
<b>CHAPTER II- Theoretical Underpinnings: Social Identity, Prestige, and Nuclear Programmes</b>	<b>22</b>
2.1 Introduction	23
2.2 The Agency of the State	23
2.3 Social Identity	25
2.4 Self-Identity	28
2.5 National Identity	36
2.6 Political Socialization	42
2.7 Ontological Security	47
2.8 Prestige and Security	50
2.9 Nuclear Deterrence	52
2.10 Prestige	54
2.11 Conclusion	56
<b>CHAPTER III- Sovereignty and Prestige: Seeking Autonomy</b>	<b>58</b>
3.1 Introduction	59
3.2 Cognitive Prior	59
3.3 India: The Policy of Non-Alignment	62
3.3.1. India’s Nuclear Tests	
3.3.2. South Asian Responses	
3.3.3. Responses from the International Community	
3.3.4. United States’ Response	

3.4 The Iranian Nuclear Programme	81
3.4.1. Neither East nor West	
3.4.2. Soviet Union's Reaction	
3.4.3. The Response of the United States	
3.4.4. Negotiating with America	
3.4.5. The 2002-03 Crisis	
3.5 Non-Alignment and Neither East nor West	100
3.6 Conclusion	101
CHAPTER IV- Post-Colonialism: Defining the Self with Prestige	103
4.1 Introduction	104
4.2 Defining Nostalgia	104
4.3 Post-Colonialism and Identity	105
4.4 Iran: Fear of Colonialism	108
4.5 India: Identifying the Colonizers	127
4.6 Self-Reliance	138
4.7 Conclusion	139
CHAPTER V- Loss in War: Fighting Humiliation with Prestige	141
5.1 Introduction	142
5.2 On War	144
5.3 India-China	146
5.4 India-Pakistan	153
5.4.1 The War for Independence: Bangladesh (1971)	
5.5 Iran-Iraq War	157
5.5.1 Iraq and the West	
5.5.2 Ceasefire	
5.6 Humiliation: Winning versus Losing	170
5.7 Conclusion	171
CHAPTER VI- Conclusion	172
6.1 Findings	174
6.2 Summaries	175
6.3 The Indian and Iranian Nuclear Deals	182
6.4 Implications	185
References	187
Appendix i	
Appendix ii	
Appendix iii	
Appendix iv	

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

## **BACKGROUND**

This study aims to understand the role prestige plays in a state's decision making, specifically how it influences the nuclear programmes of India and Iran.

Prestige, as a concept, has been an underlying factor in state decision making. Nuclear programmes, specifically, have been associated with the notion of prestige. This study looks at the nuclear programmes of India and Iran, aiming to understand, using Social Identity Theory, their decisions to go nuclear. It seeks to understand the notion of prestige, how it is viewed and interpreted by states, its relationship with the security of a state, and the role it plays in the Indian and Iranian nuclear programmes. The nuclear programme of a state typically has multiple explanations, and this study seeks to understand one such aspect, i.e.,

Prestige, using the Social Identity Theory. It aims to understand whether a state's decision to have a nuclear programme is linked to its idea of itself, and understand the determinants in this idea of its 'self'. Two case studies are taken to interrogate this argument as both have had a similar trajectory with regards to their nuclear programmes and both states, coming from a rich historical past, need to live up to their notion of civilizational greatness, by being at-par with the international community.

Thomas Hobbes' triad of grounds on which states act- fear, glory and gain- is still pivotal to the study of politics generally and global politics specifically (Steele 2008). National prestige plays an important role for every state in the international system. It denotes self-esteem and also helps build a state's internal cohesion. The present study specifically focuses on the second component, *glory*, seen as national prestige, and how it shapes decisions of states. Although Robert Gilpin (1981) states that only individuals can actually be actors, he also acknowledges that prestige is the currency of international relations, and there are major gaps in the understanding of a state as a person; there is a need to look at the state as an entity that reacts with emotions.

National prestige plays an important role for every state in the international system as it denotes self-esteem for the said state. Every state is proud of its heritage, culture and contribution to the world. One



of the reasons is that the newly created states are more desirous of catching up with the 'western states' who were, *de facto*, the creators of the international system. Steele (2008: 11) posits that "States are 'rational egoists', they base their egoism not upon (independent and exogenous) material structures, but upon self-identity needs". A state can seek Prestige in various forms, in the form of military capability, as a defender of human rights, or as an upholder of moral values. There is a constant loss and gain happening with respect to a state's Prestige.

This study is premised on the fact that for states, prestige is an important variable, especially when the said state is either newly independent or has experienced major changes internally. India and Iran were chosen as case studies because they have had very similar trajectories with regards to their nuclear programmes, which has been laden with the notion of prestige. Both the chosen case studies, India and Iran, are different in that Iran is revisionist whereas India is status quoist; nonetheless, both states' demanded respect from the international system in their foreign policy trajectory. The study investigates the two case studies wherein the said states took decisions, with regards to their nuclear programmes, that they believe raised their national prestige in the international system as well as gave cohesion to the collective.

The national/cultural pride of a state is reflected in the ethos of the people, in their understanding of other states and their interactions with other states. This notion of national prestige is seen more in states that have had drastic changes in their outlook and world view, such as revolutionary Iran and independent India. The importance of security is not being diminished, rather it is being understood within the context of prestige and Social Identity Theory and how important a role it plays in a states' nuclear programme.

Jackson (2004) observes how states are treated as people that have emotions, perceptions and other such attributes. As the disparate behaviour of states illustrate, identity needs compel them to pursue actions that are seemingly irrational, yet such behaviour would make sense to the state agents who decided upon the course of action at that time (Steele 2008). Wendt (1994: 384-7) distinguishes three types of state identities, each as important for a state: "*corporate identity*, which refers to a state's intrinsic qualities such as norms, beliefs, and resources; *social identity* (or roles), which consists of a set of meanings that a state attributes to itself; and *collective identity*, which is established when a social identity generates collective interests". Thus, all three aspects influence the way a state perceives itself and in turn interacts with the international community.

Using Social Identity Theory, the study seeks to provide an alternative understanding to how a states' decision to have a nuclear programme is linked to its sense of 'self'. The two case studies of India and Iran are taken to test this argument. This is because, both states have had a similar trajectory with regards to their nuclear programmes and both, coming from rich civilizations, demand certain recognition from the international community. Tejfel's (1982) Social Identity Theory is explained by Hornsey (2008) who calls it the first social-psychological theory that brought groups to the forefront. The theory explains how different levels of hierarchy exist between groups and how they fight for status and power where intergroup behaviour is driven by a common need to either change the status quo or maintain it. Thus, for these groups, categorization leads to perception and influences the way the state sees itself, defining, to a great extent, one's self-concept. As a result, at the intergroup level, self-concept comprises of 'social identity'. This social identity is derived from the emotional and evaluative consequences of social categories and group membership. The study would broadly be based in the social identity approach looking at the Social Identity Theory to understand the role of prestige in the nuclear programme of states.

Foreign policy of a state is influenced by a number of factors, such as social, economic, and political. Nevertheless, it is the collective identity

that binds the people into a nation and is an imperative factor that defines a state's foreign policy. This collective identity derives its understanding from its history, its experiences and its self-understanding. This study examines Iran and India, in particular their nuclear programmes and their association with prestige. It seeks to understand whether the notion of national prestige is implicit and what it represents. The study also tries to understand why it is decisive as a concept, and has been applied in nuclear programme of states.

In understanding India's decision to have an indigenous nuclear programme, research looks at the aspect of security (vis-à-vis Pakistan having nuclear arsenal while India did not), post colonial identity, technological progress, the bureaucratic lobby as well as the notion of prestige. India's nuclear programme garnered speed when it realized that the Pakistan was close to developing its nuclear programme (Levy & Scott-Clark 2007). Not only was its security being threatened, but also a smaller state that was a part of undivided India was developing a nuclear programme. Would the Indian state's self-esteem not be affected if both its biggest neighbours would have been declared nuclear states? Why did India not wait for Pakistan to test its weapons programme before India? These questions hope to be addressed in the study.

Iran's nuclear programme gained momentum during the 1980s and it was by 2000s that the international community was raising alarms regarding its programme. For Iran, as for India, recognition from the nuclear club was paramount (Wastell 2004). Security of Iran, which was under threat after the Iran-Iraq war was also a major factor with the state feeling humiliated, reducing Iran's ability to protect itself and compelling the state to develop a nuclear capability. Iran, a Shia majority state was surrounded by Sunni headed states which made Iran want to be more self-sufficient with respect to its resources as well as its security (Shah and Thakur 2010). Iran did not want to be in a position where it had to ask for help from the international community again and hurt its self-esteem by being rejected.

Hence, for both the states, the nuclear programme has many meanings and this study aims to examine one of those underlying meanings. It tends to be heavily influenced by the idea of protecting the national **Prestige**. This is more so because the two states were seeking acceptance of their existence in the international community and in turn with its domestic audience too. Iran already had a strong notion of its identity, so the nuclear dimension was seen as a cementing of this identity in the international system.

The study aims to bring in an alternative perspective to the understanding of the said nuclear programmes. In order to understand how prestige plays a decisive role, the study investigates the discourse

prevalent in the two states and how these discourses have shaped the respective nuclear programmes of the two states. It seeks to analyze the notion of prestige and seeks to understand whether this notion overlaps with the concept of security or whether it can decisively shape the decision of states on its own. In other words, is national prestige an intrinsic part of the national ethos, is it used as a tool by the political class to further its national interests and whether security and prestige are interlinked within the 'self' of the state?

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The literature review has been divided into three themes, namely, prestige in International Relations, India's nuclear programme and Iran's nuclear programme. Each segment highlights the current debates and also identifies the gaps in literature that this thesis would try to address.

### **PRESTIGE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

Prestige as a concept has always been the driving force in international relations (Crane 1992). It is also associated with a number of terms such as pride, respect, and reputation. These terms in turn affect identity and self-esteem of a state. While pride is an internal emotion, prestige is the reflection of that pride in the 'other'. For Rorty (1998: 3): "National pride

is to nations what self-respect is to individuals: a necessary condition for self-improvement. Too much national pride can lead to bellicosity and imperialism, just as excessive self respect can produce arrogance". For individuals, as for states, emotions can be complex. Behaviour can be looked upon as an indicator of emotions (Turner 2000). Thus, Turner and Stets (2005) draw on the link between behaviour and emotions by using the gestalt approach wherein consistency and congruence is sought among cognitions. Since the 'self' is central and constantly defined, most cognitions are about the 'self' and the response of others to self. With respect to a state, in International Relations one studies only the reactions of state behaviour and not the emotional responses of the state and how they, unconsciously, become motivators or catalysts behind the decisions taken.

Kim's (2004) critique of neo-realism suggests that Prestige is not independent of the political use of force, but supplementary to it. An important positive source of prestige is the successful use of power in war, for example, the prestige of the US belatedly caught up with its actual power after the victory in World War II. Theodore Kemper's (1978) theory looked at emotions and how the influence of power (authority) and status (prestige) shape them. The central argument of the theory is that gaining power leads to positive emotions such as satisfaction, confidence

and security; and conversely, losing power leads to anxiety, fear and loss of self-confidence. Thus, according to Kemper, status (prestige) is correlated to the rise and fall of power.

An event can lead to reduction of prestige just as another can help regain lost prestige. The idea of what is 'prestigious' can be different for different states. Wylie (2009:124) proposes that "powers such as Canada do believe in the rule of law, global governance and human rights" suggesting that for a pacifist state such as Canada, upholding certain notions is considered more prestigious than associating prestige with power and an increase in their self-esteem. But in a majority of cases, the idea of national prestige is directly proportional to not only how other states view the said state but also how they view themselves. India, during the 1950s was in dire need of help with depleting food resources but refused aid until it was completely out of its resources. Morgenthau, too, discusses prestige in detail. For Morgenthau (1967), the concept could not be ignored in International Relations and he explains how prestige, which is the image on the mirror of the other, determines the status of the 'self' in society.

O' Neill (1999) talks about how an expansive historiography, symbolic interaction, linguistic analysis, and game theory can be effectively combined and applied to illuminate the influence of prestige and honor;



Wegener (1992) argues that 'rational and normative foundations of prestige are possible'; Breiner (2004: 299) refers to prestige as a potential trigger and protection of a security dilemma. All these scholars place prestige in International Relations, whether it is from a security dilemma perspective or from a normative aspect. Thus, as the scholarship points out, in a generic sense every state is proud of itself and that the notion of prestige can be looked at from a realist as well as a constructivist lenses in understanding state decision making. But this notion of prestige is not associated with any particular decision that helps to explain and place prestige as a concept in International Relations.

Weber talks about the linkages between prestige and power.

All power of political entities carries in itself a specific dynamic: it can be the basis for a specific 'prestige'-pretension of those who belong to them, which influences their externally focused behaviour...prestige pretensions extends itself across relations among political entities; feudal rulers, likewise modern military officers or state bureaucrats, are the natural primary bearers of this 'prestige'-striving (Weber 1922: 691).

For Lebow (2008), prestige is bound with beliefs about cultural eminence, heroism, and honor. For citizenry and rulers, organic and abstract entities merge for performances in which 'standing and honor' can be very important and interrelated. National identity and sentiment permeate his account. Both Lebow and Morgenthau insist on the

importance of prestige as a concept but these concepts have not yet been used to understand the state behaviour of the two case studies present.

Michael Dyson (2006), in his book points out the difference between patriotism and nationalism by stating that patriotism is 'self-referential' whereas nationalism is inherently 'comparative', both involving a degree of prestige in them. Expressions of nationalism often appeal to advance their national interests in the international order. On a different note, Aaron Ben Ze'ev (2000), states that as in other emotions, the comparative concern is important in pride. The comparative value, rather than the absolute one, is of greatest concern in pride. Pride does not necessarily presuppose exclusivity, but it presupposes some sense of a comparatively high value and often also superiority. The importance of the comparative concern in Prestige indicates that although pride is directed at one self, the opinion of others is of crucial importance as well.

Prestige steers diplomacy's concern to avoid offense, or with how 'we' treat 'them' and are perceived too. Lack or loss of prestige incites resentment and occasionally extreme reaction. "The prestige deprivation inflicted by the Versailles Treaty" Etzioni (1962: 22) argued, "is commonly seen as a factor contributing to the emergence of Nazism, a movement

obsessed with national status.” Using the concept of interaction of the self with the other to define the self, Doty (1993) poses that for a state, foreign policy discourse, i.e., interaction with the ‘other’, defines the state ‘self’ in the international system. The identity of the state which is defined by its notion of rationality and its interests get fine tuned by interacting with the international community (Moshirzadeh 2007). “Great Prestige with the inner public is necessary in order to negotiate from strength and success in negotiations increases inner Prestige” (Liverani 2001:10). Thus, a state seeks Prestige as much for the people it represents as for the upliftment of its self-esteem, which would help it interact with other states.

In the study of a states’ Prestige, the primary area of study is its social identity; how it sees itself in the international arena; and how it affects the state’s self esteem. Hogg and Abrams (1990) extrapolate that lower self-esteem promotes greater in-group bias. According to Hornsey (2008), Tajfel and Turner argue that the desire for a positive, secure self-concept leads to competition between groups (states) wherein group members create a positive distinctiveness between themselves and the other.

As stated, there are different competing explanations in order to understand the nuclear programmes of the said states with prestige being one of them. This study aims to understand the notion of prestige via

Social Identity Theory and how the state as a cohesive group perceives the need to have nuclear programmes.

## INDIA'S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME

In understanding the Indian nuclear programme, research has focused on the security dilemma (Rajagopalan 2005; Singh, 1998), Prestige (Bajpai 2003; Perkovich 1999), Post-colonial identity (Abraham 1998; Chacko 2012), the role of the right-wing (Vanaik 2001), the scientific lobby (Anderson 2010), and the strategic enclave (Basrur 2001). This study seeks to test the notion of Prestige from a Social Identity Theoretical perspective.

Wood believes that, like change in the international balance of influence, Prestige is generally a stronger impetus for revisionist actors than those satisfied with the status quo (Wood 2013: 17). But this statement does not take into account status quo-ist India who consistently aimed to seek Prestige in its foreign policy decisions.

Dijkink (1996), points out how India's role in the international arena was formulated by Nehru alone and no one in the domestic political elite challenged it, even though the parliament was interested in foreign policy. As long as India could uphold its prestige in the international system, which it usually did in the 1950s, everyone was satisfied. India acquired

prestige from mediating in international conflicts such as Korea (1949) and Indochina (1954). There have been examples when India, at the international forums, has blatantly taken sides with the Soviet Union. Whenever this has happened, the domestic elite and the public opinion have risen against the official line of foreign policy (Dijkink 1996). Thus, India values her national prestige and has taken decisions that are in line with this school of thought. But this is an implicit understanding. When looking at India's nuclear programme, prestige has been understood as a factor along with security but studies do not seek to understand the state as a 'self' and this study aims to bring out the need for a state to be identified by the international community in a worthy manner.

All states justify their actions, even when such actions compromise existing international principle states. States 'talk' about their actions in identity terms and this is necessary because "only in the telling of the event does it acquire meaning, the meaning that makes such events politically relevant" (Lang 2002: 13). Those specific 'tellings' or behavioural patterns link the policy to the self of the state, constituting the states' biographical narrative (Steele 2008:10).

Karnad (2008) in his book talks about India's strategic clout and minimum credible deterrence. A sizable amount of work has been done

on India's foreign policy and the concept of security has been explored in detail (Mansingh 1984; Dixit 1998; Ganguly 2003). Shyam Saran (2013), in his article clearly states that India took the decision to become a nuclear weapons state only because of security reasons and points out that the notion that India's strategic programme being driven by Prestige and propaganda is a Western concept, while Ollapally (2001) explains how India's motivations were mixed; a combination of reason and passion. William Walker, bringing in the bigger picture, points to the hegemonic order developed with regards to states and their Nuclear Programmes (Walker 1946).

Abraham (1998) in his book, *The Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb*, studies the response of the Indian public with regards to the bomb and felt that it was those on the right that spoke of a grudging respect that was gained from the major nuclear powers after the explosion. Santana (2009) makes a similar argument to Abraham stating that the focuses on the aspect of the nuclear programmes are a fetish in the minds of the collective Indian identity wherein the status of the state is associated with its nuclear capability, making it symbolic. In a similar line of thought, Chacko (2012) talks about India's post colonial identity shaping its foreign policy, which stems the same argument made by Abraham. In his book on *Managing India's Nuclear Forces*, Koithara states that India's dominant

objective was political and technological prestige, whereas for every other nuclear weapons state it was deterrence (Koithara 2012). This line of argument is followed by George Perkovich who examines the historical as well as geographical links to establish India's need for Prestige in the international arena (Perkovich, 1999). But what were the determinants of this prestige? Is Prestige an emotional reaction to the differences of the world order? Or is it a value that states need to attain?

After India tested in 1998, the reactions emphasized a strong sense of pride and generated a sense of power within the people (Mishra 2000; Burns 1998; Ghosh 1998). This study seeks to understand how India's self-esteem and prestige can be understood from the theoretical aspect of social identity. It would have tentatively made both of India's biggest neighbours nuclear weapon states, and this harped on India's threat as well as its image of being unable to protect itself. Thus, academics have explored the idea of how it was the post colonial identity that shaped India's foreign policy, but in their narrative, they look at how it was important for a post colonial state to be at par technologically with the 'first world'. This study will use Social Identity Theory to understand how national prestige is understood in the context of the nuclear programme of India.

IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAMME

In understanding the Iranian nuclear programme, research has focused on the security dilemma (Sagan 1997; Takeyh 2003), Prestige (Patrikarakos 2012; Vick 2011) and theology (Shah and Thakur 2010; Kanani 2011). The study aims to understand the notion of prestige via Social Identity Theory and how it is interlinked with the notions of security and the 'self' of the state.

Berejikian (2002) opines that keeping rational deterrence theory in mind, if a state is dissatisfied with the status quo, action should not be taken that might harm its position. But revolutionary Iran has constantly challenged the international system and tried to establish its world view on the said system. This is because of the states' need to be self assured and comfortable with its identity. This self-assurance for a state comes only when there is a sense of pride in its conduct in the international system.

Change in terms of "an actor's (re) construction of its (an actor's) identity; and the meaning an actor attributes to this identity, determines an actor's interests and interactions. An actor's construction of reality determines such actors' identity, interests and actions" (Wood 2013:37). The case study of Iran provides an example of how reconstruction of identity took place after the revolution and the new meanings that were attributed to the 'Iranian identity', what it meant, and how it was to be



defined. These definitions in turn shaped the foreign policy and most importantly, the nuclear programme, of the revolutionary state and its interactions with the international system.

Iranian nuclear programme, as stated has many dimensions, a security dimension, that focuses on Israel as a real threat as well as the threat that a nuclear and unstable Pakistan brings; a regional hegemon dimension that states the Iranian right to lead the Arab world in the international arena, and the dimension of prestige, which states that Iranian collective identity is premised on certain ideals such as its civilizational past which demand a right to be at par with the other states of the world. Patrikarakos talks about the Iranian need to be a regional hegemon along with recognition by the Western Powers (Patrikarakos 2012).

When looking at the Iranian nuclear ambitions, the statements made by leaders seem to justify Iran's need for a nuclear weapons programme, but on being questioned about the nuclear programme in totality, Iranians have always maintained that there is a need to reduce their oil dependency and work towards a civilian nuclear programme. Mokhtari (2005) states that for the Iranians, historical experiences have impacted their psyche deeply. The challenging times of the Iran-Iraq war have not been forgotten and thus define the national security discourse of the

state. The war shaped the perception of the Iranians towards the United States and the international community as they fought a battle against the entire world. This in turn made them obsessed with self-reliance. This need for self-reliance stems from the hurt the Iranian people, as a collective, felt when their trust was betrayed by the international community and a need to redeem their Prestige, not only in the international system, but for their own self-esteem as a nation.

Rafsanjani, quoted in Bowen and Kidd (2004) after the ceasefire between Iran and Iraq, pointed out that, "With regard to chemical, bacteriological, and radiological weapon training, it was made very clear during the war that these weapons are very decisive...We should fully equip ourselves both in the offensive and defensive use of chemical, bacteriological, and radiological weapons." This statement is contradictory to what most Iranian leaders have stood for, i.e. constantly associating chemical, biological and nuclear weapons as *haram* and not an option that Iran would want to exercise. Nevertheless, within this context, deterring Iraq became the principal rationale for the current regime's nuclear ambitions and lead to a revival of the country's Nuclear Programme in the mid-1980s (Bowen & Kidd 2004; Acton 2015). Thus, Iranian psyche was deeply affected by the war and its national Prestige deeply hurt.

Statements made by the Iranian elite emphasize how important Prestige as a concept is in their national identity. Khatipzadeh, says, "We want to be admitted to the nuclear club, we want the Prestige, and we want to be respected in the world". Chegnizadeh, as quoted in Kibaroglu (2006) argues that three pillars of Iranian strategic thinking are important to understand, the Iranian sense of victimization, their quest for recognition and the rich culture of their past. All these three aspects point out to a very high degree of prestige that still prevails in the Iranian psyche. This psychological deficit within the Iranian nation is the bases for their interaction with the international system. This can be seen in statements made by the current president, who was the ex-National Security Council secretary, Mohammad Rouhani, whereby he stresses on Iran's right to develop a nuclear programme as independent of negotiations with the International community (AFP 2013).

According to Edward Luttwak (2013), "Security needs, or rather perceived security needs, can notoriously be invoked to justify any expense, risk or outright loss human or material, but in Iran's case, their plausibility is more dubious than many seem to think." He points out how the Iranian state is protected due to its geography which is an inherent characteristic of the state. Iran is surrounded with mostly 'harmless' countries. Moreover, with the Iraqi war and with the situation in Syria and Afghanistan, Iran is seen as a natural hegemon (Turkey's utter impotence renders its intentions irrelevant). Luttwak feels that Iran certainly has little to fear from its immediate neighbours. Although, Luttwak points out the threat from bombardment by both Israel and the United States, he feels that Iran's nuclear programme could not be justified on

those lines. This is because neither of the two 'enemy' states would attack Iran in order to stop their programmes. Thus, Iran does not exist in a prisoner's dilemma and the country's national security would unequivocally be enhanced rather than weakened if its weapon-related nuclear activities were abandoned. Thus, Luttwak is of the opinion that the Iranian leaders should quickly end their isolation in order to end their economic woes and for the minute danger of Israeli or American attacks (overt as well as covert). Luttwak does not take into account the fact that Iran has not given up its NPT status and continues to support the flawed treaty as it does not believe in nuclear weapons. Iranian leaders, according to Luttwak are more concerned with regime security and not with national security, which is under no threat whatsoever. This regime security refers to the ideological intensity which the author refers to as an asset, as once an ideology comes to power and the novelty wears off, disadvantages become the talking point (Luttwak 2013)

According to Vaez (2013), the Iranian Nuclear threat is exaggerated in the Western minds. He states that, "No state has built nuclear weapons while under scrutiny of in-country IAEA inspectors. In fact, out of the five countries that developed nuclear weapons in the past four decades, four (Pakistan, India, South Africa and Israel) were not signatories of the NPT and therefore were never under IAEA inspection, while North Korea had expelled the inspectors before testing its nuclear device. IAEA inspectors visited Iran's nuclear facilities on an almost weekly basis." Vaez points out how analysts across the spectrum are missing a very important fact-- if Iran does decide to produce weapons grade uranium, it would have to reconfigure its centrifuge cascades. This process is not easy. For a state to reach the military nuclear threshold, it should have the ability to manufacture a number of nuclear weapons within weeks, again not an easy feat. But most importantly, Vaez states that the risk of a covert or overt war is too high for each side involved and the price too little- a single crude nuclear device. In order for Iran to have a nuclear deterrent, it would need more material and a deployable nuclear arsenal. It would also need to test a nuclear device and create a delivery vehicle that matches the said device. And for such an elaborate task to be conducted under the watchful eye of the IAEA is not feasible. Vaez also states that Iranian leaders have pledged to never make nuclear weapons, which they consider a violation of Islam. As a theocratic state, it would require a lot of turn of events in the international system for current Iranian leaders to

justify their step. He also refers to James Clapper, the Director of the U.S. National Intelligence, who has states that Iran's leaders have not yet decided to build nuclear weapons. Both the U.S. and Israeli intelligence communities are reasonably confident of their ability to detect such a decision (Vaez 2013). Grem Greenwald (2012) uses rationality to dismiss Iran's nuclear weapon threat. He states that as a rational individual, one simple cannot take the claim of Iran developing a nuclear weapon seriously. And if such a scenario were true, why would the United State and Israel wait to attack the state and remove its nuclear stockpile.

Ali Vaez, states that, "With 17 declared nuclear facilities and nearly five-decades in the making, Iran's nuclear programme is quite extensive. It has also been expensive given the cost of harsh sanctions that the programme has incurred. Yet, it has also become a point of national pride as Iran has developed indigenous nuclear know-how" (Vaez 2013). The argument against Iran acquiring nuclear weapons is that it would lead to a domino effect with Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Egypt starting their own nuclear programmes. But if this chain of events were to be stopped, why did the International bodies not stop Israel from acquiring a nuclear programme? That was bound to have a cascading effect. For that matter, why was China not stopped from acquiring one as it was bound to heighten India's insecurities?

Every state fights for the best defence systems because there is a notion of 'Prestige' attached to gaining the latest and fastest modes of destruction. Studies focus on security aspects of a state or bring about a post-colonial understanding of the Nuclear Programmes or look at how Prestige as a secondary variable leading to developing a Nuclear Programme. This study looks at Social Identity Theory to understand why states go nuclear. It examines whether Prestige overlaps with security

and whether a state's self is strengthened by the developing of a Nuclear Programme.

Thus, the literature discussed deals with many aspects of the nuclear programmes of India and Iran. Some of the literature talks about prestige too. However, there seems to be no discussion or debate on prestige as linked to the social identity of these states. This thesis hopes to fill in this gap in literature.

## **DEFINITION, RATIONALE AND SCOPE**

### **DEFINITION**

McGinn defines Prestige as explicitly represented as a kind of accumulation: a reservoir or body of opinion which can shrink or swell, be augmented or depleted, gained or lost over time. He points out that political discourse couched in terms of the discourse of Prestige most often revolves around what the agent had done, is doing or proposes to do with its Prestige, for e.g. attempt to secure it (McGinn 1972). Prestige belongs to an extended conceptual family that includes honour (O' Neill 1999; Joshi 2008; Lebow 2008), status (Weber 1922,; Reinhold 1969), reputation (Tang 2005; Sharman 2007; Wylie 2009), glory (Slomp 2000), credibility, respect, pride and legitimacy. Self esteem and national

esteem, also related to Prestige, often reflect each other (Wood 2013). The study aims to define how Prestige is seen and understood in the field of IR as well as to understand the role that Prestige plays in a state's decision making, specifically nuclear decisions. It seeks to understand how Prestige is understood by Social Identity Theory and whether it explains the motivations behind the Indian and Iranian Nuclear Programmes. The two case studies would provide a deeper understanding of the role of Prestige in International Relations, specifically Nuclear Programmes. It hopes to bring out the common aspects between the two, thus helping to formulate an understanding of how and why is national Prestige an important aspect of a state's decision to have a Nuclear Programme.

## RATIONALE

There are two reasons why a study on understanding the role of prestige with respect to India and Iran should be undertaken. First, the nuclear programmes of the said states have been constantly associated with the notion of Prestige, but a study entailing Social Identity Theory, explaining the need for a state to develop its nuclear programme and its links with a state's self-esteem has not been undertaken. Second, the two case studies of India and Iran have a similar nuclear trajectory as both started with wanting to develop a nuclear programme, gave up their programmes

due to different reasons, then re-started the process only to accelerate their nuclear programmes.

Both states started (India after independence and Iran after the revolution) with being opposed to a Nuclear Programme; used covert means to acquire nuclear material; and faced sanctions from the international community for their conduct. But while India is looked upon as rational and stable and has been given backdoor entry into the nuclear club; Iran is looked upon as illogical and there is a constant tussle within the international community on how to interact with the state. The purpose of this study is to look at how these two states, located at opposite poles in their foreign policy orientation, have understood and applied the notion of national Prestige in their Nuclear Programmes. It seeks to understand how India as a status-quoist state and Iran a theological revisionist state, defined their Nuclear Programmes with security but fit into the larger paradigm of a state and its ability to protect itself, to secure its image, not only for the collective, but also for the international community it interacts with.

## SCOPE

Prestige demonstrates 'universality' and 'persistence' and acts as a motivational tool for states' decision making. It is close to being an



informal ordering principle in international affairs. Possessed or sought, Prestige emerges from and contributes to the shaping of identities and interests (Wood 2013). The study aims to contribute and add to the existing debates on the nuclear programme of Iran and India from a social identity theoretical perspective. It, most importantly, brings out an explanation of what makes states chose a particular path and the role national prestige plays in it. The study focuses on the motivations that lead to the states' decisions with regards to their nuclear programmes. Nuclear programmes include both civilian and military aspects. Since the debate on Iran's nuclear programme was still divided at the beginning of this thesis, nuclear programmes in this research work refer to the idea of developing a programme that is indigenous. However, it would specifically look at India's decision to test its nuclear weapons in 1998 and Iran's decision to restart its nuclear programme despite a fatwa by the Supreme leader against nuclear weapons.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. To what extent does the concept of Prestige matter in International Relations?

2. Why is Prestige most associated with the nuclear programmes of states?
3. What are the different variables that effect prestige?
4. What effect does war have on the prestige of a state?
5. What aspects of the post colonial identity are most reflected in the prestige of a state via its Nuclear Programme?
6. How do concepts of 'Iraniyat' and 'Islamiyat' figure in the Nuclear Programme of Iran?
7. What are the factors that determine a states' national Prestige with respect to their Nuclear Programme?
8. How do state discourses react to the notion of Prestige?

## **HYPOTHESES**

1. Prestige associated with the nuclear programme, and loss of prestige associated with giving up the programme was an important determinant in Indian and Iranian nuclear programmes.
2. Both countries have repeatedly, publicly, deified their nuclear programmes, felicitated the personnel behind these programmes

and identified their scientific advances and international progress with references to their nuclear programmes.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

Prestige is compatible with realist, rationalist, sociological and normative interpretations of international politics. It is a nexus for differing emphasis, though largely neglected by scholarship seeking commonalities or convergence (Barkin 2003; Hellman 2003; Jackson and Nexon 2004; Lebow 2008; Beardsworth 2008). The focus would be on content analysis, examining statements of heads of states, various leaders and people in positions such as the ministers of external affairs, the home ministers, high ranking officials and the important members of civil society. In order to operationalize the emotion of prestige, three variables would be considered, namely, the role of the international community, the post colonial identity of the state, and the effects of war on the collective psyche. These three variables would be the independent variable and the dependent variable would be the nuclear programmes of the states.

The study would rely on primary and secondary sources. Primary sources would include Indian Constituent Assembly and Parliamentary debates, United Nations proceedings, speeches of leaders who were in important positions, and interviews. Additionally, newspaper articles, press releases

by the Indian and Iranian Ministry of External Affairs, published interviews of relevant policy-makers, journals, memoirs and autobiographies would be consulted. In the interest of a holistic picture, primary and secondary materials from external sources would also be consulted. The study would also make an attempt to integrate insights from interviews with relevant past decision makers Indian and Iranian policy-makers of the past and present. The study would also do a word frequency test using the content analysis of the data derived from secondary and primary sources. Secondary sources would comprise of literature from across the disciplines of international relations, psychology, political psychology, political science, political theory, history and sociology that are relevant to the themes of the study.

## **CHAPTERS**

### ***Chapter 1: Introduction***

This chapter would explain the need for such a study and the rationale behind the study. It would also lay out the structure of the study in

detail. It would define national Prestige in International Relations, how it is different from national interests and national security, whether the terms overlap or clash, and how they been understood in the field of International Relations. It would then go on to examine how these three aspects represent parts of the 'self' of the state and whether Social Identity Theory explains the need for states to have a Nuclear Programme.

### ***Chapter II: Theoretical Underpinnings: Social Identity, Prestige and Nuclear Programmes***

This chapter would focus on understanding the concept of prestige and how it can be operationalized based on the effects of war, the relationship with the international community and the post colonial identity of the state. It would link these aspects together to the notions of prestige base on the definition mentioned at the beginning.

### ***Chapter III: Sovereignty and Prestige: Seeking Autonomy***

The chapter looks at the relationship between the international community and the case studies in the context of the nuclear negotiations with regards to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. The chapter looks at the foreign policy dictates of 'Non-Alignment' and 'Neither East nor West' and places prestige as a concept.

#### ***Chapter IV: Post-colonialism: Defining the Self with Prestige***

This chapter would place the concept of national Prestige and places it in the post colonial understanding of states. The chapter uses the nuclear programmes of the said states as a case study to understand the relationship between the need for prestige and the post colonial identity of the state.

#### ***Chapter V: Loss in War: Fighting Humiliation with Prestige***

The chapter would study the wars of 1971 and 1962 for India and the eight year long war between Iran and Iraq (1980-88). It places the notions of prestige that play a role in a state's quest for a nuclear programme and subsequent effect it has on the want for a nuclear programme.

#### ***Chapter VI: Conclusion***

The last chapter, based on the findings of the study, would seek to explain how the concept of national Prestige is understood by Iran and India and the different variables that showcase this emotion. This chapter would bring out the similarities between the two case studies and how both have understood the notion of Prestige with respect to Social Identity Theory. The chapter would further identify areas of research.



## CHAPTER TWO

# **Theoretical Underpinnings: Social Identity, Prestige and Nuclear Programmes**



## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter highlights the state as a social unit and uses social identity theory to place prestige as central to the social unit. The different aspects of identity, i.e. national identity and social identity are explained in the context of ontological security. It also defines the term prestige, which is understood as a value and as an emotion, for the purpose of the thesis.

Defining the state as a cohesive social unit, the chapter looks to explain how states seek identity confirmation via prestige. It uses social identity theory and ontological security concepts to elucidate the need for a state to seek prestige and how and why a nuclear programme becomes the centre of this seeking process. The chapter would first look at the different events that affect the prestige of a state and categorize how states understand the term. The second part of the chapter would bring in concepts of national identity and ontological security and understand their links with prestige. The last part would define the term prestige and formulate a definition after understanding the different aspects of the

term. The chapter would also try and draw the link between concepts of security and prestige, whereby one does not necessarily have to be in opposition to the other.

## **THE AGENCY OF THE STATE**

To think about the 'state as a person' is to attribute to the state certain properties that we attribute to individuals: intentions, personalities, and rationalities. According to Wendt (2004), what state persons are, is the behaviour and discourse of the individual human beings who make them up. Walter Bagehot, the 19<sup>th</sup> century British constitutional lawyer, argued that personification was useful because it made governments more easily understood and more apt to gain the loyalty of their subjects (Mc Graw & Duclan, 2007). Thus, personification of the state is helpful not only to the state and the people representing it, but also to the units and people who are bounded by it and interact with it.

Scholars disagree about which properties of persons should be ascribed to states, how important state persons are relative to other corporate persons like MNCs or NGOs, whether state persons are a good thing, and whether failed states can or should be persons at all (Wendt 2004). Rodham (2015) argues that states are 'egoistical' and 'survival oriented' and pursue self-serving actions. He points out to the numerous factors involved in the decision making of a state; the internal power dynamics that change according to the government and opposition parties in the case of democracies; the blatant human

rights violations against protesters in autocracies; the geopolitical situation as triggered by unforeseen events; the changing international climate; organizational mechanisms; and so forth. All these factors make an impact and have to be considered by decision makers.

But even though there are problems in the defining of a state and what attributes should or should not be taken, it is clear that some form of personification is needed as it helps in dealing with the other states as entities. Each state as a unit will have divisions amongst them but in the end a collective front is needed for interaction with other states.

Views about states are often intimately bound to views about salient features. Because states are abstract entities, they frequently require physical embodiment, in order for ordinary citizens and even state elites to make sense of them. Embodiment can be in the form of a national leader, institution, symbols or social groups (Mc Graw and Duclan 2007). It is these leaders, institutions and symbols that become the backbone of the state identity and give it legitimacy in the eyes of the people it represents and with the other state units it interacts with. For example, a flag of a state, national language, and important institutions that become landmarks such as the Burj Kalifa in Dubai.

States are readily described as collective cognition. Although they usually have one person in charge, leaders do not know everything their states know. States are characterized by massive division of labour internally, the structure of which enables their members to operate as a single cognitive system. Some state identities and interests stem primarily from relations to domestic society, others from international society, foreign policy role theorists (eg. S. Walker, 1987) as well as more recently a number of neoliberals have emphasized the domestic (and thus systematically exogenous) roots of state identities (Wendt 1994). Both the points stated above clearly refer to the various gaps in literature and in the understanding of the state as a person, but also mention how a states' identity is sometimes formed in its interactions as a unit with other similar units. According to Wendt (1994) the corporate identity of a state generates four basic interests of appetites:

- Physical security, including its differentiation from other actors

- Ontological security, or predictability in relationships to the world, which creates a desire for stable social identities
- Recognition as an actor by others, above and beyond survival through brute force
- Development in the sense of meeting the human aspiration for a better life, for which states are repositories at the collective level.

As Wendt puts it, “Relative to the alternatives, a strong argument can be made that they should (be persons) notwithstanding its potential costs: states help bring order, and yes, even justice to the world, and if we want to have states then it is better to take them as persons rather than something more amorphous, because it will make their effects more politically accountable” (Wendt, 1999). Although there is much to be debated as to whether states do become more politically accountable or not they do tend to make interactions with other states as units more manageable.

## **SOCIAL IDENTITY**

The social identity of a state is influenced by a number of factors. This section looks at the concept of social identity as explained by Tajfel and Turner. It then goes on to look at state decision making and how social identity affects the state decision making.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the theory of social identity was introduced by Henri Tajfel (1982). The theory focused on understanding group relations based on concepts such as status, stability, permeability and legitimacy. The theory specifically looked at the way positive social identity was pursued by groups. Taking the theory forward, Tajfel and

Turner (1979) brought out the different social categories that are used for classification, namely, organizational membership, religious affiliation, gender and age.

Ashforth and Mael (1989) suggest that social classification, by systematically defining the other, helps the individual to put the social environment in order. According to the Social Identity theory (SIT), “the self concept is comprised of a personal identity encompassing distinctive characteristics (e.g. bodily attributes, abilities, psychological traits, interests) and a social identity encompassing salient group classifications. Social identification, therefore, is considered to be “the perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate” (Ashforth & Mael, 1989: 21). Social identification, thus, derives from the concept of ‘Group Identification’ (Tolman, 1943). One can see many examples of the two being used interchangeably in literature on social identity. By understanding the core aspects that define group identification such as its definition of being a perpetual cognitive construct, a better understanding of the linkages between the two can be formed.

According to Freud (1959), as heterogeneity is submerged, the homogeneous aspect rises along with the racial unconscious. The concepts which bind individuals together come to the forefront and aspects that showcase their dissimilarities are removed, i.e., the collective

self takes over the individual self and decisions that might not be taken by individuals are sometimes easily accessible as a collective.

Sen (2006) criticizes “identity disregard” (i.e. when an individual is separate from any other and does not identify with anyone but themselves, no man is an island)” as this concept does not fit within the previews of social identity. He explains the dialects of the colonized mind in a different manner, blaming people of a reactive self-perception which essentially helps them develop a perspective on the political and socio-economic aspects that is anti-western. In his book, Sen (2006) takes on post colonial theory and explains how it takes over the identity of the collective. The “dialectics of the colonized mind”, according to him, leads to formulation of a self-perception with is reactive in nature. As a result, the political and socio-economic ideals of the state are heavily influenced by an anti-western perspective.

