China's military rise and Indian discursive interpretations

Thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

At the University of Leicester

By

Ann Mary George

Department of Politics and International Relations

University of Leicester

January 2019

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Ann Mary George

Abstract

This thesis examines China's military rise since 2013 and the Indian strategic community's discursive interpretations. This thesis furthers our understanding of Indian security and foreign policy, by highlighting the working of non-security imperatives or ideational elements within the Indian strategic community's discursive representations of the Chinese military actions. The thesis analyses the discursive strategies used to construct the China identity, and concurrently the binary opposite Indian identity. By employing critical discourse analysis and a constructivist framework, it explains how constituent groups within the Indian strategic community represent the Chinese military actions. The primary argument of the thesis is that ideational elements are far more influential in shaping or constructing the Indian strategic community's discursive interpretations and recommendations for response to China, than previously acknowledged. Secondly, it argues that the Indian strategic elite's discursive constructions facilitate the Indian government's policy choices – for example, deliberate strategic ambiguity (especially in nuclear policy) and multialignment (i.e. the discourse supports the Indian government's foreign policy approach of pursuing multiple policy practices and multi-directional engagement). A secondary, but related finding of the thesis is that the discursive presence of ideational elements is more prominent in areas where India's power ambitions lie.

This thesis is dedicated to my father, whose example has made me all that I am.

Acknowledgements

Contents

List of abbreviations

A2/AD: Anti-Access and Area Denial

ABM: Anti-Ballistic Missile

ADIZ: Air Defence Identification Zone

AEW: Air-borne Early Warning

AHW: Advanced Hypersonic Weapon

AIIB: Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

AIR: Air Identification Rules

ASAT: Anti-Satellite weapons

ASBM: Anti-Ship Ballistic Missile

ASB: Air-Sea Battle

ASEAN: Association of South East Asian Nations

ASW: Anti-Submarine Warfare

ATC: Air Traffic Control

ATV: Advanced Technology Vehicle

AVIC: Aviation Industry Corporation of China

AWACS: Airborne Warning and Control System

BIG-B: Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt

BJP: Bharatiya Janata Party

BMD: Ballistic Missile Defense

BrahMos: Brahmaputra-Moskova, joint venture between the Russian Federation's NPO
Mashinostroyeniya and India's DRDO

BRI: Belt and Road Initiative

BRICS: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa

C4ISR: Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and
Reconnaissance

CAPS: Centre for Air Power Studies

CATOBAR: Catapult Assisted Take-Off But Arrested Recovery

CBG: Carrier Battle Group

CCP: Chinese Communist Party (also called CPC – Communist Party of China)

CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis

CLAWS: Centre for Land Warfare Studies

CMC: Central Military Commission

CNN: Cable News Network

CNP: Comprehensive National Power

CNPC: China National Petroleum Corporation

COMCASA: Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement

CPEC: China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

CPGS: Conventional Prompt Global Strike

CSG: Carrier Strike Group

CTBT: Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

DF: Dong Feng

DoD: US Department of Defense

DRDL: Defence Research and Development Laboratory

DRDO: Defence Research and Development Organisation

DTTI: Defense Trade and Technology Initiative

EAS: East Asia Summit

ECM: Electronic Counter Measures

ECS: East China Sea

EEZs: Exclusive Economic Zones

ELINT: Electronic Intelligence

EMALS: Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System

EMP: Electromagnetic Pulse

EMRG: Electromagnetic Rail Gun

FDI: Foreign Direct Investment

FGFA: Fifth Generation Fighter Aircraft

FIR: Flight Information Region

FP: Foreign Policy

FPA: Foreign Policy Analysis

G-2: Group of Two

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

GHG: Greenhouse gases

GLD: General Logistics Department (PLA)

HADR: Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

HAWC: Hypersonic Air-Breathing Weapon Concept

HGV: Hypersonic Glide Vehicle

HMAS: Her Majesty's Australian Ship

HMS: Her Majesty's Ship

HSTDV: Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle

IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency

ICAO: International Civil Aviation Organization

ICBM: Intercontinental Ballistic Missile

IDSA: Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses

IN: Indian Navy

IONS: Indian Ocean Naval Symposium

IOR: Indian Ocean Region

IORA: Indian Ocean Rim Association

IPCS: Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies

IRBM: Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile

ISRO: Indian Space Research Organisation

J-15: Shenyang J-15 fighter, 'Flying Shark'

JIMEX: Japan India military exercise

JSF: Joint Strike Fighter

KADIZ: Korean Air Defence Identification Zone

Kph: kilometres per hour

LAC: Line of Actual Control

LCA: Light Combat Aircraft

LEMOA: Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement

LoE: Line of Equality

MaRVs: Manoeuvrable Re-entry Vehicles

MDA: Maritime Domain Awareness

MEA: Ministry of External Affairs

MIRV: Multiple Independent Targetable Re-Entry Vehicles

MND: Ministry of National Defence, People's Republic of China

MoD: Ministry of Defence

MOFA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MoU: Memorandum of Understanding