According to Steele (2008), states pursue needs through social action to satisfy their own self-identity needs, rather than to impress an external society. States care about their own identity and their narrative, which needs to be in a positive light. However, this positive light needs to be seen by the ‘other’ which is defined by the external society. Thus, even though social action has been undertaken to fulfil the needs of their identity, these social actions do formulate an opinion on the external

society. The ontological security process deals with matters such as self-identity, the creation of meanings for actions through a “biographical narrative”, how actors decide upon certain actions to promote a healthy vision of the self to others, how the internal dialectic of a divided or severed Self overcomes (but not always) insecurity, and how all of this influences the place of the national self in an international context. This explains why states in similar structural contexts pursue different policy choices. Browning (2013) adds that nation states need to maintain a consistent self concept as it is only through a distinct narrative that foreign policy actions can be set into a routine, shaping the identity of the nation state.

The definitions of self are based on the interactions with the other. Sasley (2011) emphasizes on the push of world culture upon the state identities which is mediated by the perception of the main actors who were behind its origin. For example, the ‘western states’<sup>1</sup> came together after the second world war to create international organizations becoming what Acharya (2009) terms norm entrepreneurs. Keeping Sasley’s argument mentioned above, it can be argued that a state’s self-identity needs are also a summation of its interactions with the other.

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<sup>1</sup> Western states in this thesis refer to the first world states that form a loose federation over the international community. These western states are: United States of America, Canada, United Kingdom, Western Europe, Australia, and South Africa.

Recognition from the other shapes the self-identity of the state and is responsible for the ontological security considerations of the state.

Campbell (1992) delineates how state agents locate “threats” to construct the “sovereign” state, asserting that the development of the state Self is part and parcel of the need for state agents to establish control and order within their borders. Sasley (2011) reiterates the concepts of Katzenstein and Campbell by stating that in order to justify their policy actions to the citizens of the state, they are forced to articulate a particular set of self-interests. Vanaik (2015) also points that states need to put a cover of security on their decisions as they justify their actions more than giving a ‘prestige’ argument.

## **SELF-IDENTITY**

This section looks at the concept of self-identity and narrative. It aims to bring to light how a state understands these concepts and what implications they bring to decision making, especially, nuclear decision making with regards to its social identity.



Steele (2008), talks about the construction of self-relevant history as being a double-edged sword. This self-relevant history organizes the past in the context of the present, giving a priori meanings to actions, sometimes motivating and stimulating agents for the same (Steele 2008: 56). But as a disadvantage, they shackle further actions in case the narratives become so dominant that they inhibit counter-interpretations from being developed.

A historical narrative “provides comforting stories in times of increased ontological insecurity and existential anxiety” traumas are useful here as well, while they disrupt this linear narrative, they can also be “chosen” resources used by agents to synthesize that narrative, providing “the linking objects for later generations to be rediscovered, reinterpreted and reused” (Volkan 1997: 81). The concept of historical narrative, as explained by Volkan, takes into account the emotions of humiliation, pain and victory that are either highlighted or subdued within the narrative. This is especially true for war narratives, where a state becomes a victim or a messiah based on the results of the war. For example, the Indian defeat of 1962 is always portrayed as a stab in the back by the Chinese, even though documents support other claims. At the same time, the Indian victories over Pakistan are glorified and over glazed with statements such as, “India never attacks, only defends”. The moral

character of the state is constantly nurtured according to the emotions at play.

Sasley (2011) speaks of identity development as a negotiation. In order for a good negotiation to take place, the variety of choices for action need to be provided to a state. These may range from deployment of military forces to the articulation of a narrative of the self, in the face of identity threats. Thus according to Sasley (2011) states do not just react to external events, but position their interests according to which version of state identity prevails in the face of these threats.

Kinvall (2004) talks about the role of the narrative in the self identity process as being central. By organizing history in a salient fashion, this narrative constructs a salient group identity. The biographical narrative is what Giddens also terms the “narrative of the self”: the story or stories by means of which self-identity is reflexively understood, both by the individual concerned and by others (Giddens 1991: Glossary). States ‘talk’ about their actions in identity terms and this is necessary because “only in the telling of the event does it acquire meaning, the meaning that makes such events politically relevant” (Lang, 2002: 13). According to Catarina (interview 2013), by bringing prestige in the folds of ontological security, one is able to combine the two ideas of prestige and security.

Thus, when states define an event to their public, they are committing to a narrative that they need to protect and engage with.

Niebuhr (1943) in his seminal work, states that “the root of imperialism is therefore in self-consciousness”. He goes on to expand that agents (individuals or nation-states) are attempting to construct a society that reflects their sense of selves. The reverse- that individual agents conform to the principles of the community for the same reason- is less likely to “give life significance”. While every state would have similar value on what it wants, the events of history will shape its reaction to these emotions.

Sasley (2011) draws on the vast literature of ontological security to bring out the link between identity threats and the narrative of the self. Neumann (2008) defines discourse analysis as the study of meaning within the language itself. Discourse analysis, Sasley points out, justifies the decisions of the state actors. By reasoning out what the policy would mean about the state’s sense of self-identity, actors create meanings not only of their vision of state identity but also of identity threats, for example, what cause them, why these specific threats must be dealt with and which policies can best confirm the threats. Self narratives, thus, are one manifestation of a ‘reality production’ as they form the meaning of an agent’s self-identity.

The people of the state are emotionally connected to the nation-state. The state agent in turn, uses this emotional connect to promote national interest. Thus, they harp on the philosophy that the citizen's existential experience can only be completed through the state itself. Sasley (2011) states that in order to continue with this relationship between the state agents and the individuals, actors must create meanings to their actions to be logically consistent with their identities. State agents need to consistently use different means to justify and explain a policy in terms of the state's self-identity. In understanding the state agents, it is important to recognize that state interests and identity are always up for grabs wherein each is formed and reformed by the individuals who constitute the state.

In Jutta Weldes's (1999: 57-58) words, "in order for the state to act, state officials must produce representations" of a crisis, a crisis which itself "depends on the discursively constituted identity of the state". Thus, the directions of the narrative strongly depend on the agents' (individuals, groups or states) ability to handle the identity crisis and emerge victorious.

Steele posits that "by drawing a connection between the practices of a targeted state and its professed self-identity, by focusing on the inconsistencies between the actions of a state and the "biographical

narrative” that state uses to justify those actions, critical actors can “lay bare” the Self of the state” (Steele 2008: 65). But these critical actors also help in the evolution of the state and the self of the state gets better defined. The other advantage of a clean biological narrative is the idea of the state. For example, the Pakistani government operated at two different levels, giving every group, within its fold, an almost autonomous existence. As a result, the small groups, not entities, have developed their own ideology and their own standards; making mini countries within a single state. While promoting relations with the United States on one hand, the Pakistani government gave its tacit support to the militants it was fighting against, along with the United States. This has led to a complete confusion to the public regarding its belongingness. Hence, research on the narrative of the states kept oneself updated regarding the new technologies.

Each leader of the state must independently interpret the self-identity that shapes his or her policy choices and then bring that interpretation to the bargaining table when discussing a course of action. Leadership plays an important role in defining a state’s identity and giving it direction. Great leaders have been responsible for making or shaping the identities of states. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru of India and Imam Khomeini of Iran have shaped the identities of India and Iran respectively with their vision, and

their idea of the state. They laid down the guidelines that are still being represented in the foreign policies of the two states. Both the leaders have tried to chart the identity of their respective states as unique and as self-sufficient.

The desire for independence, and the power of memory and organizing that memory through a historical narrative, all serve to motivate nation-states to organize their selves first and foremost, getting that self in order to interact with the “others” of international politics. However, nation-states’ attempt to shift the moral blame upon interconnected others in order to absolve themselves of responsibilities for past (and future) actions. Yet, this is a political strategy to cover the deeper dramas of the anxiety of the self (Steele 2008)

A sense of self, Steele (2008) notes is derived from the environment around us. Narratives not only provide coherence to the Self, but also create a ‘person’ of the state. Without a narrative, without a state agent, collecting and making sense of the historical events of the nation-state, the Self of the state would not exist. The reactions of states to their historical events shape their behaviour in current actions. Thus, the responsibility of the construction of the state lies to a large extent with the state agents who create the state as events occur and subsequent reactions take place.

Shame and self-identity play significant roles in foreign policy decision making. It implies that for states, their need to satisfy their ontological security is of prime importance.

Steele (2008) posits that states may engage in behaviours that that reinforce or distinguish them as part of a larger community of states. The case studies of India and Iran serve as examples for this argument. Both the states were looking for engagement with the larger international community by distinguishing themselves and at certain point associating themselves by ways of their behavior. This has led to a secure sense of self-identity.

Although Steele (2008) argues that identity change has always had implications for forceful responses, and the relationship between a society and its military thus has an impact upon foreign policy structures. He also states the importance of non-military events (where no force is used or where such force poses no physical or material threat to an examined state) having strong implications in decision making. Thus, events, whether military or non-military in nature have a strong impact on decision making.

Identity Theory in social psychological literature, according to Astrom and Rise (2001), "conceives of the self as a collection of identities which

reflect the roles a person may enact in a social situation, thus linking the self to the wider social structure". It "considers self-identities (or role-identities) as self-definitions, deriving from people's knowledge of the roles they occupy, motivating people to make behavioural decisions which are consistent with their self concepts" (Astrom & Rise 2001: 226).

Campbell's (1992) account of identity is a bit more fluid. He states that "the fact [is] that the sovereign domain, for all its identification as a well-ordered and rational entity, is as much a site of ambiguity and indeterminacy as the anarchic realm it is distinguished from" (Campbell 1992: 61). According to Campbell threat plays a significantly larger role in the formation of a state's identity. These threats may be perceived or real, but their influence on the decision making of a state is larger as a result of the impact it has.

The making of selves is a narrative process of identification whereby a number of identities that have been negotiated in specific contexts are strung together into one overarching story. As a result, the forging of selves becomes a path-dependent process, building its identity as it goes along and experiences different events (Neumann 1999: 212 & 223). These new events are negotiated with the prior ones and bring out a final credible version of the state's narrative.



Wendt (1994) talks of different types of identities with one being corporate identity. Corporate identities are “the intrinsic, self-organizing qualities that constitute actor individuality” (Wendt 1994: 385). They generate basic interests such as physical security, recognition as an actor by others beyond pure survival issues, and the development of a state’s role in meeting the human aspiration for a better life. This definition by Wendt explains how states define their identities and what are the significant factors involved in the process. In other work Wendt (1996) states that social identities are a combination of self and collective interest that are heavily tied to the fate of the other. Wendt goes on to state that identification is a continuum from negative to positive, from conceiving the other as anathema to the self to seeing it as an extension of the self (Wendt 1994: 386). Bringing this analogy to the case study of India, it can be seen that after India’s ‘peaceful’ nuclear explosion the international community launched an embargo (a negative) which was eventually removed and India was given entry into the nuclear suppliers group (a positive).

Jennifer Mitzen (2006), in her argument, looks at self-identity as being socially dependent upon others, and the states becoming attached to those relationships, leading to ontological security dilemma. Realists, according to her, aim for an ideal self as opposed to the real self. But

this is a very limited viewpoint. The aim of this study is to look beyond the theoretical lenses provided and to understand decision making from the perspective of emotions/ values.

Scholars recognize that an emphasis on the emotional dimension is missing from the study of a social context (Kinvall 2004; Craib 1995). The aspects of anxiety or identity crisis motivate the state and state agents to act.

Bauman (1990) refers to the negative aspects of a state seeking 'self-identity' wherein violence becomes a "vehicle of social integration", in order to "diffuse the danger that a 'foreigner inside' may or may not be responsible for. This danger to the self-identity and self-production of the host group can lead to colossal losses, not just of cities but entire populations. Huysmans's (1998) position is quite useful here, in that states view internal others as threats to self-identify precisely because they are strangers, disturbing the "predictability and continuity" of a state's self-identity through time, and thus a form of "chaos" that precludes their realization of ontological security (Wendt 1994: 385).

Self-identity is also strongly influenced by the power the state generates in the international community. Apart from the confidence it induces, powerful states also are the more responsible states, which is a result of

their freedom of choice. This implies that when speaking of self-identity, while material capabilities are important, they are contingent upon the additional capabilities the nation-states might possess such as a position of influencing other state decisions. This awareness of a sense of power leads to production of outcomes that might not have been possible otherwise.

Lucian Pye (1962), in his analysis of nation-building opined that states can come into existence with the use of force, but its sustenance is only due to the building of a psychological nation. He explained the argument by bringing in the concept of political socialization which helps maintain the stability of the system. If political socialization were lacking, a polity would be unable to endure any conflict. This was reinforced by Rupert Emerson (1962) who was of the opinion that acceptance of the nation as a community with legitimate demands leads to coercive power.

The biographical narrative is important to self-identity because it is the locus through which agents “work out” their understandings of social settings and the placement of their Selves in those settings. Actors, with varying degrees of success, are using narrative as the form of “discursive consciousness” through which agents create meanings for their actions (Giddens 1984). A state’s biographical narrative is a form of “performative language”. A biographical narrative is an “illocutionary” speech act where

“the speaker performs an action in saying something” (Habermas 1984: 288). Although narratives are shaped after events transpire, it is imperative to remember that consistency in the narrative of the state should not be lost. When leaders come to power within the state structure, they bring with them personal agendas and ideas for implementation. However, if such ideas are a complete turnaround from the previous actions of the state, it can lead to complicated situations. This is especially true for situations such as loss during war. The Indian government has repeatedly refused to declassify information regarding the 1962 war as the official documents would clash with the state narrative.

Steele (2008) adds to this argument stating that narration is the most political of acts a state agent can execute. This is because, as pointed out earlier in the chapter, by using the narrative a state defines its goals and actions and justifies them repeatedly using the narrative. This does not imply a homogenization of the state identity, which can be influenced by various agents. Rather it implies one discourse which is prevalent, which shapes the ideology of future leaders. He posits the different processes involved in the formulation of a biographical narrative: an actor’s understanding of what causes or drives events; what that event means about an actor’s self-identity; how those events are important to an actor’s interests, or how those interests are derived from the self-

identity of an actor in relation to the event; and what policies a state should use to pursue those interests. The biographical narrative, thus, is an amalgamation of roles occupied by the state in specific situations.

But this narrative is also not independent of the social constructs of the international community. State agents place the Self in the context of the international community. According to Bach (1999: 46), “narratives bind temporal events together such that meaning can be ascribed to a pattern. The organization of time itself endows meaning to events”. In providing meaning to a given event, the decisive factor is played by the language of the state narrative. Onuf (1989:82) states that “to invoke some property of language called illocutionary force is indeed to leave behind the longstanding view, on which positivism depends, that the only function of language is to represent reality”. Like “illocutionary force, elocutionary language is a performative act through which “the speaker produces an effect upon the hearing; by carrying out a speech he brings about something in the world” (Habermas 1984: 289). Scholars widely agree on the nature of the state narrative being influenced by the state language and how this is further utilized by the state to justify their actions.

Neta Crawford (2002: 114) argues that one of the conditions necessary for actors to change their beliefs relates to their “receptivity” to an ethical

argument, and this receptivity “depends on the fit between the self-conceptualization of actor’s identity and the proposed normative belief”. She posits that there are at least three components to political identity: a sense of self in relation to or distinct from others or “social identity”; a historical narrative about the Self; and an ideology. These three aspects point to the different variables which could affect a state’s prestige.

Sasley also points out to the role of social movements. He believes that they can challenge and shape national narratives in order to influence the security interests of states. In the case of democracies, this statement holds true to a larger extent as there is a public space to voice your opinion. For example, many pockets or regions within American have been successful in reducing the toxic waste from power plants (nuclear and otherwise) while in India the movements against the nuclear establishment have been away from the limelight. Social movements usually resort to moral claims made by the government and try and hold them to be more accountable. The biographical (self-) narrative that a state uses to describe and justify its actions serves also as a comparison device, a form of discourse that becomes the basis for the contestation of self-identity by societal groups. This aspect is also used by the groups heading the movements when they are voicing their concern over an existing policy.

A state's narrative is built by a number of factors, an internal sense of security, a need to develop a positive Self and the role of the state agents as well as the role of the challengers of the state agents. Academics and Scholars have worked on differing aspects of these factors and understood them in detail, which helps clarify the concepts for readers. But the common underlying theme in all these factors is the need for recognition from the 'other'. This relation shall be more deeply understood in the course of the study. It will draw upon examples from the case studies of India and Iran to validate its claims of prestige and identity determining nuclear behaviour.

All scholars discussed in this section refer to the self identity as national identity. Albeit true, it is required at the same time to understand the nuances of difference between self identity and national identity. While the former can be transformed based on the experiences of the collective, very often, the national identity of the state remains linear and does not show growth of any kind.

## **NATIONAL IDENTITY**

There is no clear distinction between the national identity of a state and the self-identity of the state as the agents would be the same, the

questions on discourse would be the same and so would the statements of those questioning the nationalist discourse. However, self-identity can be a broader term while national identity is more specific in nature. The latter can also be clearly associated with the notion of prestige. Hence this segment brings out the literature on national identity and how it affects the state's prestige.

Bloom (1990: 55) defines nation-building as "the formation and the establishment of the new state itself as a political entity, and the processes of creating viable degrees of unity, adaptation, achievement, and a sense of national identity among the people." In understanding nation-building, there is an inherent understanding of a created state which consists of a nation or a community that identifies with the state (Rokkan, 1973). Regardless of a state's political and historical circumstances, nation-building suggests a clear norm for the psychological relationship between mass citizenry and the state. This norm can be made explicit in terms of its internal and its international functions. Internally, the nation-building can be termed successful when the nation-state has the ultimate or transcending claim on its people's loyalty. There may still be regional, religious, or ethnic ties, but these loyalties cannot be mobilized against the nation-state itself although they may compete within the nation-state (Smith, 1981). Bloom (1990) expands on the



international dimension of nation-building being successful as when the state can rely on the support of its people when in a situation with external actors. He states that as long as a state's foreign policy initiatives are perceived by its people as part of defending or enhancing national security, the state will have the support of its people in its decisions.

Lord Acton states that, "A state may in the course of time produce a nationality but that a nationality should constitute a state is contrary to the nature of modern civilization" (Acton 1909: 292). According to Bloom (1990) as an idea in itself, nationalism has no intrinsic power to create any national identity. However, this nationalism can be harnessed to achieve specific ends. Identification with, and loyalty to, the nation is evoked from actual experiences in which it is psychologically beneficial to make the identification (Bloom 1990: 61). He states the uses of symbols to further reinforce this identification. This could be done via formal and informal social rituals wherein people communicate with each other about this common identification. Rodham defines nationalism as, "both civic and ethnic, values sentimental belonging but there is a fundamental difference in their view of the state and nation. The psychology of belonging inherent in ethnic nationalism is one of deep commitment and bias towards a romanticized and abstract notion of the 'people'. The state would thus be born as an aggregate volition of a certain group, with common allegiances, and mirroring their sensibilities" (Al-Rodham, 2015). Bloom (1990)

expands on the concept stating that a sense of national community is identified with state symbols which are seen as the concordant identification of culture and polity. The symbols are seen as the result of a lengthy shared experience in which actions of the state, domestically and internationally, directly touched the mass of citizens. In terms of political analysis, national interest has no conceptual use as a tool for ranking foreign policy priorities. It does, however, describe a discrete social-psychological structure- the arena of communication and discourse for mobilizing the national identity dynamic.

Freud (1859) opines that for groups the truth is not the ultimate aim. They prefer illusions that consistently give them information that appeals to their core emotions. As a result, they are almost as strongly influenced by what is untrue as by what is true. It is this conception that state agents exploit with the national identity dynamic.

National identities manifested themselves most strongly in European context (Bloom 1990). Although Europe had a uniting religion in Christianity and the language base for all the Europeans was Latin, nationalism as a concept took shape first in the continent. For the individuals of the region, their cultural difference became a source of national identity. The cultural 'other' was kept at a distance and associations were formulated with groups that seemed to be more

culturally similar. There is a clear and strong association between the individuals and their nations. This behavioural tendency is well exploited by the state agents who use this identification to support the decisions taken by these state agents.

In his book, *Personal Identity, National Identity*, Bloom (1990) builds on the argument above stating that events/ crises are presented to the masses in such a way that either national identity is perceived to be threatened, or the event is used as an opportunity such that it enhances the national identity. This leads the identification imperative to work through the public as one nation. This group or nation will follow in the demands of the national identity dynamic which in turn will seek to secure, protect and enhance their general national identity. The national identity dynamic, therefore, describes the socio-psychological dynamic by which a mass national public may be mobilized in relation to its international environment.

According to identification theory, as explained by Bloom (1990), the mobilization of popular support for unilateral disarmament can only come about if the arguments for such a policy are framed in such a way as to be seen to enhance national identity. The theory provides a distinct level of analysis which draws into perspective a consistent structural variable of the foreign policy of decision making process. It outlines the structural

dynamics of the psychological relationship between a people and their nation-state and makes possible a coherent analysis of the influence of the mass national public. Transcending religious, ideological and parochial divisions, the mobilization of national identity is the largest mobilization possible within a state in which leads to successful nation-building.

Al Rodham (2010) argues that in order to understand any event, it is imperative to understand their emotional motivators. Nationalism, for him, is another word for emotions as the concept of nationalism is based on folklore, myths and sentimental forms of attachment. The nationalistic ideal is kept alive via symbols where justice for past humiliation and reaching an early glory point is sought. For example, Rodham points out to “a sense of revenge and historic justice for Germany accompanied Hitler’s choice of the Compiegne Forest as the location for signing the armistice that meant the defeat of France in 1940, the same spot where in 1918 Germany had signed the armistice that confirmed its humiliating defeat. For further emphasis, Hitler ordered the armistice to be signed in the same railway wagon in which the previous armistice had been signed” (Al-Rodham, 2015). He states how this example explains the concept of *animus dominandi*, which is ‘the desire to dominate’. It is a social force which determines political activity. This desire to dominate manifests itself in the maintenance of existing balance of power, the seeking of more power and finally using strength in the ability to show off or keep the power. The terms for this would be status quo, imperialism and prestige.

Benedict Anderson (1983) explains the concept of an imagined community by stating that members do not necessarily have to know each other but the idea of belongingness comes from the image of their communion. This imagined community time and again comes together on specific pretexts. The nuclear programme of a state undoubtedly brings the imagined communities together, whether it is for the dismantling of the nuclear programme, as in the case of Sweden or it is the development via different means, as in the case of Pakistan. At workshop on nuclear safety and security conducted by the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS, 2014) discussions on Pakistan’s nuclear

programme lead the Pakistani delegation to become defensive regarding the conduct of Pakistan in the nuclear domain. Discussions with Iranians (Majidi interview, 2015) throw some more light on the issue. The responses of the interviewee tend to become guarded when asked about the proliferation record of the state or when aberrations are pointed out. Although the destruction caused by chemical and biological weapons is in no comparison to the level of devastation caused by a nuclear weapon, the abhorrence of the former and the want for the later is universal.

Price (1995) talks of the taboo generated by a chemical weapons attack and how it calls for the strongest action from all parties involved. Present day chemical attacks in Syria have lead to a similar outrage with the Syrian leader Assad being reprimanded for the actions. Thus, the divide between nuclear one hand and chemical and biological weapons on the other is clear. The sheer level of destruction that a nuclear programme can induce makes it out of reach from use for states. However, this does not imply that a nuclear weapons state cannot use the programme for annihilation. In moments of decision making a leader might take the wrong call, leading to destruction that will last for generations. This distinction, between nuclear and chemical weapons, also provides evidence to the fact that the want for a nuclear programme is more than just being security centric.

Bloom (1990) expands on the concept of the national identity dynamic as an imperative trigger point. State decisions, specifically, foreign policy decisions, may trigger, manipulate, appropriate, or be manipulated by this dynamic. State agents, acting as significant symbolic figures raise the national identity dynamic in view of the protection and enhancement of the nation. The state agents merge the differences between government, state and national community. A crisis or an event helps entwine these

different branches of state agents into one bundle that represents the national identity of the state.

The social-psychological theory might not be understood by the decision makers in a conscious manner, but this notion of the national identity dynamic is always used by state leaders as a means to mobilize its people away from domestic problems, achieving political integration. Once this dynamic is triggered and mobilized by sources, its powerful momentum is used by state leaders to negotiate with the international community. For example, in the case of US-Pakistan relations, the latter has always justified its decisions based on the very population it aggravates with hate speeches.

There are many other clear historical examples of the mobilized national identity dynamic, of public opinion, forcing governments into aggressive international behaviour. Public opinion, for instance, clearly took the United States into the Spanish-American War. The Anglo-Spanish war of 1739 was more popularly known as the War of Jenkins' Ear, for it was the severing of the English sea-captain's ear which mobilized the English people so that Walpole, against his better judgment, was forced to war with Spain (Bloom 1990). And in Japan, at least since the Meiji Restoration, public opinion and spontaneous mass mobilization have been central factors in the making of an aggressive Japanese foreign policy; it

was, for instance, specifically public opinion, which took Japan into Korea in 1894 and into the war with China in the same year (Beasley, 1981).

National identity dynamic is a tool that more often than not is used for aggravating the masses of a state. The state agents responsible for this use the national identity dynamic to build on the state narrative as they deem fit. Thus, the national identity dynamic is nothing more than a tool in the hands of the state agents who aim to build on a narrative. If the state narrative does not fit with the events in place, the national identity dynamic is used appropriately to solve the identity crisis. Thus, prestige would be built on in the next segment to better understand the reasons for state narratives moving in certain directions.

National identity, therefore, can be made out to be a more evolved version of the state's self identity, that is defined by the state experiences along with the development of the state structures.

## **POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION**

This section looks at the concept of political socialization, of how people form their opinions about state decisions. It explains how state actors use political socialization to portray nuclear programmes as necessary for the identity of the state.

Habermas (1979: 180) states, "the state does not, it is true, establish the collective identity of the society; nor can itself carry out social integration through values and norms, which are not at its disposition. But in as much as the state assumes the guarantee to prevent social disintegration by way of binding decisions, the exercise of state power is tied to the claim of maintaining society in its normatively determined identity".

"The process of psychologically belonging to a group involves categorization of oneself as a group member, which in turn causes people to think, behave and define themselves in terms of the group norm rather than unique properties of the self"(Astrom and Rise 2001: 226).

William Bloom (1990), refers to Durkheim's 'collective conscious' to explain the relationship between the members of society, social norms and the authority of the government. He states that it is this 'collective conscious' which leads to the solidarity of interdependence of dissimilar individuals.

There are different approaches to understanding political socialization. Renshon (1975) uses Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory to explain political socialization which takes place from the time an infant is born. He states that the process of socialization begins at birth so as to fit into



the human environment. The sociological approach states differently, looking at the social mores as being imposed on the infant in order to fulfil the need for stability in the social system. According to Benedict (1934), political socialization can be understood via the national character of a state. This national character is explained as that particular set of cultural mores and political norms which, through socialization, are passed down from generations within a particular ethos (Bloom 1990: 18). Joseph Frankel in particular suggests that foreign policy decisions were guided by core values distinct to particular nation-states; and Nathan Leites, in his description of the Soviet Politburo's operational code, suggested that a particular ideological and cultural frame determined decision outcomes (Frankel 1979 and Leites 1951). On the other hand, Katz (1965) as quoted in Bloom (1990) refers to four types of forces that shape an individual's nationalism: Emotional and Behavioural conditioning to national symbols; personal identity as national; compensatory and defensive identification with militant nationalism and instrumental involvement in the national structure. Singer (1968) proposes variables of personality, attitude and opinion which interact with the system and shape the political social sphere of an individual. There are other academics that have a differing take on the concept of political socialization.

According to Bloom (1990), Identification theory is a psychological theory which explains the problems of integration and mobilization. It states that in order to achieve psychological security, every individual possesses an inherent drive to internalize- to identify with- the behavior, the mores and attitudes of significant figures in her/his social environment, i.e. people actively seek identity (Bloom 1990: 23). If a strong leader is present then this identity is further developed. Bloom explains how identification is as social as it is private and thus, psychological. Identification with the other gives the individual a sense of belonging and pushes them to act together as a cohesive unit to preserve, defend and enhance this common identity.

According to Karl Vick (2011) the sense of pride is found in every nation, but is especially deep in Iran. The Iranian sense of nationhood extends back to 2,500 years, and Iranians take pride in the fact that their state-identity was not formed with the advent of the Europeans in Middle East. Vick states that “ordinary, rank and file, workaday Iranians want a nuclear programme. Even those who dislike their government crave the prestige afforded by atomic power.” Vick gives personal examples stating how some time back he had spent time at Persepolis and was told how 2,500 years ago Armenians were bringing gifts to the Iranian king and the Indians did not even have shoes to wear. Both the states now have nuclear programmes with India having nine to its credit. Keeping such perspectives in mind he states that Iran might want a nuclear programme just as Japan does. “Even if the findings of the IAEA show that, in fact, Iran’s nuclear programme has drawn from Pakistani plans, North Korean parts and specific technical advice from a Russian, the point in question is essentially emotional” (Vick 2011).

Using Bloom's analysis, one can understand the link between a state's identity and its desire for a nuclear programme. When state leaders associate a nuclear programme as imperative to a state's identity, it creates a psychological bond for the 'collective conscious' of the state. Identification theory not only explicates the structure and dynamics of this common psychological bond, it also suggests the circumstances that may lead to the creation of this bond and the triggers that could lead to enhancement or protection of the state.

Bloom (1990) quotes Freud on the socializing effects of identification who used a common identification to understand group cohesion. He stated that the basis of its members' common identification was that they had a common leader. In his discussion of what prompted a subject to form an ego-ideal in common with others, Freud suggested that the initial impetus came from the parents but was later subsumed by 'all the other people in his environment- his fellow-men- and public opinion.

Successful identification, according to Bloom, then means gratification of primary needs. An important aspect of primary needs would include a successful identity. This was made explicit with Erik Erikson's (1959) stages of development which brought in the role of identity verses identity crisis. The major thrust of Erikson's written work was to demonstrate that identity formation was not just sexual as emphasized by

Freud, but was an ongoing process from infancy to old age. There were different stages involved in the process and many a time, stages were revisited by individuals to clear the conflict. According to Erikson (1968: 41), "Man's need for psychosocial identity is anchored in nothing less than his socio-genetic evolution". He believed that a secure sense of identity is strongly associated with feelings of contentment whereas an identity crisis occurs when there is no clarity on the position of the self. When the idea of a nuclear programme becomes associated with its identity and the said state does not have a nuclear programme to its credit, it leads to identity crisis.

Bloom's analysis also sheds light on how Erikson followed Freud and Hartmann in drawing the linkages between a secure sense of identity and a lack of anxiety. Thus, they believed that the gratification of primary needs and identification were strongly linked.

According to Erikson (1959: 22), ego identity was held only by reference to the external social world: "Ego identity, then, in its subjective aspect, is the awareness of the fact that there is a self-sameness and continuity to the ego's synthesizing methods and these methods are effective in safe-guarding the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others". Erikson went on to posit that less anxiety and a sense of well being was a symptom of the increasing sense of identity.

Bloom (1990) uses this notion, stating that this brings the link between a secure sense of identity and less anxiety. The author, in his seminal book, draws on Erikson's work and talks about the linkages between threat and identity, where enhancement of culture leads to an enhancement of identity wherein a cultural threats as seen as a threat to identity. This hypothetical diffusion of identity leads to a conflict between identity and identity crisis (Erikson, 1968). It triggers anxiety with the crisis being resolved either in favour of the identity (restoration) or a new synthesis of identification. Thus, an event can either lead to restoration of identity or create a new identity crises. We use this analysis in the later chapters to explain the nuclear decision making of the India and Iran.

Identification requires the identifier and the identified. With identity diffusion comes insecurity and anxiety and there is also the behavioural imperative to be considered that is used either to protect the already held identification or to re-synthesise a new and secure identity. This syndrome, of course, will be shared by all the individuals within the group that share the same identification. Theoretically, each individual may separately re-synthesise a new identity or bolster the old one in isolation from her/his fellows who share the same situation. On the other hand, however, by reference to each other the individuals may together synthesise a new identification or bolster the old. As a state facing an

event/ crisis, the cohesiveness of the group tends to rise. This cohesiveness may be stronger if the group has deep historical links that bind it together. A number of other factors such as geographical proximity, ethnicity, and religion and so on may also help the group cohesiveness, but these factors also get stronger due to deep historical ties.

Bloom (1990) posits that the nature of the crisis too plays a role in determining the reaction of the group. Both the perception and the communications are, of course, vulnerable to manipulation- particularly so since individuals, and individuals as a group with a shared identification, may seek together to enhance their sense of identity. Developing on Bloom's point regarding the notion of shared threats and their effect on the collective conscious, one can surmise that the perceived threat, as discussed in the previous segment, leads to an identity crisis. This identity crisis, if unresolved, leads to anxiety for the state, which provides for a low level of self-esteem. However, if the state is able to overcome its crisis in a positive manner, prestige of a state would increase.

As explained earlier, there is a direct correlation between identity and its security with events that act as a threat to existence. But these studies specifically look at the individual and not the social. Parsons (1998) moves identification theory from the understanding of the individual to the

larger social structure. This identification mechanism is, of course, a lynchpin in Parsons' attempt to bring society, culture, personality, and human organism into meaningful relationship for a general theory of social action. Bloom (1990) underlies the difference between the individual and the state by positing that philosophically, identification may be a selfish drive- and, practically, it may be conducted aggressively and sometimes fatally- but socially it is by its very nature cooperative and adaptive.

Bloom (1990) talks about how people require an easy understanding of the social reality in order to relate themselves to the social milieu that they belong to, and as a result, have identity. An accessible interpretation, once formulated, explains the ideology of the said group. Ideologies provide behavioural patterns and attitudes for periods of identity crisis. Bloom states that one example of an identity securing interpretive system may be the nation, which gives the identity of nationality. This nationality becomes a source of pride for every individual who is associated with it. But as pride is an internal emotion, it does not affect the interactions of the individuals/ group. In order to understand pride in comparative terms, we bring the emotion of prestige in the forefront.

Bloom states how political ideologies do not work in a psychological vacuum and must provide for appropriate modes of behaviour, attitudes, ideologies and identity securing interpretive systems. These modes help deal with specific situations. He draws the link between support for a state and the role of national identity. Popular support- i.e. identification with such an ideology - comes only if it interprets and provides an appropriate attitude for an experienced reality. A symbol or an ideology without a relevant experience is meaningless and impotent in terms of evoking identification (Bloom 1990: 46). For national identity to exist, the people, en masse, must have gone through the actual psychological process of making that general identification with the nation (Bloom 1990: 52). National Identity Dynamic, thus, describes the potential that a group possesses and which can be evoked in times of crises.

The process of political socialization brings out the nuances involved in the understanding of social identity and its association with the state. The section explains the need for a group identity via the process of identification, and how they are associated with the dyadic of identity verses identity crisis. It then goes on to showcase the possibilities of a solution, explaining how prestige is associated with the identity verses identity crisis.



Political Socialization is a process that will take place, irrespective of the state. Hence it is imperative for the state structures to be strengthened at the beginning and also for less room to be provided for manoeuvring of the public.

## **ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY**

This section explains the concept of ontological security and expands on the reason for the state to be associated with different emotions. It links ontological security with prestige and elucidates the role of social identity theory in state decision making.

Giddens defines ontological security as “a sense of continuity and order in events” (Giddens 1991: 243). He places ‘shame’ as an emotion that attacks the self esteem of the individual/group. Shame leads to a feeling of low prestige where for the state the narrative is not congruent with the self-identity; for example, India’s response to the 1962 war with China. The Indian state refuses to discuss the events that led to its only loss in war for possible fear of losing its moral upper ground.

Sasley (2011) brings emotions in the international politics by distinguishing between ‘shame’ and ‘guilt’. He uses the example of humanitarian intervention, which might break the international norm of

state sovereignty, making the international organization guilty. But not intervening would lead to shame. Thus, the act may appear to be humanitarian for certain actors involved, but they are performed more to fulfil a sense of self-identity than out of rational concern. Shame then, according to Sasley, becomes a metaphor for the radical disconnect produced when national ontological security is disrupted. More often, it is observed that state narratives hide this shame behind facades, such as India's response to its China war. But the other reaction to shame is also to adopt the humiliation the collective self has gone through and to make the shame a part of the narrative. States then use the historical occasions to create meanings for the present action of states. For example, Iran's constant emphasis on the humiliation it faced during the eight year long war with Iraq. The eventual ceasefire was nothing less than a defeat for the Iranian state that still refers to the humiliation it faced.

According to Sasley, shame occurs when actors/ agents feel anxiety with regards to their ability to reflect how they see themselves in the state narrative. Thus, there is a gap between the biographical narrative and the self-identity. It is therefore, a radical disruption of the Self. Sasley points out that in order to adjust these discrepancies within the narrative, agents within a state create linkages to provide a justificatory self-

narrative. This makes state identities a sum of interests co-instituted. He points out that in order to organize the relevant self-interests into a narrative; agents provide certain interpretations of history, using it to create the basis for action. Kratochwil (2006) reiterates this fact by explaining that a critical reflection on the historicity of a state helps to understand and define the role of the agents.

Because history both used in and consumes a biographical narrative, the struggle for ontological security is intertwined with the ability of agents to fixate on or to forget events that shape the collective memories: “the self is not some kind of mini-agency within the agent; it is the sum of those forms of recall whereby the agent reflexively characterizes ‘what’ is the origin of his or her action” (Giddens, 1984: 51). While the state’s Self can be manipulated, changed, reflexively reformed, Sasley (2011) is of the opinion that this hinders the development of the state’s identity. Many experiences and events that do not fit with the positive narrative are sidelined and shame plays a big role between the public-private debates.

Expressions of caring, emotion, rescue, empathy are private interests-not within the purview of diplomacy and security interests. But they do shape the mainstream assumptions. Sasley (2011) talks about how these constructs shape the self-identity of the nation states leading to the ‘private’ constantly being in the ‘public’ domain. That is, states “talk”

about who they are. And because the construction of self-identity is an incredibly inward, reflective process, “successful” ontological security seeking necessitates the publicization of the private. Shaming, for a nation state, is a result of going against the established norms of the self-identity. It contradicts for the state who they are- of who they thought they were becoming. The self of a state is shared by a group of individuals through narrative and experience, making such emotions observable in states.

Ontological security illuminates not only why state pursue “non-material” incentives in their foreign policy actions, but also how nation-states structure their militaries to serve identity needs rather than “physical” security needs (Sasley, 2011). Self-identity rather than survival becomes an operative analytical concept around which future security research could be centred. The concept of ontological security helps understand the notions of perceived threat that will be elaborated in the chapters ahead. For India and Iran, the perceived threat has been built up by the state narratives to justify their nuclear decisions. This does not necessarily mean a military dimension to the nuclear programmes but does refer to the portrayal of a strong power to the international community at large.

Reflexive monitoring stimulates states to engage their sense of Self. But under a state of (perceived) societal physical threat, state agents are likely unwilling (but not unable) to engage in reflexive monitoring since such monitoring may inhibit the ability to implement policies which target perceived existential threats (Sasley 2011). By not indulging in reflexive monitoring, states are able to enjoy the status quo which serves the purpose of the elites. If this version of state-narrative is internalized by the people, then it leads to an emotion of patriotism. Thus, not challenging the discourse leads to a linear understanding of self-identity. This complication can be specific to issues too. If an experience has not been positive for the narrative, state leaders tend to change the discourse to fit into the mould of identity already provided.

## **PRESTIGE AND SECURITY**

As two terms, prestige and security are understood as two different reasons. Security studies as a subject is studied in the field of International Relations, where emotions are considered a roadblock in the study of security studies. But a careful study of literature and the varying relations between states emphasize how states aim for a rational decision making process but emotions always play a role in determining their

rationality. Whether it is the United States of America, the People's Republic of China or Zimbabwe, emotions dictate the decision making process of states. The history of the land influences how states think and what their place in the world.

Emotions can be primary as well as secondary. Some primary emotions that have been discussed in International Relations are fear and trust. There are a number of scholars (Wheeler & Booth 2011, Ruzicka 2010) who have tried to link these two emotions together within the paradigm of security studies by stating the absence of fear to be trust and vice versa. Although there is merit in this concept as fear and trust are two ends of a spectrum, there are other emotions that exist between these two emotions. They need to be explored within the field of International Relations. One such emotion that the study taps into is prestige. Every emotion has a high point as well as a low point. The same is true with prestige. It comes midway, between fear and trust. Thus, prestige is often understood as a value that has to be attained and less as an emotion that needs to be acted upon. For example, when states opt for a nuclear programme, do they choose to develop it due to lack of trust or for fear of an attack from a stronger enemy?

Prestige does not seek to rule out fear and trust, but rather seeks to answer the questions raised. It is the emotion that states seek in the

subconscious. Every decision a state takes in the international arena affects the prestige of the said state. India using the CIRUS reactor for its peaceful nuclear explosion, India defeating its neighbour in the four wars fought, and India helping Bangladesh attain independence, all examples involve prestige. Losing a war to China, being greeted with Kargil after the Lahore declaration of 1999 and asking for food aid from world powers in the 1950s are all examples of loss of prestige.

The eminent philosopher and neuro-physicist Nayef Al-Rodham explains pride and hubris: “Hubris is exaggerated pride, often combined with arrogance.” He gives the example of Napoleon to state how excessive confidence in ‘self’ lead to inspiration for his conquests. But when this confidence was established with conquests and grandiosity, it led to narcissism. The end result was that Napoleon ended up being classified as irrational due to his later military campaigns which were conducted against the backdrop of a series of warnings and unfavorable forecasts from his lieutenants. For example, to conquer Russia, ruled by the Czar Alexander, the driving force was not a geopolitical necessity but rather that of defeating a rival power as by the impetus “to satisfy a hubris-infected personality” and an insatiable “hunger (...) for applause from others”(Al-Rodham, 2015).

Nuclear Weapons proved to be a great equalizer in South Asia where the conventionally superior India was brought down to be at par with its western neighbour. Where India was conventionally superior, it lost its top position with the sub-continent’s two major powers going nuclear. Thus, they bridge the gap between weaker and stronger states.

Ward Wilson (2015) who tries to highlight the difference between rationality or the lack of it, explains the gap better. In his work, he explains how rationality is desired, but may not always be achieved. According to him there is enough evidence in the pages of history to justify that decision making during crises situations is hardly ever rational.

Thus, as an objective observer, rationality cannot be the one answer to all decision-making woes. Wilson raises some pertinent questions such as and even cites the recent book written by Harvard Alumni Daniel Wegner *The Illusion of Conscious Will*, which challenges the idea that we are all rational. The book argues that humans are not good with rationality but with rationalizing. Emotions make us act and then in retrospect, we make up a plausible rational reason for our actions. Rodham (2015) questions that if rationality were so well defined, then why did the U.S.S.R. after achieving nuclear parity continue to build up its programme? Thus, if it is emotions that determine our rationality, then there is no irrationality. Every actor has their own rationale for a decision taken. For example, Iran and India were both under sanctions and needed the economic support of the international community, but choose to pursue their decision to develop a nuclear programme as their prestige determined their rationality.

The philosopher Nayef Al Rodham (2015) takes on realism to explain prestige. He opines that a realist such as Morgenthau too, was unable to understand interests and power exclusively and saw it as an expression in different areas of politics. He explained how the desire to dominate or *animus dominandi* determines political activity which can be pursued via imperialism or prestige.

A state's security is of paramount importance, because notions of sovereignty are at stake. What is the emotion dictating this sovereignty? States fear the takeover of their land by another power. According to Lupovici (2016), when an actor is able to deter, it creates emotions like pride, but if an actor is unable to deter, fear is evoked along with humiliation, frustration, shame, nostalgia and anxiety. When a state is unable to protect its land, it looks for help from stronger powers. For example, during the Second World War, when France was unable to secure itself from the invading Nazis, it sought help from the Allied



powers. This led to a loss of prestige for the nation. The Allied powers were able to win the war and France was a nation ruled by the French. But prestige was never recovered by the French people. Thus, in the fight for security is embedded the emotion of prestige. Prestige and security, hence, are not different reasons for state decision making. Rather, they stem from the same understanding of a situation.

## **NUCLEAR DETERRENCE**

This section brings to light the relationship between nuclear programmes and prestige. It highlights the technological and scientific value a nuclear programme holds and how it becomes a great equalizer for states.

Bernard Brodie (1946: 76) had stated that, “thus far the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them.” Robert McNamara (1983: 79), the U.S. Secretary of Defence during the Vietnam War, had stated, “nuclear weapons serve no military purpose whatsoever. They are totally useless—except only to deter one’s opponent from using them.” K. Subramaniam, the Indian strategist, once famously stated nuclear weapons to be a political tool. In his article titled, “Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons,” Sagan (1996) emphasizes on “nuclear symbolism”, where he saw nuclear decisions as serving important symbolic functions, both shaping and reflecting a state’s identity. He also drew the link between symbolism and focusing on the norms of weapons acquisition. Sagan

(1996) oversimplifies the threat conceptions by stating that only a significant military threat leads to a nuclear programme and if such a significant threat were not prevalent, states would chose to be non-nuclear states.

It is a matter of collective shame that all states have not been able to eliminate nuclear weapons and that they are still associated with symbols of respect, prestige and influence. The five legal possessors and the closed nuclear club play a big role in being responsible for this. The link between power and prestige, as elaborated by Rodham's (2009) argument is very evident in this statement. While the two can rarely be separated, the argument is more rooted in the notions of power as no nuclear state is unable to give up this emotion.

Taghizadeh (2009) opines that despite all efforts by the international organizations to halt the nuclear programme, the Iranian state has continued with the development of its programme as it is viewed by the people and the state alike as the last tool to restore the prestige and hegemony in the region. Reza Taghizadeh (2009) feels that the concept of prestige and Iran is not new. This is because prior to the revolution, the then ruler Reza Shah believed in the concept of exporting oil a he found it worthy of respect, along with its value as a strategic material. But with the developments in the 1960s, the Shah felt the need for nuclear energy rather than oil and gas; as the new object of prestige had presented itself. In an interview given to CBS, the then President, Mahmoud Ahmedinejad (2004) posed a 'rational' question, "Let's even imagine that we have an atomic weapon, a nuclear weapon. What would we do with it? What intelligent person would fight 5,000 American bombs with one bomb?"The question states that since rationally the Iranian nuclear programme was no match for the American programme, the need for a nuclear programme was one of ontological security and prestige.

## **PRESTIGE**

Daniel Markey's article (2007) discusses prestige as an intrinsically-valued pursuit of publicly recognized eminence, and is described by four essential characteristics: it is social, its pursuit is perpetual, it may be materially irrational and it is judged in relative terms. He focuses in the realist explanations of prestige, making it one of the three variables that determine state behaviour.

Prestige as a term has been understood by different schools of thought within the field of International Relations. It overlaps with a number of terms such as reputation, respect, honor, status and so on. Thus, for the purpose of this study, three aspects help define this emotion:

- A means to recover humiliation
- A way of declaring an 'independent' policy
- The process of gaining 'respect' for the 'self' from the 'other'

According to Bloom (1990: 84), "Prestige describes the influence that can be exercised or the impression produced by virtue of events and images that devalue or enhance national identity". Thus, an increase in prestige is synonymous with any circumstance that enhances national identity; a decrease in prestige is any circumstance that devalues national identity. National prestige is, therefore, of course, a matter of perception and communication, and political leaders will seek to associate themselves

with it as a way of appropriating the national identity dynamic. Prestige is also a meter for states to compete with each other. Bloom points out that this might not only be the result of statespersons' seeking ego gratification. From a practical point of view, the statesperson who succeeds in acquiring an increase in national prestige for her/his country will also tend to mobilize mass national public behind her/him.

Halvorson (2010) is of the opinion that "Prestige is rarely sought or maintained as an end in itself, but to serve a policy of imperialism or the *status quo*." He quotes Dean Acheson who describes prestige "as the shadow cast by power, which is of great deterrent importance". Citing the motives for the 1882 British occupation of Egypt for a *status quo* imperial Power, he states that "the maintenance of prestige is the fundamental interest from which security and wealth flow." (Halvorson 2010)

While O'Neill (2001) links the use of symbols with honor, he does not isolate honor as a concept in and of itself. He asserts that when states stake their national honor on a policy their commitments become more credible, which creates a different approach for modeling deterrence, "by looking at how deterrence is set up before a crisis, rather than during one." O'Neill extracts three requirements of national honor: trueness to one's word, defence of home, and social grace. He implicitly proposes an internal and external component to honor- that it actually structures state behaviour in a community because "honor obliges its possessor to show others that he possesses honor...the way to show concern for others' perception is to make a sacrifice" (O'Neill 2001: 87-88). "Honor driven

worlds are highly competitive, but they also require a high degree of consensus and cooperation. It is only meaningful if recognized and praised by others” (Lebow 2004: 347). Honour is a material- states competing for recognition through a “zero-sum game” (Donnelly 2000:67). A state’s view of honour is also shaped by how other members of its community- mainly other states- recognize it. A proper treatment of honour should also recognize how it is developed through internal reflection and how it relates to an agent’s sense of Self. A state’s sense of “both self and collective identity is integral to understanding its sense of honor” (Steele 2008: 40). All these definitions of honour mentioned by various scholars bring out aspects that have been outlined for the definition of prestige. Thus, the understanding of these terms varies but in their essence they are similar to the term under study, i.e. prestige.

Bloom, in his work on identification theory, draws a link with prestige by stating that the theory analyses how a relationship may be developed and the elements which may create and sustain it. It explicates how the national identity dynamic is mobilized and how it can overcome, be triggered by, appropriated by and manipulated by, the state. Thus, it provides an insight into the psycho-social motivation which makes for both political integration and international conflict.

Bloom (1990) talks about the concept of psychological security, which resonates with the ontological security concept discussed in the chapter. This psychological security comes when people share similar attitudes and behaviour patterns; people share a political culture. Once the shared culture has been achieved, the identification dynamic also works to defend and enhance that shared identity. If a mass of people who share the same national identity perceive that identity to be threatened, or perceive the possibility of enhancing it, then they will mobilize so as to defend and enhance it (Bloom 1990:140). The drive to protect and enhance identity is, in certain situations, more powerful even than the drive to live. Thus, the drive to protect and enhance this security of the state is a means of gaining the respect of the 'other', defined as prestige.

The three aspects from which we operationalize prestige in the given case studies are: how states are viewed by the 'other' in the International community, how the two states reacted to the pressures of the international system, and what means did they adopt to attain prestige. The postcolonial nature defining its 'self'- the need to define its identity within the confines of its history and geography and how these terms helped attain prestige. And the effects of war on a state's collective consciousness- what role does winning or losing a war play in developing

a perceived sense of superiority or fear in the narrative of the state and how much of an effect it has on the prestige of a state.

## **CONCLUSION**

The chapter highlights the different aspects of state identity, namely self identity, social identity, national identity and links them to the notion of ontological security and prestige. The chapter also explains the crucial link between prestige and security where the state's response to a situation arises from different emotions. It also makes clear how prestige and security as terms are not diametrically opposite but entwined in each other. The chapter can be summarised by stating that the notion of self-identity of the state formulates the national identity which in turn, develops national prestige of the said state.

The following chapters study the impact of prestige on the nuclear programmes of India and Iran by bringing indifferent themes that affect the prestige of a state. In the next chapter the theme of foreign policy dictates of India and Iran are understood. While for India, non-alignment defined its foreign policy initiative, for post-revolution Iran, it was the conception of neither east nor west. The explanations provided in this chapter would act as a base for the subsequent chapters that explain

how the notions of prestige become entwined in the decision making of states, with special reference to nuclear decision making. The consequent chapters would look at the case studies of India and Iran and how the concepts explained in this chapter help understand the decision making of the states, especially with regards to the nuclear programmes. The following chapters hope to build on the theoretical aspects discussed in this chapter and bring to light the different events and policies that showcase the prestige variable in the nuclear programmes of India and Iran.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

# **SOVEREIGNTY AND PRESTIGE: SEEKING AUTONOMY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The chapter studies the foreign policy outlines of India and Iran and links the concept of prestige to their foreign policies. The chapter aims to draw links between the concept of cognitive prior, how it shaped the foreign policy decisions of the two states and how it is linked to the idea of prestige. The relationship between the foreign policy pillars of India (non-alignment) and Iran (Neither East nor West) is also showcased at the

end as both had autonomy as a central concept. It aims to understand the relationship between non-alignment/ neither east nor west and prestige. The chapter looks at the interactions of the states with the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty to draw the linkages between prestige and the foreign policy pillars. The first part of the chapter brings out the concept of cognitive prior along with its various sources that help define cognitive prior. The next two segments look at the specific case studies of India and Iran and bring to light statements made by leaders. These statements are understood in the contexts provided drawing a link between the notions of prestige and their respective foreign policy conceptions. The chapter endeavours to explain the responses of India and Iran to the Nuclear Non proliferation Treaty via notions of prestige and their foreign policy dictates.

The chapter focuses on the relationship of India and Iran vis-à-vis the international system where the key foreign policy diktats defined their approach in the said community. While for India, the concept of non-alignment was a defining feature of its relationship with the International community, for Iran, it was the dictum of “Neither East nor West” that was given by the leader of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini. The chapter looks at the said concepts of the two states and how they

explain the variable of prestige being attained via their respective nuclear programmes.

## **COGNITIVE PRIOR**

This section would define the term cognitive prior and use the term to understand the foreign policy decisions of India and Iran. According to Acharya (2009:21), "Cognitive Prior may be defined as an existing set of ideas, belief systems, and norms, which determine and condition an individual or social group's receptivity to new norms."

In his book, *Whose Ideas Matter?*, Acharya derives this definition for four types. The first is based on the traditional concepts that subconsciously determine the decisions of the social groups. Another source of cognitive priors is worldviews and principled or causal beliefs of leaders and/or elites of a social group, a state, or a region (Goldstien and Keohane, 1993). For example, The Gandhian Tradition in India or the concept of nonviolence as advocated by the Jains. Acharya (2011) also mentions another kind of cognitive prior, which refers to international norms which are accepted and institutionalized due to choices made. He refers to the concept of 'path dependence' as highlighted in Paul Pierson's (2000) work on the same, using it to explain that the international political

environment is created by European norms of Sovereignty and such an equivalent does not exist in the traditional structures of Asian and African states. The fourth type stated by the author are the newly independent states of these regions adapt the principles to develop their foreign policies.

The author uses examples from the South East Asian Region to explain how the international/ western norms were understood and assimilated by ASEAN and because of choosing certain aspects of the international norms that were compatible with the local norms ASEAN has been able to create a success story. He refers to the Bandung Conference that acts as a cognitive prior for ASEAN as several characteristics that are considered to be an integral part of ASEAN have been inspired by 'Bandung injunction'. Some of these are, its interpretation of non-intervention and its preference for limited institutionalization as well as consensus based decision making procedures. He also focuses on the normative forces from within the region that generate a particular form of regionalism and refers to multilateral institutions in the Asia-Pacific region that focus more on informal diplomacy and are less legally binding (Acharya, 2009).

Acharya (2009) talks about how because of the way the international system is defined, the United Nations becomes the default norm

entrepreneur. The pushing for the cause of the international organizations such as the U.N. consists mostly of Western states, as they are the ones championing the said norms while the Asian and African nations are made to adjust to these norms by either accepting them, by rejecting them or by localizing them.

In interacting with the international community the social milieu at the specific period must be considered. During the cold war, many Asian countries' foreign policies focused on concepts of non-intervention, sovereignty and neutralism. One reason was nations found global institutions such as the U.N. incapable of preventing violations as the violators were the controllers of the global institutions (Acharya, 2009). As a result, a number of conferences took place that initiated institutions which could help these newly independent states to develop their foreign policy independent of either super powers. Examples of this include: Asian Relations Conference (1947), Colombo Powers Conference (1954), The Asia-Africa Bandung Conference (1955) culminating in The Non-Aligned Movement (1961).

The running theme for all these conferences and their yearly meetings was not to support foreign domination as these states had recently experienced freedom from colonial rule. Non-intervention took more time to formulate as it could mean either an Asian state intervening to help

another state under colonial rule (as was done by India in 1945) or a super power trying to intervene in the policies of a newly-independent state (fear of China intervening in ASEAN). But non-intervention prevailed as these states faced a number of internal conflicts that were best resolved without help from the Superpowers or from their extended regional neighbours. Sovereignty, to these nation states, was of utmost importance, especially as they were newly independent.

According to a National Intelligence Update (NIE-4-82) on non-proliferation trends, in international nuclear related forums one can see a rise in the number of developing countries becoming more unified and influential wherein primarily, the discriminatory nature of the NPT is seen as more problematic than proliferation itself. The report states that given the rise of the trend, it would make international efforts of proliferation more difficult to initiate or strengthen leading to the time gap between producing fissile material and having nuclear weapon capability reducing drastically. Thus, policies and treaties aimed specifically at deterring states from exploding nuclear devices will become less effective in obstructing the production of weapons. The Western powers were aware of the fact that the nuclear non-proliferation regime was in trouble and disenchantment among developing states with Articles IV and VI was strong. The report also stated that while the regime is in trouble,

proliferation-related events would add to their opinion that the NPT has been unable to fulfil its titular function, leading to a situation where either the treaty is amended or there is massive withdrawal from it.

The report, published in 1982, was an indicator of the fact that the developing countries would not take the dictates of the Western powers after a few years given the discriminatory nature of the treaty. The two states of India and Iran have had completely different trajectories when it comes to their respective nuclear programmes. Both the states, India after its independence and Iran after the revolution, have constantly emphasized on the skewed nature of the international organizations and their need to be taken as a relevant power. The report identifies the notions of prestige in their need to defy the nuclear order as established by the 'Western' Powers. India and Iran provide examples of how the concepts of non-intervention, sovereignty and neutralism played out in their state's foreign policies, its relationship with prestige and the impact it had on the decision to develop a nuclear programme.

## **INDIA: THE POLICY OF NON-ALIGNMENT**

This-section will draw out the linkages between non alignment and prestige in a context of India's nuclear decision making and the NPT.



The theoretical framework laid out by Amitav Acharya (2009) and emphasized in the beginning of this chapter is the basis for the understanding of India's policy of non-alignment and its relation with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

One of the founding fathers of the Indian state and its foreign policy is the first Prime Minister, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. Along with Nasser of Egypt and Tito of Yugoslavia, he established the Non-Aligned Movement. The movement, though, is different from the policy of nonalignment that India followed. The section will look at the Indian policy of non-alignment and its relationship with prestige in the context of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Nehru was against the concept of powers blocs and preferred for a multi lateralism to prevail. In an essay written while in prison, Nehru (1946) explicitly rejects regional security systems under great power 'orbits' as proposed by Walter Lipmann, characterizing them as "a continuation of power politics on a vaster scale" with regionalism being "difficult to see world peace or cooperation emerging out of it." Nehru wrote in 1948, "We shall take care not to align ourselves with one group or another...remaining neutral to those not affecting us directly ...India obviously cannot join either of the two blocs...What she desires is an understanding between Russia and the U.S."(Scalpinio, 1949:1). Arun

Prakash adds to the argument stating that, “possession of nuclear weapons certainly invests a nation with strategic autonomy, and this was the main reason for going nuclear. Remember that non-nuclear weapon states like Japan and Australia need to seek a ‘nuclear umbrella’ from the USA and thus sacrifice a degree of autonomy” (Prakash, 2015). The above statements by leaders bring to light the strong links between security not as opposed to prestige, but as stemming from it.

With regards to security, the concepts emphasized were that if after getting independence one were to become a part of a pact or a treaty for the purpose of security, then gaining independence would be of no significance. In a conversation with the British High Commissioner in Delhi on 14 April, 1954, Nehru’s close advisor V.K. Krishna Menon argued that, “collective defence under the United States auspices would mean renewed intervention by the West in the East which would in principle be repugnant to all decent Asian opinion” (see Acharya 2009). Nehru (2006: 271) stated that, “We are no copies of Europeans or Americans or Russians. We are Asians and Africans. It would not be creditable for our dignity and new freedom if we were camp-followers of America or Russia or any other country of Europe.”

He also pointed out that collective defence pacts were to him a reminder of India’s “long experience with colonial rule”; they represented “an indirect return of Western power to an area from which it had recently retreated.” Going by this statement, the reason for India not agreeing to being a part of any block was the giving up of its identity, its ‘self’. This self, as stated in the earlier chapter, refers to the ego i.e. the prestige of India. He was in favour of organizations that were regional in nature. He supported

international organizations too, but only on the conditionality that they treat every state as an equal. Francis Low (1955:203) quotes Nehru who stated that “there would be no attempt by states to impose their will on one another” and focus would be on “mutual equality and respect amongst its members” wherein “differences arise and they are accepted with tolerance and mutual respect.” This consensus concept was applied during the Bandung Conference and during the Bogor Conference too. Implementation of this concept helped the participant states to chalk out important aspects of their foreign policy especially with regard to the notions of sovereignty and non-interference. The Colombo Powers Conference was a step in this direction as it rejected SEATO. But it was a premature idea as the internal as well as external conflicts of the Asian and African states along with their struggle for developing an independent foreign policy was enough to keep them pre occupied. They were thus unable to engage in the notion of Asian regionalism. Along with their anti-power politics and foreign policy beliefs, Asian neutralism constituted a prior normative framework such that the legitimacy of the superpowers came to be judged.

These initial statements were made by the Prime Minister before the advent of the NPT yet they were the foundations for how India approached the treaty and dealt with pressures to succumb to signing

and eventual ratification. The terminology used by the leader specifically emphasizes on neutrality, sovereignty and independence. Archival documents from the National Archives, George Washington University and from the Wilson Centre archives along with transcripts and letters of Indian leaders found at the Teen Murti library give a clearer picture of what India was aiming for and how it achieved its nuclear agenda and what role did the NPT play as a norm entrepreneur. The next section deals with the 1974 'peaceful' nuclear programme; and its repercussions thereafter in South Asia and the World.

## INDIA'S NUCLEAR TESTS

In a letter to Ambassador Thompson by Commissioner Palfrey, it was stated that, "In accordance with the statements agreed to at the meeting of the Committee of the Nuclear Weapons Capabilities, the commission has considered possible forms of cooperation with India in peaceful uses of atomic energy which might serve to offset the propaganda effects of the Chinese Nuclear device by increasing its stature of India in the eyes of the less developed countries" (DOC 8). In this archived document, the letter indicates that given the good relationship between Dr. Homi Bhabha and the Commission, the process could be quickly implemented. The discussion paper looks at the different aspects of nuclear technology that could use a US-India partnership. It also looks at the developmental

problems being faced by India and how they can offer nuclear technology to help overcome those aspects. The paper tries to portray the various aspects in which the Indian community can be engaged so as not to begin on the road that leads to a nuclear weapons programme from India. Thus, it portrays that the Indian need for a nuclear weapons programme after the Chinese tests would be aggravated by the need for Prestige and they try to come up with carrots that can feed the hungry ego of the Indians with sharing of technology. The central Indian argument of a valid Chinese threat in the aftermath of the 1962 war does not hold ground and shall be explained in greater detail in the chapter on war.

The Chinese threat as mentioned in the documents is more psychological than real. These threats were in the minds of the Indians and the Americans understood this phenomenon. The 1964 document (Wilson Centre Archives 1964) by the then American President would have sufficed for the Indians but they did not feel that was enough assurance and the Americans agreed for the U.S.S.R. to also make a statement in support of India.

The code name for both the 1998 tests and the 1974 tests were an afterthought. While the famous words said after the 1974 tests were “the Buddha is smiling”, the code name for the 1998 tests were ‘Operation

Shakti'. The choice for the date of the tests too, was arbitrary at most. For the second time the tests were conducted, the President was travelling and in order to avoid embarrassment the tests were postponed till his arrival. During both the instances the defence ministers were kept in the dark regarding the tests and were informed very late in the day. The laxity with which the defence ministers were informed along the timing of the tests indicate passivity with regards to testing of the nuclear devices. The tests were done but there was no show of strength that came along with it. The following are a few of the statements taken from Chengappa's (2000) book which highlight the relevance prestige played during the decision making.

- Jaswant Singh while waiting for the test results in 1998 told Vajpayee that just as Lord Krishna tells Arjun that he has lost his *smriti* (racial memory), Vajpayee also needed to do the same. He states, "India wants you to help regain her smriti."
- Vajpayee stated in a similar manner to her speech writer Surendra Kulkarni, "Hiroshima convinced me that the *world respects only the strong* and has no patience for the weak"
- George Fernandes had been against the bomb for a long time, but changed his stance in 1996 stating that, "When I found nuclear

- weapons countries unwilling to give up their own capabilities but closing the doors on ours, I decided that we *must have it.*”
- “The armed forces did not even know that India had developed chemical weapons till the government announced in 1997 that they were dismantling them in accordance with the UN treaty”
  - Jaswant Singh, after the tests states, “One Sixth of Humanity took its *rightful place under the sun*”
  - “For many years after the 1974 nuclear explosion, the Indian government even allowed bus loads of tourists to stop by the crater- the size of a football field-that the blast caused. More as *homage* to the monumental finger that India stuck out to the rest of the world when it went nuclear. ”
  - “On the morning of May 11 1998, Major Mohan Kumar Sharma of the 58 Engineers drove up and requested Sohanram, the local school principle, to keep the school children outdoors for a couple of hours. He wouldn’t divulge the reason but Sohanram told the stunned officer: Don’t worry. We know you are going to do another test. We are fully behind you.”
  - While conducting the tests in 1998, the Indian state did not go ahead and test its last device as it felt that the idea was to test

- and since the five devices before had *already proved the point*, why bother with another one
- “Naming the 1998 explosion as *Operation Shakti* was in line with the RSS thinking that India necessarily had to be revived. In his first interview to the press after the tests Vajpayee told *India Today's* Prabhu Chawla: ‘The greatest meaning of these tests is that they had given India *shakti*, they have given India strength and they have given India self-confidence.’ ”
  - “Those who knew Vajpayee well say it was the Chinese test that really crystallized his views on the need for India to have the bomb. The issue for him was simple: How *self sufficient and strong* was India in its defence? Vajpayee told his aides that if there were any lessons from India’s bonded past it was ‘that you can’t win a war if your army has inferior weapons’. Adding, ‘we *neglected our military strength* and look what happened to us’ ”
  - “In 1974 after the nuclear explosion Vajpayee was fulsome in his praise of Mrs Gandhi in parliament but cautioned her against reiterating that it is only for peaceful uses, stating ‘Let us keep our options open on this. Let us not make too many statements otherwise.’ Years later in conversations with his aides he would say, ‘India had done the right thing then. But Mrs Gandhi should



- have gone ahead and developed the bombs instead of stalling the programme.”
- “For Vajpayee, if India had to *regain its greatness*, it had to be militarily powerful too. He is said to have stated on prior occasions, ‘we have to be *self-reliant* in defence. We just cannot depend on others to come to our rescue.”
  - When Raja Ramanna, a scientist working on the nuclear programme asked the prime minister why he wanted to conduct the test now as opposed to later or before, the leader replied, “I want to see India as a *strong country* and not a soft one.”
  - Brajesh Mishra, who was the National Security Advisor is said to have stated to the then Prime Minister that, “If you look at Indian history we were defeated not because our soldiers were not brave enough. But because they *lacked superior technology*.” Mishra, at a conference a week later stated that, “We had technology for years. This is a show of our restraint not the breakdown of a restraint or a lack of restraint.” He kept reiterating that the device was still peaceful in nature, but if there were any takers, they were only there before the 1998 tests; none after that.

In the statements above specific words have been italicized as they highlight the need for prestige. Lacked superior technology, strong

country, self-reliant India, neglected military strength, self-sufficient and strong, Operation Shakti- all emphasize a need for prestige from the international community.

The link between the weak government of the time and the need to conduct tests has been highlighted by Chengappa (2000) in his book. It is similar to that of the 1974 tests when the then Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi conducted the peaceful nuclear explosion without informing her then defence minister. 1974 was also the time when domestically India was going through a lot of internal turmoil. It was the time before emergency was set in from 1975-77. Thus, domestic compulsions were getting out of hand for the leadership that wanted to send out a message to its people, a ray of hope in the dismal times. In 1998, a similar situation arose when the then Prime Minister after being sworn in for the second time needed to send a message to his allies and to the strong opposition, that of a capable leader. Both times the defence minister was not involved in the decision making process. According to an interview Uday Bhaksar (2015) recalled how an Indian politician spoke of the nuclear decision as a needed, yet regrettable, one.

Vajpayee was well aware of the precarious situation he was in and needed a wild card entry to get the people of the country on his and his party's side. Even though the nuclear question was addressed in the BJP

manifesto, none of the world leaders expected the newly elected Vajpayee to deal with the issue before he had settled six months into his role (Chengappa 2000). Vajpayee's statements above reek of a power hunger that was missing from most other state leaders. Indira Gandhi understood state realities and hence took the decision to test, but owing to her understanding of the Indian psyche she was unable to 'Cross the Rubicon'. Vajpayee, on the other hand, felt that the Indian state needed to get out of its past shadows and be more forthcoming in its foreign policy decisions.

Doc 7 (1965) released by America emphasize how as then next Prime Minister Shastri was also looking for an assurance and needed to showcase to his home ground and to Afro-Asians that India had achieved "at least as much in fields of science and technology as the Chinese". The document also brings out the dichotomy of the Indian need for a security assurance as, if fulfilled, they would be unable to call themselves a non-aligned state leading to never asking for a security assurance directly from the United States. The document cites examples of the times it has come to help the Indians, especially with regard to the 1962 war. This is a common argument heard in India too, (informal interview with Jasjit Singh, 2012) that the state looked for a security assurance, but was not provided one by the United States. As a result, India was

forced to develop its nuclear programme. But this argument fails to take into consideration that as a non-aligned country, India's stance went against its own foreign policy dictate. Another important aspect that is brought to light by a U.S. document (Doc 5 1964) is that if the United States was unable to provide such a nuclear umbrella to its allies, how could it possibly provide one to a state that initiated the non-aligned movement and has resisted being a part of a pact or treaty that binds its security with another. It can also be seen how even the security assurance asked for points to the security of India's position as a leader of the Afro-Asian community and not a threat of being attacked by the Chinese at any point.

By 1972 the moral dimension of the nuclear question did not exist for India. It was primarily concerned with the economic and strategic implications of testing and the effect it might generate within the neighbourhood and beyond. Although the Jan Sangh has consistently pushed for a bomb (Vanaik: interview, 2015) archival data supports statements (Doc18, 1974) wherein an Indian test would be the key to boost sagging Indian morale in the face of increasing domestic economic problems and political discontent. There have been arguments that India's deterrent capacity in the face of a Chinese threat would reduce its dependence on the Soviet Union, but with the gap between India and

China being vast, these arguments do not hold ground on the basis of a threat perception.

In an NSC meeting, the security aspect of India's nuclear policy was discussed wherein it was stated that India's decision would be in line with its policy of non-alignment and the two reasons it might indulge in a nuclear programme would be: (1) because they consider that their security interests require good relations with the Soviet Union from whom they receive economic and military aid and support against communist China and (2) because they want to maintain their position among Afro-Asians (Record Group 59). Thus, once more, it can be seen that its security concerns are more to do with its position in the international community, within the Afro-Asian community and how it is perceived. This resonates with the definition of prestige explained in the first chapter on how the 'other' views the 'self'.

India's peaceful explosion was its way of demonstrating its technical capabilities. It was termed peaceful, as the agreements with United States and Canada clearly stated that they would support India's quest for nuclear programme only for peaceful purposes. State department documents (Doc 10, 1966) suggest that such a 'peaceful' explosion would, however, have repercussions, especially in the South Asian region. India was well aware that testing, if only peaceful, would end in a

'me too' game (Rajaraman interview, 2015). It was to be widely viewed (In Pakistan and elsewhere) as the beginning of an Indian nuclear weapons programme and from a technical viewpoint would be virtually indistinguishable from weapon development.

In a U.S. State Department Report (1972) it was recognized that in the face of pressures from the pro-nuclear groups, the strongest incentive would be the desire for the increased status of a nuclear power and would as a result, offer short term domestic political benefits. But the counterweighing factors would be the inability of the Indian state to produce a delivery system for its nuclear programme.

The reception to the news of India's peaceful nuclear explosion was welcomed by all the major political parties and by the majority of the press. India clearly stated that it had no intentions of developing its capability for military uses, and this was true as the state did not have any the means and wherewithal for the same. In addition to the putative technological and development gains, the press and public cited other advantages of the nuclear explosion: "greater respect abroad for India's power; an opportunity to correct the inequities of the NPT and induce other states to give greater consideration to India's stand on disarmament; proof that India could achieve results by organizing its resources efficiently" (Doc19 1974). All three advantages listed clearly

focus on India's gains being intangible but important. Not one reference was made to the looming Chinese threat that made the Indian government take the step in the said direction.

After the initial euphoria died, there were some voices that were sceptical of the next step and of how the explosion would have any 'peaceful' uses. They felt that unless India could showcase how the explosion had any peaceful uses, India's credibility would be eroded. As a response to this, K. Subrahmanyum (2014), India's foremost strategist, replied that not calling it a 'peaceful' explosion would have eroded India's credibility more as it could not have followed a policy of no nuclear weapons and suddenly shift to weaponization. Such an incident would have been hard to sell not only to the World at large but also to the Indian public. There was no immediate strategic significance of the 1974 tests as they had no military significance. Due to this conception, the term 'peaceful' fits the tests conducted. Although, once India would have developed a military capability, the tests could not have been termed peaceful.

The scientific lobby played a big role in pushing for the tests to be conducted. At the end of his conversation with Vajpayee where the prime minister stated that he wanted to see India as a strong state, Raja Ramanna in agreeing with the leader stated, "Also, you can't keep scientists in suspended animation for twenty four years. They will simply

vanish” (Chengappa 2000: 52). Chengappa, elaborates on the scientific lobby aspect too. The statement made by Raja Ramanna emphasized the gap between the thinking of state leaders and the scientific community. The latter was only interested in testing the concepts it had indigenously created. There was a strong element of prestige involved within the scientific community too. They did not think from political terms but in testing they were searching for validation from the international scientific community. Another example of the same was that even though Sethna and Ramanna did not get along and eventually fell out, during the tests they remained cordial as they wanted for the tests to go through. The community leaders were ready to keep their differences apart for the greater cause of knowledge development. Sethna is said to have joked about the reason behind India testing as, ‘it was because we wanted to know what the shock waves produces by the blast looked like.’ But the real reason he stated later was, ‘we need to know whether we can do it and only an explosion could prove that.’ (Chengappa 2000: 53). Having been a part of the scientific community for a long period of time, Sethna was known to have consistently raised his voice regarding the logic of testing. According to Chengappa, he is stated to have told Dhar and Haskar, “Would it have us a nuclear weapons power? No. the rest of the countries would still say go to hell. The best thing for us is to let them



know we can do it. That India is a nuclear *have*. And that Indian is not a useless country.” (Chengappa 2000: 56) (italics added).

Raj Chengappa was able to interview one of the secretaries of Indira Gandhi, Mr. Haskar, for his book. This was a treasure trove of information. Before his death in 1999, Haskar who had always kept mum regarding the issue clarified his position regarding his reluctance to go ahead with the test in 1974. He also stated that during the period, the major factor was political considerations.

According to Haskar, the real achievement was not in conducting the tests, but in being able to hide it from the Americans (Chengappa 2000). Chengappa (2000: 59), in referring to the 1974 explosion, talks about the messianic fervour with which they were welcomed. He speaks of the explosion as India's *Brahmastra*, an ultimate weapon against its foes as described in the sacred texts as received from the trinity of Indian Gods. He speaks of how the Peaceful Nuclear Explosion was seen as a recovery over the thousands of years of humiliation that the Indian public had suffered.

According to Hymans (2012), the Prime Minister might have come to the conclusion that a nuclear test would act as an important signal to the world that India could play the game too. The international community,

especially the United States, led by Nixon and Kissinger, did not take India seriously and a nuclear explosion, albeit a peaceful one, would bring the attention of the world back to India.

The sense of pride that an indigenous nuclear programme induces in the populace is true all over the world. This notion is almost always attached with a deeper sense of security that the nuclear programme provides. This sense of security in turn also induces a sense of pride in the collective consciousness of the state and its members who realize that a threat may or may not be eminent, but its retaliation is available.

#### SOUTH ASIAN RESPONSES

It was stated in the report on the National Proliferation Trends (NIE-4-82) that the Indian nuclear programme would try to induce Pakistan to tip its hand with regards to nuclear weapons development. The main objectives of such an event would be: “to confront the nuclear threat openly in its incipient stages rather than after a prolonged Pakistani stockpiling effort; to provide a justification for Indian nuclear weapons production or preventive military action; to undermine the relationship between Pakistan and the United States”.

The biggest impact of the 1974 tests was on Pakistan. China refused to react while the Soviet Union emphasized the ‘peaceful’ aspect of the

nuclear explosion. The reaction of the United States and Canada had direct implications for their relationship with India as the latter was put into a moratorium. The Indian press was very supportive in general and was seen defending India's decision against the foreign press remarks.

In the South Asian region, Indo-Pak rivalry has always been a reason for the two states to take decisions. Catherine and Scott Levy in their book *Deception* highlight how the rivalry affected their nuclear programmes. While the Pakistani programme took flight after the 1974 Indian Peaceful Nuclear Explosion or PNE, the dormant Indian nuclear programme took flight in the 1980s when India discovered the amount of progress made by the Pakistani Nuclear programme.

India did not want to be tagged with Pakistan in its foreign relations with other states. But unfortunately, this was the reality of the sub continent. The hyphen between India and Pakistan has finally given way (Prakash, 2015). In its decisions to test the nuclear weapons in May 1998 too, the Indian state reacted to the Ghauri test conducted by Pakistan. Chengappa (2000: 51) in his book states how the prime minister organized a meeting three days after the Ghauri test to find out about India's preparedness. The then leaders of the scientific community, Kalam and Chidambaram, gave the best response that of conducting a test in thirty days, then the green signal was given to the scientists. While

Vajpayee wanted for the Indian state to be prepared and to conduct a test, the perception of being seen as matching up to its neighbour did not fit well with the self- image that the leaders had for India. They did not want to be seen as playing a game of one-upmanship. According to Chengappa (2000: 51), "it was more important to project it as part of the loftier and more relevant long term security interests of the nation." Security is always seen as a more stable reason for states to take nuclear decisions. One-upmanship and prestige are looked down upon as not having enough weight as a reason. But the opposite seems to be true. For states, as for people, image projection takes precedence over different aspects. When we delve into the security argument, a factor that is not researched is the need for security and its genesis. A perception of fear is a reality for every state. But does this perception have any evidence as backing? Does this perception create its own perceived evidence? And how is wanting to be secure different from wanting to be perceived as strong and powerful? Are they not essentially the same?

A declassified report (1976) states that the Chinese discounted the Indian threat to themselves, and in all probability realize that the programme was motivated primarily by India's aspirations to great power status. However, the report does not discount the fact that the Chinese were the only logical security threat to the Indians and the most impact that an

Indian nuclear programme would have on the Chinese would be with regards to its effect on Japanese thinking. The Chinese, although aware of India's prestige reasoning, might not think that such a perspective might help India in its perception building within the Third World.

In a report of the *Foreign Relations of the United States* (1976), it was stated that many members of the Press and the Parliamentarians felt that India needed to develop a credible minimum deterrent, to this the then Foreign Minister replied in the negative stating that not only would such a task be very expensive but also that India's military threat with China was a conventional one with India having third party support to deter Chinese Nuclear aggression. The fact was also that the gap between the Indian and the Chinese nuclear programmes was substantial and an Indian explosion without a delivery capability meant no form of threat for the Chinese.

The report goes on to examine how a nuclear explosion would soar the national pride very high and lead to a general euphoria within the population. Regarding security, there was a distancing from the intentions of the Soviet Union and the report states how a genuine 'self-reliance' of the state would be considered as apposite sign to its people. The nuclear programme would, thus, play its role of a symbol for India and strengthen its position in the subcontinent while underlying its desire to

be taken as a potential power in the world system. The social contact of South Asia should be understood at this time. While Pakistan was reeling with the loss of its territory (1971 war), New Delhi felt that this was the right time to showcase itself in the league of China and Japan, rather than being clubbed with Pakistan, with a hyphen. The report states what other reports of the U.S. government did from time to time, point to the factors impelling India towards a test, which were: “the Indians' belief that it would build up their international prestige; demonstrate India's importance as an Asian power; overawe its immediate South Asian neighbours; and bring enhanced popularity and public support to the regime which achieved it” (1976). Once again, there is no mention of a security aspect in the factors listed. This showcases that India's need was based on its perception of a great power, of hoping for the glory that great states receive as a by-product of their existence.

Although with the independence of Bangladesh, India was a clearly established regional power. This was because the perceived Chinese threat had diminished in the minds of the collective and there were no issues pending with the smaller South Asian neighbours (Doc 18 1974), albeit Pakistan which was dealing with its loss of territory in the region. The Indian state was in a clearly dominant position in South Asia without the bomb, but cemented its dominance with its first nuclear explosion.

The second time, in 1998, was for a global audience, to announce to the world that the state would no longer hide its nuclear weapons programme that was ready for more than a decade.

## RESPONSE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

The international community has always been trying to convince India to become a part of the NPT and adopt the norms it has defined. But India, at every step of the way, has chosen to defy these norms that do not fit with its identity and its image of 'self'.

The reactions of the domestic audience with regards to the international community were also very assertive. Reports state that efforts by aid donors to "punish" India or retard its nuclear development would lead to a strengthening of public support for future nuclear tests. But the report also stated that if international reaction was restrained, there might be internal debate about its utility in the face of economic priorities and nationalistic pride might take a back seat (Doc 19 1974).

The most stanch critics of the 1974 tests were the Canadians and the Americans who felt that they had agreed for collaboration only on the pretext that the uses of its nuclear supply would be for peaceful purposes. In a report on the assessment of India's nuclear tests (1974), it was specified that "India's agreements with Canada (and also with the

U.S.) specified that materials supplied would be used for peaceful purposes only.” Although India maintained that the tests were peaceful in nature, the U.S. and Canadian interpretations were that explosions of any sort could not be considered peaceful (Kamath 2009). They did take into considerations the subsequent responses of the Western Powers along with Japan, but these considerations were not factors that shaped or changed India’s decision to test.

Although the Soviets were ready to provide a nuclear deal to India that would act as an assurance, the then Atomic Energy Commission member of the Government of India, Dr. Homi Sethna felt that the trust was missing with the Soviets as they never revealed much regarding their nuclear programme. They were very secretive and were only interested in getting information regarding the Chinese tests.

Much as they might regret the Indian tests, the Soviets would not, however, be likely to spoil their relations with India over it. Confronted with a fait accompli, the Soviets might even see some compensating advantages in India assuming this symbol of great power status and thus increasing its claim to participation in security and disarmament discussions in which the Chinese promise to be increasingly active.



In a report released by the United States government and found at the national archives regarding Japan's analysis of India's Nuclear position in 1972, Japanese Embassy officer Murata indicated that the principle Indian aim was not scientific but was political, namely to enhance India's prestige and to convey warning to Chinese or "anyone else". According to the report, the impact would be greatest on the South African and Israeli Nuclear Policies (Doc 11A 1972).

The British were of the opinion that in the choice between Butter and Blast, the former was likely to win and pro-bomb sentiment would dissipate. Moreover, they felt that the then Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi was emotionally against the development of a nuclear weaponry with present 'open options' policy much more suited to India. There are events that could tempt the current government, one of which would be economic/political/Social deterioration leading to a psychological boost of nuclear explosion.