MR: Military Region

MRBM: Medium Range Ballistic Missile

MSR: Maritime Silk Road

MTCR: Missile Technology Control Regime

NASA: National Aeronautical and Space Agency

NDA: National Democratic Alliance

NFU: No-first use

NMF: National Maritime Foundation

NOTAM: Notice to Airmen

NPT: Non-Proliferation Treaty

NSG: Nuclear Suppliers Group

ONGC: Oil and Natural Gas Corporation

ORF: Observer Research Foundation

PACOM: United States Pacific Command, renamed Indo-Pacific Command in 2018

PGS: Prompt Global Strike

PIB: Press Information Bureau

PLA: People's Liberation Army

PLAAF: People's Liberation Army Air Force

PLAN: People's Liberation Army Navy

PLARF: People's Liberation Army Rocket Force

PLASAF: People's Liberation Army Second Artillery Force

PMO: Prime Minister's Office

PNE: Peaceful Nuclear Explosion

PRC: People's Republic of China

PTI: Press Trust of India

QCA: Qualitative Content Analysis

QDR: Quadrennial Defense Review

R&D: Research and Development

RLV-TD: Reusable Launch Vehicle Technology Demonstrator

RMB: Renminbi (Chinese currency)

SAM: Surface to Air Missile

SAR: Search and Rescue Operations

SCMP: South China Morning Post

SCO: Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

SCS: South China Sea

SIPRI: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

SLBM: Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile

SLOC: Sea Line of Communication

SSBN: Nuclear-Powered Ballistic Missile Submarine

SSN: Nuclear Submarine

SRBM: Short Range Ballistic Missile

STOBAR: Short Take-Off But Arrested Recovery

STOVL: Short take-off and vertical landing

Su-33: Sukhoi 33 fighter

TBG: Tactical Boost Glide

THAAD: Terminal High Altitude Area Defense

TPP: Trans Pacific Partnership

UAVs: Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

UN: United Nations

UNCLOS: United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas

US EIA: United States Energy Information Administration

USI: United Services Institute

WZC: War Zone Campaign

Introduction

This thesis examines China's military force structure enhancements since 2013 and the Indian strategic community's interpretations of them. The main objective of this thesis is to understand how the Indian strategic community interprets these Chinese military actions. The military actions considered for this thesis are China's seven tests of its hypersonic glide vehicle, its carrier programme and its declaration of the air defence zone over parts of the East China Sea (the terms 'military actions' and 'Chinese action' will be used henceforth to refer to the above actions, which are used as case studies).

Such an analysis, therefore, would throw light on how the China threat is discursively being constructed, before the Indian government's responses or China policy is framed. Official assessment on these Chinese military actions, from the Indian government, is not available in the public domain. This thesis therefore, is the first and only analysis (based on open-source literature), of the Indian strategic community's discursive interpretations of these three Chinese military actions.

China and India share a disputed border and have fought a war in 1962. Both are nuclear powers. Both have experienced complicated histories, after colonialism, and complex paths in the formulation of national identity (discussed later). Both rise within the same neighbourhood, and have witnessed sharp economic growth in recent decades. In 2017, they were among the top five biggest spenders in global military expenditure (along with the United States, Saudi Arabia and Russia. China spent an estimated $228 billion and India, $63.9 billion in 2017 on military expenditure (SIPRI 2017 data). In view of the long-standing Sino-Indian security dilemma, and these Chinese military actions that appear to alter the regional security balance, one would expect that the Indian strategic community interprets these actions focusing on security imperatives. This thesis highlights the influence of non-security imperatives (or ideational elements) in shaping the Indian strategic community's interpretations of these Chinese actions.

This thesis is, therefore, driven primarily by a desire to understand how the Indian strategic community interprets and represents (i.e. the constructs) the China threat. The focus of the thesis is an examination of 'how' the Indian strategic community, in light of these Chinese military actions, constructs or attributes the China identity. It does not analyse 'why' the Indian

strategic community does what it does, that is, the motivations, drivers and intentions behind such discursive constructions, as that is not the aim of this thesis. This does not mean that understanding the 'why they do what they do' (i.e. the internal drivers, vested interests and motivations) is not important. It is beyond the scope of this thesis and could be effectively dealt with in future research.