In a speech in 1954 Nehru expressed unease over American proposals to establish an organization for the 'so-called international control' of nuclear energy. He suspected that any such organization would be dominated by certain countries 'which have adequate power resources to restrain and restrict the use of atomic energy' at the expense of 'power-starved' countries like India(see in Chacko 2011). Nehru's consistent

world view, along with vision to see through the power struggles while maintaining India's identity was an important aspect of the non-alignment policy.

The United States was aware of the fact that by entering the nuclear club, India's need to gain satisfaction in its scientific and technical progress would be fulfilled (Doc 2 1974). But it was simultaneously aware, as stated in a report prior to the 1974 tests that the implications of a 'peaceful' nuclear explosion would lead Pakistan to start a programme of its own or look for more assistance from the U.S. or China.

While the Americans were aware that an Indian nuclear test would be a setback to the non-proliferation cause, they were more concerned about the repercussions of the events on other non-nuclear power, e.g., West Germany, Japan, Israel, South Africa, Brazil and whether these states would be provoked enough to opt for a nuclear option. The report subsequently suggested that each state would take decisions based on their political and security considerations, but a tacit understanding was provided between all parties regarding use of Indian precedent as, they could cite the Indian precedent as one justification (Doc 14 1971). This came from a belief that India was a responsible power. The Indian state's conduct has been exemplary in its relation with other states. It

has never made official statements that can be seen as reactionary and it has consistently maintained its policy of defending its borders and not attacking. It has followed every treaty that has been ratified by the parliament. These actions have spoken in India's favour and the Indo-US nuclear deal is a result of the same.

#### UNITED STATES' RESPONSE

Curtis Le May in a memorandum to the Secretary of Defence states that the best course of action after the Chinese Nuclear Test would be to wait and watch as assurances by the President regarding Chinese use of nuclear weapons against another Asian State had been previously given and making a statement in favour of India might alienate its other allies, i.e. Pakistan (Doc 2, 1964). In the archival documents, one can see an obvious understanding by the United States with respect to India wanting a nuclear programme. It is, from the very beginning, not very alarmed by the idea of India have a nuclear weapons programme. The restraint shown by India in testing its nuclear programme, has, on the other hand, drawn a few pleasant surprises.

The United States was aware of the capability of the Indian nuclear programme. Its approach was from different sides. It promoted the groups within India that focused on disarmament. The situation was dichotomous as India's testing would lead to a spiral of Pakistan and maybe Japan and Germany aiming for a nuclear programme too; but if India did test, it would not look for security assurances from either the U.S. or U.S.S.R. (Doc 10) The Americans were also well aware of India's security concerns regarding the Chinese and gave their blessing to the Russian deal (Doc 14 1967). They even hinted to a statement made by the American President in 1961, in which he tacitly stated to an American policy of not letting a nuclear war take place.

A document (1966) on the American Policy stance regarding nuclear proliferation, stated that "pride and resentment at foreign intervention could override substance of the argument (weaponization is not cost effective) and provoke reaction contrary to that intended. Same consideration may apply to some degree or other with other civil nuclear programmes" (Doc 12 1966). This statement paints a picture of how nuclear programmes become associated with the identity of the state and once that takes place, it is difficult to rationalize with the said state on what issues are more important. Although, the concept of rationality and emotions has been explained by citing Nayef Al Rodham's argument,

when understanding policy decisions, the divide has been taken as apparent.

In one very important discussion between the Secretary of Defence and Mr. L.K. Jha (1967), discriminatory aspects of the NPT are pointed out by the Indian side which is unwilling to compromise on its stance. Ambassador Jha states out that the NPT is strongly discriminatory against non-nuclear weapons states. He explains how discrimination is evident in the conduct of the nuclear weapon powers that refuse to submit their facilities (peaceful) to inspection, an aspect all non-nuclear signatories accept. He lists out “two major obstacles to an Indian acceptance, where one is the security problem vis-à-vis China and the other is that India has developed nuclear technology which contributes to Indian confidence and prestige, but which appears threatened by serious curtailment if India adheres to the NPT” (Doc 14 1967). India’s fear psychosis is evident in the strategic circles of New Delhi. A majority within the community feels that the state’s decision to go nuclear had a strong security incentive from China (Ray interview, 2015; Bhaskar interview, 2015). For them the humiliation faced at the hands of the aggressive Chinese, which is a part of the national narrative, was the factor the shaped India’s nuclear decision making.

This statement by the Indian leader resonates with Deepa Ollapally's (2001) argument about India's nuclear programme being a result of the security and prestige arguments together. But evidence pointed out above also suggests that the Chinese threat, which was one of the threats emphasized by India, was not as eminent even though the feeling of mutual animosity was equally evident.

A report of International Nuclear Trends (1967) stated that India, and to some degree in other countries capable of initiating a nuclear weapons programme, one pressure for proliferation is the assumption that a nuclear weapons programme automatically endows a state with a special *prestige* or status and enhances its voice in International Councils (Doc 12 1966; italics added). With an awareness about the role of 'prestige' in nuclear programmes, the United States tried to change the narrative of prestige, associating it with giving up of a military nuclear programme and emphasizing on the sole benefits of a civilian nuclear programme, how it would enhance development, how there is honor in taking the higher road and so forth. But this idea was not sold on the states interested in nuclear programmes as the Indian side persisted with its version of events.

India tested in 1974, but the state did not feel the need to develop the process of weaponization until the 1980s when New Delhi discovered that

Pakistan was on its way to developing a nuclear programme. The documents stated that the Pakistani nuclear programme had not only caught up with India's nuclear programme but raced slightly ahead of it (Levy 2007). While the Indian government was willing to ask for security assurances from the Superpowers in its perceived threat from China, it did no such thing on discovering the Pakistani nuclear programme's growth. In the following chapters, the historical baggage of partition along with the victories at war with Pakistan gave India the feeling of superiority. The Indian self was defined to a large extent by its superiority to Pakistan and the self image would have taken a hit, hurting the prestige of the Indian state. The direct reaction was to produce the nuclear weapon and exist as nuclear capable neighbours for more than a decade. Thus, the Indian nuclear programme, to a large extent, is guided by an overt Chinese nuclear policy and a covert Pakistani nuclear policy.

India had the capability to become a nuclear power in 1966 (U.S. govt. report) but due to its moral considerations, it chose to refrain from testing. As Pakistan's nuclear policy was entirely driven by India, it could not avoid starting its nuclear journey after 1974. Being the largest state in South Asia, Indian public and the decision making elite would not

have accepted a Pakistani Nuclear programme before India developed one.

Hence, Indian prestige determined the governments' decision to test in 1974, when it wanted to tell the world that India too had conducted a nuclear explosion albeit 'peacefully'. And its decision to be nuclear ready was also shaped by its need to not be the state that is surrounded by two nuclear powers.

Kakar (2008) argues that norms have a strange and powerful way of affecting decision making. He states that, "It is now rarely disputed that the broader intellectual currents of a time, its zeitgeist, have a profound influence on the way problems in the human sciences are formulated and systems of knowledge elaborated" (Kakar 2008: 1). He also states that social knowledge, as a result, is relative to the historical and cultural contexts it is found in. Knowledge, thus, is 'socially constructed' and can be judged or evaluated not on concepts such as 'truth' but on plausibility and coherence of statements. Thus, for the newly independent states it was imperative to formulate their own identity in the international system. If they would have succumbed to international pressure to be a part of any block, as many smaller states did, their identity would have been superseded by the state securing them.

## **THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAMME**

The Iranian Nuclear programme, like the Indian nuclear programme began under the aegis of Atoms for Peace in 1957 by the then American President Eisenhower. As a Western ally, it was one of the first signatories of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1968. The Shah



wanted to reduce the country's dependence on oil and nuclear energy provided a good alternative. His ambitions for Iran were of a regional hegemon, pointing to its glorious history. The Shah truly believed that his plan for making Iran a great state, for removing the underdevelopment and for bringing economic benefits was laid via nuclear technology. Although the nuclear programme was based in Iran, all its information and knowledge came from the United States. As with the present regime, the Shah emphasized that Iran was against nuclear weapons while stating that the policy could be changed keeping in mind the developments of the world (Ansari interview 2015). Thus, the nuclear policies of the two regimes has not been different, as the aims of both the state structures are the same.

As this programme was backed by the 'Western' powers, associations made by the Shah relating to rising power were ignored. It can be surmised that because the Shah was an ally of the Americans, none of the statements he made regarding showcasing his power were taken as a threat whereas the Islamic Republic, while making similar statements has been taken very seriously.

Patrikarakos (2012) in his book states that for the Shah, as for the current Islamic Regime, nuclear weapons were a symbol of modernization. He elaborates that nuclear power, for the Shah, became

an expression of the power he wished for, enmeshing his personal ambition with that of the nation. It was due to this reason that after the revolution, the Islamic Republic did not want to pursue a nuclear programme, as it associated nuclear energy with the Shah's personal ambitions and not an idea that could benefit Iranians. This argument is reiterated by Krishna (2013) who points out to how the new Islamic Republic considered the nuclear programme nothing more than a Trojan horse which would once again infiltrate Iran with its ideology. Nevertheless, this unclean technology was later adopted by the Islamic Republic as it faced heavy shortages during war time.

In 1982, with the Iran-Iraq War raging, the nuclear programme was officially restarted. The programme later was assimilated within the Iranian psyche as being associated with the current regime, rather than with the Shah. Iran was defined by its technological progress in the modern world (Patrikarakos 2012). As the war depleted its resources, the state looked at alternative methods of acquiring nuclear technology. One such source was the A Q Khan network (Acton interview, 2015; Veaz 2013). Although Acton (2015) feels that the imitation of the nuclear programme had clear security reasons, Patrikarakos (2012) states that the Iranian state believed that a nuclear programme could attain prestige on the state that was under fire from all sides in the international

system. Iran also purchased technology from Russia before the revolution and even so after, with the later being a primary partner in Iran's nuclear dealings. An example of Russian-Iranian relationship would be the completion of an unfinished reaction in Bushehr in 1994 (Krishner 2013). Vaez (2013) states that the Russian sponsored Bushehr reactor adds as a source of concern for the international parties who suspect every move related to Iranian enrichment activities. These suspicions are highly exaggerated according to him and they are unable to see a viable economic rationale for enrichment. Vaez (2013) also states that the enrichment programme underway in Iran was a result of secret acquisition which involved technical drawings, manufacturing instructions and samples of components and had strong imprints of the AQ Khan network. He further points out how the construction of undeclared nuclear enrichment and heavy-water facilities lead to an international crisis in 2002.

#### NEITHER EAST NOR WEST

Just as after independence, India's mantra for its foreign policy was 'Non-Alignment', after the revolution, Iran's mantra was 'Neither East nor West'. This policy was mostly driven by an anti-American agenda, but the leader of the revolution, Imam Khomeini wanted to make it clear to the world that was divided between two blocks, that Iran would not jump out of the hands of one foreign power to get into the laps of another. This statement has a similar understanding to Nehru's statement on why India should not join any power or security block.

Iran's Foreign Minister, Ali Akbar Velayati (1987b) reiterated Iran's neither East nor West policy in a new article, "was the corner stone of its Foreign Policy and relations...that both India and Iran enjoy plenty of rich potential which can be exploited for strengthening bilateral co-operation." In a discussion with India's then External Affairs minister Mr. N.D.Tiwari, Velayati (1987a) expressed that the expansion of Tehran-New Delhi relations is one of the basic aspects of Iran's foreign policy as such ties contribute to achieve a political balance in the region, with Iran as the biggest country in Western Asia and India as the biggest in Southern Asia.

Acharya's (2009) conception of cognitive prior helps understand this other case study where the norm entrepreneur, i.e., the international community is being rejected by the revolutionary government. But the problem here arises is that the norm entrepreneur exists from before while the cognitive prior of the state elite/ leadership changed with the coming of the revolution.

Iran did have a civilian nuclear programme during the reign of the Shah but after the revolution, the supreme leader made a clear statement against the use of nuclear weapons and how they were against the principles of Islam. The Revolutionary government went so far as to shut down the civilian programme too, as it had strong links with the United

States and there was a strong collaboration between the scientists of the two states. This study looks at statements of leaders that showcase Iran's vehement anti American stance and how it affected Iran's nuclear decision making. As the leader of the revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini gave a number of speeches and his recorded works have been the base line for how Iran's interactions with the international community were to be determined, this section focuses on his works on the concept of 'neither east not west'.

In a compilation of his works, by the Islamic Republic of Iran, a lucid picture is painted of how atrocities were committed by the previous government of the Shah which was nothing but a puppet in the hands of the Americans. Khomeini has written a number of books explaining his philosophy. But this compilation by the government brings to light his understandings of the Islamic Republic and its ideology which shaped the interactions of the Islamic Republic with that of the international community.

Khomeini (1979: 225) states that, "We hope that an Islamic power would emerge, a just power, a power which would depend on justice, and not the bayonets, and not even, say, cannons and tanks, [leading to] harmony among all men. We have been given the promise that when Imam of the Time reappears, these conflicts would

disappear. Everyone would coexist like brothers. I want to tell you that there will be no more bullies and bullying. We hope that we can implement some of this to the best of our ability. We hope that the nations are with us, the governments too, would be with us. It would be in their interest to be with us. God willing, we hope that this would happen.” The text emphasizes on how Iran as power would like to be a part of the international system but without any bullies, a reference to the Super power attitudes that defined the Cold War. Khomeini aimed to reach out to the people of the nation first and then to their respective governments. The focus on concepts of just power where military might is not used to achieve goals but notions of justice and independence become the guidelines.

On the Iranian relationship with key international players, Khomeini stated, “All the powers and superpowers are bent on destroying us and if we remain enclosed and contained, we will definitely be defeated. We must settle our accounts with the powers and superpowers in a straightforward manner; we must show them that, despite all our difficulties and hardships, we have the ability to approach the world ideologically” (Khomeini 1980: 170). Emphasis needs to be put on Khomeini’s words which refer to need for approval from the ‘other’.

According to Mousavian (2013), despite some aggressive rhetoric on Iran's part, an examination of the history of its actions shows that Iran's ultimate goals are no different from those of other countries: survival and influence. The three concepts of resistance, justice and independence were the benchmarks of the Iranian revolution and they resonate deeply in all the statements of the leaders, especially that of the supreme leader, Ayatollah Khomeini. "All the powers and superpowers should know that we will resist till the last person, till the last trench and till the last drop of our blood in order to elevate the word of God. Against their wishes we will establish "Neither-East-Nor-West" governments in most countries of the world" (Khomeini 1987:186). Contrary to the Indian perspective, the Iranian perspective aimed to spread its ideology via various means to other nations. It believed that the international system in place was skewed and challenged it forcefully, yet demanding changes to bring in a new power, Iran.

This dichotomy has been explained in detail by Faridey and Lotfian (2013) as the Iranian state wants to be a part of the international system, unlike North Korea, but refuses to accept the terminology of the West. Karim Sadjadpour in *Conversations with History* (2010) speaks about the Iranian nuclear programme and its relation to the revolution by stating that, "For Khamenei, the nuclear programme has come to embody the revolution's core themes: the struggle for independence, the injustice of foreign powers, the necessity of self-sufficiency, and

Islam's high esteem for the sciences. He wants to ensure that Iran is scientifically and technologically advanced enough to be self-sufficient, self-sufficient enough to be economically independent, and economically independent enough to be politically independent.” In another article, highlights the Iranian ambitions for power by stating that, “Iranians have historically gravitated toward where the most powerful” (Sadjadpour, 2010). His contemporary, another Iranian-American, Trita Parsi (2015) adds to the argument stating that there is not much difference in the two regimes as both want to be able to throw their weight around. Parsi refers to the Shah’s autocracy and the theocratic rule of the Islamic republic. According to Parsi (2015), “it is not hegemony so much as the position of first among equals that Iran desires.” Parsi feels that only the outer layer of the state has changed; while the shah garbed the role of a secular, the Islamic republic uses religion and political Islam. There are a number of analysts who look at the Iranian nuclear programme from the perspective of threat only, stating that a nuclear Israel threatens Iran and thus Iran wants to be able to deter its enemy in the region. Analysts also argue that an Iranian nuclear programme is detrimental to the region as it would most definitely start an arms race among the Sunni states that have a historical enmity towards the Shiite state of Iran. But in order for a nuclear arms race to be stopped it is only right that nuclear weapon states give up their nuclear programmes.

Karl Vick (2012) quotes Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the current leader of the Islamic Republic who has been shunning nuclear arms as sinful and off limits to the state. This fact has been reiterated by the leader on a number of occasions. Khamenei states that, “There is no doubt the decision-makers in the countries opposing us know well that Iran is not after nuclear weapons because the Islamic Republic, logically, religiously and theoretically, considers the possession of such weapons is senseless, destructive and dangerous.”

The policy of Iran was Neither east nor west, but the Eastern part, i.e. the Soviet Union did not try to interfere in the internal dynamics of the state and supported the Iranian state, albeit, covertly, in many of it



actions. As a result, the term came to represent more anti-Americanism than a neutrality policy towards the super powers. The following are some of the statements made by the Iranian leader which showcase the anti-Americanism and reasoning for the policy of neither East nor West.

Below are excerpts from writings of mostly Khomeini where specific words have been highlighted to understand the meaning better.

According to Khomeini:

- “God-willing, we will break the tyrannical hands of all the *oppressors* in Muslim countries. By exporting our revolution, which is the exportation of a true revolution and explanation of the decrees of Prophet Muhammad(s), we will end the rule and the *oppressive domination* of the World-Devourers.” (Khomeini 1987: 300)
- “We have declared this fact in our foreign and international policies that we are intending to increase the *influence of Islam* in the world and that we have been after weakening the rule of World-Devourers. Now, if the lackeys of the U.S. want to call this policy *expansionism* and the desire to form an empire, so be it. We shall not be hindered. We beseech God that He would give us

the *power* so that we could shout, Death to America and Soviet Union.” (Khomeini 1988: 71)

- Allah... Empower the nation of Iran which became the cause of *pride* of Islam in the world, creating a model country that we hope its ever-effervescent light would reach the East and West, bringing about the *victory of the Deprived* over the Arrogant.” (Khomeini 1983: 293)

These statements made by the grand leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran point to clear aspects of power projection via their newly discovered Islamic Republic; their fight against the oppressive international system; and the rise of the moralistic right over the immoral arrogance of the wrong. The words italicized, pride, victory of the deprived, expansionism, influence of Islam, oppressive domination, oppressors- all highlight the need for prestige driven power over the ‘other’.

- “When we say that our revolution must be exported everywhere, they should not misinterpret it to mean that we would want to take over other countries. We want that the same thing that happened in Iran—the awakening that occurred in Iran, causing them to distance themselves from the superpowers [by] ending their control over the [natural] resources—

would happen in all the nations and all the governments. This is our dream. The meaning of *exportation of revolution* is that all nations would wake up, all governments would up, and would save themselves from this predicament that they face: They are *being dominated*, they are living in poverty while their resources are being plundered.”(Khomeini 1980:231)

- “We must stand up to the super powers for we have the *power* to do so, provided the intellectuals give up hope in the east or the west and stop being moved and swayed by them. We are as much in opposition with international communism as we are against the US *led western imperialism* and Zionism and Israel. We should make it clear to the superpowers that we treat the world according to Islamic tenets and schools of thought, despite all the difficulties before us” (Political Office 1982:22)

The emphasis on the differentiation is evident where the Supreme Leader focuses on ‘us v/s them’ is almost all of his speeches and talks. The discrimination of the international community is highlighted, bringing Iran to a standstill via sanctions and economic lockdowns. All these policies, against the Iranian government alienate the public away from any semblance of a revolt.

- “The secret of the victory of the prophets and the Islamic Republic of Iran, has been the values which surpass the ken of the east and the west. As you see, our leader speaks of things which do not fit the materialistic frames, the Imam pin-points ideas which the east and the west have no power to comprehend.”(Political Office 1982: 22)
- “Perhaps no revolution has ever been attacked in the same way as the Iranian revolution. It is due to the fact that other revolutions have either been leftist or rightist. If they were leftist revolutions, they are backed by the leftists and thus the rightists would oppose them and vice versa. But it has never been the same in regards to the Islamic State since it organized in Islamic thought. It was neither westernized nor an easternized influence that invited people for a revolution. There was no coup d’etat involved either. It has been merely an uprising of the nation which was so oppressed by domestic and external tyranny and dictatorship. It is the uprising of a nation against all the powers. Therefore this nation must be prepared to be attacked by all the powers. We never expect the US to have compromising attitude towards us. The same with Russia. All these powers are aware of the fact that if God willing this revolution bears its fruits in Iran and is eventually materialized

in the way Islam wants it to be, it will subsequently be exported to foreign countries. There is no need for somebody to embark on this issue (exportation of the revolution).”(Lal 1985: 22)

- In a speech by the leader of the Friday prayers in Tehran, it was stated “They (outside forces) propagate that a few clergymen came and took the power without the nation backing them and they also say that the Army is against the clergy. They all know who this nation is backing as well as we know but they only aim to agitate the atmosphere through their great machinery. They all are making efforts to defeat this Islamic Revolution for the fear of its materialization in Iran which would sever their hands from Iran. They are afraid that this revolution will spread to other regions and thus the hands of powers be further cut off in the world. For this reason, they are opposing you what gives us hope is the support of Allah, the Almighty.”(Lal 1985: 24)
- “The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the basis of the experiences of our people in the course of over a hundred years of struggle against the dominance of the old and new imperialists, placed from the becoming emphasis on its pursuance of a foreign policy of rejecting both East and West. On the basis of this policy, founded on the affluent teachings of Islamic ideology,

Iran is able to export its material and spiritual resources and without being dominated by either of the super powers, further expand its co-operation with other countries within the context of the policy of non-alignment.”(Lal 1985: 84)

- “As in the case with most nations, Iran got from foreign domination only corruption and gradual decadence. Therefore, we did not wait at all in cutting short all sort of exploitation and plunder of our natural resources. Iran is confident that the non-aligned movement will do everything possible in adjudging each development in the world in accordance with justice.” (Lal 1985: 87)

The various statements point out to the oppressive regime that is taking away the power of the people with them being ruled by these oppressors who are the reason for all the problems. The Imam clarifies that the Islamic states does not want to capture other states via force, rather it wants the message of the revolution to be spread everywhere. He wanted all the states to rise against the super powers and fight against the tyrannical systems they had led themselves to be party to.

The revolution took its birth in mostly religious gatherings. Even though the Shah’s regime was supported by imperialist powers, the people were able to curtail the eastern and western influences in Iran. There were a

number of problems the Iranian State was facing, but Khomeini focused only on the closeness of the Shah to the Imperialist powers along with Israel. As a teacher, he had gained a large audience of people, particularly when he dealt with subjects such as ethics emphasized on two things: one the necessity of Islam and the second Iran to come out from the - influence of Eastern and Western colonialism.

The Jihad for Constructions or Jihad-e-Sazandegi (1983:12), which focused on cultural and developmental activities, stated about Imam Khomeini that he made it “possible to stand against Eastern and Western blocks and to make Muslims believe that it is possible to destroy the colonialistic insinuations that the Islamic countries cannot survive without the aids of East or West.” Khomeini (1981:31) as quoted in Mahajubah repeatedly instructed his countrymen not to bend upon the US, USSR and England for any sort of dependence asking them to “take the affairs into your own hands; stand on your own feet.” In an excerpt of Imam Khomeini’s (1987:1) message, in the light of the super powers supporting the Iraqi bombing of Iranian cities, the leader was quoted by Kahyan International Newspaper (1987) stating that: “All powers and superpowers should know that we stand to our last breadth and drop of blood for elevation of the word ‘Allah’ and against their wish we shall lay the

foundation for a neither East nor West type of Government in most countries of the world.”

Ayatollah Montezari (1982:6), a popular leader from the Islamic Revolution, and a follower of the Imam commented that, “if Muslim nations awake and turn their attention to their pre-eminent Islamic characters and if they stop their hopes from reaching towards the East or West, and rely solely on the power of their religion and people, then never will the oppressors from the East or West be able to continue the captivity and exploitation of Muslims.”

Thus, in every publication, in every speech, the supreme leader and his followers emphasized on how the Iranian state needs to get free of the clutches of the Superpowers and make its own path, an Iranian path where the decision making for Iran would be done by Iranians in their interest. As a leader of the Revolution, the Imam’s word was the first and the last and hence it is through his speeches that an analysis, of what the revolution meant, can be done. The chapter now explores the two aspects of east and west and their relationship with Iran and how it affects the nuclear programme of the state.

## SOVIET UNION’S REACTION



Khomeini in one of his speeches said: "I think the US has beguiled the Soviets too in the issue of Iraq" (Khomeini 1982: 133). The statement is a representative of the relationship between Iran and the Soviet Union. Not as skewed as that of Iran and the United States, their relationship was mostly distant with the Soviets having a higher trust factor than the Americans. This is true for India too, where it was never overtly pro-Soviet Union, but the animosity was largely from the 'Western' Powers.

According to Iranian documents, "Studying Moscow's position during the different stages of the war reveals that the heavy handed manipulations by the Pentagon and CIA, within the Iraqi government, motivated the Soviet Union to adopt passive and self-centered policies in order to secure its own interests. All in all, the Soviet's performance was similar to and coordinated with those of Western Europe and reactionaries in the region"(Khomeini 1982:133) The Iranians felt that the Soviets too had become a part of the international community in its fight against the Islamic republic and that they were alone in a war that had been imposed on them. This was not entirely true as the Soviets extended help to the Iranian state via Syria.

According to the Soviet documents, the Islamic renaissance was Marxist in nature. The Soviets found it interesting due to the anti-monarchical and anti-imperialist revolutionary struggle. They felt that, and rightly so,

during the revolutionary struggle, the principal blows were directed against the despotic Shah and US imperialism which supported it. The revolution was, in their terminology, against the capitalist monopolies and state monopoly structures. Although they realized that the mosque was the main institution behind the revolution, they also emphasized on how other institutions within the Iranian society followed such as the bazaar, the universities, the factories, and the oil fields. All of these soon became the base of this Islamic Revolution. The document stresses on the Shiite branch and its main tenets as the ideological banner of the revolution which was not only popular but also sacrificial in nature. Thus, from the viewpoint of its motive forces, the methods of struggle and the universal demands of social justice were the driving factors of the revolution, whose main orientation was anti-monarchical, anti-imperialist and sharply anti- American. Even though the popular slogan of 'Neither East nor West' referred in part to the Soviets, they chose to ignore that aspect and brought to the forefront the constant chants of 'Death to America' and 'Death to Israel'. In conclusion, their reports (Soviet Review 1982) stated that the revolution was bourgeois in nature, from an ideological perspective it was clearly an Islamic revolution. Thus the soviet relationship was not direct but because the Iranians were clear on wanting to maintain distance from both the superpowers, there was a

certain respect from the Soviet Union for the revolution and its sustenance.

## THE RESPONSE OF THE UNITED STATES

Iran's relationship with the United States has been most turbulent one. Due to the Shah's closeness with the United States, the revolution became not just against the Shah, but also against the American government.

According to Christopher De Bellaigue (2009) the Iranian goals are simple and focused. With a clear anti US policy the state has tried to counter US efforts of isolation. In this journey, Iranians would use their equation with India, China and even the fuel cycle as a bargaining chip.

Following the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the world was anxiously looking at the developments taking place, wondering whether expulsion of Western powers from the State would lead to a lacuna that could only be filled by the Eastern powers. But the Iranian press showcased the unity of the people in their need to maintain independence and freedom without seeking help from other sources As example of this can be seen in the magazine *Mahajubah* (1981:28) where as Iran was being showcased as "being a tyrannical government worse than the past regime", the journal came out in support of the regime stating that public opinion was being manipulated and eventual

foreign intervention in the internal affairs of a state was being given legitimacy.

Gram Greenwald (2012) in his article in *the guardian* states that when the GOP Senator Lindsey Graham was asked about sanctions and the effect they have on ordinary Iranians, the reply was 'strategic'. Explaining Iran's position the senator stated that for the Iranian regime, its survival is at stake. Graham added that the second regime goal is "influence", that "people listen to you" when you have a nuclear weapon. In other words, once Iran developed its nuclear weapon, the other powers in the region would not very comfortable, but not militarily. This threat would emanate from the idea of influence and regional dominance. This argument holds ground with a number of American's policy elites. Thus, nuclear proliferation deters American influence According to Greenwald (2012), the United States for its part was being observant and realized that the only way a country can protect itself from US attack, other than full-scale obeisance, is to acquire nuclear weapons.

The hostage crisis was a big blow in the relationship between the Iranians and the Americans. In an address at the Tehran University during Friday prayers, the then foreign minister, Mr. Banisadr, according to a report by the *Times of India* (1981), had said that the attack on the US Embassy was to mobilize the fundamental changes in the international relations and to signal an end to the US domination of their state. The Iranian government viewed all the people working at the embassy as American spies and hoped that the student led movement would benefit the government. The students in turn seized documents and made them public in a bid to bring out the spies within Iran and to

show the world how American was controlling every action of the Shah (See the Tehran Documents). According to a monograph released by the Iranian government, the documents reveal the stark contrast the US diplomats in Tehran and the policy-makers in Washington (Political Office 1982: 23). They concluded from their understanding of the documents that the dispatches from the US embassy in Tehran were more reflective of the ethos of the contemporary situation and carried a better understanding of the Iranian mind and contrast somewhat sharply with the cold calculations and policy directives emanating from far-off Washington” (Abidi 1988: 65).

The Iranian decision to publish the classified US documents was based on the assumption that if they exposed documents revealing US involvement and intervention in Iran’s domestic affairs and highlighted the degree of collaboration between the Shah and America and how the natural and nationalist aspirations of the people were ignored, they would be able to arouse the revolutionary conscience of the people at large (Abidi 1988:62). This, however, was not meant to be. According to A.H.H. Abidi (1988), the documents did nothing to help the Iranian revolution as the closeness of the Shah to the Americans was a well known fact. They did validate the claims of the Revolutionary leaders but were unsuccessful in bringing to light new facts. However, for America, it was

a violation of diplomacy and by taking its citizens under hostage; the Iranians had ruined their chances of a normal relationship.

Khomeini had an eye on the United States and slashed it time and again, believing it to be the master mind of all undesirable situations. He stated that, "The US regime is the number one enemy of the abased and deprived peoples of the world. The US government will not refrain from committing any crime in order to perpetuate its political, economic, cultural and military domination over the world" (Khomeini 1983: 19). The United States was the scapegoat for the Islamic republic for a long time. From pornography (Lal 1985: 54) to Iranian society's moralistic downward slide, it was all due to western influences for the Islamic Republic. Chants such as 'Death to America' were displayed on every Iranian missile and everywhere crowds gathered, they chanted this slogan (Washington Free Beacon, 2013). By 2007, many Iranians had realized that slogans such as "Death to America" were a bankrupt mantra. This statement was corroborated by Sadjadpour (2007) in an interview where he state that it is only in the last decade that rhetoric such as 'Death to America' and other such chants stated have gone done in a significant way.

Khomeini (1983) stated that "Israel has been second only to the United States as one of the major props of the Pahlavi dictatorship."In the

government's call to return the Shah to his Iranian subjects being denied, he called on the principles of the International Court as biased and stated, "What kind of law is this? It permits the US government to exploit and colonize people all over the world for decades. But it does not allow the extradition of an individual who has staged great massacres. Can you call it law?" (Mohamed Shafi, 1983: 45) The Iranian leadership constantly played in the inequality of the international system and how the revolutionary government was fighting for what was rightfully theirs.

A top Khomeini aid stated that "if America ceases conspiring against us and wishes to establish serious relations with us, then we will harbour no animosity against anyone"(Khomeini 1979:122).The then Majlis speaker, Hashmi Rafsanjani(1986), as quoted by the *Tehran Times* press conference had said: "If the US stops its policy of domination, we will have relations with that country the next day" These statements from various leaders state the animosity that was existent within the government officials with regards to America and its policies.

Ayatollah Khomeini in acknowledging the execution of Ayatollah Hakim's family members by the Iraqi government said that, "We are living in the oppressive and aggressive age where no justice is possible and the criminals can easily speed away after committing any offence". Alleging the United States as the agitator with Regan as their leader, he said

“(T)he people know you; you compelled the Iraqi Regime to do to Iran and Iraq everyday what the Mongols did not do” (Khomeini 1983: 4).

The Feyadeen, as cited by Tulsiram (1981:118), too tired to work along with the masses in compliance with the Islamic ideology and stated, “(O)ur organization recognizes the Islamic Republic which is led by anti-imperialist forces as a national and anti-imperialist regime...Our organization was struggling to defeat all conspiracies hatched out by imperialism and internal counter-revolutionaries.” The editorial of an Iranian Magazine spoke about Khomeini, about how he stood firm and arose like Hussein, challenging the despotic regime of the Shah. The magazine while drawing religious links with the leader spoke about how he called upon the people to revive the Islamic faith while condemning the policy of the East and the West (Ghaffari 1981: 1). The people too followed the guidance of their leader and appeared to have pulled out the US hegemony and despotic rule in Iran as can be seen in the student demonstrations and the bazaars.

As the Americans lost a key ally in the region, they tried to push for a regime change by portraying the state as fundamentalist. But Washington was soon to learn of the unyielding and uncompromising attitude of the Revolution towards the predatory class of the world powers unless it prefers to remain in isolation from current events. An Iranian government



document quoted an American Senator Barry Goldwater showing support for the Arab nations in their fight against Iran and used the statement to portray how it would fight against biases such as these and emerge victorious (AP 1982).

According to Abidi (1977) even though the tensions between the two states were omnipresent at all times, there was anxiety within the Iranian government to improve its relations with the United States. It was keen on obtaining US assistance in its vital matters and tried to establish contact with the Americans at different levels. This was a needs based approach as they required the aid for their new government to function. But in all their approaches the Iranians made sure that they were treated as equal partners and both the parties tried their best to downplay each other at every instance they got.

## NEGOTIATING WITH AMERICA

The President of Islamic Republic of Iran, Hashmi Rafsanjani (1983) stated that “Iran has now turned into a heavyweight that can influence the peoples of both the Eastern and Western super powers, let along the third world nations” (Shafi 1983: 120). According to Sadjadpour (2007), since the inception of the revolution, it has been very important for the

Iranians to be considered as the vanguard of the Muslim World, especially in the region.

A National Intelligence estimate (1982) by the United States shows that Iran had been re-examining its civilian nuclear programme that it had stopped at the advent of the revolution. Officials indicated their interest in wanting to complete a minimum of one reactor. The report (NIE-4-82 1982) estimated that considering the nuclear technology sharing that had taken place prior to the revolution, it would be possible for Iran to have nuclear research programme by 1987. Although they would be far from producing a nuclear weapon, it would give the Iranians some confidence in its neighbourhood. This was spurned by the Iran-Iraq war where chemical weapons were used against the Iranian forces by Iraq. This aspect shall be discussed in the fifth chapter in detail.

The Iranian anxiety for good relations, mentioned earlier in the chapter, with the United States not only provided immense opportunity to the Americans to rehabilitate themselves in the new revolutionary environment but also reduced the prospective cost of repairing their image. In addition, it gave them strong bargaining power with which to deal with the Iranians on many specific issues between the two countries (Abidi 1988: 67). But the Iranians were also able to gauge the US situations well and would come up with different tactics on the negotiating table.

In an article for the *Guardian* Sourush and Madani (2014) write that sanctions are tools which help the powerful state to isolate and hurt the target state's economy. Sanctions help the powerful state to arm-twist the target state to change its policy. But in the short run, a target country may adopt alternative, survivalist means to evade the grip of sanctions. This is most true for Iran. The sanctioned state has not only managed to develop its own nuclear programme without any outside help, but has also managed to sustain its economy for the longest time without support from international players. Sourush and Madani (2014), state that, "With aggressive, home-grown policies Iran has managed to evade the sanctions to an extent. Turning petrochemical factories into oil refineries is one example. In 2010, Iran imported 40% of its consumer fuel. When President Barack Obama introduced penalties for selling petrol to Iran and imports fell by 75%, Iran responded by developing its own refining and producing" (Sourush and Madani, 2014).

According to Karl Vick (2012), saving one's face is of utmost importance during negotiations. This is truer for Iranians who are a very proud race/ ethnicity. Iran also sees itself as a vanguard of the Muslim world and to some extent, as a leader of the non-aligned movement. Coupled with the Iranian sense of pride that is derived from its 2,500 year history and early history, it is easy to say how the Iranian state sees itself and the place it should hold in international history.

Farideh and Lotfian (2013), make this claim that for Iran, rejection of the International order was as important as Iran's need to be a part of the order in a prominent position. This dichotomy provides for a constant tension within the foreign policy of the state. The authors also point out to another dichotomy that exists in the Iranian foreign policy, where on one hand they feel the right to be taken as a regional and global player and on the other hand the feeling of insecurity and strategic loneliness that the state has to live with. Iran is unable to alleviate its international

status due to the pressures of the Western powers, most notably The United States. The nuclear negotiations between the two states have been most controversial with both having a very different understanding of each other's cognitive priors.

### THE 2002-03 CRISES

The negotiations between Iran and the Western powers have been many fold and lasted for a long time. The essence of 'prestige' that is being understood in Iran's foreign policy of 'Neither East nor West' can be seen most directly in its nuclear negotiations where Iran fights tooth and nail to be taken as a serious power.

According to Mousavian (2013), Iran's policy has always been based on three aspects, resistance, independence and perseverance. Although Iran has never admitted to pursuing nuclear weapons, Mousavian quotes U.S. ambassador James Dobbins (2009) who believes it to be perfectly logical for the state to pursue a programme as all the other three outlier states of India, Pakistan and Israel are within the Iranian region and as a geopolitical power, Iran's position is threatened if it does not take any action. The Western powers, especially the United States, have deep

concerns regarding Iran's true nuclear intentions. An important reason is the close proximity of Iran to Israel, a strong U.S. ally. IAEA reports portray Iran's gas centrifuge programme as starting in 1985-1987 when it was able to acquire certain aspects of research from the A.Q. Khan network reached Iranians (Acton, 2015). Its 2002-03 nuclear programme is discussed in the next section which brings out the Iranian need to be seen as an equal partner in the international system.

After Iran was found of not reporting certain nuclear activities in 2003, there was a collective anger against the state within the International community. Although the United States put Iran in the 'Axis of Evil', Iran suggested negotiations that could address the mutual concerns of the parties. Sadjadpour (2007) is of the opinion that the Iranians don't take the Europeans seriously. They think that Europeans lack the backbone and they feel they can act with impunity when it comes to Europe. Thus, they prefer negotiating with the Americans.

The outline of the proposal (2015) from the Iranian side consisted of six points, out of which three focused on concepts of respect, recognition and the status of Iran, one on sanctions, another one on access to technology and lastly on anti-terrorism activities against the Iranian government. The gist of the Iranian aims as listed in the proposal are:

- Halt hostile U.S. behaviour and rectify the status of Iran in the United States
- Abolishment of all sanctions
- Respect for Iranian national interests in Iraq
- Full access to peaceful nuclear technology
- Recognition of Iran's legitimate security interests in the region
- Pursuit of anti -Iranian terrorists

After the 2003 IAEA report findings were announced, the Asian countries were supportive of Iran's position but the European Union was most adamant that Iran sign the additional protocol. This stance of the Europeans was equated by Ali Akbar Velayati, the supreme leader's advisor on foreign affairs, with the 1828 Treaty of Trukmenchai wherein Iran surrendered large parts of its territory to Russia (Mousavian, 2013).

The offensive position in Iran feels that the talks with European Union were unsuccessful and thus led to increased Western demands on Iran rather than the other way around. According to Acton (interview, 2015), the social milieu of the talks needs to be taken into perspective. The U.S. administration was almost on the verge of going to war with Iran while the European Union was finalizing its deal with Iran and the latter

acted as a roadblock in the US plans. But once the United States was on board and negotiations started, there was more credibility.

According to Mousavian (2013), the reason why the Iranians, in 2005, responded to the threats of P5 +1 by accelerating their uranium enrichment programme was because they wanted to force the west to negotiate on equal terms. This belief, of being equal partners across the table is central to the Iranian demands and one of the key reasons for support from the populace to master the nuclear fuel cycle. Mousavian (2013) opines that the implementation of sanctions leads to increased support for the system against foreign meddling.

### **'NON-ALIGNMENT' AND 'NEITHER EAST NOR WEST'**

Hussain Musavi, the then Foreign Secretary, while delivering a speech at the non-aligned countries conference during March 1983 in New Delhi, pointed out how the honor and dignity of the oppressed nations needs to be maintained. In a guiding message to the heads of the non-aligned countries, Imam Khomeini (1982) as quoted in the *Echo of Islam* (1982: 55) explained that, “we advise you, Iran advises you to sit alone for a while and watch the US Government, Soviet Russia and other powers away from your minds .... Real non-alignment happens only when the

non-aligned movement truly breaks away from the superpowers.” Non-alignment for these states was strongly linked with the notion of sovereignty.

With the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty as the norm, India had little choice but to reject the biased nature of the treaty. Its moral dilemma of not testing its nuclear programme’s development led it to be an outlier state for more than three decades. Iran, as a prior signatory, chose to not leave the treaty but the revolutionary government generated little trust within the international community that chose to restrict its uranium enrichment. This, to the Iranian psyche, was a direct attack on the dignity and freedom of the state.

Khomeini (1985), in a message to the non-aligned nations stated, “History has witnessed that the people of India and the Muslim people of Iran rose against foreign domination over their respective political, economic and cultural spheres and did not stop short of achieving complete independence and sovereignty over their destinies. India and Iran have, since time immemorial, common affinities in culture and fine arts, like poetry, literature, architecture. With the passage of time, these bonds of close relationship have blossomed into very fruitful cooperation and collaboration. After the success of the Islamic Revolution, Iran freed herself from the strangulating treaties and joined the Non-Aligned



Movement of which India was one of the founder members. Since then, the scope of cooperation between our two countries has acquired notable dimensions. This is the avowed aim of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to keep super powers away from interference in the internal affairs of other nations to ensure peace and stability in the world, especially in South West Asia” (in Lal 1985: 87-88). Clubbing the two regions together, the Iranian leader describes how the two states were ‘fighting’ a similar battle and how there is a need for the two to co-operate against the ‘superpowers’.

## **CONCLUSION**

The chapter draws on the policies of India and Iran and how the prestige of the states was safe guarded using specific policies, that of non alignment and neither east nor west. It then goes on to link the policies with that of the specific nuclear programmes. Drawing from its policy of non-alignment, India was not unsure about accepting help for the perceived threats in its region. It had the support of the Soviet Union as well as America during times of crisis and there was no clear nuclear threat from either of its neighbours. But cognitive prior plays a significant role as it determines the state’s receptivity to new norms. For India, the

Nuclear Non Proliferation treaty did not represent an egalitarian model, but rather a subtle form of apartheid. This strongly affected the state prestige and the heightened the need for redemption.

The Iranian ideology of 'Neither East nor West', as championed by their leader, followed the same basic tenants of non-alignment. Although a part of the NPT, Iran, within the legal parameters of the treaty, wanted its right to enrich uranium. The Western Powers, due to their mistrust of the revolutionary state were more stringent with Iran than they were with other nuclear energy seeking states. This discrimination and inequality was against the norms of the Iranian state for whom justice, perseverance and independence were the cornerstones of their policies. Thus, the cognitive prior of Iran did not agree with the policies of inequality that are cornerstones for the Islamic Republic.

The chapter highlights the similarities between the two states of India and Iran and how they devised mechanisms such as foreign policy diktats that prevented them from a complete merger with the international community while still engaging with it.

The chapter also discusses at length, the new concepts of cognitive prior, as explained by Amitav Acharya that can help understand the decision making processes of states. Cognitive prior helps understand the reasons

for a state's decisions rather than clubbing it into groupings of 'irrational' or 'evil'. India was considered an outlier nuclear state and Iran was referred to as irrational and part of the 'axis of evil'. Cognitive prior explains the decisions of states without categorizing them into the slots mentioned.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

# **POST-COLONIALISM: DEFINING THE SELF WITH PRESTIGE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter aims to understand the definition of prestige using a postcolonial lens. It links the ontological security created by post-colonialism to nostalgia. This nostalgia in turn, develops within the collective, a need for prestige. The chapter then draws the linkages

between the decision to develop an indigenous nuclear programme and the notion of prestige associated with it.

Post-colonialism has been understood by both the states in a different manner. While for India, post colonialism meant getting out of the shadows of close to two hundred years of foreign occupation, for Iran, it meant averting any influences (direct and indirect) to its decision making. For Iran, the fear of colonialism was strongest after the revolution as the state had never directly been under colonial rule but could not have been listed as a free self-governed state either. For India, colonialism brought with it many things that bound the state as one, but on the other hand, the state also lost its sovereignty.

The chapter aims to bring together arguments of scholars on post colonialism and nostalgia and understand how prestige becomes an integral part of the decision making of the said states. Thereafter the chapter would look at the case study of India and Iran, bringing out the notions of prestige in their post colonial identity and nuclear programmes.

## **DEFINING NOSTALGIA**

Vess et al (2004) have drawn strong linkages between nostalgia and self-esteem. Sedikides takes the argument forward by asserting that nostalgia

is strongly linked with the development of the identity and becomes a mechanism for engaging with the 'other' (Sedikides 2012). Lupovici (2016) adds to the argument stating that by reconstructing the past and by mythologizing it, nostalgia idealizes the past. While increasing the self of self worth, nostalgia, Sedikides (2012) states that a subject derives pleasure from past glories and grandeur as the past cannot be taken away or denied.

Sucharov (2005) takes the argument forward by stating that pathological nostalgia occurs when the actor is fixated with past fantasy. Thus, for actors that are rigidly attached to past routines, nostalgia becomes both a sign of ontological security and an attempt to address it by narrating that glorified past.

## **POST-COLONIALISM AND IDENTITY**

According to Kakar (2008:1), "Identity is not a role, or a succession of roles, with which it is often confused. It is not a garment that can be put on or taken off according to the weather outside; it is not 'fluid', but marked by a sense of continuity and sameness irrespective of where the person finds himself during the course of his life." He felt that 'fluid' and changing identities were superficial and the identities we are born into leave a deep impact on our psyche, much before we make the choice of what we seek in our identity.

Identity is multi layered, multi-faceted and an ever evolving concept. Defining a person's identity is difficult as there is no one definition that can completely explain this notion. People chose different aspects of their identity to suit their needs. A State's identity is equally if not more complex than that of an individual. Foreign policy decisions are a clear indicator of these changes that occur within a state. Another indicator is the position taken by the said state with regards to international events. Although India has many facets and identities, there is a common notion of 'Indian-ness' that defines the state and its inhabitants. The same would hold true for Iran. As an Islamic republic, the notions of 'Islamiyat' and 'Iraniyat' would be the imperative factors that define the identity of the state. The study of discourse allows us to explain why a particular constructed understanding of a national interest is prioritized over others and becomes dominant (Solomon, 2015: 15-6).

Kapuuscinski (2006) talks about how post colonial states, especially weaker ones, tend to border themselves in the fear of being taken over once again. They do not want to be dictated to by another people, another culture or another set of values. They choose mechanisms from which they can differentiate their state from the colonial states. Thus, emphasis is not only on maintaining a distinct language and cultural ethos but also on matching the powerful colonizers in their own field, i.e. technology.



Literature on post colonial identity discusses the definition of the term, which is varied and diverse. This chapter looks at post colonialism as the study of the states that were under European colonial rule. Katzenstein (2005:103) observes that, "Europe is undergoing fundamental institutional change, with far-reaching efforts to redefine state prerogatives, while Asia is characterized by marginal adjustments, insistence of state sovereignty and a preference for bilateralism." This observation would hold true for the Asia and Europe in the 1950s and 60s too. Europe, keeping in line with the previous chapter, has stuck to its role of being the norm entrepreneur (along with the United States) while Asia has continued as the norm follower (India and Iran). Hemmer and Katzenstein (2002) drew an analogy between Europe and Asia, looking at how they were viewed by the United States. They explain that in order for multilateralism to succeed, a strong sense of collective identity is required in addition to shared interests and Asians were considered as aliens and an inferior community. Europeans were seen as an extension of their 'selves' giving a feeling of a transatlantic community, while Asians were unable to build on any transpacific commonality with the United States. Europe was seen as a part of the U.S.'s "self" and Asia as the "other". In his earlier work Katzenstein (1997) talks about how social norms of a region or state influence inter-state conduct differently in Asia and Europe as Asian

domestic structures tend to be informal and assimilative rather than formal and legal-rationalistic. This 'othering' of Asia is a bias it is constantly fighting against, and the space from which emerges their post colonial identity.

Post colonialism has been understood as a concept by many scholars (Spivak, 1988; Said, 1985; Krishna, 1999; Anderson, 2002; Yong, 2003; Chatterjee, 1999; Nandy, 1998, 1989, 1982). Recent work done on India's nuclear programme and post colonialism (Abraham, 1998 and Chacko, 2013) brings to light the links between the two concepts. This chapter aims to look at the notions of prestige prevalent in the relationship between postcolonial identity and the nuclear programme of a state. It also brings out the said concepts of post colonialism and nuclear programmes and understands the role of prestige.

"But at the same time, the desire for autonomy, for recognition, is something that is extremely powerful and a driver for a lot of otherwise irrational policies" (Abraham interview 2015). "Anything that is a response to a past event, to a personal trauma is post colonial."(Abraham 2015).

According to Abraham (2015), "there is no neat line dividing non alignment with post colonial identity .Non-alignment is a number of things, it reflects the desire to change the rules of the past; to not be tied to

any one particular country or bloc; and a desire to chart one's own path in the international system.”

Non alignment is a change in India's policy. The idea is that you have been colonized, putting the brown and the black countries in a box by themselves. To fight this force of new colonialism, they had to band together, to give each other support. This was predicated on a certain idea that a common colonial experience provides enough glue to create a common political stance. This didn't work. Hence, non-alignment. You can't assume that you share anything in common. India's desire to be non-aligned is in reference to the idea that it is a great civilizational country, it deserves to be separate and distinguished and taken seriously; that basic desire for recognition. This is a deeply post colonial concept. Its not just a question of being recognized by somebody else. But first to recognize that there is an inequality in the relationship. Its to recognize that the more powerful person needs the recognition of the weaker person and the weaker person can only become fully human, a sovereign subject, through struggle. This is not just recognition in the narrow international law sense of the word. Focus on the relationship between being non-aligned and the non-aligned movement. Simultaneously figure out the relationship between being non aligned and taking decisions that reflect an alliance. India, from the 1950s, took seriously the idea of the non-aligned movement, even though being part of a movement is, in a sense, subsuming its identity. So non-alignment as a policy is deeply contradictory. Seeing it as a mark of recognition gives it more purchase. (Abraham, 2010)

According to MgBeoji (2006) colonial states were fashioned on the Westphalian system, and were default followers and not creators of the

said system. As a result, the local institutions that were built from a bottom up approach in Europe, were developed in a top-down approach in the colonial states. This led to poor regulation and mismanagement in the colonies. No regulation meant that there was no development of human dignity and basic rights within these states. As a result, agency was presumed to be in the hands of the 'great powers' while western political perspectives were constructed and are still considered to be the pinnacle of international norms (Barkawi & Laffey 2006: 340) The fashioning of the states on the Westphalian system follows in the footsteps of Europe being the norm entrepreneur and Asia being the norm follower.

The link between the veto powers at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the nuclear powers is an obvious and glaring one. Many scholars have pointed out this link (Biswas, 2001; Abraham, 1998) leading to a critique of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty that legitimizes and institutionalizes nuclear power at the hands of a few while prohibiting the pursuit of nuclear security by the rest of the world. According to Grosfoguel (2011) the growth of the global South taking the notions of post colonialism ahead is a result of an acknowledgement of the difference between the cultures and peoples.

## **IRAN: FEAR OF COLONIALISM**

The tag of a post colonial state does not sit comfortably on the Islamic Republic of Iran as the state has never been directly under colonial rule. But different powers at different points of time have made deals with its rulers to get a free hand regarding their oil needs. The revolution of 1979 brought in a new government and a new way of thinking that is based on 'Islamiyat' and 'Iraniyat' and where the old government was discarded completely. But Theda Skocpol (1979) is of the opinion that revolutionary states are not completely devoid of their prior history; although they aim to disconnect from the past, their history is also a continuation of their past.

Ryszard Kapuscinski in his book on the Shah explains the Iranian psyche from a religious, Shiite perspective as well as from a nationalistic, ethnic perspective and how both came together to define the current Iranian identity. Whenever the rulers of Iran tried to be independent entities, they were cut short by the colonizers. Reza Shah, the founder of the Pahlavi Dynasty came to power with the tacit support of Britain. He was an autocratic ruler and during the Second World War appreciated Hitler's strategy and work ethic. Iran was the channel through which the Allied Powers were sending supplies to the Soviets. The Shah decided to stop the channel, exercising his right on his land. This angered the allied

powers to no end and the Shah was asked to abdicate his throne for the twenty two year old prince. With heavy dependency on the Allied powers for weapons, the Shah was forced to leave his throne and live out his life on the sidelines of history. The same was true for Iranian Prime Minister, Mohhamed Mossadegh. He wanted to nationalize Iranian oil so that the benefits of the money would reach the people of the country. But this did not fit well with the Allied powers who were reaping the benefits of the oil. As a result, in a coup backed by the CIA, the Shah's young and naïve son took over the reigns of the state machinery and ousted the popular leader. Thus, although Iran was never directly under the colonial rule of any power, colonial rulers have played a big role in dictating the leaders of the state. This was one of the reasons Ayatollah Khomeini was able to gather the angst of the people (BBC Documentary, 2009). It was also, as will be explained in the chapter, a major reason for the state to want to develop a nuclear programme of its own.

Kapuscinski (2006) speaks about the notions of superiority that exist in the Iranian psyche. Hierarchy is of prime importance in the culture where a group of Iranians organize themselves in accordance with the rules. One is spared the game of superiority if they are not considered a part of the game. He gives the example of a family set up in Iran. The woman is always inferior to the man. This is because the husband may

be non-existent in the outside world, but inside his home, he is the 'superior' being and more number of children guarantee more number of foot soldiers for the 'man' of the house. Notions of hierarchy are well entrenched within the society that sees itself as a superior race. State leaders are easily able to build on these notions and arouse public support for the state resources to be spent on development of nuclear technology.

Kapuscinski (2006) also states how important the concept of 'saving its face' is for Iran. Even though the Shah was facing unrest with the public, he refused to accept help from the world leaders who were his friends as he did not want to be seen as a weak leader. The same is also true for the Islamic republic leaders who cracked down on the 2003 protests and slowly brought in reforms.

Shi'ism came into being as an oppositional thought to the Sunni leadership (Ansari 2009). The Shia saw Ali as the next natural leader after the Prophet while the rest of the leadership felt otherwise. This traction was converted into a cleavage when Ali and his lineage were killed in trying circumstances. When Islam came to Persia, the conceptions of Shi'ism fit with the existing Iranian identity. The Iranian state, during the Sannasid Dynasty, had been warring for quite some time and found the ideals of Islam appealing. While the Persians adopted

Islam, it was not the version their Arab brethren were practicing, but a slightly varied version (Majidi interview 2015; Kapuscinski 2006).

The Iranians, according to Kapuscinski (2006), have the ability to safeguard their identity and independence irrespective of the subjugator. Even though the Arabs won the war and imposed Islam on the people of Persia, the Iranians found and adopted Shi'ism as Islam rather than be subjugated by the Arabs and their culture. Like most Asian nations, Iran too has consistently been invaded, partitioned and subjugated by a host of other states. Amidst all this accepting of Islam, they managed to keep their dignity and distinctness alive by adopting Shi'ism and opposing the Sunni ideology. The Iranian community has a feeling of being historically wronged and the concept in Shi'ism of waiting for the hidden imam keeps the hope consistently alive (Majidi interview 2015). This is also a way for the Iranians to fight the rulers. Shi'ism, thus, became a form of national survival for the Iranians; a way of life through which the Iranians kept their culture and sense of identity alive. The Iranian identity has also been formed by making Iran as oasis for all oppositionalists in the Muslim world. It was the place of refuge for all persecuted Muslims, mostly Shia who were fighting against the Sunni rule. The acceptance of Shi'ism in Iran is also linked to the Iranian fight against the Arab



authority, which was enmeshed with the Sunni authority figures (Kapuscinski 2006; Majidi 2015).

Two concepts are considered essential to understanding the Shia psyche, *taqija* and *kitman* (Kapuscinski 2006). These conceptions are enmeshed in the Iranian Shia identity and cannot be segregated under and either or category. *Taqija* is known as the art of dissembling. It entails that in a situation when a Shia is against a stronger opponent, the person can claim to become a believer of the stronger party. This would be accepted, as in doing so the Shi'ite is saving herself and the religion. The other concept is that of *Kitman*, which refers to the art of disorientation. This concept states that the Shi'ite can be contradictory and change a stance earlier taken. The Shi'ite can also choose to be ignorant or an idiot when danger is at the door step.

Iran's importance cannot be restrained. Christopher De Bellaigue points out that "Iran is the second-largest oil producer in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and has the world's second-largest natural gas reserves." At the same time, Iran's demands for energy are also growing and need to be met. Bellaigue (2009) states that, "Iran's power consumption is growing by around 7 percent annually, and its capacity must nearly triple over the next 15 years to meet projected demand." The sanctions have been very harsh and have lead to increased corruption and inefficiency while institutionalizing the distrust of Western investors. Bellaigue (2009) points out that,

Since 1995, when the sector was opened to a handful of foreign companies, Iran has added 600,000 barrels per day to its crude production, enough to offset

depletion in aging fields, but not enough to boost output, which has stagnated at around 3.7 million barrels per day since the late 1990s. Almost 40 percent of Iran's crude oil is consumed locally. If this figure were to rise, oil revenues would fall, spelling the end of the strong economic growth the country has enjoyed since 1999. Plugging the gap with natural gas is not possible — yet. Iran's gigantic gas reserves are only just being tapped, so Iran remains a net importer. (De Bellaigue 2009)

The relationship with the international community, which was not on good grounds to begin with, went bad with a series of events. After statements made such as 'Death to Israel' and 'Death to America' by Iranian leaders and the greater polity, Iran posed an existential threat to the Israeli statehood. Although the Khatami years were mostly unproblematic, with the coming of Mahmoud Ahmedinejad in 2005 the divide between the west and Iran increased. It was also under Ahmedinejad that Iran made technological headway in nuclear fuel cycle and enrichment of Uranium (Patrikarakos 2012).

Targhi (2001), states that Iranian nationalism has been used as a tool by the political leaders time and again to pursue their goals. The Iranian polity aggravates the issues of apartheid and create differences to pursue personal goals. This is especially true for the nuclear programme. As a Middle Eastern scholar, he explains how Iranian nationalism has time and again adopted practices from Europe and the Arabs, only to assimilate them and make them Iranian in nature. Thus, in the debate on whether Iraniyat or Islamiyat is the influencing factor in Iranian politics, Iraniyat is

the main driver behind the decisions of the state, but as an Islamic Republic, it uses the cover of Islamiyat to move ahead. This point was also reiterated by Ali Ansari (2015) when he said that the decisions of the state are primarily nationalistic in orientation and not very different from that of the Shah.

According to Luttwak (2013), whatever the state government of the day proposes, the people tend to go in the other direction. While the Shah's liberal policies made the Iranian people more pious, with the Islamic Republic, the Iranian people have become more secular. It is in this context that Iran's nuclear pursuits strengthen the regime as it evokes nationalistic support. With more opposition from the world leaders, the nationalistic fervour for the nuclear programme would only grow.

For Targhi (2001), identification with European culture has been used by the Iranians time and again to disassociate itself with the Arab-Islamic culture. They also use the racial difference (Aryan) to identify with Europe. An example quoted by Targhi (2001: 103) is that of Muhammad Shah (r. 1834-48), a Persian ruler who proclaimed that European military uniforms of his era were similar to the one worn by soldiers engraved on the wall of Persepolis. Targhi (2000) also refers to the boundaries of the Iranian state that were reaffirmed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century following many treaties such as those of Gulistan (1813) Turkmanchay (1828); Erzurum (1823 and 1847), and Paris (1857). According to him, the change in the

territory of Iran lead to a change in its characterization too wherein it became, from a confederation to a cohesive unit (mamlakat-ilran).

Sheldon Krishner (2013) helps understand the Iranian notions of post colonialism by stating that Iran would be a unique case where the anti-imperialism was very high, but it has never experienced direct colonial rule. It has, however, been subjected to foreign meddling under the rule of the Shah. The state has also constantly been part of 'the great game'. On the one hand it has lost sizable amounts of its territory to Russia (1980s) it has also been forced to give land to the new state of Armenia and Azerbaijan. During the Second World War, Iran was divided as a sphere of influence between the Soviet Union and Great Britain and finally in the 1950s, the United States became the main ally of the Iranian state. All this historical events have been used by leaders to fight stronger for Iran's independence and territorial integrity.

In a statement given to Press T.V. Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi (2013) said that, "Our enemies...know that the Iranian nation has never surrendered to bullying powers, and foreign powers have never been and will never be able to colonize Iran. The Iranian nation...will cross the treacherous and difficult strait of the [ongoing] economic war and brutal US sanctions and like the [1980-1988 Iraqi] imposed war, the enemy will be defeated and humiliated." As a senior military commander he kept

emphasizing on the how Iran has never been and never will be colonized by world powers.

Rahim Kanani, makes the argument that nuclear weapons are deplored by Iranian leaders. He states if one were to look at the overwhelming majority of voices, especially religious voices, the argument would be clear. Individuals in opposition to a nuclear weapon include current and former Supreme Leaders of Iran, the former Deputy Supreme Leader, the former Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, the Chairman of Parliament of Iran, Iran's Ambassador to Pakistan, and the Grand Marja of Shia Islam, among others. Those in favor of possession, including on a conditional basis as a deterrent and in the context of equal retaliation, include a member of the Iranian Parliaments' Judicial Commission, a member of Iran's Assembly of Experts, and two middle-ranking clerics. Although Kanani does point out to the Hezbollah Iran nexus in the nuclear dimension and the problems that could occur if such a device were to land in difficult hands. Kanani lists out support for nuclear programme but not for a nuclear weapons programme by Iran's religious elite which include Ayatoallah Khomeini, Grand Ayatollah Yusef Saanei Grand Marja of Shia Islam, Iranian Scholar and Hussein Shariamadari Managing Editor of Kayhan, an Iranian newspaper (Kanani 2011). Farhamy states that,

There is popular sentiment for Iran's nuclear programme not only among the youth, but also in academia and the bureaucratic and scientific establishments. The recent information about the nuclear programme disclosed to the people has been a source of national pride for a citizenry accustomed to the revolution's failures and setbacks. Acquiring nuclear weapons is thought to bring a certain level of prestige and political influence, both at the regional and global levels. From a sociological perspective, nuclear weapons can be seen as serving a nationalistic function, similar to that of flags, airlines and Olympic teams. These items represent what a state believes they have to possess to be legitimate and modern. These ideas give credibility to Iran's desire for legitimacy, identity and regional hegemony and security. Iran's clear sense of victimization also drives the desire to acquire nuclear weapons. Many Iranians believe that the nation has been denied its "rightful" status as a regional power by the West. The continuing American economic sanctions since 1979 have further intensified the sense of victimization. Iran's motivations to acquire nuclear weapons are driven by strategic utility and national pride. Nuclear power and nuclear weapons are a

symbol of strength and power, giving Iran a sense of identity. A nuclear Iran means a realignment of geopolitics and power dynamics in the Persian Gulf. It could potentially mean much more, such as a shift in the position of the long subordinated Shi'ite minority relative to the power and prestige of the Sunni majority, which generally dominates the Muslim world. (Farhamy 2008)

Ray Tayekeh (2004-05), a senior scholar, adds that the slow emergence of bureaucratic and nationalist pressure has generated a momentum towards proliferation. Takeyeh, in his work quotes Iranian students, explaining their fervour where the Iranian students proclaim that nuclear energy is the legitimate right of Iranians and that they will now bow to oppression and hegemonic policies. They further also state that Iran needs nuclear weapons to deter the U.S. and scientists objected to the Additional Protocols (AP) because it brought along checks on the nuclear programme that could potentially stop Iran from developing nuclear energy and weapons. International Scholars such as McFaul et al (2006-07), seem to be in agreement with this argument. He believes that status is a huge driving factor for Iran where the element of prestige that comes from being in the nuclear club would help Iran become a dominant regional power.

Richard Falk (2004) quoted by Zachary Lockman observes that, there is a dichotomy within the understanding of Islam and the West. While Islam is understood as deeply irrational and oppressive as a political arrangement, the West is understood as being rational and coherent (Lockman 2004: 174). According to Steinback (2011), this can be seen in the double standards of the west with regards to Israel and Iran. While Israel as a nuclear weapon state (undeclared) does not get reprimanded, Iran is forced to follow stricter rules for fear of a domino effect. Iran gets sanctions while Israel is protected.

This dichotomy resonates with Said's (1978) argument on Orientalism where the 'Orient' is the mirror image of the West, "where 'we' are rational and disciplined; 'they' are impulsive and emotional; where 'we' are modern and flexible, 'they' are slaves to ancient passions and routines; where 'we' are honest and compassionate, 'they' are treacherous and uncultivated," (Gusterson 1999: 114; Said 1978). For example, Iran has been demonised by the United States since the Iranian Revolution in 1979, when citizens of the Islamic Republic laid siege to the US embassy compound in Tehran, and took fifty-two American hostages for 444 days (Zenko 2012). Their suspected nuclear weapons programme and alleged sponsorship of terrorism have deemed them a 'rogue state' (BBC 2013). US President Obama issued a warning to Iran in a September 2012 speech at the UN General Assembly, stating unequivocally, "The United States will do what we must to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon...It would threaten the elimination of Israel, the security of Gulf nations and the stability of the global economy" (United States Govt. 2012).

According to the Iranian Diplomacy (2015), Presidential Advisor Akbar Torkan have lauded praises on the Iranian scientists and engineers for continuing their efforts successfully despite sanctions. Torkan (2015) addressing the national engineering conference, stated that "We have

gained many achievements in the defence industry under the sanctions during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war and after that. Those who had imposed sanctions on Iran thought that we cannot utilize the state-of-the-art fighter jets as well as radar and missile systems, but we managed to achieve great achievements in the defence field." Like India, the Iranian state has consistently emphasized that its independent and growing military serve only defensive purposes.

Khatami (2010) stated that with regards to the U.S.-Iran relationship, it is imperative for the United States to "forget about its master-servant relationship with the Third World and as a power that has garnered so much of its wealth and power from all over the world—it ought to instead use this power for peace and development of the other countries. It should not define its interests in contradiction to the others" (Iranian Diplomacy, 2010). In an interview with Graham Allison, Mohamed El Baradei (2010), the IAEA chief who has worked with the Iranians states that Iranian officials has stated the Iranian position which claims to not have problems with the acceptance of America as a global power, but the problem comes with the non-acceptance of Iran as a regional power. The acceptance of the other, with the other being Iran, has always been a roadblock in the US-Iran relationship. Iranians can for an acknowledgement from the Americans regarding their existence as not



just neighbours of the Arabs and the Israelis. The definition of prestige stated at the beginning of the study falls in line with the Iranian need for validation from the 'other'.

Iran's current President, Hassan Rouhani (2013) discussing the mutual hostility with the United States to Peterson (2013) has made statements which reflect the need to reproach, but not at the cost of its prestige.

- "This is a very old wound...and we need to think about somehow *healing this injury,*"
- "Wisdom tells us both countries need to think more about the future [and a] way to *find solutions to past issues.*"
- Rohani said he'd like to see an express declaration by the US *to "never interfere"* in Iran's domestic politics, *recognition of Iran's right to enrich uranium* for peaceful purposes, and an end to what Iran sees as *unilateral "bullying."* In exchange he said Iran might make "confidence building" gestures of its own.
- "We have some enemies, but we need to try our utmost to make the enemy understand that they will have to *bow down to the Iranian nation,* not to show the dagger."

Iran and the international community are at loggerheads with regards to Iran's nuclear programme. The Islamic Republic has time and again specified that it does not want a weapons programme, citing it to be against their religion, i.e. the concept of Islamiyat (Khaminey 2013; Khomeini 1990). Quotes by both the Supreme leaders, Ayatollah Khomeini and Ayatollah Khamenei as pointed above, repeatedly emphasize how the concept of a nuclear weapon is against their faith and as they are an Islamic Republic, following the tenets of their faith would be a prime mover of their foreign policy.

Mohammed Javad Zarif's opinion pieces and interviews provides an insight into the Iranian psyche. Some of his quotes bring out the essence of Iran and the need for prestige. In an article written for the New York Times, Zarif (2015) states that, "Our rationale is that the nuclear issue has been a symptom, not a cause, of mistrust and conflict. On a broader level, regional dialogue should be based on generally recognized principles and shared objectives, notably respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all states; inviolability of international boundaries; non-interference in internal affairs; peaceful settlement of disputes; impermissibility of threat or use of force; and promotion of peace, stability, progress and prosperity in the region". Many of his other interviews and editorials reflect the same. The following are

certain points made by Zarif in an interview with David Ignatius (2013) and in an opinion piece (2015a) written for the Foreign Affairs (italics added):

- “As you know, Iranians have never accepted ‘diktats’ from outside forces. And this is not an exception. The pressures that have been placed upon it, and the willingness to live with them is testimony to the *refusal to accept pressure* and intimidation. So *equal footing* is an important concept for us.”
- “A simple definition of equal footing is that we will not seek to dictate to them what a solution should look like; and we will not accept from them what they dictate a solution should look like. We are supposed to address the concerns that Iran will not produce nuclear weapons or create the situation that creates concerns about a nuclear weapons programme. Iran did not decide to enrich. Iran was *forced to enrich*, because we had a share in a consortium in France called “Eurodif,” which we had paid for fully, but we were not able to get a gram of enriched uranium, even for our research reactor that was built under the ‘Atoms for Peace’ Program of President Eisenhower.”

- “We did not decide to enrich to 20 percent. We tried for 20 years to buy 20 percent-enriched uranium for fuel for that reactor. We were intimidated, insulated, pushed back and forth to the point that we said we’ll do it ourselves: We’re not going to take this from anybody! Now this doesn’t mean that if they provide us with fuel now we will accept it, because first of all we have made this investment domestically, and secondly we do not have any trust and, third we do not see any reason now that we have put so much time and effort in it and brought them to the point of abandoning the illusion of zero enrichment in Iran, why should we accept anything less.”
- “Every single programme that Iran has was sought from the West first; they refused, we then relied on our own technology. We did not want to start from scratch in building all these research reactors. We wanted to use the technology. Everybody wants to use sophisticated technology. It was *denied to us*, in denial of the NPT, because mind you, it requires countries to provide energy for peaceful purposes. It’s not just a right, it’s a requirement – it’s an obligation to provide. So they have been in violation of the NPT for the past at least 22 years, since 1990, almost every single Western country. Unfortunately there is no official judge of that

violation because that article does not have any monitoring mechanisms. But it should, because NPT stands on three pillars, and one of them is peaceful use – along with non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.”

- “Let’s not talk about disarmament, because the record is not that impressive. Iran was not provided with light water reactors. We had to invest with what we knew how to build. It doesn’t mean that we wanted a heavy water reactor because you can extract plutonium from it. It was because that was the only technology that was available to us at the time we started this.”
- “If you sit in Iran, and you see people having concerns about Fordow, the only conclusion you can draw is that they want to attack you. Because what is the significance of Fordow? Fordow is a facility that is under daily inspection by [International Atomic Energy Agency]. Daily! So we cannot do anything in Fordow. The only difference that Fordow has from the enrichment facility at Natanz is that Fordow cannot be hit. So if you insist that I should dismantle Fordow, or do something with Fordow, that means that somebody has an intention of a military strike. And I have to say that a military strike is a violation of the most fundamental principles of international law. I mean, that is not a basis for

negotiation. I should not accept negotiations which, as their foundation, have a violation international law, let alone Iranian interest. . . . So they're asking me to consider an issue that is fundamentally unreasonable.”

- “We do not follow a policy of ambiguity; this is not our intention; we follow a policy of clarity that we do not seek nuclear weapons. If you call us a religious state, then at least recognize the premise on which a religious state is founded, and the highest principle in a religious state is that when the highest jurist in the country issues a decree, that becomes untouchable. And the decree is that weapons of mass destruction are against Islamic principles and are haram (sinful and forbidden). So that leaves no ambiguity. We are prepared to translate that clarity into action – because we have no interest in leaving any ambiguity. But we're *not going to accept diktats.*”
- “We are going to negotiate on all issues, within the framework of the Geneva agreement, but based on equal footing, *mutual respect.* We are prepared to put ourselves in your shoes but we, at the same time, ask you to *respect our constraints.* Don't ask us to give you an economic analysis of why enrichment is feasible in Iran, because it doesn't apply. For us, the issue is not economic

viability but the fact of denial – when you do not have access to something, money is no problem.”

- “We will not accept any preconditions, not that we have any difficulty with anything, but as a matter of principle, we believe that for Iran to accept preconditions is simply not necessary because if you want Iran to play a positive role, then you will invite Iran. If you do not want Iran to play a positive role, to be there, then nobody is asking for an invitation. So I’m not asking for an invitation. I will certainly not accept any preconditions.”
- “The ongoing process of globalization -- however conceived and defined, whether lauded or despised -- has brought its inescapable weight to bear on the foreign policies of all states, whether large or small, developed or developing. Since its establishment by a popular revolution in 1979, the Islamic Republic of Iran has grappled with these challenges. The post-revolutionary foreign policy of Iran has been based on a number of cherished ideals and objectives embedded in the country’s constitution. These include the preservation of Iran’s independence, territorial integrity, and national security and the achievement of long-term, sustainable national development. Beyond its borders, Iran seeks to enhance its regional and global stature; to promote its ideals, including

Islamic democracy; to expand its bilateral and multilateral relations, particularly with neighbouring Muslim-majority countries and nonaligned states; to reduce tensions and manage disagreements with other states; to foster peace and security at both the regional and the international levels through positive engagement; and to promote international understanding through dialogue and cultural interaction.”

- “As a solid regional power in this era of intense transition in global politics, Iran stands in a unique position. Given its large landmass and unique geographic position along the east-west transit route, Iran, since antiquity, has enjoyed a preeminent position in its region and beyond. Although Iran’s civilization and cultural heritage have remained intact, its political and economic fortunes have fluctuated periodically, depending on, among other things, its governance at home and its relations with the outside world. The victory of the 1979 revolution, a popular, nationwide, antimonarchical uprising with a mixture of republican and Islamic traits, contributed to the establishment of a new revolutionary order in the country. The repercussions were drastic, and the revolution deeply affected the country’s foreign relations, not only in its



immediate neighbourhood but also throughout the greater Middle East and in the rest of the world.”

- “Any objective analysis of Iran’s unique attributes within the larger context of its tumultuous region would reveal the country’s significant potential for a prominent regional and global role. The Islamic Republic can actively contribute to the restoration of regional peace, security, and stability and play a catalytic role during this current transitional stage in international relations. In light of the increasing importance of normative and ideational factors in global politics, the Islamic Republic is well suited to draw on the rich millennial heritage of Iranian society and culture and the significant heritage of the Islamic Revolution, particularly its indigenously derived and sustained participatory model of governance. Iran can use such strengths to help realize the deeply cherished national aspirations of the Iranian people, including the achievement of long-term development and regional ascendance commensurate with the country’s inherent capacities and stature.”
- “Iran also benefits from a number of historical characteristics that could be considered unique sources of opportunity, many of which have not been properly or fully leveraged in the past. For example, Iran has *remained independent from outside powers* and *practiced*

*genuine nonalignment*, lending it a particular freedom of action within the existing global order. Iran can also leverage its political traditions. It has successfully established an *indigenous democratic model of governance*, developing and maintaining a rare religious democracy in the modern world. It has an unmatched cultural identity emanating from its dynamic blend of Iranian and Islamic culture, which it can use to promote its mission and message throughout the entire Islamic world.”

- “As an ancient society with a plurality of ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities, Iran also offers a model for political inclusion. And the country has achieved all of this at the centre of a vital geostrategic region that has witnessed a long history of major-power rivalries, interventions of all sorts, and protracted military conflicts. Finally, Iran has also demonstrated its potent ideational capabilities and universal reach through such initiatives as President Muhammad Khatami’s “Dialogue among Civilizations” and President Hassan Rouhani’s recent proposal for a “world against violence and extremism,” which was adopted as a resolution by the UN General Assembly last December.”
- “It is imperative for other states to accept the reality of Iran’s prominent role in the Middle East and beyond and to recognize

and respect Iran's legitimate national rights, interests, and security concerns. It is equally important for other states to scrupulously *observe the sensitivities of the Iranian nation*, particularly regarding its *national dignity, independence, and achievements*. Westerners, especially Americans, need to modify their understandings of Iran and the Middle East and develop a better grasp of the region's realities, avoiding the analytic and practical mistakes of the past. Courage and leadership are required to seize this historic opportunity, which might not come again. The opportunity must not be lost."

Iranian Diplomacy (2012) met with Reza Sabzalipour, head of the World Trade Centre, who stated that although sanctions deeply affected the Iranian population, for the economic and political growth of Iran, the sanctions were a boon. This was because the tough sanctions reinforced the notions of Independence, industrial innovation and growth (Sabzalipour 2012). Documentary movies made by Press T.V. (2014, 2015) highlight how the Iranian determination to fight has gotten stronger with faced sanctions; the Press T.V. documentary (2015) states that at the heart of Iranian science is self belief, independence and endless possibilities and although Iran might not be there yet, but it wants to be at the forefront of the science world.

Current Iranian President Hassan Rouhani (2014) too has reiterated points made by the Supreme Leader against the development and use of nuclear weapons. In this statement quoted by Iranian Diplomacy (2014), the president states that the decision is not based on Iran being a part of the NPT, but was based on the Iran's ethical principles and beliefs as laid down by Ayatollah Khomeini during and after the revolution. The elected leader, in a meeting with Defence ministry officials cited how it would be easier to make chemical and biological weapons but Iran, once again chooses to not pursue these means based on its beliefs. As a signatory to the NPT, the president assures the world that it would not build a bomb, but refuses to accept limitations on uranium enrichment and nuclear fuel production (Iranian Diplomacy 2014). "We signed these treaties to show the world we are not after such weapons. Even if there were no NPT or other treaties, our belief, our faith, our religion and principles tell us not to seek weapons of mass destruction. The foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is based on easing tensions and building confidence with the world. This is not a tactic or slogan. Iran is not seeking tensions with others ... but we don't compromise on our dignity, independence, national interests and values," Rouhani said (Iranian Diplomacy 2014). Thus, Iran portrays itself as morally driven, much like India did.

Fars News Agency (2015) reports President Hassan Rouhani (2015) underscoring that Iran would like to reach an agreement with the world powers, but not at the cost of its principles. His foreign minister toed the Iranian line, stating,

Achieving the first objective is not difficult, because Iran does not want or need nuclear weapons. In our view, nuclear weapons are obsolete tools of the past, incapable of providing external security or internal stability. This is especially the case for Iran, which is content with its size, geography, natural resources and human capital, and has not started a single war in the past three centuries. A sober strategic assessment will show that nuclear weapons are detrimental to Iran's security. Also, Iran also has a solid track record of opposing all WMDs on religious grounds. Ayatollah Khamenei, like his predecessor Imam Khomeini, declared that all WMDs are strictly forbidden by Islam. For this reason, Iran did not use chemical weapons even in retaliation when Saddam Hussein gassed our troops and civilians on a scale not seen since the First World War Zarif (2015b).

Jim Walsh (2015), in an interview with Iranian Diplomacy pointed out the need to recognize Tehran's capabilities as the first step towards acceptance. He agrees with President Rohani that all sides should use the language of respect stating that, "I know that there's also sort of a cultural issue here. It's really common for US politicians to talk about carrots and sticks; that is normal for us and is not meant as an insult.

But I can see how that in other cultures can be seen as disrespectful. So I think we have to change the language” (Walsh 2015).

Farideh and Lotfian (2013), in their article in *Foreign Affairs* talk about different approaches used by the Americans, offensive and defensive strategies and their implications on Iranian relations with the United States. They use Iran’s *20-Year Outlook* (2005) document, which was produced by the government to provide some insight. The brief is a framework the state of Iran uses to outline the country’s aspirations which include reaching the top in progress in the regions of the Middle East and South East Asia, whether it be economic, technological or scientific. This showcases the reality of the world powers as understood by Iran, where it aims realistically to become a stronger regional power. Another aim of the *20-Year Outlook*, is that of constructive interaction with the global community. Both the aims point to an attainment of prestige via the decided goals.

Khomeini, as the Supreme leader made a few statements that reflect on the post colonial nature of the Iranian psyche.

- In a message on the Anniversary of the 15<sup>th</sup> of Khordad of June 1953, Ayatollah Khomeini asserted that the Islamic Republic “seeks religious brotherhood with the Muslims of the region and the world

and seeks peaceful coexistence with all countries of the world.” He states: “Islam has come to unite the various nations and mankind like the teeth of a comb so that none of them may dominate another...According to Islam, the merit of Human beings lies in the degree of their ‘taqwa’, consciousness of God.”(Shafi 1993:117)

- Khomeini (1981b:24) stated that “our nation is *submissive to justice and truth* just as it has *stood up to oppression and tyranny*.”
- “We were a nation who was under the pressure of the superpowers. Now we have been relieved from their pressure. We are advancing now, which is a *source of dignity* for the nation. Dignity does not mean that our stomachs have to be filled. Dignity means that we make progress in our religion and ideology. Thank God, we are making progress for our ideology and will expand our ideology [so it would reach] all of the Islamic countries. Moreover, we want to reach the Deprived wherever they are. We are making progress and we want human beings to make progress.” (Khomeini 1979: 104)
- “They mostly spend their time in order to destroy this Islamic Republic. It was either said or written in these texts that the U.S. president Ronald Regan has said that „we have to do something

so that the war (Iran-Iraq) would end, because this war is no longer in the U.S. interest. You can see what kind of confession a man [such as] the president of a so-called superpower nation is making: That the war has so far been in the interest of the U.S., because the war was meant to create disruptions in this Islamic Republic. Now that they see this cannot be done and that it is possible that the Islamic Republic would develop very much, and that is possible that other Muslim countries, too, would be awakened. Therefore, now this is a threat for the U.S.; it is no longer in the U.S. interest. Now it has asked all those who are involved to get together and find a way to somehow end this war in peace.”(Khomeini 1982a: 145)

- “All praises be to Allah, thanks to the Islamic Revolution of Iran, vistas of light and hope are opened before all the world’s Muslims. As a result of the ramifications of these events, death and destruction will be brought to the Arrogant.”(Khomeini 1988b:71)
- “The nation of Iran, thank God Almighty and due to the grace of the saints of the Blessed and Exalted Lord who gave it [the nation] its faith, and who empowered it, this nation rejected all.” It took a stand, saying “We want *independence*. We want



- freedom*". If the situation continues in manner, you can be sure that its rays will engulf the whole world."(Khomeini 1988d: 447)
- "There is an all-out propaganda [campaign] of the West's propaganda apparatus, or their satellites, or the propaganda [machine] of the East with all of its satellites, because they have been frightened by the Islamic Republic. In addition to the fact that their interests in Iran have been hurt—and if it be the Will of Allah, they will permanently remain damaged—they are also afraid that this would spill over, this movement and revolution would spill over to outside, and would be exported to other countries" (Khomeini 1981d: 375-6)
  - "I hope that the nations would be awakened and take note of the fact that all of this propaganda aims to suppress Islam right here and not allow Islam, in its true sense, in its Neither-Eastern-Nor-Western sense, to be implemented in other places." (Khomeini 1981a:123)
  - "They can say what they want about the East and the West. We are going on our own path and we hope to go all the way. Of course, they are unhappy that their interests in this country have ceased to exist. They are afraid that the same will happen to their

interests in other countries. That is why they are hatching, and in the future will hatch, their own plots. If it be the will of Allah, He will foil these plots.”(Khomeini 1983b: 345)

- “This century is the century of the *victory of the oppressed* over the oppressors.”(Khomeini 1981a: 14)
- “Iran has always encouraged the non-aligned movement to take revolutionary action at a time when the super powers have agreed between themselves to suppress and plunder the countries of the third world...and as a revolutionary Islamic country and a member of the non-aligned movement, Iran has declared its willingness to put this great plan into effect.”(Khomeini 1982c:55)

Taylor (1983) discussing the Iranian notion of martyrdom within the Shia tradition points out how this very tradition of martyrdom lead the ulema to head the opposition movements against the Shah. Another example of Shia martyrdom being used in the protests that led to the revolution was the popularity of Hussein’s dictum, “death is better than life under oppressors”.