This thesis furthers our understanding of the Sino-Indian strategic equation, by analysing discursive interpretations in threat construction i.e. Indian discursive interpretations (of the Chinese threat), occurring before India's China responses or policy are framed (Weldes 1996:276). The thesis relies on the core assumption that threat and security are social constructions. Language constitutes the social world and narratives are central to identity construction, and to threat and security representations. The study employs critical discourse analysis (CDA) on the Indian discourse on the three case studies (Chinese actions). It also uses interviews with the Indian strategic community.

China's military modernisation

Since the late 1980s, the world has witnessed China's rapid military modernisation and increased defence spending[1]. The end of the Cold War saw the beginning of an era of unipolarity and the United States' power projection worldwide, especially in the western Pacific, encroaching even into China's territorial seas and sovereign airspace (Friedberg and Ross 2009:20-21). The 1991 Gulf War caused a lot of soul-searching in China on the pace of its military sector reforms (Farley 2014; see Jencks 1992 for internal Chinese responses), and taught its leadership valuable lessons on what future warfighting would look like. This renewed focus on technology and military modernization saw China strengthening its air and naval forces. The two services witnessed rapid technological advancements for force projection and efforts towards interoperability (Farley 2014).

The most recent Chinese force structure enhancements were visible starting November 2013. On 23 November 2013, China declared an Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) over parts of the East China Sea (ECS). On 26 November 2013, its first aircraft carrier Liaoning moved into international waters. China began repeated tests of its hypersonic glide vehicle[2] (HGV) from 9

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[1] From US$ 19 billion in 1989 to 28 billion in 1997 to 108 billion in 2008 and US$ 228 billion in 2017 (SIPRI 2017 Report 'Trends in world military expenditure'). Chinese government's spending on its military is widely debated (see https://chinapower.csis.org/military-spending/).

[2] Seven tests conducted between 9 Jan 2014 and 22 April 2016. The programme is aimed at developing vehicles with prompt global strike (PGS) capability (Lele 2017) and at extending warhead ranges drastically, especially when

January 2014. China's second aircraft carrier, the Shandong was launched in April 2017. Each of these Chinese military actions increasingly alters the regional status quo. They are representative of China's aims to achieve force projection, far from its territorial limits, and area denial. The 'denial measure' is "an action to hinder or deny the enemy the use of territory, personnel, or facilities to include destruction, removal, contamination, or erection of obstructions[3]". "Through the development of an area denial capability, China hopes to create a buffer around its continental and maritime periphery that will increase the cost for other states to conduct military operations against targets on the mainland" (Fravel 2008:131).

China's carrier programme is in line with its ambitions in maritime force projection and obtaining a blue-water navy (Singh A 2014). Hypersonic weapons are game-changing weapons, with ultra-high velocities, abilities to avoid detection by 'creeping under' early-warning radars, and the capability to undermine missile defence systems with their extreme manoeuvrability. They could alter deterrence equations worldwide (Lele 2017: 41, 42). China's declaration of its ADIZ over parts of the ECS provides it strategic depth at its periphery – both maritime depth and area denial (Permal 2014). It strengthens and legitimises its claims – on disputed territories, vast energy reserves in the ECS and enhances China's capabilities to influence Taiwan's sovereignty claims. These actions adhere to China's overarching strategic guidelines of Active Defense and People's War (discussed in Chapter One).

China's strategic goals and security challenges require a focus on the protection of its interests in the far seas and keeping adversaries far from its sphere of influence. Acquiring such area denial and force projection capabilities, far from its immediate periphery, helps China curb what it views as the United States' unhindered influence and its ability to operate with impunity in the Western Pacific. These Chinese attempts at area denial and force projection, together with its ramped up efforts at military modernisation, however, simultaneously heighten the regional security dilemma and make neighbours wary of China's professed 'peaceful development'. They alter the regional status quo and military balance, and are perceived as threatening.

This research project began as an effort to understand the Indian government's interpretation of these three Chinese military actions. Official government statements or assessment,

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used atop China's existing anti-ship ballistic missile (ASBM) DF-21D. This thesis does not examine the wider Chinese hypersonic programme. It only analyses Indian discourse on the seven tests of the HGV.

[3] US Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (8 November 2010), pg 64 (JP 3-05), Available at https://fas.org/irp/doddir/dod/jp1_02.pdf

however, were not available in the public domain. Nor was it possible to interview the Indian Foreign and Defence ministers, officials within the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the National Security Council and government officials directly involved in China policymaking. Security clearance and the Official Secrets Act 1923[4], mentioned above, proved a hindrance that was difficult to overcome. The remit of this thesis, therefore, does not include understanding or gauging the Indian government's interpretation or its official assessment. This thesis explores how the Indian strategic elite interprets these Chinese military actions.

The thesis employs the term 'strategic elite' as used by Karsten Frey (2006: 28-35) in his analysis of India's nuclear build-up. According to Frey, the Indian strategic elite are individuals who monopolise or dominate the foreign policy debates occurring in India. Frey uses three broad groups within the Indian strategic elite – military-strategists, politico-strategists, and scientific-strategists. They possess diverse backgrounds and levels of expertise. They exercise influence on the policymakers, and incumbents or officials within the government through their advisory roles. They shape public opinion and also serve as a pulse (for the government) to gauge public opinion on critical policy matters. Concomitantly, they also aid in leveraging public pressure on the government. They are representative of "the traditionally non-institutionalized and informal strategic policymaking process in India" (Frey 2006:28). They thus serve as a link between the elected political stakeholders, key government officials and the informed public, influencing the topics or discursive themes (on Indian government's policy) which are debated. Ogden (2017:35) terms them collectively as "India's security community".

The audience that they write for is an informed public, termed by Malik and Medcalf (2011:13) as "…India's television-propelled middle-class opinion". This audience will "…continue to shape discourse that will harangue governments, demand instant action and escalated rhetoric regardless of the international repercussions" (ibid.).

This thesis also considers only three broad categories within the wider Indian strategic community – Armed Forces analysts (currently serving and retired); experts within Think Tanks (who advise or consult with the Government i.e. broadly encompassing retired bureaucrats and diplomats, civilian scientists from ISRO and DRDO[5], experts involved in Track II diplomacy with

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4 India's anti-espionage Act that prevents communication of any official information related to the Indian government, especially on matters of national security. Under Clause 6 of the Act, any information related to any government office is considered as official information. The Official Secrets Act takes precedence over the Right to Information Act 2005, and thus any such information disclosure is restricted.

5 The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

China, China researchers and academics, etc.); and analysts placed within the news media (i.e. specifically China correspondents or China bureau chiefs of major Indian newspapers). Constituents of the first two categories have previously served in the Indian government, or have relationships with the government in advisory functions, or serve on government committees. They exercise their communicative power through extensive publishing within defence and aerospace journals, Think Tank commentaries and policy briefs, and in India's print media. Their writings incorporated the prominent themes that the Indian strategic community was analysing in the context of these three Chinese actions. This thesis employed discourse written by the Indian strategic elite and available only within the public domain. The Indian Official Secrets Act 1923 and security clearance requirements prevented access to other closed sources or classified reports. Interviews conducted for this study were mostly with retired officials and a very limited number of serving members of the Armed Forces (List of interviews in Appendix One).

Research questions

The thesis examines the Indian strategic elite's interpretations of the three Chinese military actions. This proceeds from Weldes' (1999: 7) core conception that "Determining what the particular situation confronting a state is; what, if any, threat a state faces; and what the correct national interest with respect to that situation or threat is always requires interpretation. Rather than being self-evident, threats … are fundamentally matters of interpretation". Prior to China policy being made or responses to China being constructed, there first occurs a process of 'interpretation' of Chinese actions (or the China threat), by the Indian government and the wider strategic community. A process of discursive 'representation' and an 'attribution of identity' then follows. The Indian government and the strategic community's interpretations and representations of these Chinese military actions, influence how the government pursues its security interests and delineates its national security strategy.

The central research question for this study thus is '**How are the three Chinese military actions being interpreted by the Indian strategic community?**'

To answer this research question, it was necessary to understand how the Chinese military actions were interpreted and represented within the discourse created by the Indian strategic community – were they interpreted as 'threatening' Indian national security, or as a 'rational act' required to ensure China's national security? What identity was attributed to China and concomitantly, to India, in the light of these actions?

The research sub-questions, therefore, are

1) What is the 'China identity' being represented in the Indian discourse?
2) What is the 'Indian identity' being constructed in the Indian discourse?
3) How are these identities being constructed discursively?

The time period chosen for this study was between 2013 and 2017. November 2013 was chosen as the starting point, as there were a spate of Chinese military actions starting November 2013. July 2017 was the cut-off date for various reasons – the seventh hypersonic glide vehicle (HGV) test had been conducted on 22 April 2016 and there seemed to be a lull in tests in the year that followed, and the Shandong carrier had been launched in April 2017 (further details explained in Chapter Three).

Thesis contribution and argument

This thesis makes two central and important contributions to our understanding of Indian security strategy and its foreign policy behaviours – First, it contributes a systematic explanation on how the Indian State's strategic elite interprets and represents actions from another China, which threaten its security interests, even its very existence and sovereignty. Second, this thesis provides an analysis of non-security imperatives (i.e. ideational elements like self-image, history and colonial experiences, normative predispositions, national memory and India's unique interpretations of external threats, etc.) within the Indian strategic community's discursive interpretations. Conventional wisdom delineates that India's interpretations of these Chinese military actions and its foreign policy responses could be best understood through the lens of its security imperatives. Chinese military actions are expected to be perceived as threats to India's national security, and an aggressive and hostile intent immediately attributed to China. However, the Indian strategic elites' discursive interpretations, though security-driven, illustrates the working of non-security imperatives like ideational elements.