Beheshti (1980), Leader of Iran’s Islamic Republic Party, said: “Independence was the touch stone of Iran’s policies and maintaining that

independence was the key to her relations with other countries”( *Times of India*, 1980). Ali Khomeini (1982), then President of Iran was firm in his statements with the editor of the *Newsweek Magazine* that acceptance of foreign help would be restricted to purchase of equipment but the Iranian state would not heed to advise from the outside.

Thus, Iranian notions of post imperialism and post colonialism weighed heavily and still continue to do so in their decision making. The Iranian Self, which is defined by the notions of Iraniyat followed by Islamiyat, defines their post colonial identity in the most coherent manner. This, according to Ali Ansari (interview, 2015) is a part of the Islamic Republic’s foreign policy which is in concentric circles. Iraniyat is at the core followed by the notion of Islamiyat. The larger circle for the regime consists of all the downtrodden and sidelined people.

## **INDIA: IDENTIFYING THE COLONIZERS**

This segment looks at the different voices that brought to fore the post colonial understanding to India’s nuclear decisions. It brings out the aspects of prestige in the narrative of the state and how a post colonial understanding provides an explanation of this need for prestige.

Nehru in *Discovery of India* (1946:30) states that, “the unit of India was no longer merely an intellectual conception for me; it was an emotional experience which overpowered me...It was absurd, of course, to think of India or any country as a kind of anthropomorphic entity. I did not do so..Yet I think with a long cultural background and a common outlook on life, develops a spirit that is peculiar to it and that is impressed on all its children, however much they may differ among themselves.” Kakar (2008) uses this statement by Nehru to explain that the concept of ‘Indianness’ by default, comes from the similarities produced by “an overarching Indic, pre-eminently Hindu civilization that has contributed the lion’s share to what would call the ‘cultural gene pool’ of India’s people.”

According to Nehru, “the spirit of adventure and a rational spirit of inquiry gave way to a narrow orthodoxy, taboos and blind idolatry...like a sluggish stream moving slowly through the accumulations of dead centuries” (Chengappa 2000: 68). This change was to be brought about by the new independent state leaders. Chengappa cites Nehru and gives examples from history to show how India became prey to invaders. For example, Al-Buruni, the gifted eleventh century scholar employed in the court of Mahmud of Ghazni, the Muslim invader who ransacked India wrote, ‘The Hindus believe that there is no country but theirs, no nation but theirs, no kings like theirs, no religion like theirs, no science like theirs. They are haughty, foolishly vain, self-conceited and stolid.If they travelled and mixed with other nations they would soon change their minds, for their ancestors were not so narrow minded as the present generation is.’” (Chengappa 2000: 68). These examples add to the feeling of lost confidence and a low self-esteem. A nuclear programme, with its technological prowess, acts as a confidence booster. For India then, the nuclear programme acted as booster and gave the state assurance to interact with the international states at an equal footing.

“In his 1998 interview Haskar felt: ‘Nehru wanted to break the concept that nations could take colour pencils, divide the world among themselves and carve dominions.’ He interprets Nehru’s advocacy of being non-aligned as only ‘a means at a particular time, and at a particular place, to advance, promote and protect not just India’s interest but for maintaining world peace’” (Chengappa 2000: 71). According to Chengappa (2000: 78), self reliance was one of the key themes of the first Indian Prime Minister. By placing

India on the path of progress, by developing India's science and technology division, Pt. Nehru wanted to pull the nation out of a rut. He wanted for India to be at par with the developed nations of the time. It was the theme of self-reliance that led the Tata Trust to set up the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) the earlier name for Baba Atomic Research Centre (BARC).

“In April 1948, Nehru agreed to Bhabha's proposal to legislate the Atomic energy Act in the Constituent Assembly and establish the AEC stating: ‘we are now facing an atomic age...and this is something more powerful than either steam or electricity. If we have to remain abreast in the world as a nation which keeps ahead of things, we must develop this atomic energy quite apart from war- indeed, I think we must develop it for the purpose of using it for peaceful purposes.’ Significantly, Nehru added, ‘Of course we are compelled as a nation to use it for other purposes, possibly no pious sentiments of any of us will stop the nation from using it that way’” (Chengappa 2000: 79).

Nehru's statements show the dichotomy of the decision for the development of a nuclear programme. He wanted India to be an international and active participant in decision making and knew that in order for India to be taken as a serious contender, a nuclear programme was a must. He was, simultaneously, aware of the horror of a nuclear war and the disaster that it could bring. Thus, as Prime minister, he kept the nuclear option alive because of the need to be taken seriously by the international community. This fact was reiterated by Raja Ramanna (interview 2015) who stated that before India became a nuclear weapons state, there was no debate regarding nuclear weapons and policy that India was called for; while after testing, India and Indians were part of the international debate and their views were taken seriously. The driving factor for keeping a nuclear programme alive was indeed a need to be taken seriously by the international community.

Raja Ramanna, the eminent scientist, stated, “There was never a discussion among us over whether we shouldn't make the bomb; how to do it was more important. For us it was a matter of prestige that would justify our ancient past. The question of a deterrent came much later. Also, as Indian scientists we were keen to show our Western counterparts, who thought little of us those days, that we too could do it” (cited in Chengappa 2000: 82). S. Gopal, Nehru's biographer in an interview stated, “It is not

generally known that Nehru wrote to Bhabha that he was against outlawing of atomic weapons. His policy was never to use it but to have it because we can't completely abjure from it; whereas Bhabha wanted to abjure from it completely in line with Nehru's public speeches. Nehru refused" (Chengappa 2000: 83). As the next leader, it was for Shastri to take change the ambiguity regarding nuclear weapons. But his decision to willingly come under the umbrella of another state did not go down well with the press and with the Indian elite. Questions were raised regarding India's non-alignment policy and how such a move would be against the very principles the Indian nation stood for. Prime Minister Shastri's Gandhian approach and ideology did not fit well with the strategic and scientific community in India. He is said to have suggested that other countries could use India's facilities to reprocess plutonium, an idea that had most nuclear capable countries turn pale. This made the scientists upset as the statement referred to the use of facilities in an open manner and the strategic community went berserk when such a national security matter was laid out in the open by the leader of the nation. (Chengappa 2000)

In the traditional Indian set up, a father-son relationship holds strong significance. To fill a father's shoes would mean that a son is ready to take on the responsibility of the family (Kakar 2008). With the ending of the British rule, power was transferred to the elites of India. These elites then went on to aim to be like their superiors/ prior bosses. After 1945, nuclear technology has gripped the world with its power and its influence. If the Western powers were to have this hold over nuclear technology, then it is imperative for the Indian state to be at par with the hierarchically superior state and develop its own programme.

Kakar brings forth another legacy, that of the superior-subordinate or leader-follower. Indian conceptions demand that we pay respect or *manna* to our elders and leaders while our followers and subordinates provide us (the superior/ leader) with the same respect. He opines that Indians are more prone to revere than to admire. We seek this in our relations with the international community. As a new born state in 1947, India duly paid its dues by being obedient and respectful towards others. By the time it turned 30, i.e. in 1977, it had showcased that the nuclear device had been tested.

Kakar (2008: 37) then refers to the concept of the fair skin and what it means for Indians. He opines a dichotomy where on the one hand a foreigner eats forbidden foods, especially beef, putting him in the category of untouchables, but at the same time the psychological association of fair skin with everything clean, regal and desirable along with memories of being ruled by fair skinned visitors makes the category of untouchability improbable.

“Just as the family is the primary foil for a child’s budding sense of identity, caste is the next circle in his widening social radius. The caste’s values, beliefs, prejudices and injunctions, as well as its distortions of reality, become part of the individual’s mind and contents of his conscience. It is his internalized caste norms that define ‘right action’ or dharma for the individual, make him feel good and loved when he lives up to these norms, and anxious and guilty when he transgresses them” (Kakar 2008: 26). Kakar’s argument finds resonance in the hierarchical mindset of the Indian and the Iranian societies. Both the societies are, as stated, hierarchical in nature. India’s problem of caste is well known and Kapuscinski (2006) sheds some light on the Iranian sense of superiority as highlighted before.

Sudhir Kakar (2008) makes the argument for how Indians are the most hierarchical of all cultures. The Indian caste system is such that there will always be someone subordinate to you and someone superior to you. Even so, the Brahmins as a varna exist at the top and are never discriminated against. This sense of superiority was deeply affected when India was not provided entry into the exclusive Security Council club which also doubles up as a nuclear club. Many states, including India, linked the veto to nuclear technology and weaponization. As a ruling and majoritarian brahminical class, the Indian state was keen to advance its knowledge base in the nuclear realm and develop this technology on its own.

Ashis Nandy (1983) speaks of modern colonialism as a separate entity that won over vast lands not because of its technological and military might, but more due to its ability to maintain hierarchies that were incompatible with the traditional order. He states that as the colony is the mind, concepts of the West are generalized and shifted; they are no longer geographical and temporal entities, rather just psychological entities in which the

West is inside and outside, in structures and in minds. It is due to this reason that “Colonialism never seems to end with formal political freedom. As a state of mind, colonialism is an indigenous process released by external factors; its sources lie deep in the minds of the rulers and the ruled” (Nandy 1983: 3).

“Colonialism is also a psychological state rooted in earlier forms of social consciousness in both the colonizers and the colonized. It represents a certain cultural continuity and carries a certain cultural baggage” (Nandy 1983: 2). Nandy views colonialism as a psychological entity wherein the variables used to describe the states of mind under colonialism have themselves become politicized since the entry of modern colonialism on the world scene, in the sphere of political psychology.

He does not take away from the political economy of colonialism that had its effects on the populace, but reiterates that “the crudity and inanity of colonialism are principally expressed in the sphere of psychology and in the ability of colonialism to capture the minds of the people in subjugation”(Nandy, 1983: 2). According to Nandy, “Colonialism creates a culture in which the ruled are constantly tempted to fight their rulers within the psychological limits set by the latter. Thus, the specific variants of the concepts with which many anti-colonial movements in our times have worked have often been the products of the imperial culture itself and, even in opposition, these movements have paid homage to their respective cultural origin” (Nandy 1983:3). “For example, once the British rulers and sections of Indians internalized the colonial role definitions and began to speak, with reformist fervour, the language of the homology between sexual and political stratarchies, the battle for the minds of men was to a great extent won by the Raj” (Nandy 1983: 6-7).

He points out that “In colonial culture, identification with the aggressor bound the rulers and the ruled in an unbreakable dyadic relationship. While the British saw their rule as an agent of progress and as a mission, many Indians saw their salvation in becoming more like the British, in friendship or in enmity” (Nandy 1983: 7). It is this salvation that independent India was trying to get rid of by strengthening its identity vis-a-vis the international community.



This argument is further supported by Al Rodham who delves links neuro psychology with politics. He states that the socializing structures in a society play a significant part in how habits are formed. Habit, as a promoter of status quo, has a powerful function in social life. Rodham states that social theorists from Weber to Bourdieu have recognized the relevance of habits and how it is different from a reflexive behaviour. Thus, habits play a significant role at the intra-state and inter-states levels and as a result entrench patterns of behaviour, whether it be for cooperation or enmity (Al-Rodham, 2015). Dipesh Chakraborty (2000) shows how the legacies of Eurocentrism are yet to leave the Indian psyche. Ram (2010) points out how concepts of 'west' and 'non-west' are saturated with the legacies of Euro-America. These conceptions find their linkages in the work Frantz Fanon (1961) and Ashis Nandy (2004). This resonates with the conception of cognitive prior determining the outcome of state decisions.

As a state on the brink of independence, India was unclear on its stand on intervention. A post colonial state should support other post colonial states or should it not intervene in the affairs of another state. The latter would be beneficial for India as it did not want for other states to intervene in the internal matters of the state either. But after much deliberation, the Indian government offered some political as well as material support to Indonesian nationalists after they proclaimed independence from the Dutch in July 1945, including aerial supply missions to break the air and sea blockade of the republic. On 28 November Nehru (1945) declared, "the people of India will stand by the

Indonesian demand for independence and will give all the help they can” (Baladas 1999: 106).Maulana Azad, a prominent Congress leader and ex-President stated that, “things have come now to the point when Congress will have to consider seriously what steps to adopt to prevent the use of Indian men and material against the Asiatic peoples fighting for their freedom” (*The Statesman* 1945).

There is also a link between the states that did not want to be part of any super power pact and their struggle for independence from their colonizers. As a post colonial state they were eager to develop their own identity and implement them in their foreign policy. In a speech to the Indian Parliament on 8 March 1949, Nehru said, “we have not yet decided as to what region that cooperation should relate to. India is interested in several regions of Asia and whether all of these should be grouped together or dealt with separately is still to be considered.” He laid down “two conditions for Indian participation in a regional grouping: (1) it must be wholly within the scope and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and (2) it must be largely confined to consultation and cooperation with no binding covenant in it.”(Cited in Palmer and Perkins 1954: 804-5)

When he was questioned on the legitimacy of a state’s independence, Nehru clarified his argument during the Bandung Conference. He

explained the difference between states that were represented by their colonial masters and states which had their own representatives. The latter, according to Nehru (1955), were sovereign states with whom India had diplomatic ties, referring to the East Europeans nations. He felt that states such as Algeria, Morocco or Tunisia did not fit into the category of independent states (Nehru Speech in Acharya 2011). On 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1955 at the Bandung Conference, Nehru argued that membership to pacts made a country a 'camp follower' and deprived it of its "freedom and dignity." "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."<sup>2</sup> The idea of non-intervention, far from threatening the identity of Asian leaders, was seen as a way of amplifying their profile and role in regional and international affairs. According to Acharya (2011), it was an integral part of their belief in active neutralism, the rationale for which included a desire to acquire a recognizable voice in international affairs.

Acharya (2011) states that although the norms of 'sovereignty' and 'non-intervention' were enshrined in the UN charter, the international organization was unable to be unbiased in its implementation of these

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<sup>2</sup> Speech by Nehru, Proceedings of the Bandung conference Political Committee, 23 April 1955, UUOD

norms. In order for the Asian and African nations to follow these 'universal' norms, it was imperative for them to create regional structures.

In an article written by Arundhati Roy (1998) titled *The End of Imagination (the Bomb and me)*, Roy responds to India's weaponization by critiquing India for its dreadful actions, and how the event signified an 'end of imagination'. She states that by testing its nuclear weapons India has given away its 'choice' and chosen a side in the discourse." (Roy 1998).

Her critique of India's decision was strongly embedded in its post colonial identity which was seeking recognition as a technologically superior state. Roy goes on to talk about the concept of techno-colonialism where technology and colonialism fuse into one and a state that pursues a nuclear programme becomes a colonial slave to it. She links the emulation of the latest gadgets, music, and television and so on to techno-colonialism. The need to reach out, to be like the 'other' reinforces the differences between 'us' and 'them'. Fighting this bias is important, but Roy's main critique comes from becoming a part of the bias, albeit on the other side. Roy, it seems, is stating that by aspiring for the prestige from the Western powers, India had succumbed to the notions of colonialism and lost a part of its identity.

This 'identity crisis', according to her, is not only a function of imperialist and western European influences, but also a function of the internal political strife India was experiencing, and still continues to experience. In India finding its identity is not the problem here. The search for identity is something every state has to go through and as a post colonial state India's directions need to be charted. But the leaders charting these directions should take into account the entire Indian population. In the need for recognition and prestige from the 'other', retaining the self-identity is of prime importance. Technology should be used as a means but not become an end in itself. To quote Roy (1998): "We storm the heart of whiteness; we embrace the most diabolical creation of Western science and call it our own. But we protest against their music, their food, their clothes, their cinema, and their literature...[O]n August 15 last year we celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of India's independence. Next May we can mark our first anniversary in nuclear bondage."

Priya Chacko (2011) in an article on India's nuclear programme argues that the pursuit of technology and the policy of disarmament need to be understood in the context of a broader project of ethical modernity. India's nuclear ambitions have always been unclear and Chacko uses post colonialism to understand India's dichotomous stand where on one hand it submits a memorandum to the International Court of Justice (ICJ)

calling nuclear weapons abhorrent but does not shy away from weaponization after two years. She states how when India believed itself to be on the cusp of being recognized as a nuclear weapon state it still felt obliged to engage in disarmament discourse as this reiterated a self image of morality and ethical conduct.

Chacko (2011), using the lens of post colonialism, explains that India's nuclear ambiguity stems from its ambiguity regarding Western modernity. While this modernity was critiqued, it was also aspired for. India accepted the charge of its 'lack' of modernity being the reason for succumbing to colonial rule. It failed to reach the standard of civilization set by Europe and its cousins. In this context, nuclear technology becomes significant, as an ambiguity that fulfils this 'lack' while being a threat to Western modernity. Chacko uses gender to explain India's nuclear programme where the masculinity is associated with the West and the Indian is feminine. This resonates with Bal Thakerey's comment of India not being an eunuch anymore after having conducted the tests. She explains how this reach for masculinity was twofold; first the Indian would reach out to older texts and prove them scientific in nature ( eg: Vedas, Astronomy) and, two, adapt and assimilate nuclear technology and make it their own. Through all of this argument, one can reflect on a sense of prestige that determines the Indian behaviour to reach out to its counter parts in the

West. Chacko also brings in Gandhi, explaining how he used feminism to fight the masculine ideals of the West; how Gandhi promoted science and technology but did not put it at a higher pedestal than India's history and civilization calling the former dehumanizing and alienating. She adds that India's Prime Minister though, had a separate understanding. Nehru, in contrast, was too desperate to hold on to modern notions of reason and science to be in a position to seriously challenge the colonial ideology of progress or its attendant politics of masculinity. She adds that Nehru's writings on India were explicitly gendered and depicted India as a mother -*Bharat Mata* or Mother India. Initially, in his Autobiography, Nehru invokes an image of Mother India as a victim: 'woeful accumulations of superstition and degrading custom' had 'borne her down' (Nehru 1980: 429 cited in Chacko 2011).

Chacko (2011) brings in the analogy of gender to understand India's postcolonial identity. In her analogy, India emerges as a "woman in drag - a mother that needed to be disciplined (by her best and brightest modern children) into wearing the distinctly masculine garb of modernity while retaining the moral, feminine spirit that is the guarantee that she does not lose her distinctly Indian identity and succumb to copying the hyper-masculine modernity of the West". According to Chacko (2011), Nehru presented modern science as a neutral product of human history,

devoid of ownership by any one particular group and available to all to use for their development. Science, then, was a tool with which to reconcile India to a modernity in which Europe was seen as the pinnacle of material development. She believes that he did not want to follow his predecessors by identifying an indigenous scientific tradition for India, but he was also opposed to India following the Western understanding of science. The adoption of a scientific outlook was central to India's project of postcolonial modernity but nuclear technology, in particular, was acclaimed as 'a symbol of the modern times' (Nehru 2003: 40). This was partly because he understood the history of India and wanted to create a unique 'Indian' identity which took its history along into the 'modern' times; to reconcile India to a modernity in which Europe was seen as the pinnacle of material development.

The government of India, after successfully testing its nuclear weapons, lauded the efforts of the scientists, praising them for the indigenous nature of India's nuclear programme. According to Raja Ramanna, one of the scientists involved in the test, despite facing opposition from some of her advisors up to the last moment, "Mrs Gandhi decreed that the experiment should be carried out on schedule for the simple reason that India required such a demonstration' (Ramanna 1991: 89). The Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) announced the peaceful' explosion that took



place, emphasizing that the test had been undertaken for reasons of technological development, particularly in the areas of mining and earth moving operations, and reiterated that India had no intention of producing nuclear weapons and remained strongly opposed to military uses of nuclear explosions (Government of India statement 1974). This statement was supported by the fact that the military was kept out of the loop of the decision to conduct an explosion which consisted only of political advisors and scientists. For Abraham (2004:49), “crossing the test threshold was symbolically significant as it sought to signal identity with dominant international norms of nuclear meaning.”

After successfully conducting the nuclear tests in May 1998, a letter to US President Bill Clinton from Vajpayee was sent. It explained the rationale behind the tests and was later leaked to the New York Times (Vajpayee 1998: 14). As in 1974, the Prime Minister’s first extensive comments on the 1998 tests were made to a foreign audience. In the letter, Vajpayee expressed his deepening concern ‘at the deteriorating security environment, specially the nuclear environment, faced by India for some years past’ and, without explicitly naming them, cited China and Pakistan as nuclear threats to India. Chacko (2011) points that it was later emerged that similar letters had been prepared for the G8 prior to the test. This corroborates with the argument that the tests were done

keeping an international audience in mind. This resonates with the definition of prestige stated in the beginning of the study.

Quotes by Vajpayee, India's Prime Minister during the May 1998 tests indicate prestige: India is now a nuclear weapons state' he also claimed that '[o]urs will never be weapons of aggression; India has never considered military might as the ultimate measure of national strength. It is a necessary component of overall national strength. I would, therefore, say that the greatest meaning of the tests is that they have given India shakti, they have given India strength, they have given India self-confidence; the tests, '[. . .] are a continuation of the policies set into motion that put this country on the path of self-reliance and independence of thought and action"(Vajpayee 1998)

Priya Chacko's (2011) article on the ambivalence of India's nuclear policy talks about the ambivalence stemming from a need to critique western modernity while accepting that reason for colonization as lacking in modernity. But India's ambivalence can also be understood from the lens of a state's prestige which points out how the state developed a nuclear weapon but constantly emphasized on disarmament to show that the nuclear weapon was not to be used, but only to be showcased as a prized possession.

## **SELF-RELIANCE**

This section first explains the concept of emotional constellations and how they have been understood in the context of the thesis. Then the sub topic discusses a classified report by the United States while linking self reliance with its different constellations.

A National Intelligence Estimate report by the United States government (NIE 1972) acknowledged that for India 'resistance' was an important element of its foreign policy. This resistance is a part of the larger value constellation of sovereignty, self-reliance, and independence. Sovereignty and prestige have been strongly linked in the chapter three. This links the constellation of prestige to resistance.

The report states that, "Mrs. Gandhi is bent both on mobilizing the energy of her people in a massive assault on social inequities, and on making India's voice heard with respect in international councils. There are obviously contradictions between her domestic reform needs and spending vast sums on advanced weapons in pursuit of international status. But she may come to believe that some kind of nuclear capability would be useful in terms of adding to national support for her domestic programmes, and that having a limited weapons capability, perhaps in the guise of a peaceful program, would give India increased stature or

greater security on the world scene” (Doc 14 1972). The report links this notion of self-reliance with India’s civilian nuclear programme stating that the latter is broadly based and this helps reduce dependence on foreign technology. The report also explains how India’s self-reliance was at the forefront of even its economic decisions as many articulate Indians felt that it would be in the country’s interest to renounce aid and reduce the debt it had already acquired. This possibility of losing Western economic aid is one which, the report quotes, “would inhibit but not decisively deter the Indians from conducting a nuclear test”.

The special report stated that India’s drive for self-reliance has brought a greater means to resist the pressures of the international community and the skills and resources it could require would be provided for by the French and Communist countries. The report felt that along with its economic self-development and reduction of aid, there could be a massive reaction by the public to resist international overtures by the nationalist leaders.

In understanding Prestige and its functionality as an emotion, self-reliance provides an important outlook. A state seeks self-reliance as it does not want dependency on the ‘other’. It is looking for validation from this ‘other’ and dependency does not support its need for validation. Hence, prestige is an integral part of a state’s need for self-reliance.

## CONCLUSION

It can be argued that by not agreeing to build a bomb and still fighting the Western powers, Iran has retained its identity while India after testing and gaining back door entry has merged with the Western powers. Thus the Iranian notion of prestige would be higher than the Indian, as the latter let go of its prestige in order to be admitted into the nuclear club.

For India, coming out of the shadows of post- colonialism has taken a long process. The indigenously developed nuclear programme has helped boost the morale of the collective Indian self. The same is true for Iran. As pointed out in the chapter, the Iranian threat of loss of its identity has been a paramount reason for its distancing from the western powers. The Post-colonial lens has been used to understand the nuclear programmes of India extensively and in a limited capacity for Iran. Nonetheless, the chapter tried to link post colonial identity with prestige, wherein post colonialism explains the need for prestige in a nuclear programme.

The chapter discusses the concept of post colonialism as understood by India and Iran. While India has been a colony and there is many a study done on the post colonial nature of Indian identity, Iran has never technically been colonized. However, the Islamic Republic has faced

many leaders who were part of the colonial legacy, providing the 'other' with benefits that should have reached the Iranian populace. The consequent revolution that occurred had many weak points, but was able to succeed due to the strong wave of nationalism and anti-imperialism that had gripped the country.

India's colonial identity, as explained by Kakar and Nandy explains how state identities are formulated on the basis on how they are seen by the 'other'. For India, that had been a colony for close to two hundred years, this process was so deep and part of the subconscious self that acknowledgement of the colonial process itself took a long time. However, by formulating its identity, the state has also managed to uphold its prestige in the international arena.

Iranian identity was never diminished, but was consistently threatened by outside forces in every generation. This made the fear of colonization rise to a great degree and still is a significant factor in the decision making of the Islamic Republic.



## CHAPTER FIVE

# **LOSS IN WAR: FIGHTING HUMILIATION WITH PRESTIGE**



## INTRODUCTION

War: An act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfil our will

(Clausewitz, 1989)

This chapter aims to analyze the effects of war and establish the relationship between the effects of loss in a war with the reduction in a state's prestige. India has fought four battles with Pakistan and one with China. The chapter will look at two Indian wars, the Sino-Indian war of 1962 and the war of 1971 where India aided Bangladesh to attain independence from Pakistan. It aims to bring to light the effect of loss in the 1962 war and the effect of a 'perceived threat' with regards to the 1971 war. The second part of the chapter focuses on the Iran-Iraq war which lasted for eight years and, much to Iran's disappointment, ended in a ceasefire. This part analyzes the humiliation borne by Iran and how the war affected the Iranian collective. The chapter would aim to bring out the relationship between the events mentioned and the prestige of the

state, by placing the arguments in the context of the nuclear decision making of the two states.

The chapter aims to bring to light the effect of war and how it affects the prestige of a state. It aims to look at redemption of humiliation as a determining factor as a way to achieve self-reliance.

War as an event has a significant effect on a state and its idea of 'self'. Territorial exchange and boundary issues lead to the making and breaking of alliances and also change the perceptions of leaders and public regarding their positions in the international system. This chapter aims to understand the negative effects of war on the collective state narrative. The chapter seeks to answer questions such as what effects do perceived threats have on the state narrative and how do they affect the nuclear decision making of states.

Emotions such as fear, anger, and pride have often been the prime motivators to drive states to war. Freud (1959) talks about how fear is either provoked by greatness of a danger or by the cessation of emotional ties. In his translated work by James Strachey, Freud quotes another scholar, Gustave LeBon who expands on the concepts of mass psychology to state that as a group reactions can be more pronounced. It leads to state behaviour that is deeply influenced by emotions. Work

done by scholars on emotions, especially group emotions, states that new characteristics are developed as part of a group which were previously not possessed (Freud, 1959). Thus, a collective may not have a strong sense of prestige but might develop this emotion based on certain events.

Emotions are a subject understood by Al-Rodham in great detail. He points out to the repertoire of emotions and uses the case studies of China and Japan and their debate over the Senkakus to explain prestige. He states that the whole repertoire of emotions play a key role as a motivator of actions. Rodham lists these emotions as pain, grief, ego, pride, reputation, greed and so on. In a political scenario, when there are few checks and balances, leaders often use the negative emotions to further their ideas of 'self'. This is true especially in authoritarian regimes where due to unlimited power, leaders have been known to be reckless and gruesome. As stated and explained earlier, the relationship between power, leaders and dopamine is dangerous and addictive. Rodham (2015) uses the confrontation between China and Japan regarding the Senkakus/ Diaoyuto show the importance or role of emotions in conflicts. According to Rodham (2015), the islands are of little value to either of the two states, from a resource perspective or from a strategic and military perspective. They are however symbolic of older military conflicts between the two states. Considering the gain from the island is minimal, the resources invested by the two states do not seem to be justified. Rodham argues that the activities undertaken by China and Japan are a result of a narrative where historical grudges and cultural pride over-ride strategic and military gains (Al-Rodham, 2015).

Wars empower states to gauge who their foes are and who they can trust in difficult times. Depending on whether a state has won or lost a war, there is a collective mood surge towards either superiority or a sense of fear with regards to the 'other' state. With fear, comes the

question of securing the state for the future; to not undergo and repeat the humiliation for the collective self. This notion of security is deeply entrenched with the emotion/value of pride being hurt. When a war is won against adverse circumstances there is a surge of pride that the collective self feels for itself. This brings a sense of superiority in relation to the 'other' state, just as losing a war brings emotions of self-doubt and low self-confidence. As explained in the second chapter, while pride is a more internal emotion where the state takes pride in its history and its decision making, prestige is the emotion or value where this pride is validated by the 'other'. As a result, the emotion of prestige is gauged by the interactions of the state with its warring party which becomes the 'other'.

## **ON WAR**

The significance of war has been most clearly elucidated by Clausewitz (1989) in his seminal work *On War* that explains the effects of war on state and how it influences their subsequent interaction in the international arena. Clausewitz states that (1984:138), "Theorists are apt to look on fighting in the abstract as a trial of strength without emotion entering into it. This is one of the thousand errors which they quite consciously commit because they have no idea of the implications." He states emotions to be central to the analysis of war. For Clausewitz

(1984:89) emotions “are a paradoxical trinity- composed of primordial violence, hatred and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force; of the place of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam and of its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone.”

Clausewitz (1984: 105) takes the argument further by stating that, “Of all the passions that inspire man in battle, none, we have to admit, is so powerful and so constant as the longing for honor and renown.” Clausewitz (1984: 137) characterizes combat as “essentially...an expression of hostile feelings”. He also argues that, “even if there is no national hatred and no animosity to start with, the fighting itself will stir up hostile feelings: violence committed on superior orders will stir up the desire for revenge and retaliation against the perpetrator rather than against the powers that ordered the action. This is only human (or animal if you like), but it is a fact” (Clausewitz 1984: 138). Balzacq and Jervis add to the argument, “in the event of a large scale attack, emotions would surely weigh heavily. This is not to say that an emotions based response would be wrong or to hold up unemotional calculation as the model of rationality” (Balzacq and Jervis 2004:567)

According to Garver (2006), the historiography of any war is politically sensitive as it touches on the question of which nation bears responsibility and thus bearing the implicit moral onus for initiating that war. This chapter looks at the different wars that shaped the two states under study, India and Iran. When looking at the impact of wars on the two states, the focus is on the state narrative and how this narrative has dealt with the consequences of winning and losing. India, having fought at least three wars with its western neighbour, i.e. Pakistan and with its eastern neighbour, i.e., China, has constantly created a state narrative that provides a moral upper ground. Even though it was the aggressor in

1971 as well as in 1962, the discourse reflects a positive image of India. The wars against Pakistan, specifically, the 1971 Bangladesh liberation war have led to a notion of natural superiority in the Indian psyche (Prakash 2015; Joshi 2015). At the opposite end of this spectrum, the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962 had a negative impact on the state narrative, which brings out the humiliation of a loss. Iran has had one major, all-consuming war, the Iran-Iraq war, that lasted close to a decade and even though the war ended in a ceasefire and no Iranian territory was lost, the cost of war was huge. Every Iranian household lost someone in that war (Majidi 2015) and because of this reason the Iran-Iraq war still has a deep impact on the Iranian psyche, as shall be discussed.

According to Al-Rodham (2015), an emotion that can be a strong catalyst of the tensions between states is humiliation. The emotion tends to reinforce feelings of jealousy and as a result, competition and mutual animosity. He uses the example of Israel and Palestine to explain the role of this emotion. He states that the anger and insecurity that was earlier felt by the Jews is not felt by the Palestinians. The emotions felt by the Jews lead them to only think of their national interest and survival of the state of Israel. And to add to this conflict are the regional players, who think in geopolitical terms while their foundation in thinking is emotional. Rodham states, "Throughout the history of the Middle East, emotions such as humiliation, shame, hubris, vengeance and various symbolic gestures were and continue to be quite visible. At every point in the troubled history of the region, strong emotions punctuated inter-state relations and had decisive impacts on the peace process specifically and regional stability in general." He gives examples of other such conflicts to substantiate his claim, i.e. the US-USSR cold war, the Shia-Sunni divide, the tensions between India and Pakistan and the divide between the two Koreas. (Al-Rodham, 2015)

The psychological effect of war on a state depends on the amount of resources spent by the state and on the subsequent result. Loses are bound to have an adverse effect, just as wins will lead to a positive effect on the national psyche. Winning a war with an enemy gives the state a boost in its self-confidence and in its abilities. Although there can be obvious signs of a loss on the national psyche, winning is more difficult to gauge as most nations feel vindicated when they win a war. For example, in the case of India-Pakistan, the four wars fought have been unequivocally won by India. This knowledge has shaped the way India interacts with Pakistan. And if the China- India relationship is compared prior to 1962 and after 1962, a sea change from the Indian side is observed, which shall be explained in the chapter. This change, it is argued, was a result of the loss of self-confidence in its interactions with China.

## **INDIA-CHINA**

The Sino-Indian war of 1962 had a huge impact on the national psyche of India. Even after winning the subsequent wars with Pakistan, India was unable to free itself from the humiliating defeat of 1962. One can see the after effects of this loss in war even today as India still grapples

with its reaction to the Chinese skirmishes along the border. The 1962 war with China had an almost reverse impact on the Indian public which is still not clear on the events that lead a budding relationship between the two Asian giants to turn sour.

Chacko (2011) answers the China threat perception by stating that India-China relations were steadily improving and given the reactive policy of Pakistan, there is little doubt that Pakistan would not have tested. Although Jasjit Singh (2012) has stated that the fault was with India and that the provocation happened from the Indian side, this information has not been validated by Indian documents that are still classified. As a result the Indian population believes the Chinese to be the aggressors in the war. There is still fuzziness in the public domain with regards to why China attacked India and as a result, China is still treated with caution. The Chinese incursions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) have added to reducing the clarity with regards to the real problem. China-India relations have been complex because of their history where the Indians think of the Chinese as the other great superpower in the Asian region and there is a sense of respect towards the Chinese for having made it on their own terms and still striving for more; yet there is also a sense of competition regarding opportunities.



An aspect that has been glorified by the Indian narrative is the notion that each war fought has been in defence of the nation where none were initiated by the Indian side, giving it a moral upper edge. Garver (2006) in his extensive research on China points out that little was published in China regarding the war until the 1990s. As a result, foreign analysts such as Neville Maxwell (1970) relied mostly on inferences drawn from Chinese public statements.

Garver (2006) goes on to say that the historiography of that war figures prominently in the contemporary political psychology of Sino-Indian relations, on both sides of that relationship. According to him, both sides bear the onus for the 1962 war, China for misconstruing India's Tibetan policies, and India for pursuing a confrontational policy on the border. Cables from the Wilson Centre Archives discussing the skirmishes and later war indicate the Chinese anguish towards the then Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, was handling the situation (Report 1962 and Memorandum 1959). The Chinese were accused by Nehru of "going 30 to 50 kilometres south beyond the McMahon Line", while the Indians were accused of creating a dispute to a land area of 38,000 square kilometres in the west and 90,000 square kilometres in the east. This, according to the Chinese official, was equivalent to the size of a country (Memorandum 1959). Nehru however, put forth the demand that peace

talks must restore the “8 September borders.” The context of this was not clear as it referred to “the north eastern region” and the Chinese were unable to conclude on what this meant for the central and western Sectors (Cable 1962).

In a letter between Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zeng Yong quan and Charge d’Affaires of the Embassy of the Soviet Union in China S. Antonov, September 10, 1959 it was stated that “It is evident that India has invaded and slandered us. Our silence does not indicate our agreement to their claims, nor does it indicate our guilt. We usually read some American magazines, e.g. *Life* and *US News & World Report*, which file slanders against the Soviet Union regarding invasion, retaliation, and espionage. But we always turn a blind eye to such slanders.” The same letter states that “Antonov: Premier Zhou’s letter is a foundational document that offers comprehensive information, including the various issues surrounding the Sino-Indian border and the historical conditions. Our stance remains the same, i.e. no territorial invasion is tolerable” (Memorandum 1959). The Chinese also blamed it on the imperialist policy of the United States which was providing India with the aid in terms of military and economic support in the 1962 war stating that, “Interestingly, in earlier years in the Senate, [John F.] Kennedy already said that to contain the communist movement in Asia, India will

play a significant role” (Speech by the Chief Editor of the Soviet Weekly *ZaRubezhom*1962).

The behaviour of the Indian forces was baffling to the Chinese who felt that invasion of air space, (as mentioned in the Memorandum of Conversation between Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zeng Yong quan and Charge d’Affaires of the Embassy of the Soviet Union, S. Antonov in China 1959) especially that of the Tibetan regions was a sign of Indian interests in Tibet. Provocations by the Indian side were not one, but many and at one point it was noted that in a single day nine Indian aircrafts had invaded the territorial airspace of China.

The Soviet reaction to the war was an area of anger and confusion for the Chinese. In a report from the Chinese ministry in April 1963 they listed out the main mistakes of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), wherein it was stated that the border conflict was provoked by the Chinese and stemmed from China’s nationalism. According to the Chinese side the conflict had been deliberately provoked by India for the purposes of opposing China, attacking the Communist Party internally while striving for increased American aid externally, and countering the impact of the reforms in Tibet. They felt that in what could be termed a serious international class struggle, CPSU outwardly adopted a neutral stance, but in reality sided with capitalist India and criticized socialist

China, which was unprecedented. The soviet stance within the leaders and the media was the same, support for India (Chinese Foreign Ministry Report 1963). The report then goes on to list the Soviet reaction, which did not appreciate the Chinese behaviour. Khrushchev slandered the Chinese for opposing India's "nonalignment" policy and accused them of "creating a hotbed for the bacillus of nationalism and war mania," pushing India to the West, and causing the Communist Party of India to be persecuted. He felt that India would be lost because of China having an aggressive policy. According to the Chinese government report, he tried to put the responsibility of the conflict upon them (Chinese Foreign Ministry Report, 1963).

A comparison of India's and China's actions since 21 November 1962, done by the Chinese government showed how the war had been perceived and understood by the Indians and the Chinese (Asian Affairs Report, 1962). The report brings out the differences in the reactions, where on one hand China's reactions were measured; the reactions in India were haphazard at best. A law was passed by the Indian Lok Sabha on 'Defending India' which authorized the government to deal with any situation arising from an emergency giving it the power to infringe upon basic rights. Another law implemented on December 2, 1962 which prohibited trading with the traders of the "enemy;" and the order declared

on 3 December prohibited planes registered with China or operated by the Chinese government. Some of the speeches of Indian Leaders clamouring for a Long-Term War stated:

- At a gathering of children in New Delhi on 22 November, Nehru said the war with China would be long-term, “maybe it will be long enough so that when some of you grow up you will be fit for and prepared to fight against China.”
- On 18 December, India’s vice president [Zakir] Hussein said that China had imposed the conflict upon India and India had “made the decision to spare no effort until the end.”
- On 21 December, India’s president [Sarvepalli] Radhakrishnan said in Bombay that the government had decided that India should not give up before the last Chinese invader was evicted out of India and the basic condition for negotiating with China was that China “withdraws from our territory” occupied by China. He also said that “today, military power is the only solution to all kinds of insecurities.”
- On 4 December, India’s foreign minister Menon said in Colombo that, “along the Eastern Sector, we will push forward when the Chinese withdraw. We will not accept the claim that we should

stay 20 kilometres away from McMahon Line. We must control the mountain passes in the special regions of the north-eastern border.”(Asian Affairs Report, 1962)

The report showcases how the ‘othering’ of the Chinese was done rampantly but also was done without a clear line of thought. A large part of the responsibility for these comments came on the government, who did not and still refuses to share information regarding the events that transpired on the border of the two Asian giants. The Indian government chose to cover the war with its own created narrative. This led to a number of state agents playing ignorant with regards to the apparent ‘Chinese Attack’ on the India.

Some of the measures taken by China after the war were: taking the initiative to ceasefire, taking the initiative to withdraw, releasing India’s wounded and ill soldiers, returning the materials collected by China’s frontier forces, providing normal treatment and necessary protection for the Indian Embassy and Consulates in China, and lastly, providing adequate conveniences for India to withdraw its Consulate Personnel. India, in turn returned the favour by taking up the following measures: Unilaterally tearing up the Agreement for the Mutual Establishment of Consulates, closing down the Bank of China, completely cutting off trade, inspecting posts and telecommunications, persecuting Chinese nationals,

strengthening restrictions on our publications to prevent Indian people from learning the truth of the boundary issues and most importantly, strengthening the anti-China propaganda and creating a war atmosphere (Asian Affairs Report 1963).