Therefore, the key argument of this thesis is that ideational elements are far more influential in shaping or constructing discursive interpretations of the Indian strategic community, than previously acknowledged. The second central argument of this thesis is that the Indian strategic elite's discursive constructions support and facilitate the Indian government's policy choices – for example, deliberate strategic ambiguity (especially in nuclear policy) and multialignment (i.e. the discourse creates space for the pursuit of multiple policy practices and multi-directional engagement; see Hall 2016).

A related finding emanating from the three case studies is that the discursive presence of ideational elements is more prominent in areas where India's power ambitions lie. For example, in the case studies on China's carrier programme and the ADIZ declaration, Indian discourse analyses security implications for India and the wider region. Ideational elements predominate in these case studies, as these are arenas where India's power ambitions lie, and any threat to them threatens the very 'idea of India' (Ogden 2017:12). India's ambitions as a naval power and its perception of the IOR as its natural sphere of influence (in the carrier case study), and its threat perceptions and security imaginings about its disputed border with China (in the ADIZ case study) are both critical to the preservation of the 'idea of India'. Therefore, the discursive presence of ideational elements is more prominent in these case studies.

This thesis bridges the gap in the Indian foreign policy literature, which lacks state and individual level analysis to explain foreign policy, and the literature criticising India's lack of a coherent, unified China policy. Existing Indian foreign policy literature rarely examines state and individual level influences – for example, it rarely examines discursive interpretations or constructions by key individuals and groups. Perkovich (1999:454) stresses the importance of such state and individual level analysis to explain specific Indian policies (like India's nuclear policy). This thesis fills that gap by examining how the Indian strategic elite interpret and construct Chinese military actions. It uses discursive constructions at the domestic level (strategic community) to shed light on Indian government's foreign policy responses.

The thesis also bridges a gap within the security-imperatives-focused literature, criticising India's lack of a coherent and unified China policy. Such calls for a unified and coherent China policy seem to emanate from an exclusive focus on security imperatives – where policy responses are shaped by the extant Sino-Indian security dilemma (see Garver 2002:2-3 and Holslag 2009 on Sino-Indian security dilemma) and the mindset of relative power gains and self-help. There is a failure to consider non-security imperatives (especially ideational elements), which influence India's foreign policy behaviours. The influence of powerful ideational elements (that underpin Indian national identity) within the discourse, together with the Indian government's pursuit of the foreign policy approach of multialignment, could be contributing to such a criticism on India's lack of a coherent, unified China policy. In furthering Hall's (2016: 275) argument that transition to the new foreign policy strategy of multialignment, could have precipitated the criticism that Indian foreign policy was adrift and directionless, the thesis draws

attention to the influence of ideational elements on the strategic elite's interpretations and recommendations for response to the Indian government.

Structure of the thesis

Part One provides the analytical framework of the thesis. In Chapter One, China's military actions and force structure enhancements are explained, in the context of China's strategic goals, especially its interest in national security. The indispensability of the concepts of national security and national interests in explaining state behaviour is highlighted. China's identity as a peaceful riser versus a revisionist threat leads the chapter on to an examination of national identity and of the core elements underlying conflicting national identities. Contested Chinese and Indian conceptions of national identity are examined and powerful ideational elements (for example, history and colonial experiences, culture, national memory, core values and beliefs, normative predispositions) are highlighted. India's 'great power' ambitions and its reticence in claiming such an identity further illustrates conflicting identity principles (for example, great power versus non-aligned power, etc.) This reluctance and diffidence is oft criticised as India's lack of a strategic culture. The chapter proves the presence of Indian strategic thinking on China. It also supports Hall's (2016) argument of the foreign policy approach of multialignment partly contributing to the criticism on directionless foreign policy, mired in confusion. However, it takes the argument further by highlighting the working of ideational elements. The chapter also bridges a gap within the security-imperatives-focused literature criticising India's lack of a coherent and unified China policy, by illustrating the presence of ideational elements underpinning national identity (that have not previously been taken into consideration). It sets the stage for the analysis of the three case studies (three Chinese military actions) which follow, and illustrates the interpretations of the Indian strategic community, also revealing the working of ideational elements within the Indian discourse.