The reactions of the government of India portray a loss of control regarding the events and how the state felt a loss of self. As the Indian stance has been to portray itself as only a defender of its land, the Sino-Indian war was hard to explain from this perspective. A loss of self-esteem is sensed within the Indian reaction to the war. The Indian behaviour that had been highlighted by the Chinese government reports is away from the gaze of the mainstream media. This Indian reaction too, was a result of the unaware Indian, who did not know about the real time situation in the war. These actions show how the fear psychosis had become entrenched in the minds of the Indian psyche who were unclear on how to act with the Chinese, except with suspicion.

There are examples quoted in official Chinese records that display a strong discrimination the Indian government partook against the Chinese nationals in India. One such example is of Embassy counsellors who were in Calcutta Hotel where they were constantly supervised. In another example the Chinese first secretary was intercepted by Indian policemen at the airport for 40 minutes, insisting on permits which were not needed

by any other State embassy's staff. In addition, they continue to have mobs make trouble at China's embassy and consulates" (Asian Affairs report, 1963). These aspects have not been highlighted within the Indian media and public at large which continue to feed on the ideas of a Chinese 'threat'. The Indian government, in its bid to hide its mistakes from the war has built on the narrative where the blame lies entirely with the Chinese state. Thus, the sense of humiliation was deep within the Indian psyche long before it percolated to the masses.

Reports from the Chinese Foreign Ministry Soviet Main Arguments Concerning the Sino-Indian Border Issue highlighted the issue by stating that China has attacked India; The conflict stems from China's nationalism; The conflict is not conducive to the neutrality of India and Asian and African countries, the Communist Party of India, the socialist cause, or peace. It "just helps the imperialists and India's reactionary clique."; The Soviet Union's stance is "strictly neutral," but it has accused China of being "foolish" and "unforgivable."; The only way to resolve the border dispute is to hand over territory to India; Selling aircraft to India is conducive to India's policy of nonalignment and neutrality, and will not tip the balance of power between China and India" (Chinese Ministry Report 1963).



As India is yet to release any documents regarding the war, most archival data that explain the events are based on Chinese documents. Given the scenario, and with the documents available, an analysis can be made the threat from China that India harps on is more perceived than real. The Indian state narrative has merged into the discourse of the nation leading to the discourse becoming a reality. India's idea of itself would get contradicted if it were termed the aggressor in a conflict. Hence, India chooses to continue with the skewed narrative, than to let the facts speak for themselves. This has helped the state narrative to build on the humiliation of the war and use it as a pretext for securing India. But what is also true is that the Chinese never considered India to be a threat and did not even react when India conducted a 'peaceful' nuclear explosion as it was deemed insignificant. Their reaction after the 1998 tests was only concern for the fallout and how other Asian states such as Japan might react. In terms of capability too, the gap between India and China cannot be filled by India any time soon and thus the threat is more perceived than real.

According to Joshi (2015), the disintegration of the Army at Bomdi La was a serious setback, but more than that it generated a panic across the country. The performance of the army was not bad in the western front, but overall it was a psychological setback which still affects India.

Humiliation for the Indian army and the populace would begin with the setback at Bomdi La. Basrur (2015) adds how this partly explains why Indians always think in terms of competing against China. “The 1962 War was indeed a blow to the Indian psyche because it exposed, (a) the naivete and myopia of our political leadership; (b) the incompetence of India’s Intelligence services and (c) the ineptitude of Generals chosen by the politicians to lead our military” (Prakash, interview 2015).

The 1962 war was India’s only defeat and hence irrespective of who the aggressor of the conflict was, it would leave an impact on the state narrative. The loss helped increase the sense of perceived threat that China could induce. It also developed within the Indian leadership and population a deep humiliation. However, unlike the Pakistani ideology of hitting back at India to avenge its humiliation, the established Indian moral code did not provide for a similar space. However, the humiliation of defeat is hard to forget, and leaves behind doubts as to whether India is a capable power. This judgment of capability, if unsuccessful, brings low self reliance and triggers a need for prestige. Hence, it is important for a state, to have pride in itself and to earn the prestige of its contemporaries. A nuclear programme provides a space for India to redeem its humiliation by coming at par with China without engaging with China.

## **INDIA-PAKISTAN**

S.D. Muni (2015) refers to India's neighbours explaining that traditionally, India has always had good relations with its neighbours, but independence and in the subsequent years lead to the creation two new neighbours. With the creation of Pakistan and the annexation of Tibet into China, India found itself with two new aggressive neighbours.

The wars fought between India and Pakistan provides a mere glimpse into the relationship, but in no way explain the entire conflict between the two states. Apart from the everyday skirmishes that take place at the border areas, especially along the line of control in Kashmir, three wars and a limited conflict have been fought between the two neighbours.

The first war (1948) between the two states was immediately after their independence. The second war, in 1965, was initiated by Pakistan, at the behest of its military ruler. The end of war resulted on both sides capturing certain areas which were reverted back after the Tashkent Agreement. The 1971 war, which was the third time India and Pakistan were at loggerheads, led to the creation of Bangladesh. The Simla Agreement was a result of this war and lead to a ceasefire environment with nuclear development taking focus for both the countries. This agreement was a success as the two neighbours did not indulge in war for close to two decades. The Kargil war (1998) was the last conventional war fought between Islamabad and New Delhi that took

place after weaponization of the said states. A prominent Indian Analyst (2013) has drawn parallels between the India Pakistan Wars and riots stating that none of the wars were fought on a large scale and each war, except for the 1971 war was nothing more than a border dispute among the two states.

The war that led to the creation of Bangladesh was the first where the United States played a small but important role. Even though India won the war and Bangladesh was proclaimed as a separate state, the Indian realized the need for super power support and reluctantly turned towards the Soviet Union with a Friendship treaty (1971). This aspect is explained in the next segment which looks specifically at India's role in the Bangladeshi war for independence, what were its perceived threat perceptions and how they are coexistent with India's notion of prestige.

#### THE WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE: BANGLADESH (1971)

This section of the chapter begins by giving a brief outline of the events that transpired and how India came to be involved in the internal matters of its neighbor (East Pakistan). The segment looks at the U.S. reports pointing to the obvious 'tilt' of the American government towards Pakistan and how it affected the Indian notion of prestige.

Pakistan was a state with two wings on the eastern and western side of India. But while the population of East Pakistan was higher, it was the establishment in West Pakistan that headed the government. Jack Anderson (1973) explains how elections were held for the first time in both the wings in 1970. This was done in the aftermath of the 1953-56 demand from East Pakistan for recognition of Bengali as the second national language. With ethnic nationalist running high, the Awami league leader, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman won 162 of the 164 seats in Eastern Pakistan. This was the first time that political power in Pakistan would be concentrated in its Eastern half (Anderson 1973: 214), an idea the leaders in Western Pakistan were not ready for. Making a deal with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the leader who won in West Pakistan, General Yahya Khan and his martial law administrator Lt. General Tikka Khan tried to suppress the Bengali claims for autonomy and independence by using force. Large numbers of intellectuals and students were killed in mass massacres within Universities and outside. Women were repeatedly raped and Urdu enforced over the spoken Bengali (Norman 1972; Raghavan 2014). The atrocities of the West Pakistanis against their brethren in the eastern region were committed in huge numbers with General Tikka Khan dubbed as the “Butcher of Bengal” (Bangash 2011). Students were killed within the university premises, sometimes within their dormitories and

bodies were found stacked together. As a result, the refugee crisis became unmanageable for India and tensions between India and Pakistan rose to greater heights leading to a war between the two states that ended with the birth of a new state of Bangladesh in 1971 (Gandhi 1971).

By May 1971, as a result of the violence and instability caused in East Pakistan by the genocide, an estimated ten million Bengalis had fled across the border to India (Ganguly 2001: 61). Ganguly (2001) lists two main reasons as to why this was problematic: "first, they created a strain on the Indian economy, an economy just coming to terms with development. Secondly, a group of refugees known as the Mukti Bahini, referred to by the Indians as "Bengali Freedom Fighters" were using India as a base from which to launch guerrilla attacks in efforts to fight against West Pakistani oppression" (Ganguly 2001: 61).

Although communication from and to East Pakistan was blocked, the American Embassy was able to send out communication to its government. U.S. consulate cables from Dacca repeatedly emphasized their displeasure at the American policy of non-intervention by citing the indiscriminate violence that was taking place in East Pakistan. They pointed out how tensions were high within the region. Ambassador Archer Blood personally sent strongly worded telegrams that were repeatedly

ignored. He cited how the capital city was now a ghost town and that students were killed in their dormitories and hung in the main squares. All this led to naught as the U.S. government had its interests in keeping Yahya Khan, the military commander of Pakistan, happy as he was to be the link in reaching out to the Chinese (Raghavan 2013).

The Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, too wrote a letter to President Nixon, explaining how refugee inflow had not slowed down and crossed seven million. In the letter she urged the Americans to take the lead and find a political solution to the problems of the East Pakistanis (Doc 7 1971). Documents supporting these statements have been released by the U.S. government available in the Wilson centre archives. The U.S. State Department became aware that a war was possible between India and Pakistan and a memorandum stating the same denotes the causes to: (1) continued military repression in the East, (2) the refugee flow into India, and (3) Indian cross-border support to Bengali guerillas (the Mukti Bahini) (Doc 12 1971). In this record, at a time when rapprochement with China was in the national interest, Kissinger suggests that "a U.S. effort to split off part of Pakistan in the name of self-determination would have implications for Taiwan and Tibet in Peking's eyes" (Doc 19 1971).

In a cable released by the United States and found at the George Bush Library it was found that, while discussing the India-Pakistan crisis,

Kissinger reveals that the American position was in line with the Chinese and that he had given tacit acknowledgement of Chinese help being provided to the Pakistanis instead of the United States (Doc 32 1971). This was because of the infamous Blood Telegram. A strongly worded telegram sent by the US Ambassador in Dacca once again. But this time the ambassador sent it out as a low level of confidentiality, making sure it reached the American newspapers and senators across the board. The infamous Blood Telegram sent by the United States ambassador to its government made its way to Congress that then decided to stop its aid to Pakistan (Bass 2013).

In a last ditch effort to show its support for the Pakistani government, the *USS Enterprise*, was sent in the direction of Bangladesh. Although it was aware of the atrocities committed by the Pakistani government in the region, it was bound to support the government of Yahya Khan as the latter was helping the Americans make headway with China. To show its support to Pakistan, Washington sent a nuclear aircraft carrier into the Bay of Bengal. The *USS Enterprise* was given the cover of evacuation purposes, but it was not meant to be exercised, either militarily or otherwise. Admiral Welander from the NSC Staff indicates that the JCS had approved, for planning purposes only, the CINCPAC concept to ready a USS attack carrier to dissuade "third party" involvement in the



South Asia crisis (Doc 19 1971).The then Indian Ambassador Jha expressed his concern over American deployment of a Nuclear Carrier in the Indian Ocean (Doc 7 1971).

The entry of this nuclear aircraft carrier has been cited by scholars as a threat from a super power. But the entry of the USS Enterprise took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December, when India was on the verge of winning the war and by 16<sup>th</sup> of December the Pakistani army had surrendered. Hence the argument does not hold ground. In understanding the effect of the wars India had fought with its western neighbour (1947, 1965 and 1971), one can surmise that winning the wars gave India a sense of superiority. Basrur (interview, 2015) points out that there was a stronger sense in 1971 that Pakistan was 'cut to size.' According the Jacques Hymans (interview, 2015) Indira Gandhi was not alone in believing that the 1971 war with Pakistan should end their claims to be on a par with India, and therefore she was doubly angry when she learned in 1972 that they were trying to keep pace by building nuclear weapons. This argument is also corroborated with the argument of how India was against the hyphenated 'Indo-Pak' that was used by the international community (Basrur, 2015; Joshi, 2015 and Hymans, 2015). "The 'hyphenation' of the two countries by the West was considered inappropriate by India because we have considered ourselves to be in a different league (superior) to Pakistan. Being treated on par with a country which is much smaller in territorial, demographic,

economic and (conventional) military terms is resented by India. At the same time, it has been Pakistan's continuous endeavour to remain linked to India and not allow it to rise out of the 'sub-continental box'. Up to a point, the USA has also used 'hyphenation' to keep India from growing too big for its boots" (Prakash, interview 2015).

Also, cables of the United States government support the argument of the USS Enterprise not being a threat to India, but rather acted as a symbolic support structure to the Pakistani government. The US tilt towards the Pakistanis was evident and India did have the tacit backing of the Soviet Union, yet the threat perception has been understood to be an attack on Indian sovereignty.

Hymans (2015) was of the opinion that former top policymakers from that time felt that the arrival of the USS Enterprise was more confusing than threatening. They had already won the war and did not quite see the point of it all. Nevertheless they felt it was an insult. Basrur (2015) adds that, it was a symbolic threat from the US side, but for India it indicated what could happen on another occasion. According to Admiral Arun Prakash (2015), "No, it did not bring insecurity, but this attempt to intimidate India was seen as a clear indicator of the strong US "tilt" in favour of Pakistan. It was also a reminder that unless India possessed a strong navy, it could become the victim of maritime blackmail or 'arm-twisting' by the super-powers." Although the threat from the United States was more perceived than real, the effect was stronger as it clashed with India's sense of self. India did not want to be

dependent on an outside source for its security as the idea of dependence lead to low prestige in a state.

## **IRAN-IRAQ WAR**

“I felt for the Imam. It was hard to accept the ceasefire. Our slogan had always been-Even if it takes 20 years, we fight on” (Rafsanjani, 2012). Former Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani as quoted by Scott Sagan (2005) said that the conflict with Iraq showed that “the moral teachings of the world are not very effective when war reaches a serious stage,” and that Iranians must “fully equip ourselves in the defensive and offensive use of chemical, bacteriological and radiological weapons.”

The Iran Iraq war is also known as the imposed war to the Iranians. Just when they were finding their ground as a new Islamic Republic, their neighbour in Iraq led by Saddam Hussein, backed by the ‘West’, declared war on Iran. The war lasted for eight years and took many Iranian lives. Every family in Iran has a martyr whose life was lost because of fighting in the Iran-Iraq war. Iran had become a pariah state and no state came forward to provide support, either in the form of aid or in its fight against the illegal behaviour of the United States.

Khomeini (1983) assured his countrymen that the state of Iran was on high alert and that he was prepared to sacrifice himself along with the 20 million member army and national mobilization forces which have

been organized by the people of Iran. In one of his many speeches, he spoke of the hardships that the Iranian nation had to undergo and that there is a need to be courageous and strong in the face of adversity. He stated, "Today a war has begun between righteousness and falsehood, between poverty and wealth, between Deprivation and the Arrogance, and between the poor and the callous rich. I kiss the hands and arms of all those beloved ones who are carrying the burden of the struggle all over the world, and have decided to struggle in the path of God and for the sake of the dignity of the Muslims. I extend my sincere salutations to all of these blooming forces of freedom and perfection. I also would like to tell the courageous and beloved nation of Iran that God has exported the positive effects of your spirituality to the world, your hearts and your acute visions are turned into centres for the supporting of the Deprived, and the flames of your revolutionary vengeance have frightened the leftist and rightist World-Devourers" (Khomeini 1988: 69).

Current Supreme Leader and then President, Khamenei stated, "If we achieve a victory in War but stretch our hands for foreign help, we have not achieved a great victory" (Khamenei 1987:1). This need for independence stems from the Iranian of pride which is reflected in many of Khomeini's speeches too. They emphasize of how the war, at a

ideological level, was a fight between right and wrong and the Iranian population had to make sure that in this 'David v/s Goliath' contest, the smaller, weaker state of Iran emerges victorious using whatever resources were at its disposal.

In one political document brought to light by Lal (1985: 85), Khomeini explains the war was not just against the Iranian people, it was against the revolution that challenged the World Powers. The Supreme leader states that, "The Iraqi war of aggression launched against Iran at the instigation of the super powers, had its pretext in the intention of Iran to export the revolution and was hopeful of a speedy triumph against our revolutionary nation. It is evident that any revolution, such as the Islamic Revolution of Iran, which is founded on the principles of the divine belief, shall in a natural way, influence other nations and bring about certain changes. Yet, the Islamic republic of Iran has no intention of effectuating these changes by resorting to force and thence, the propagation of this matter by the superpower is for the justification of their own criminal acts against Iran"(Khomeini 1985). Constantly emphasizing on the courageous qualities of the Iranian populace, he speaks about the need to not just fight the enemy externally, but also internally. He points out that, "the courageous Iranian nation, not only on the external fronts but also on the internal fronts is confronted with the agitations emanating from beguiled

and deceived elements affiliated with the right and left wings who have so far murdered many of the state officials and religious personalities and caused numerous explosions resulting in the death of innocent people including mothers and their infants. The enemy's mass media, for the purpose of marring the visage of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, has been sympathizing with the executed leaders of such counter-revolutionary elements, and strive, by appealing to Amnesty international and other similar organizations, to condemn Iran for breaching the principles of Human Rights" (Khomeini 1985). There is, as in the prior chapters, an emphasis on the enmity of the 'other' and a need to emerge stronger than and as independent as the situation allowed for them. Lal brings to light new quotes on the Supreme Leaders that help analyze prestige and how it is understood in the Iranian state.

The war began when the Iraqi regime was alleged to have entered the Iranian territory on September 22, 1980 with "twelve well equipped Iraqi divisions advanced into approximately 700 kms" (Editorial 1983: 12). A major source of conflict had been the territorial dispute over the Shatt-al-Arab Water way and the land borders seemed to be a clear cut source of tension between Iran and Iraq leading to a sudden outbreak of war. While the war on the Iraqi border was still being accepted and assimilated in the minds of the Iranians, Israel attacked Southern

Lebanon, which had a strong Shiite population. Khomeini drew a link between the two explaining to the public how the western powers were diverting Iranian public opinion and rallied the opinion towards defeating Iraq (Political Office, Iran 1982: 144). His speeches emphasized on the divide that existed between the Iranians and the rest of the world and how in this fight, they were alone.

It was reported in the Iranian Press that “if this war lasts even 20 years, we will resist and are certain that we will be victorious ones” (Islamic Republic Party Weekly Bulletin 1981: 42). This was one such example of the continuous statements made by the Ayatollah and other leaders who emphasized on the resilience of the Iranian people.

The international press, which mostly consisted of writers from the West were of the opinion that the Iranian government was exploiting the prolongation of the war by uniting the Iranians through religious and national sentiments. They also used the opportunity to extinguish any doubts on its failure to maintain the economic stability and to chop off the declared repression of the Mujahedeen Khalq, Kurdish rebels and other opponents of the regime (Ghareeb 1983: 70).

The role of the Iran-Iraq war in Iran’s quest to become a nuclear power is not so direct. Although the state has always blatantly denied the need

for a nuclear weapons programme, it definitely aims to develop a nuclear weapons capability (Sadjadpour interview, 2013). Prior to the War, Khomeini had clearly stated that Iran was against the use of nuclear weapons and most of the nuclear facility that had been developed by Iran with help from the United States was shut down. But as brought to light by Acton (interview, 2015) the timing of Iranian connections in the A.Q. Khan network emerging around the same time as the war was at its peak is not co-incidental.

More support in favour of a nuclear weapons programme comes from an Iraqi report (1992) on Iran efforts to obtain nuclear weapons where [Deputy President] Mahjarani emphasizes the necessity for developing nuclear weapons in Iran, so that Muslims can confront Israel. The report highlights the emphasis Mahjrani laid on Muslims, especially Iranians and how they must reach an advanced level [of technological sophistication] in the nuclear field in order to confront the Israeli nuclear challenge making them strong. Mahjrani ends by stating that, Iran has not denied its desire to develop nuclear weapons for this end. The report also brings to light the relations between the Chinese and the Iranians where new technology developed by the Chinese is being shared with the Iranians. Another statement in support of the Iranian quest for a nuclear weapon comes from the said report which states, "Under the current international



circumstances, the Iranian people must depend on their [own] capabilities and power” (Iraqi Report 1992) and the current international currency of power is nuclear. The report gives a detailed analysis of a Chinese nuclear reactor and its dealings with the Iranians. It also brings to light other evidence regarding Iranian desire for nuclear weapons. According to Takeyeh (2004-05), “Iraq’s use of chemical weapons against Iran with impunity, if not tacit acceptance of the Western power, has reinforced Iran’s suspicions of the international order.” Takeyeh quoted the leading liberal newspaper Aftab-e Yazd, which noted that, “In the near future Iran might be thinking of the military aspects of nuclear energy.”

Iran’s dealing with Kazakhstan is also highlighted in the report, which says that in January 1992 parts for an assembly process were obtained from Kazakhstan, information of which came from a reliable Iranian source. But this has been proclaimed by the Russians as incorrect because all tactical nuclear weapons were withdrawn into Russia. Hence the validity of the report comes under scrutiny. Nonetheless, statements of Iranian leaders given above indicate Iran’s want for a nuclear weapon even though it chooses to maintain its official stance against the same.

The report claims that the statements by the Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei confirm Iran’s want for a nuclear weapon. The speech which was delivered as part of the Friday sermons on 7<sup>th</sup> February 1992 has Khamenei pointing to the danger of nuclear weapons being less than the

danger of the Great Powers. The following day's speech addressing the Iranian Air Force Officers has Khamenei stating that the false rumors of Iran's nuclear weapons are being spread by the Americans in order to dominate the Gulf region. He is quoted stating, "Today, the Great Powers prepare a campaign accusing Iran of being armed with advanced weapons. However, this campaign is illusive and exaggerated because their main goal is to justify their existence and to scare other states, especially in the region" (Iraqi Report 1992).

A national intelligence estimate by the United States government highlights the domino effect an Iranian nuclear programme could have but explaining that the progress of particular states toward nuclear weapons capabilities is likely to aggravate regional political tensions that will complicate diplomatic efforts aimed at preventing nuclear weapons production (NIE-4-82 1982). Karim Sadjadpour (interview, 2013) points out how there are voices within the Iranian polity that are aware of this domino effect, such as Javad Zarif, who was also one of the chief negotiators during the recent bid for a deal between the United States and Iran. Hence there are voices within the Iranian polity that are working towards reducing damages on both sides.

The war did not just empty the coffers of the Islamic Republic but also affected the Iranian psyche deeply. Throughout the eight years of the

war, Iran kept crying hoarse about the injustice of the war, but the international community turned a blind eye to the atrocities that were committed by Iraq. Iranians appealed against the use of chemical weapons by Iraq, citing the loss of innocent life and the violation of international agreements, but no state responded strongly. The skewed nature of the war ensured that Iran was left with few supporters. While an international body such as the United Nations turned a blind eye towards the atrocities on the Iranian soldiers and civilian alike, the Iraqi government got away with a reprimand from the United Nations regarding use of chemical weapons due to its allegiance with the United States.

According to a monograph on the Iran-Iraq War released by the Islamic Republic, the United Nations alongside the west, was entertaining the notion that persuading Iran to submit to its (UN) conditions for ending the conflict, would result in a political defeat for the Islamic Republic and a victory for Iraq. The only point reiterated by Olaf Palme (UN special envoy), in the course of his repeated visits to Iran, was to persuade the Islamic Republic's authorities to forgo their legitimate rights, and he was at the same time trying hard to convince Iran to pave the way for a compromise with Iraq, while Iraqi troops were in occupation Iranian cities and towns (Political Office, Iran 1982: 158). This behaviour of the international body angered Iran and made the state realize that

international commitments may not always hold ground during crises. The link between the Iraqi government and the international community was evident as the United Nations called for the evacuation of the Iraqi troops from Iran at a time when the former, as imagined by the world's political opinion, had apparently completed its withdrawal of troops from Iran's occupied territory. This made the Iranians feel that if Iraq had delayed its declaration of withdrawal from Iran for six more months, the UN too would have issued its resolution to the same effect after the same period.

Wilson Centre archives bring to light the stark difference in the budgets of the two warring nations. While the Iranian defence budget for 1991 was 3.77 billion dollars, circulated information shows that Iran paid about 19 billion dollars for the purchase of weapons, nuclear technology, and military equipment during the same year (Iraqi Report 1992). In the face of such adversity, nationalism within the Iranian population reached an all time high. This nationalism led to a rekindling of its resources. A surge of pride is evident but the notion of prestige becomes lucid in the decisions the state takes, especially with regards to its nuclear programme. Iran states that it needs nuclear power because the sanctions led to an embargo when it comes its Iran's energy needs. The state's need to not depend on outside forces comes from its experiences

during the war when it was shunned by the international community. This feeling of isolation has made it more self-reliant which in turn has led to a sense of prestige.

## IRAQ AND THE WEST

The relations of Iraq and the West were known to all decision makers during the war. Documents and monographs released by the Islamic Republic of Iran bring to light the strong ties that helped Iraq. A major cause of Iraq being the war front was the easy accessibility of Iranian Ayatollahs to the religious sites in Iraq. This might have been used by the Persians to spread the revolution, a feat many in the other camp were afraid of.

According to Bellaigue, the Iranian nation comes under the model of a nation state as it has one language, Persian, and is inhabited by majority ethnic Persians. This does not mean that Iran is without minorities which are sizable and dispersed, but it refers to ancient Persian empires and the fact that most Iranians are Shia. Iran's neighbours, on the other hand, are state nations, i.e. they are a mix of Sunni Kurds, Shia Arabs, Yazidis and so forth (De Bellaigue 2009). This helps add value to the Iranian prestige.

The Political Office of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) (1982) released a report on the Iran-Iraq war. This explains how the coup by Saddam in July 1979 was a development speeded by Washington in the light of the emerging Islamic Revolution in Iran. Washington had decided that Saddam should soon embroil Iran in a war, and therefore, in a pre-emptive move to do away with the opposition who might, in the course of the war, impede or thwart his plans, it was necessary that the purging be done speedily. And as the Islamic Revolution was gaining impetus, the French government acted as an intermediary, to promote the US policies in the region.

This scheme of the United States, according to the IRGC, was supported by the neighbouring Arab states so as to curb the spread of the revolution. According to the News magazine *Jeune Afrique*, as quoted in the IRGC monograph, "Not that they are worried about any potential danger by the Islamic republic in the very near future, but that they fear that models of the Islamic Revolution might pass into other countries." Drawing linkages with the 1979 incidents in Mecca, the magazine opined that the Arab states, especially the Saudi Arabian government too might be replaced by such a movement as the one that led to the Shah's disposal.

A 1982 statement by Henry Kissinger in the *Washington Post* explained the strategic relationship between Iraq and the US in the following words: "Had Iraq triumphed in the war there would be no fear today in relations to the Persian Gulf and our interests in that part of the World would not have been endangered as they have been now, after Iranian offensive. At any rate it would be to our own interest to impose a ceasefire in the area, and gradually approach a more compromising government which will probably sometime in the future substitute the present regime in Iran" (Political Office, Iran 1982: 112). The extent of the use of Iraq as a front line state made clear the objectives of the Americans in the Middle East. This offensive may have been covertly led by the U.S. and overtly led by the Iraqi government, but the support of the Europeans in the decisions is an important aspect and they, especially France, helped build on the links between Iraq and the United States. According to Al-Ossbu'ul Arabic, France had topped all other countries in its export of foods to Iraq with the agreements entered into between Iraq and French companies in 1981 totalling 4.7 billion dollars.

The IRGC monograph shares statistics that show how despite a lack of direct diplomatic relations with Baghdad in 1981, Washington increased its exports to Iraq three fold, compared to the preceding year. US exports to Iraq during 1981 reached about 950 million dollars, even in

excess of Soviet exports to Iraq during the same period. The US agreement for the sale of five commercial Boeing aircraft to Baghdad and Baghdad's sale of oil to the United States signifies the expansion of relations between the two countries. In its June 4, 1980 issue, the *Wall Street Journal* commented that despite Washington's reluctance to aid Baghdad openly, there were clues about secret military aid to Baghdad by Washington.

The monograph also shows how the international community followed the example of the United States and soon Japan, England, Belgium, Spain and Austria entered into various economic agreements with Baghdad, which even threatened Soviet interests in Iraq (Political Office, Iran 1982: 113). Thus, even though the war was sapping the resources of both the countries, Iraq was able to replenish its demands as a result of being the 'current favourite' of the international community. Weapons seized by Iranian forces had inscriptions belonging to Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt, which made Iran simmer with rage. This was because despite providing evidence at international forums regarding the vicious attack of the Middle East and western powers, no organization stepped forward to stop the atrocities.

By using chemical weapons against Iran, Saddam Hussein had violated an international law and yet the international community chose turned the



other way. Examples such as these led Iran to believe that this was a war where personal vendetta was being settled rather than get something less. Speeches made by Iranian leaders even 10 years after the war refer to Iran's moral upper ground and how the international rules are only for some to follow, especially not for the Superpowers.

As quoted in the IRGC monograph, Professor Tacker, a US State Department expert explained Washington's strategy in the Persian Gulf after the culmination of the Islamic Revolution, in the following words: "As the Islamic Revolution in Iran is gradually shaping, the nucleus of the potential threat to the US security interests has shifted from Europe to the Persian Gulf. Today, the interests of the West are threatened by three elements, countries in the region that deny unhindered access to their resources; invasion by the Soviet Union; and a Devouring power declaring a revolutionary movement in the international system" (Political Office, Iran 1982: 123). These were aspects Iranians were fighting against and would not agree to become a lackey of the Americans again. But as a result of America's strategy, propaganda against the Islamic Republic gained impetus in the Arab world. The Saudi Minister of the interior Nayef Iban Abdul Aziz was quoted in the Kuwaiti daily 'Assiyasah' stating that, "The conflict with Iran, which was brought about by the expansionist policy pursued by the Islamic regime, is not one between

Iraq and Iran, but rather a conflict because of Iran's ambitions to gain control of the Arab states of the Persian Gulf, which starts out with Bahrain, and spreads to all states in the region" (Political Office, Iran 1982: 118).

In a report in the *New York Times* (January 24, 1980) it was brought out that as the Persian Gulf was intensified, Washington exploited US media to convince the world that the war had jeopardized US interests as well as the lives of its friendly governments in the region, except for Pakistan. Thereby putting the blame for the war on the Iranian people and as a result, on the Islamic Revolution. This aspect was highlighted in the monograph released by the Political Office of the Revolutionary Guards.

In its Persian programme dated April 16, 1982, Radio Moscow broadcast a commentary on the imposed war saying: "Two attitudes could now be observed parallel with each other in the international arena about the Iran-Iraq war, on the one hand there are the forces who resort to every sort of trickery in order to prolong the war, internationalize or Arabize it" (Political Office, Iran 1982: 138). On the one hand, the Radio condemned those attempting to internationalize the war and on the other hand, it referred to only Saddam as anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist, but did not term Iraq the aggressor. Thus, the Soviet Union also used the war to its advantage by portraying how the two states at war were being used by

imperialist powers and how the only benefit of such a war would come to the United States. In analyses and commentaries it always presented the US as the war monger. The conclusion often reached in these discussions was the urgency of ending the war. But the Soviet interest in ending the war was its own as Iraq was turning away from its dependence on the eastern block and was about to join the west.

The Supreme leader Khomeini had tried to reduce the Shia-Sunni divide by clubbing all Muslims under the same banner and not focusing on the differences of race. But Saddam Hussein Arabised the conflict. He tried to internationalize the war by involving countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Morocco. He chose Arabism as the axis for attracting these regimes, modelling the war after the historic war of Qadisiyeh, between the Persians and the Arabs. Bringing in historical contexts gave him more credibility as a leader of the Arab world and he felt he would be able to repeat the success of Qadisiyeh by conquering Persia again.

A moral angle was also brought into the war. In an article in the *Economist* (2012) it was pointed out that Iran choose to end the war with a truce rather than develop its chemical and biological weapons. The article states how Saddam Hussein, who had the backing of the Western powers was allowed to go scot free even though he used chemical weapons in the war with Iran. As the leader of the Iranian people,

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini could have chosen the path of weaponry but preferred to call a truce (*Economist*, 2012). Following the US-backed invasion of Southern Lebanon, French authorities repeatedly declared their support for Iraq and emphasized ending the war on the basis of the 1975 Algiers Agreement. Claude Cheyssaun speaking in France's National Assembly declared that the 1975 Agreement was a good basis for settling Iran-Iraq conflicts. In his speech he also stressed the necessity of ending this war since it endangered the whole region.

The UN resolutions passed for the Iran Iraq war represented the biased nature of the International Organization. Resolution 582 (1986) 'Deplores the use of Chemical Weapons in the war' but never cited the aggressor. Instead, the resolution stated that it, "expects both sides to refrain from the future use of chemical weapons". Resolution 598 (1987) demanded an immediate ceasefire between Iran and Iran and asked for the UN secretary general to start an investigation determining the start of the conflict; an exercise that was not undertaken. The Iran-Iraq war became nothing but a spectacle of a David verses Goliath where a very battered David did not win, yet did not get defeated as the war resulted in a ceasefire.

## THE CEASEFIRE

The 'imposed war' that lasted for eight years defined the revolutionary state's identity to a great extent. The Iranian government had taken the aim of the war to not just free itself from Iraq but a step further, to overthrow the regime of the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. According to Iranian sources, at the beginning of the war, military victories seemed attainable and many were found during the 8 year struggle. For example, on November 29, 1981, Imam Khomeini congratulated his military commanders on successes achieved in Khuzestan, remarking that 'the Iraqis had been obliged to retreat before the faith of the Iranian troops and their eagerness for martyrdom'. In the following year, on May 24, the city of Khurramshahr, which had been held by the Iraqis since shortly after the outbreak of war, was liberated, and only small pockets of Iranian territory remained in Iraqi hands. The war, which was also a covert war between the Arabs and the Persians felt to be close to an Iranian victory. The Imam marked the occasion by condemning anew the Persian Gulf states that supported Saddam Husain and describing the victory as a divine gift (Khomeini 1982: 154-5). Iran however, as a new state trying to find its feet was unable to cash in on its surprise victory. Thus the war kept oscillating between the two states. The support of the international community with Iraq has been highlighted in the previous section. Given the proximity between the two, Iraqi loss would have been

difficult due to the aid and arms that were being provided covertly by the United States.

The Americans, whose citizens had been taken as hostages, were determined to deny Iran a decisive victory and stepped up the intervention. On July 2, 1988, the US navy stationed in the Persian Gulf shot down a civilian Iranian airliner which led to the loss of 290 passengers. This was a final blow to Iran, who finally agreed to the ceasefire in the aftermath of the incident.

It was with great difficulty that Imam Khomeini agreed to end the war on the terms specified in Resolution 598 of the United Nations Security Council, comparing his decision in a lengthy statement issued on July 20 to the drinking of poison (Khomeini 1988: 227).

The suggestion to agreeing to a ceasefire was given by the then Prime Minister, Rafsanjani (interview, 2012) who agreed to step down from his position rather than let the Supreme leader take the responsibility.

According to Pear (1988), in calling off the war the Leader, Khomeini was conciliatory in his approach. This was a marked shift from the time the war began, when statements such as "fight on until the infidels are defeated," vowing "no compromise with the invaders" were the norm. In 1982, he had said: "Even if the Security Council orders, we will not

make peace. Even if the whole world gathers, we will not make peace." For "peace with the criminal is a crime against Islam," he said" (Pear 1988). Thus, the linking of his drinking poison with ending the war is an analogy that holds true. Statements of leaders confirm to this analogy as an official was quoted by Pear (1988) stating that, "For him to accept peace with Iraq with Saddam still in power is a particularly bitter pill because of his hatred of Saddam."

The Imam turned the ceasefire, which was a decision to save Iranian lives, into a decision that was taken to reduce the propaganda against the Iranians that was being done by the Western countries. But in the same breadth, he cautioned that no situation is definite and this memory would not go down well with the Iranian population. He would reiterate the call for war as being delayed not denied. The leader has been quoted saying, "We should be prepared for holy war to deflect possible aggression by the enemy. Our nation should not consider the matter finished" (Pear 1988).

This quote by the Supreme leader paints a picture of what impact the war had on the psyche of the Iranian people. The long war which took away many Iranian lives left a huge impact as Iran realized that its policy of Neither East nor West fell true for Iran too. While India could ask for help and get it from the international community, Iran was shunned

widely. The little help that Tehran got was from Syria and covert support from the Soviet Union. But in the international forums, such as the United Nations, Iran was alone in its battle for justice.

The redemption of this humiliation has shaped Iranian thinking in a subconscious way where every sanctions by the international community is put in the same category as the time when the war was imposed on Iran.

#### **HUMILIATION: WINNING VERSUS LOSING**

The humiliation borne by the Iranians has stayed with them to this day. Nuclear negotiations constantly emphasize the Iranian 'right' to enrichment along with a need to be treated as an equal partner in the discussions. Similarly, the after-effects of the Sino-Indian war have also been deep because of the war going in favour of the Chinese. The bonhomie prior to the war led to more confusion on how the elite as well as the public were to react. The confusion was added to by the Indian side when it refused to and still refuses to give access to documents and white papers that explain the war, how and why it happened. For many generations to come, the Indian side, public and elite, were unclear on how to interact with the Chinese. The definite sense of untrustworthiness



aside, the confusion lies in India not understanding the intentions of the Chinese (Moore 2014).

In every war that India and Pakistan fought with each other, India has emerged victorious. The notion of superiority by India can be seen in there action of Indira Gandhi (Hymans 2015) to Pakistan developing a nuclear programme where she gets furious to find out that Pakistan is very likely to have nuclear weapons. In their book, Catharine Scott-Clark and Adrian Levy (2008), explain how the Indian tests of 1974 sparked the Pakistani search for a bomb. The book cites evidence for how after Bhutto was hanged, RAW agents chanced upon documents that brought to light the Pakistani nuclear programme which was at an advanced stage. This, the authors claim started the race to the finish line of a nuclear weapon. The race of the 80s as well as the final step towards Weaponization in the 90s was nothing short of a slow paced south Asian nuclear race. With such circumstances in place, for Pakistan to become a nuclear weapons state before India would have been nothing short of blasphemous.

## **CONCLUSION**

War can have a lasting effect on the population of a state. The victors of a war feel a surge of pride in their acts and a subconscious superiority

complex becomes a key driver in their motivations for specific acts (for e.g., Indira Gandhi). However, equal if not stronger results are found by states that undergo loss in war. Humiliation can become a stronger motivator and driver to achieve peace than maintenance of prestige. The nuclear programmes of India and Iran were no different. They were deeply affected by the wars the states partook and their subsequent results. The humiliation felt by the defeat of a new state and to have sustained for eight years, is commendable. It was in this humiliation that led to the death of India's first prime minister and Khomeini too passed away soon after.

The chapter has brought to light the effect of war and how it affects the prestige of a state. It aims to look at redemption of humiliation as a determining factor as a way to achieve self-reliance. Iran's leader compared a cease fire with Iraq akin to drinking poison and the Indians have been wary of the Chinese for almost 2 decades after the war. State narratives are changed so as to accommodate the humiliation of war. They deeply affect the prestige of a state and redemption of this prestige can many-a-time happen only via another war, the result of which cannot be predetermined. Keeping in mind the loss of life and destruction war brings, a nuclear programme instils security and guarantees prestige. In the case of India and Pakistan, a conventionally superior India was made

equal to Pakistan after the two tested their nuclear programs. By giving up their nuclear weapons, Argentina and Brazil achieved the same parity, albeit in a different manner.

The Iran-Iraq war is not the only memory of war for Iranians. The Arab conquest of Iran in the year 651 was the other important war fought between the Arabs and the Persians. It is also known as the Muslim conquest of Persia and is not considered as humiliating an experience as the loss at war brought with it Islam, the main religion followed by the people of the state. Hence, it is seen as a blessing as well as a blot. However, for a majority of Iranians, the Iran Iraq war as an eight year long punishment is the situation they will avoid at all costs.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

# CONCLUSION

A state's identity, as argued in the previous chapters, is an ever evolving one. It is influenced by a variety of emotions. These emotions are generated when specific events occur that lead to the change in the perception of the states, with regards to themselves and the international community they are a part of. Of the varied emotions that affect the decision making of states, this thesis focused on the emotion of 'Prestige'. States are considered rational actors. But states are made by people and people aim to be rational actors. However, more often than not, emotions tend to influence the final decision. This study did touch upon, but did not focus on the debate between rationality and emotions. Rather, it understood the two as one where a state's rationality is determined by the events that occur and eventually shape it. Thus, in the case studies of India and Iran, their

rationality was shaped by the events that transpired. For the purpose of the study, events were taken after India achieved independence from the British and after the revolution led to the overthrow of the Shah in Iran. This was done to limit the study into a specific time frame. The study has also been limited by the individual nuclear deals that the two states have signed which give them access to interact with the world, not just from a nuclear perspective but also from economic purposes.

The literature on nuclear programmes has focused on two important variables that lead to a state's decision making. These variables, namely prestige and security, have been the overarching reasons for state wanting a nuclear programme. The delay in India's nuclear programme and the timing of the tests in 1998 are not explained by the security variable. A number of scholars have drawn the links between prestige and the Indian nuclear programme (Perkovich 1999; Markey 2000). But what are these pointers of prestige? What are the factors that affect this prestige, positively or negatively? The study has tried to answer these questions by looking at the three events in Indian history that influenced the nuclear programme of India. Another aspect the research entailed was the use of content analysis data sets. Qualitative data analysis was undertaken to highlight the underlying themes of discussion and to support the variables discussed in the chapters.

## **FINDINGS**

To bring out the essence of prestige that was evident in the statements and speeches of leaders and in the interviews conducted, content analysis was undertaken via NVivo. The qualitative data analysis software analyzed the texts and highlighted the most used words and frequently occurring words. Close to twenty interviews were conducted via Skype, email exchange and personal interviews. The interviewees ranged from academics to think tank professionals and were corroborated with some

informal interviews that are not part of the text, but gave the research work the necessary direction. Due to travel constraints, Iranian academics teaching outside of Iran were approached for interviews, while for the Indian case studies; local as well as international scholars were approached.