Chapters Two and Three explain the theoretical assumptions and the research methods used. The use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is significant, as the central interest of this study is to understand how Indian strategic elite are interpreting and representing the three Chinese actions, thus providing 'meaning' to and portraying the 'social reality' of Chinese military actions. CDA helps analyse how particular discursive techniques or strategies are used to construct a particular China 'Other' identity and an Indian 'Self' identity, thus providing meaning to Chinese military actions. Discourse as a representational practice facilitates particular social realities (Milliken 1999: 229). Threats and security, like subjects and objects, are socially constructed and discursively situated (Wendt 1992: 396, Doty 1993:298). This thesis therefore

draws from Constructivism and overlaps the fields of both Foreign Policy Analysis and Social Constructivist Discourse theories.

Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) focuses on the influence of identity and cultural norms in foreign policymaking. Most importantly, it problematizes the domestic level and even progresses to the level of agency in foreign policy making (Doty 1993, Hopf 2002, Weldes 1996). This thesis uses the Indian strategic community, i.e. a domestic or state level actor. Discourse theories explain the centrality of narratives to identity construction, and to threat and security representations. They examine how language constitutes the social world and how discursive constructions of identities affect state interests and foreign policy preferences. Through the construction of 'Self' and 'Other' as binary oppositions, particular courses of actions become meaningful to the strategic community, which then influences State preferences. The chapter thus, sets the theoretical grounding for the explanation of research methods employed.

Chapter Three deals with how the research was designed and what methods were used to answer the chosen research question. It explains and justifies the use of the case study method, the choice of Indian discourse for analysis, the use of particular CDA techniques and the use of interviews. It also discusses the limitations in research design and methods employed.

Part Two of the thesis begins the examination of the three empirical case studies (the Chinese military actions). Chapter Four, the first of the case studies, analyses the Chinese aircraft carrier programme. The chapter begins with an overview of the Chinese and Indian carrier programmes, to provide the context. It then examines the Indian strategic community's interpretations on the movement of China's first carrier Liaoning into international waters and the launch of the Shandong carrier. The chapter makes three significant arguments - Firstly, it highlights that the China threat identity construction and the Indian self-identity are not fixed, but fluctuating. It illustrates that identity constructions attributed to China are contradictory. Secondly, it argues that the discursive strategies employed to construct the Chinese and Indian identities (for example, the juxtaposition of identities, use of historical metaphors, leveraging a Pakistan threat and silences or omissions of contexts) help to build up the China threat. The discursive strategies employed and the China threat identity constructions within the discourse, illustrate the presence of powerful ideational elements that underpin national identity. Ideational elements like Indian self-image (as a naval power in the Indian Ocean) and its colonial experiences (Indian Navy as the successor to the Royal Navy) are at play, both within the

discursive strategies employed and in the strategic community's perceptions of China's growing influence in the Indian Ocean.

Thirdly, the recommendations to the Indian government, within the discourse, could enable varied policy practices to counter China. They seem to support the pursuit of varied foreign policy choices, for example, alignment with other Asian states like Japan, or being a Swing power (Ogden 2018:9, Hall 2016:282) between China and the United States, or balancing even containing Chinese influence through the Act East policy and other evolving Indo-Pacific architectures, and so on. The discourse (i.e. the varied recommendations) seems to support and facilitate India's emerging foreign policy approach of multi-directional engagement (called multialignment).

Chapter Five analyses discourse on the seven tests of the Chinese hypersonic glide vehicle (the HGV, called Wu-14 or DF-ZF). It follows the same structure as the previous case study, beginning with empirical details on the Chinese and Indian hypersonic programmes. The chapter makes two arguments - First, it argues that the discursive strategies and identity constructions employed, serve specific purposes. The construction of a formidable and "very dangerous adversary" strengthens the Indian identity concept and justifies Indian actions at safeguarding national security. An identity of the copying and re-engineering actor seems to play down China's technological expertise and massive R&D investments (this may also preclude criticism against the Indian government from the audience or readers).

Second, such representations or discursive constructions "make various courses of action possible" (Doty 1996: 5). A narrative of nascence and operational weakness is deliberately constructed and utilized to buy time and space for the development of the hypersonic programme at the scientific establishments' (or the government's) desired pace. Any unwanted attention could be discouraged by constructing and propagating such narratives. At the same time, the representation of the HGV tests as aimed at the United States, precludes criticism or comparisons with China's technological and R&D prowess. Indian policymakers or strategic commentators do not need to immediately state their position or frame a response. The discursive constructions therefore, serve to further India's use of deliberate strategic ambiguity, especially in its nuclear policy and responses.

This chapter also contends that the discourse points to ideational elements (for example, India's historical path to nuclearisation, its past perceptions of a discriminating Western-created nuclear order, and its normative predispositions as a non-aligned, non-proliferating power focused on global disarmament). The preponderance of ideational and normative elements seem to influence the Indian government's behaviours and responses towards China within the hypersonics arena.