The interviews were divided into different groups of data sets so as to give a more nuanced understanding of the terminology. While the letters of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini were analysed separately due to their importance as standalone documents, the articles written by leaders while in an official position such as Jaswant Singh, Admiral Arun Prakash, Javad Zarif and Mohammad Rouhani were grouped as part of the official documents separately for India and Iran. Another grouping undertaken was that of the negotiators from the United States. John Kerry and Strobe Talbot led the negotiations for the United States during the nuclear negotiations with Iran and India, respectively. This data set was most unusual and verified the use of the data set with its results.

When the data sets of all the Iranian ministers' speeches were analyzed, the commonly used words were: confidence, negotiations, security, respect, enrichment, history, and recognize. On the other hand, when the interviews taken, for both India and Iran, were analyzed, the common

terms were: deserve, disapproving, distrust, establish and incapable. An interesting data set was the interviews of John Kerry and Strobe Talbott, both negotiators from the United States. Their common terms of together, defence, challenge, attempt, and benefits, speaks of a common American stance to overcome the difficulties and to bring the other side at the negotiating table. When the responses of the world after the Indian tests were scrutinized, results were surprising. Outrage is a term commonly associated with the 1998 tests, but it was used a mere eleven times while security was used thirty seven times. Capability (22), dangerous (24), pressure (19) and believe (19) were the other commonly used words with sanctions (54) being the most used word. This data set is an indicator of the real responses of the international community. Even though there was outrage towards India that brought the states together to form a new nuclear group, called the Nuclear Suppliers Group, there was tacit acceptance of India's decision. The fact that the most frequently used word was security and sanctions is evidence that the decision of include India was a slow but obvious one.

Ayatollah Khomeini's letter at the end of the Iran-Iraq war was also analyzed and the oft repeated terms were: principles (4), accept (6), faced (5), firmly (6), defeat (5), decision (6) and honor (5); while the Indian official responses were perused to get terms such as powerful

(27), advantage (7), capability (7), destruction (12), existence (9), and aggression (6). Both provide, to some extent, an understanding of their current positions in the international order. While India's statements as seen as that of a power that is aiming to grow with terms such as advantage and powerful, the Ayatollah's letter refers to acceptance of defeat and the humiliation at this defeat.

An over arching examination of the data gave some very interesting responses. Weapons, believe, agreement, security, confidence, capability and respect topped this list. Although the interviewees were a mix of Indians and Iranians, their reference points were clear indicators of how they saw the state evolving. Security and confidence come out as the primary concerns for the states, irrespective of where the interviewee is from or what they stand for.

## **SUMMARIES**

This study focused on the prestige factor and brought to light the different variables that affect prestige such as humiliation at war that led to a reduction of the state's prestige; the mistrust of the international system that makes a state safeguard its prestige more strongly and the prestige of a state deeply affected by its colonial/imperial past leading it



to announce its identity. Prestige has been understood as a value as well as an emotion in this thesis. As pointed out in the previous chapters, at many junctures prestige is seen as an emotion that drives decisions and at other stages in the research the term is seen as a value that states want to attain, driving the decision making. Thus, the factors that influence this value/ emotion are brought to the fore in the study.

The first part of the study understands the concept of prestige, how it is understood in International Relations literature, in Psychology, in Sociology and within the cultural contexts of the specific states. It then goes on to define prestige as an emotion that influences decision making. The study also looks at the events or evidence that showcases prestige as a value that states aim to attain.

Every action or event can lead to an increase or a decrease in the prestige of a state. Hence the study looks specifically at the nuclear programmes of India and Iran to contrast the different variables that affect the prestige of a state. Thus, the study operationalizes the term prestige to understand specific variables and the effect they have on the term.

For the research the three variables being considered are the effect of war on the national psyche and the subsequent threat perception, how it influences the prestige of a state and what decisions does the state undertake to retain the value of prestige. The second variable studied is the effect of post colonialism and the loss of self-confidence, the low self-esteem that is associated with post colonialism. The research looks to associate the emotion of prestige with the paradigms mentioned and has laid down how these emotions affect the nuclear decision making of the state. The third variable that places prestige as an emotion/ value is the interactions of the said states with the international community. It looks at the exchanges between India and Iran individually with the international community and how the two states have tried to uphold their pride while aiming to achieve prestige within the international community.

The third chapter looks at the variable of foreign policy slogans of the two states of India and Iran. It aims to draw a link between the slogans that defined and still define the foreign policy of the two case studies. While for India the slogan being referred to is 'Non-Alignment', for Iran, it was the slogan of 'Neither East nor West'. These slogans or diktats have defined the decision making of the two states to a large extent. Diktats provide an insight into the nation's psyche, how it sees itself and what it aims for in the long run. Non-alignment and neither east nor west imply

a need for a separate identity within the international conglomeration of states. The policies of India and Iran are hugely influenced by the need to be independent, more importantly, to not become a lackey of a superpower, where the self of the state becomes nothing more than a shadow of the superpower it supports or rallies behind. The founding leaders of the two states, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and Ayatollah Khomeini, time and again have reiterated the need for their respective states to have a voice of its own. They were both of the firm belief that their 'selves' would be defined not by following a superpower but by stating their states' philosophies on the same platform as that of the other states.

After independence, the Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru stated its foreign policy as that of 'non-alignment'. This term was used to explain India's posture in the international community and how it would abstain from taking sides in the cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union. India, according to Nehru, wanted to chart its own course and as an Asian power did not want to become a tool in the power play between the two super powers. There were periods of struggle, as in the case of Indonesia asking for military support from India and the latter first agreeing then disagreeing. But these kinks were worked out over a period of time. India, under the able leadership of its

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru defined its philosophy in terms of non-alignment where it wanted a peaceful and healthy relationship with both the superpowers. It aimed to create co-dependence as opposed to complete dependence of one state on the other. This policy made the superpowers vary of India's future goals while at the same time generated some amount of respect. The Indian policy, while similar to the Iranian policy of neither east nor west, was different as it did not seek to challenge the superpowers. India aimed for coexistence and harmony while trying to become a power in the international community. This policy of non-alignment was in sync with India's stand to be a nuclear power in its own right.

Iran's foreign policy after the Islamic Revolution was based on a similar model. Their supreme leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, issued the diktat of 'Neither East nor West' which was a response to the Shah's dependence on America and its western allies. The guardians of the revolution were keen to promote a policy which did not lead to the Iranian state becoming a lackey of a super power. The revolution was against the ruling of the Shah, but was more against the blind American support provided and against the discriminatory policies of the Shah that gave leeway to the Western powers. The speeches by leaders focused on the divide between 'us verse them' where every chant may not have been

against the Shah, but was against the Shah providing access to the Western powers with regards to Iranian oil. The calls for independence were strongly worded against the capitalist markets that were looting the Iranian state dry with no benefits reaching the people of the state.

An anti-Americanism drive was found to be the source of the revolution, but this did not mean that the Iranian state wanted to tilt towards the other side. Dependence on outside forces was the biggest evil the Islamic Republic was aiming to fight and in this fight it made clear that it did not want dependence on any power. This can be seen with ample clarity in the diktat of 'Neither East nor West'. Thus, Imam Khomeini wanted to make clear that while most of its foreign policy was driven with an anti-American, anti-western agenda, the Iranian state did not choose to use the support of the Soviet Union either, terming the policy 'Neither East nor West'.

The second variable under study was post colonialism and post imperialism that affected the prestige of the states of India and Iran. There is a sizable literature available on the post colonial nature of India's nuclear decision making (see Abraham, 1998; Chacko, 2009). But what was missing from this literature was the linkage of the emotion of prestige. The fourth chapter delves deeper to bring out the link between prestige and post colonialism to understand the nuclear decision making

of India and Iran. It answers questions such as how a state sees its Self, and how the state defines its identity. It brings to light the important factors that influence the prestige of a state. All these aspects are studied under the lens of post colonialism and what effects they have on the prestige of a state. For example, for the Indian state, having a nuclear weapons programme during the 1960s would not have fit with its identity which focused on an ethical and moral outlook rather than one based on realism.

The study brings to light the association of the self-identity with the concept of self-reliance and in turn with prestige. It links the concepts brought to light by Franz Fanon and his understanding of how the third world sees itself and what decisions are taken in order to bridge the gap that is understood by the states of India and Iran. It links the statements made by leaders that reflect on the Indian notion of self. These leaders, as a result of being in positions of power also define the evolving identity of the state. For example, one can see the change in the Indian self from being influenced by moral standards to becoming a pragmatic state. The same is true for the Iranian identity which tried to redefine itself in opposition to the prior ruler, the Shah. Although, according Ali Ansari (interview 2015), there is not much difference in the way the state of Iran

was ruled by the Shah and how it is been ruled under the religious leaders, the latter have tried to build on the difference between the two.

India's understanding of its 'self' has developed along with the events that have taken place over the years. Statements made by leaders reflect a deep desire to be taken as a power of contention. But India, in its initial phase, had stronger moralist leanings which it has, over a period of time, overcome. The chapter has tried to bring out the discussions by scholars such as Arundhati Roy (1998) and Priya Chacko (2009) to explain the concepts of post colonialism. It was an ethical dilemma for India, who was ready to test its nuclear programme in 1966 (archival evidence quoted in prior chapters). By testing its nuclear programme, as pointed out by Roy (1998) India not only lost its identity, but also subsumed the identity of the Western powers. Thus, India in trying to attain prestige for its identity ended up losing the very same identity it wanted to develop. The chapter also talks about Abraham's (1998) work and how its explains India's decisions in the post colonial framework.

There are two major influences on the Iranian nuclear programme which focuses on post imperialism. This post imperialism stems from the Shah, who ruled as an autocrat and from its Islamic past. For Iran, breaking out of the clutches of imperialism was difficult as it was thrust into a war as soon as it became an Islamic Republic, rejecting the imperialist

policies of the Shah. The two terms of 'Iraniyat' and 'Islamiyat' have been the defining factors of the Iranian decision making. According to Ali Ansari (interview, 2015), the Iranian decision making takes place and is best understood from the point of concentric circles. At the core is the notion of 'Iraniyat' which is nationalistic, followed by the notion of 'Islamiyat' where the Iranians see themselves as the leaders of the Islamic world. Around this circle is the larger world comprising of the downtrodden and needy, who could be from the 'Western' powers or from the third world. Based on the research conducted, it can be surmised that the Islamic Republic has a clear nationalist agenda bringing the notions of Iraniyat to the fore. But as the state is headed by the religious leaders and is an Islamic Republic, Islamiyat is used as a cover for its decisions.

Although post colonialism has been understood differently by India and Iran, it has shaped the prestige variable that lead to their respective nuclear programmes. While for Iran, the idea of breaking away from the Western powers defined post colonialism, for India it was being accepted as a power in the same league as that of its colonial masters. While the Indo-US nuclear deal is seen as a validation for India's quest for prestige, according to Acton (interview, 2015) for Iran, a nuclear deal will not provide the same validation. This is because nuclear deals take into



account the state's behaviour in other dimensions. India, in its need to be accepted by the international community, has always toed the line with regard to its commitments to the international powers. Iran, on the other hand, due to its disdain of the international powers and also due to the anti-western statements that harp on its break from the Western powers is not accepted the same way as India.

The third variable analyzed was the effect of war on the collective psyche of the state. The chapter on war looked at 1971 war for the Independence of Bangladesh, the 1962 war between India and China, and the eight year long war fought by Iran and Iraq (1980-88). It drew the link between the humiliation that is a result of defeat in war and the need to uplift a state's prestige. Statements made by leaders of both the states of India and Iran portray the deep hurt that they had to undergo as a result of the defeat of their forces. The statement of the grand Ayatollah while accepting the ceasefire stated his acceptance of the result as nothing short of drinking poison. He felt he had disappointed the people of the state as he had promised them victory in the war against the world. The hurt was evident in not just the statement of Khomeini (1988), but also those of other leaders. In the case of India, the government still refuses access to data regarding the 1962 war due to the humiliation faced by the state. This resulted in a different narrative

being formed where the Indian state was the victim in an attack from the aggressive Chinese state. Thus, the nuclear programme was justified in terms of an impending Chinese threat. It used the narrative built by state agents to explain India's threat perception. The notion of threat perception was also used when the *USS Enterprise* entered Indian waters.

The war of 1962 was the first and only loss India has borne. Due to this, the impact of the humiliation on the state narrative is stronger than that of the wars India has won with Pakistan. The Indian state has chosen to portray a different picture, that of a victim, to its public. This perception has stayed with the Indian public and a number of state agents till date. As explained above, the Indian state used the constructed threat perception of a Chinese attack to justify its nuclear programme.

Adding to this event was the 1971 incident of the *USS Enterprise* entering Bay of Bengal waters. Analysts count the event as a security threat even though the nuclear aircraft carrier entered Indian waters on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December, a time when India was on the brink of winning the war. Thus the threat was more perceived than real, which is similar to India's perception with its China threat. These perceived threats were handled by the state by showcasing India as a state that needed to be

equipped to handle its defences. As the notions of independence were important to the Indian identity, the state needed to be able to defend itself, and change the humiliation it felt into prestige for the state.

The war between Iran and Iraq was initiated by the latter with tacit support of the Western powers. There was use of chemical weapons by the Iraqis and neither the international community nor any international organization came to support the Iranians. This was a huge blow to Iran as it faced the death of a number of young soldiers in the face of chemical attacks. To add insult to injury, the new regime was put on an embargo and no western state was ready to provide it with military aid to protect itself. The war, which was thrust on Iran, went on for eight long years, with its main purpose being the removal of the guardians of the Islamic Republic. But just as the effect of sanctions lead Iran to develop its own nuclear programme independently, the Islamic Republic used the national identity dynamic to hold on to its power and to fight the war effectively. Even with its limited resources it was able to win small battles and came close to winning the war many a time.

All these incidents during the war hit the Iranian notion of prestige, which needed redemption. The speeches of leaders during the war emphasized on how they intended to defeat the Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, avenging the death of the young Iranian men. But this was not to be.

The Iranian regime did not have enough military aid to sustain and had to settle for a ceasefire. Due to the statements made by the leaders during the course of the war, the ceasefire, while pragmatic, was more humiliating than loss for the Iranian psyche which aimed to redeem its prestige via a nuclear programme.

An important difference between the Iranian defeat and the Indian defeat is the time of the war. While the Indian defeat, though humiliating to the Indian psyche, was a result of a war fought over a period of a few months. On the other hand, Iran had to suffer humiliation repeatedly for a period of eight years as it fought a war that was not just against its neighbour, but against the Western powers. This humiliation was further imbibed in the minds of the Iranian psyche when no international organization was able to, at a minimum; condemn the chemical attacks that were carried out by the Iraqi state. The study brought out the different variables affecting the prestige of a state and how and why did the nuclear programmes become a means to attain this prestige for India and Iran. While India and Iran have had different trajectories in their understanding out the three variables, the study was able to bring out how the three variables have had a similar impact on the prestige factor in the nuclear programmes of the two states. Each of the chapters dealt

with different variables, explaining their process and the linkages to the emotion/ value of prestige.

## **THE INDIAN AND IRANIAN NUCLEAR DEALS**

Since 1968, when the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was inaugurated, an Asian State has consistently opposed the unfair terms of the treaty. It has pursued an atomic bomb amid regional tensions and precarious relations with its neighbours. It also managed to use its capability to bolster a national identity tied to “security” and to achieve the goal of being a power of significance. This State is not Iran, which is a signatory of the NPT. It is India, which is not. So why is it that Iran, for decades, has been scrutinized and castigated while India has not only escaped stricture but has been given tacit support for its nuclear programme? One explanation could be not in any formal mechanism in the global system, let alone the NPT, but in the informal consideration of “behaviour”.

India and Iran have both been sanctioned in the past for their nuclear behaviour. India after its first ‘peaceful’ explosion in 1974 and after weaponization in 1998 and Iran during the better part of 2000s. However, Delhi was able to weather the immediate economic punishment. Soon, the sanctions ebbed, replaced by an acceptance of India’s arsenal. Even the 2002 crisis with Pakistan, which threatened war, did not unsettle this de facto arrangement: India might not be in the NPT in practice, but it was considered an adherent in principle.

At one level, the Islamic Republic can also be said to have promoted adherence to no use of a bomb: after all, current Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei issued a fatwa against nuclear weapons in 2005 and the leader of the revolution, Imam Khomeini also rejected nuclear weapons stating them to be incompatible with Islam. The State has not crossed any legal boundaries of the treaties it has signed. While flexing its muscles within the parameters of the treaty, it has not left the framework of the NPT or set it aside.

However, that is far from sufficient for Iran to be given the leeway accorded to India. Why? “Behaviour” is set within a geo-political arena where states shroud their decisions in the garb of security. India’s nuclear decision is showcased as a response to the Chinese and Pakistani security threat, while Iran’s nuclear ambition can be considered a retort to the covert Israeli nuclear programme and a possible threat from nuclear Saudi Arabia. However, because Iran has been put in the “offensive” position — or put itself in that position, depending on your viewpoint — the implicit understanding that was provided to India could not be replicated in Iran. Delhi has been able to support its portrayal of a bomb for security through its behaviour in the international arena, from proclamation of a zero-proliferation record to respect for international borders, over four decades. It has built a “trust” beyond formal standards.

For all the details in an agreement and annexes of more than 60 pages, the significance of the deal begins with the symbolic. It is a starting point for Iran’s behaviour to be considered reliable rather than devious, civil rather than military, realistic development rather than existential threat. But it could take all 10 or 15 years of that agreement for the Islamic State to approach the trust which is afforded to the Indian nuclear power.

The Islamic Republic has been on the radar of the international community since its inception. Israel announcing Iran to be an existential threat to the former has led to an increased emphasis on the security dimension of Iran’s nuclear programme. However, the Iranian leaders have consistently emphasized their stand against nuclear weapons. They state the easy availability of chemical and biological weapons and their choice to not purchase or create the weapons of mass destruction. Iran, as signatory of the NPT, has upheld its part of the bargain and does not make claims to leave the treaty, rather makes efforts to be part of the international nuclear community. How are these factors explained in the

context of prestige? Does ontological security play a role in Iran's nuclear programme? How is the prestige of a state, India or Iran, affected by threat perception? This study has tried to answer these questions by looking at the different variables that affect the Iranian nuclear programme.

Mahapatra (2013) compares and contrasts the nuclear deals of India and Iran stating that, while the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Agreement (JCPOA) was negotiated with six countries, the Indian nuclear deal, i.e. the 123 Agreement was a bilateral one. He also points out that there was a lot of support towards a deal to pursue civilian nuclear activities with India while allowing it to retain its nuclear weapons while Iran had to refrain its uranium enrichment to the demands of the agreement, while facing strong criticism from the Republican leadership. But at the same time, he also brought forward certain similarities between the deals. Just as China and Pakistan reacted unfavourably towards the Indo-US deal, Israel and Saudi Arabia too were highly critical of the Iranian nuclear deal. He also opined that just as the geo-political considerations of states changed with a surge in Indo-US relations, the same would hold true for the Middle Eastern region.

Thus, both the states with their different foreign policy dictates pursued the same aims of independence and equal status with regards to the international community. They used their slogan to showcase the philosophy behind their decision making, one of which was the nuclear programme. As the Indian and Iranian states fought to be treated at par with the international community, they realized having a nuclear programme to their credit was one of the ways to attain parity. Hence,

as explained in the chapter, the states of India and Iran chose to develop a nuclear programme so as to gain prestige. The aim of the states was to gain the value of prestige they so desired and not an emotion they were fulfilling. Being treated as a second grade citizen within the international community reduced the prestige value of India and Iran. Both the states sought to change the current equation by developing a nuclear programme. The development of this programme was not to threaten any neighbouring state or a superpower. Rather it was to portray to the larger community that they (India and Iran) were at the same pedestal as that of the western states. The association of technology is an important aspect of this prestige. Parallels of which have been made in the subsequent chapter.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

At the beginning of the study, two hypotheses were to be tested using the different variables. The first hypothesis that is to be tested is, Prestige associated with the nuclear programme, and loss of prestige associated with giving up the programme was an important determinant in Indian and Iranian nuclear programmes. From the study it was found that prestige and loss of prestige can occur from a variety of different



experiences. All the three experiences discussed within the thesis, where loss of prestige is felt by the states, do not necessarily occur due to nuclear programmes. However, redemption of the loss of prestige is undertaken by the development of a nuclear programme. Loss in War, discussed in the fifth chapter explains this in detail. However, redemption of the humiliation from loss of prestige was undertaken by both India and Iran with the development of an indigenous nuclear programme. Since loss of prestige was not associated with giving up of the programme, this hypothesis is partially verified.

The second hypothesis that is to be tested is, Both countries have repeatedly, publicly, deified their nuclear programmes, felicitated the personnel behind these programmes and identified their scientific advances and international progress with references to their nuclear programmes. Statements by leaders of both India and Iran justify the development of their nuclear programmes. However, one of justifications used, especially by Iran, is that the states' resources have been used to develop the indigenous nuclear programme and they would not want to stop production as that would lead to wasted resources. Both the states have strongly identified their progress with the technological and scientific advances they have made despite brevity of sanctions that were levied against them. For both the states, the nuclear negotiations were a make

or break situation where all their effort was being tested. Given the circumstances and the differing geopolitical understandings of the two states, India and Iran have managed to break out of the isolation keeping their vision of higher status intact. Thus, this hypothesis is verified.

Prestige has come out as an important variable during state decision making. It is important when wars are fought, it is important when state leaders interact with each other and it is important when crucial decisions are to be taken by the heads of state. Although the study of emotions is not that well defined within International Relations, there is a lot of new literature that delves into their role in decision making. This thesis hopes to be a small contribution into the area of emotions and decision making.

Emotions when understood carefully can help guide the state take the correct and best suited decision. The thesis then suggests that more aspects of state identities and emotions should be brought to the forefront to produce research in International Relations in general and decision making in particular.

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## Transcribed Version of Achin Vanaik's Interview

By Kanica Rakhra, Research Scholar, SIS, JNU, New Delhi

at Panchsheel Park, New Delhi

On 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2015 from 5 30 p.m. to 6 30 p.m.

For PhD Thesis titled "Understanding the Role of Prestige in the Indian and Iranian Nuclear Programs"

- India's nuclear program was the earliest of any countries, including the advanced industrialized countries. So clearly it starts very much before the perceived threat of a Chinese nuclear program. This development was clearly associated with India seeing itself as a great power in the international system.
- Pakistan's policy is India driven whereas India's policy is driven more by the international system than by its neighbours.
- Every single nuclear power has proliferated one way or another. The Russians and the Chinese collaborated; the British and the Americans collaborated; the French and the Israelis; the Israelis and the South Africans.

- India broke the trust of the international community with its 1974 nuclear test and called it a peaceful nuclear test as it had betrayed its international commitments.
- India developed its nuclear energy program and then conducted a peaceful nuclear test, breaking its international commitment. It was legally bound to not conduct a test.
- Jan Sangh has always wanted a bomb. [to be corroborated with other research on the topic]
- Even before China developed a nuclear program, the Jan Sangh writings emphasize on the need for a bomb
- Security is always seen as a more credible reason to develop a nuclear weapons program.
- If you look at countries going nuclear, the reasons had more to do with changes in self-perceptions rather than changes in threat perceptions
- The using of the bomb by the United States at the end of the Second world war was not because it faced a threat from Japan and Germany but because of self perceptions. It had to send a message to the Soviet Union that we are the top dog. The cover was using the threat of communism.

- One month after the tests, Vajpayee says its not threat specific. One year after the tests, the then Indian government's position is not country specific.
- For the tests in 1998, the Defense minister was not part of the decision making." How then can it be threat specific?
- There is a predominant view that morality has little to do with international order. But states are governed by people, who are inherently moral. States with nuclear weapons have lost from states that did not have nuclear weapons, because of an obvious moral dimension that comes in the use of nuclear weapons. Thus, they are not strategically useful and are unable to act as a deterrent in the true sense of the term. Eg: Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq.
- The nature of the Indian movements was such that there was a transfer of power from the English to the elite in India. As a result of this transfer of power, they in fact adopted the forward defense thesis of the British government. India's foreign policy, thus, was to a large extent influenced by the British methods. This affects its behavior vis-à-vis the neighbours Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Maldives and Bangladesh.
- The border dispute between India and China also has its roots in the national liberation movement that adopted the policies of its colonizers. The Chinese want a simple give and take and do not want to accept an

imperiallly driven border. But the basic reason why India does not want to change the borders in because of the very nature of the Indian national movement.

- The Indian national movement was unclear on how to deal with the princely states. The movement did not take the mass base from the peasants. The character of the Indian national movement was totally different as swaraj meant different things and the goal of independence comes much later. The concept of a force pushing out the colonizers was not there.
- India's nuclear program was status driven, although it was dressed up in the grab of deterrence.
- The validity of the argument that deterrence provides security does not hold ground in the South Asian region. Two aspects to deterrence, one is to say that nuclear weapons deter and the other is to say that one gets security through deterrence. Former is correct but deterrence is something different from the property of being able to deter. It is the theorization and rationalization that this property is so strong and so powerful that you can rely on it for your security. This security is not just physical but also psychological. (argument in after the bomb)
- China has been able to resolve its borders with all of its neighbours, except for India.

- The dominant view within the Indian elite, who the Indian state serves, is that India is an emerging power which must establish its global standing and this attitude influences the behaviour of the Indian state.
- Having nuclear weapons does improve the status of India in the comity of Nations, in the sense that certain powerful countries will take India more seriously. This is because the leaders or the decision makers of these other states share the same framework of thinking with regard to nuclear weapons.
- The benefits India gets from being a nuclear power is much more at the intangible level. Their translation into concrete benefits is extremely low. Nuclear weapons do not help resolve India's current problems, such as Kashmir, Poverty, and every growing Population. It does not guarantee that the United States will adjust more during the WTO negotiations. It also does not mean that you will a UN Security Council seat, because there are other considerations. The development of nuclear weapons only acts as a confidence booster in the interactions of the Indian diplomats with their counterparts.
- Its military impact is almost nil. For example, you are much more likely to make yourself a target of a nuclear conflict by having nuclear weapons than by not having nuclear weapons. One could argue that not

having nuclear weapons is a stronger deterrent than having nuclear weapons.

- There is a strong moral angle in the use of nuclear weapons which makes them redundant which is why they haven't been used since 1945.



## **Transcribed Version of Ali Ansari's Interview**

By Kanica Rakhra, Research Scholar, SIS, JNU, New Delhi

Via Skype call

**On 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2015**

For PhD Thesis titled "Understanding the Role of Prestige in the Indian and Iranian Nuclear Programs"

- It is difficult to underestimate the impact of the Iran-Iraq war on the Iranian psychology not only domestically but also in its relations with the outside world. There is a very strong narrative in Iran that the war had been imposed on them and basically the duplicity of the outside world in maintaining the war not only for as long as it went on but also in terms of supporting Iraq, or at least turning a blind eye, in terms of the use of chemical and biological weapons.
- There is clear evidence that the United States and other powers tended to err slightly on the side of the Iraqis when the situation got more difficult.
- For the Iranians, especially from a military point of view, there is a need to feel self-sufficient as there was an arms embargo and it was difficult

to get the equipment. But from a broader world view perspective, it confirms this trend of them feeling the siege and battling it out, along, against all odds.

- The Iranian nuclear program is exactly like it was under the Shah.
- Although they explicitly say the nuclear program is civilian in nature, they want to be a threshold state.
- Even when they say that the pathways have been closed, the pathways have only temporarily been closed. They are not likely to accept anything that permanently, in their view, because they believe that circumstances may change and they may have to go towards weaponization.
- The notion of 'Iraniyat' is without a shadow of doubt the influencing factor in Iran's nuclear program as it is driven by nationalism. If it were 'Islamiyat' there are enough instances that provide justification for developing a weapon too, but the Iranian program is nationalistic in nature.
- There is dichotomy between the pragmatism of a power that wants to integrate into the international system and the ideology of the revolution. They have not chosen a dual path where the negotiators play the realpolitik role of an emerging great power trying to integrate into the system and on the other hand the rhetoric has never been harsher focusing on the evil Americans or the evil Europeans.

- For the reintegration to work, you need a measure of trust from both sides. The Americans have, at least publicly, tried to make an effort. They keep bending over backwards saying how they have to understand the Iranian position. Although the Americans have not handled it brilliantly, but it's not the same level of rhetoric that's coming out of Tehran.
- Even now while the Americans are saying that there could be cooperation in the future on ISIS, Khamenei still maintains that America will always be our enemy. On Khamenei's website there is a poster of an American who is half satanic, half human. Things such as these don't help matters at all.
- Iranians have done nothing to build that level of trust, especially domestically, to prepare the public opinion.
- Validation by the Americans is a double edged sword. The main thing the Iranians want is that they say the Americans are validating them because the restrictions on the Iranian nuclear program are so constraining that it is a deep humiliation for the Iranians. One look at the American fact sheet and its evident that the Iranians have it pretty tough.
- From a prestige perspective, the Iranians feel that they are a scientific and advanced country. If the Pakistanis and the Indians can have it, why can't we. It's not a question of Israel as much as it is of South Asia.

Their anxiety stems from the 1974 tests India conducted and again when it tested in 1998, particularly from the Pakistani testing.

- In terms of Pride, there was this angst that India wasn't even a signatory to the NPT and how are they getting away with it. So there is the element of double standard, of pride, but also a sense of wanting to be treated as an equal. What they don't factor in, of course, is all the other things they get into.
- The difference between India and Iran is that the former never makes sweeping statements about wiping away a country off the globe.
- You can't want a nuclear program and be such a regional trouble maker.
- Iran needs to have a constructive relationship with the state of Israel because its in your region. The very least the Iranians can do is to not talk about their claims, but their insistence leads them to trouble.
- The Iranians like to see themselves as a post colonial state and their rhetoric tends to reflect that, but I personally don't think it's true. In part because they inherited so much of the Shah's international strategy and foreign policy. They put it in Islamic language but it's actually very similar, particularly the nuclear policy. Its basically identical to that of the Shah.
- What one could call it a post imperial state. But the imperial structure doesn't know quite what to do with itself. It sees itself as a great

civilization of the region, it feel that the world owes Iran some sort of debt. If you look at its activities in Iraq and Afghanistan it does have a sense of self.

- Post colonial doesn't really work with Iran. While a lot of politicians like to voice these things, it has never really been or seen itself as a colonial state. Its attitudes and aspirations are in some ways quite from a post colonial state's set up.
- The state agents see themselves as guardians of Shias. It has to be understood in terms on concentric circles. The core is the Shias. The second tier is the Islamic world and the third tier is all the oppressed of the world. Their message is truly revolutionary, but as Kissinger says, they have to decide between being a cause or a state. Underlying all this is a strong Iranian imperial attitude where Islam is more a means to an end.
- Independence and Justice and just slogans that all states use. It's a good slogan to have, but the problem is that they don't practice it very well at home. Iran's policy is more revolutionary and more Universalist in nature.
- The level of scrutiny on Iran's nuclear program is so much that they would be fool hardy to move into a weaponization state at the moment. But I think they always want to keep the options open. They have the

what if criteria. What if the international situation changes, what if Pakistan collapses and its nuclear weapons go into the hands of some radical Sunni groups. In certain scenarios, if they feel a deterrent would be needed and would like to consider their options.

## **Transcribed Version of James Acton's Interview**

By Kanica Rakhra, Research Scholar, SIS, JNU, New Delhi

Via Skype call

**On 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2015**

For PhD Thesis titled "Understanding the Role of Prestige in the Indian and Iranian Nuclear Programs"

- If you go back to the IAEA report, you look at when the AQ Khan network and its contact with Iran, it coincides with the Iran Iraq war and this is unlikely to be a coincidence.
- In general, one would consider that a country with a security threat may consider nuclear weapons and the Iran-Iraq war was a significant threat to Iran. This leads to suggesting that the war was a factor in catalyzing the program in the beginning.
- The program was dormant for nearly a decade and investment in the program gets ramped up only after a gap of about ten years.
- The Iran Iraq war is a factor in starting the program, but it cannot, by itself explain where we are today.

- Very early in the Iranian Revolution, there was some hope that the US and Iran could maintain good relations. But the siege of the US embassy did huge damage to the relations. But the latter half of the hostage siege, the US is fundamentally opposed to the new regime in Iran.
- The US took an instrumental approach to Iran. The US saw Iran as a way of advancing its interests with one example being the Iran-Contra Scandal. The US wanted to deal with Iran, but this was at a covert level.
- There is a much more perceived conventional threat from the US, much more than isolation and adulation per se. even though there is no direct evidence to support the same. How Iran judges that threat and how it is correlated with the ebb and flow of the nuclear program is an interesting factor to study.
- Clearly the program had picked up in 2003 when the Iraq war was taking place. This is the same time that Iran reportedly approached the US with a grand bargain.
- the extent to which they have used their nuclear program as a bargaining chip has ebbed and flowed over time.



- I do think there is a prestige motivation in Iran's program. But that would be different from Iran's independence and non alignment. I do not see much of a link between them, but haven't given it enough thought either.
- When the negotiations between Iran and Europe were taking place in 2003, the Bush administration was at its most hardline phase and invading Iran was a very strong possibility. During this time, the negotiations were acting as a deterrent in the plans of the United States. Hence, the US administration not being happy with the results of the negotiations had its own motivations. Change occurred during the latter half of the Bush administration where it is willing to talk to Iran. But trust is a factor for the other side too and Iran is not ready to make a deal by then. It takes the Obama administration to convince people that diplomacy is the path that the United States wants to follow.
- Clearly the Iranians want a deal with the US and maybe because the US was on board, the Iranians were willing to make concessions they disagreed on with during their negotiations with Europe.
- On the other hand there is this concern the Iranians have that the US will not be able to stick to its commitments and domestic politics will overpower the discussions between the two states.

- Had the deal in 2003 between Iran and Europe stuck, the lack of US involvement in the process would have become a problem for the future of the deal.
- A partial explanation would be a deal with the United States providing legitimacy to the Iranians. But at a very practical level, Iran needs US sanctions relief. This is because firms all over the world are affected by US legislature on this issue.
- While the US has become more pro-negotiations with time, the French have actually gone more hard-line with the Iranians. But the US can keep its allies in line.
- There is also a degree of prestige here in that Iran paints itself as a non-aligned country. While unlike North Korea it wants to be a part of the international system and its not just an economic thing, it's a cultural thing, it's a prestige thing, it's Iran's idea of being a great power thing. Being an accepted part of the international system matters. It is not very different from India's desire to be a part of the export control. It is what important countries do.
- Its not that negotiating with the US confers legitimacy per se, but its very hard for Iran to re-enter the international community without the US its tacit approval or at least not disapproving Iran's entry.
- Iran's great power status requires the US to not be actively blocking it.

- The US India deal is a contested deal in terms of how much it has actually achieved on ground and its been very difficult to implement. In that sense there is a similarity. The Iran deal would be easier to implement as lifting sanctions ought to be simpler than building reactors, which is incredibly complex. On the other hand we know from experience that there will be inevitably be complications with the Iran deal because you can never be completely specific and statements can always be misunderstood.
- So there is a clear analogy there because both of them attempted to create a nuclear normalization. Here's the big difference though; prior to the Nuclear deal India was not a pariah state. The deal was a consequence of India achieving great power status; India got so much power in the system that it became impossible for the US administration to not recognize the facts and bring India out of its nuclear isolation. Iran in no sense is a great power but has a lot of power to create regional mischief. It is a regional power in some ways. So the nuclear deal will not enable it to become a great power but it will become richer after the deal, which will enable it to have some greater degree of power projection.
- There is huge fear in the US that a rich Iran will become much more aggressive and more powerful than now. But Iran's economic problems

are so deep that this effect is going to be a fairly marginal one. Most of the money is likely to go into domestic sources and not into exporting of terror.

- In some sense the India deal didn't matter because India was already a great power before the deal and in some sense the Iran deal won't matter because Iran won't be a great power with the deal. There are other aspects from which these deals are important, but from a prestige/great power status perspective India and Iran start from very different levels.
- I think prestige had no role in starting the Iranian program because it was a secret and a secret program doesn't get you much prestige. But once it became public prestige became very important. Never mind internationally, which was a factor too, but particularly the domestic prestige was an important factor. This was because the regime had sold its own people so heavily on enrichment technology as a source of modernity that it became hard to make a deal over that program.
- Iran did not get into the centrifuge business because of prestige, but once the program got public, prestige became incredibly important.
- Its better to argue security concerns and prestige as two separate things where prestige is a purely ideational thing.

- But it is also true that if the Iranian regime is seen as incapable of not defending its own citizens, it will lose prestige. So one could develop a nuclear program to ensure prestige amongst its people and security and prestige become intertwined. You need a program to convince your own people that you can defend yourself. There is a prestige angle to security as well.

### **Transcribed Version of Prof. Rajaraman's Interview**

By Kanica Rakhra, Research Scholar, SIS, JNU, New Delhi

Via Skype call

**On 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2015**

For PhD Thesis titled "Understanding the Role of Prestige in the Indian and Iranian Nuclear Programs"

- The coming of the USS Enterprise did not have any military effect. It did have an effect on the Indian psyche in terms of a global sensibility, but

not on the nuclear program. The nuclear program was going on at its own pace with the constant ambiguity of should we or should we not.

- The Chinese defeat in 1962 had a major impact. This was because the defeat was also followed by a nuclear explosion in 1964 by them.
- Plus Mrs. Gandhi had her own domestic compulsions. She did the test in 1974 to strengthen her hand.
- Am not aware of any correlation between India winning the 1971 war and wanting to develop its nuclear program further.
- Pakistan has always been an adversary and the fact that they were developing a nuclear program was bound to have an effect on India's program. The defeats in war were taken very much to heart by the Pakistani's who still hold the grudge. Thus, their nuclear program was initiated as a result of the Bangladesh war. And their initiation prompted our program to be speeded up.
- China had made no threats whereas Pakistan was quick to make threats.
- In the initial days the primary target was Pakistan and later it became China centric.
- Indo-Pak hyphen: India is happy that it is going away, but its not gone completely. In Washington Think Tanks, they still refer to the relationship as a rivalry. How can you have rivalry between a country and another that is seven times its size. There is no arms race between India and

Pakistan and on the nuclear front we are more than capable. If India is building more, it is because of China.

- So in the beginning Pakistan was a primary motivator as all our problems and wars were with that neighbor. With China there was only one war and nothing else. Once we had covered Pakistan, we tried to match upto China.
- Neither India nor Pakistan would have wanted to be the second country in South Asia to test.
- India's 1998 tests had a lot to do with the government in power. The BJP had mentioned it in their manifesto and once they were in power, they had to do it. The BJP felt that we were ready, not just against Pakistan, but also as a world power.
- When we needed the aid we took help from whatever quarters we could. So this sense of self might be a little misplaced.
- This does not take away the fact that India was a new state, just out of the hands of colonial powers and to ask for help from the colonial powers or their cousins.
- The complaints have been more against the Americans than the Russians. This is primarily because our country's intelligencia was dominated by the left. There was much more suspicion with regards to the US. Practically all people with experience seem to have felt a general

distrust towards the Americans. This is not to say that the Russians have not done their share of double handling with India, but because of our left leanings, we have let go many a time. But the feelings against the Americans are more much explicitly stated.

- There has always been a feeling of being a country of influence. We were a great country and now we want to come back and find our own place in the nation. For a while we had no clout, no money and no arms but India was still viewed as a country with seriousness because of leaders such as Gandhi and Nehru. It received a number of leaders such as Tito and Sukarno too. But after a while that died out, and what mattered the most was power. It was Rajiv Gandhi who initiated a nuclear disarmament action plan but when it was spurned, no one paid any attention.
- Iran demands respect, which it is not getting, but it hopes to achieve that some day.
- Their manpower isn't as big as ours but they, more than us, live in the notions of the past civilizations. Iranians have the feeling of we have done much more than they have and hence deserve a seat on the table. This drives their nuclear policy to a great extent; of being a key player in the world.



- Israel continues to view Iran as a perpetual threat. It wasn't that strong a threat to Israel before but after having started its nuclear program, it is viewed very strongly as one. This is an important reason why Iran got singled out by America and Europe. Iran had no hostile intentions towards anyone in particular. This is not to say that their notion of threat perception did not exist.
- Their general policy is to come up to the edge of nuclear credibility and capability
- But certainly their public statements have been rather clear in stating that they do not want nuclear weapons. Thus they want to enrich only as much as allowed by the NPT which is what every nation other signatory is privy to.
- It is not inconsistent on the part of the Iranians to make a statement that they don't want nuclear weapons but will do make all the preparations for the development of such a program.
- Their missile program is something that the Americans worry about. They can't reach the United States but are capable of reaching Israel.
- Along with the Shah went all the concessions, so they definitely had to watch out for themselves.
- Iran knew very well that the big boy is annoyed with them.

- Saddam not being chastised for the use of chemical weapons was a problem for the Iranians.
- But the nuclear program is influenced by the Shia-Sunni divide to a great extent. Certainly the Arabs get jittery about Iran being the dominant power in the region.
- Prestige firstly is based on correct perception. It is not an empty concept. There is no doubt that India has a stronger world presence after the nuclear tests. Much as people might dislike the bomb, the fact is that all invitations to talk with a good place to stay come because of the bomb.
- If India were to increase the number of nuclear arsenal from 100 to 200, its not going to increase their prestige. The nuclear prestige remains the same.
- 1974 looked like a one off experiment because we were unclear on what we wanted from such a test. Thus, if you develop an arsenal with a test, it becomes an arsenal with potential, making it a prestige issue.
- One could associate prestige with having a state with no person living in poverty. For example Germany. In all fairness, those guys had the cover of NATO.
- Non-Aligned is an offense to both the parties.