The last case study (Chapter Six) explores China's declaration of the Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) over parts of the East China Sea (ECS) in November 2013. It begins with empirical details on China's ADIZ declaration and how it furthers China's claims of sovereignty over the disputed Senkaku/ Diaoyu islands. The chapter makes two specific arguments - First, it argues that discursive interpretations of the Chinese ADIZ are linked to the ideational elements underpinning India's national identity concept. Discursive constructions illustrate that mindsets, perceptions and interactions remain predominantly driven by historical events, experiences, memories and fears. The discourse highlights India's long-standing distrust of China, often linked to its deceiving of India in the 1962 war. Discursive strategies (of juxtaposition, silences on or omission of contexts, alluding to a Sino-Pakistan nexus and creation of a temporal threat) are leveraged to build the China threat and consequently, the Indian self-image. History and India's experiences at the hands of China in the 1962 war continue to influence mindsets and security interpretations on China's ADIZ.

Second, the chapter argues that such representations or discursive constructions "make various courses of action possible" (Doty 1996: 5), for example, the Indian government's preferred foreign policy approach of multialignment. The creation of a particular Japanese identity, within the discourse, facilitates a stronger Indo-Japanese alignment to counter China's rising influence. Indian discursive interpretations of the Chinese ADIZ being primarily aimed at curbing US influence in the region, creates the narrative of weakening US influence and the value of emerging Asian alignments.

The final chapter draws the overarching argument of the thesis to a conclusion. The chapter highlights the centrality of ideational elements within the Indian discursive constructions, and explains the usefulness of employing them, along with security imperatives, as the lens required to make sense of Indian strategic community's discursive interpretations of Chinese military actions. This chapter also reflects broadly on some of the key themes and arguments developed

in the thesis; as well as demonstrating the centrality of ideational elements and explaining how and why, when taken together with Hall's argument for multialignment, it provides a better lens or approach to understand Indian foreign policy behaviours.

Part I - The Analytical Framework: Concepts, Theory, and Method

Chapter One: Understanding India's China policy through conceptualisations of 'identity'

Introduction

This chapter provides the background and context for this research problem. It starts with a thematic discussion to explain and situate the concepts of 'national interest' and 'national identity'. China's military actions or force structure enhancements since 2013 have increased threat perceptions and altered the status quo, both in the neighbourhood and within the wider region. Conventional International Relations (IR) interpretations would construe such force structure enhancements and military build-up as efforts by states to maximise national security, within an anarchic system. Conventional wisdom delineates that India's interpretations of these Chinese actions and its foreign policy behaviour or responses would be best understood by examining it through the lens of its security imperatives. China's military actions would be expected to be perceived as threats to India's national security, and an aggressive and hostile intent immediately attributed to them. A threat identity would be attributed to China. The Indian government has not released publicly, any official assessment on these Chinese actions. The Indian strategic elites' discursive interpretations are examined in this study, to see how they represent the Chinese actions and construct the Chinese identity.

This chapter bridges the gap in the Indian foreign policy literature (which lacks state and individual level analysis to explain foreign policy), and the literature criticising India's lack of a coherent, unified China policy. Research on state and individual level influence on specific policies, or foreign policy-making, is missing in Indian analysis (Perkovich 1999:454). This thesis fills that gap by examining how the Indian strategic elite interpret and construct Chinese military actions. It uses discursive constructions at the domestic level (strategic community) to shed light on the Indian government's foreign policy responses.

This chapter also sets the context to further our understanding of Indian foreign policy literature that criticises India's lack of a coherent and unified China policy. Such calls for a unified and coherent China policy seem to emanate from an exclusive focus on security imperatives – where policy responses are shaped by the extant Sino-Indian security dilemma (see Garver 2002:2-3 and Holslag 2009 on Sino-Indian security dilemma) and the mindset of relative power gains and

self-help. There is a failure to consider non-security imperatives (especially ideational elements), which influence India's foreign policy behaviours. The expectation of a security-oriented Indian response to each of China's moves, when coupled with the Indian government's pursuit of multialignment as the preferred foreign policy approach, accentuates the criticism of India's lack of a coherent, unified China policy. The literature on Indian foreign policy and strategic thinking criticises India's lack of a strategic culture and lambastes India's reticent China policy (see Tanham 1992:1-23, Pant 2010:120-153, Mitra and Schottli 2007, Pant 2009-a:250-52; Mehta 2009, Garver 2011:5-6, Kainikara 2016, Samanta 2018, Chellaney 2017, Chatterjee Miller 2013-a: 14, Mukherjee and Malone 2011). The absence of official statement or assessment on these Chinese military actions, from the Indian government, seems to further this criticism. This thesis however, illustrates that the Indian discursive interpretations, though security-driven, also highlights the working of ideational elements which influence Indian foreign policy behaviours. Ideational elements play a powerful role in defining India's national identity concept, and especially in determining how the Indian strategic elite interpret the three Chinese actions.

This chapter explains concepts like the Indian and Chinese contested national identities and links them to ideational elements of history, national memory, territorial and cultural conceptualisations of identity, normative values of the post-colonial Indian and Chinese State, and the ambitions or national interests in achieving major power status (through economic and military power). In providing a background on Sino-Indian relations (post-1947 Indian independence and 1949 formation of the People's Republic of China), this chapter is also highlighting the working of these ideational elements in the Sino-Indian story.

This chapter is structured as follows - First of all, China's military actions or force structure enhancements are examined in the context of China's strategic goals, analysing how it furthers China's national security. National security and national interests are indispensable in explaining state behaviour and foreign policy responses. Such efforts aimed at procuring asymmetric victories for China alter regional status quo and power balances, with neighbours viewing China as a revisionist power. China has over decades worked to distance itself from an identity of revisionism, and even any identity involving the term 'rise' (for example, 'peaceful rise', as that was still viewed as threatening by the world). China has carefully constructed the narrative of 'peaceful development'. These identities surface at various instances, often at conflict with each other [see Friedberg and Ross (2009) on conflicting narratives on China's military threat being

a menace and a myth]. China's behaviours are often termed as being at odds with its rhetoric. Chinese national identity is examined next, to understand underpinning concepts that contribute to its definition of its national interests. The chapter highlights that China's national security goals are closely intertwined with the ideational concepts underlying its national identity – for example, its history, national memory of victimization during the Century of Humiliation, culture, geographical location, etc. These ideational elements influence the Chinese state's behaviour and foreign policy, even its military strategy. China's prickliness about Western criticism of its human rights issues, its claims to sovereignty over historically disputed territories, all emanate from these core ideational elements that underpin national identity.

The chapter next considers 'China as the Other' within Indian strategic thinking, and India's own contested concept of national identity. Themes underpinning India's concept of national identity (i.e., territorial, cultural and religious notions) merge within the two principal imaginations of Indian identity, the secular nationalist and the Hindu nationalist. This discussion highlights the importance of ideational elements that exert powerful influences on how states perceive themselves and others, and how they behave and construct policy. Ideational elements like history affect policymaking and the methods and processes the state employs for policymaking. For example, India's 1991 opening of its economy to the waves of globalisation, was of course criticised in many quarters as ensnarement in exploitative relations with greedy foreign investors and giant multi-nationals (colonial history and national memory being the drivers). "The economic liberalisation programme fundamentally disrupted a constitutive element of India's postcolonial identity, enabling a discourse of 'lost self-esteem'" (Varadarajan 2004:337-38). The revival of India's dormant nuclear programme and the 1998 Pokhran tests were viewed widely within India as a restoration of India's sovereignty, especially in the 'national security' realm (ibid.). But such amassing of material (and nuclear) power conflicted with India's normative values of disarmament, peaceful co-existence, and global harmony (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam[6]).

The chapter closes with an examination of the criticism on India's lack of strategic culture and its reticent China policy. India's rapid economic growth and the emanating 'rising power' identity, has hastened criticism on India's power ambitions and its reticence in claiming such an identity (status-seeking as national interest and an ideational element). This reluctance and diffidence is oft criticised as India's lack of a strategic culture. Such criticism, of its great power

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[6] The world as one family.

ambitions and the reticence to claim such an identity, needs to be examined with India's conflicting identity principles (great power versus non-aligned power, etc.) The chapter proves the presence of strategic thinking on China, by pointing to the presence of the various schools of China thought. The chapter supports Hall's (2016) argument of the Indian foreign policy approach of multialignment partly contributing to the criticism on directionless foreign policy, mired in confusion. However, it takes the argument further by highlighting the influence of ideational elements.

First, an examination of how China's three military actions further its national security.

Chinese military modernisation and the strategic goal of national security

To better understand the Chinese military actions or force structure enhancements used in this thesis, it is necessary to examine how they further China's national security objectives. Such efforts also ignite questions on whether China's military modernisation would lead to a change in military doctrine and war fighting strategies. To answer these questions, it is key to understand unique 'Chinese characteristics' in military modernisation – i.e China's strategic thinking on concepts like Active Defense, People's War, and 'Two Transformations' (or the 'transformational model'). These are closely tied to the Chinese government's vision for achieving its national security goals.

China's repeated tests of its hypersonic glide vehicle, the launches of its aircraft carriers and its demarcation of an air defence zone are not random efforts in military modernisation. These military actions or force structure enhancements are in line with its wider strategy of area denial (A2/AD) and force projection. China's carrier programme is in line with its ambitions to have a blue-water navy[7]. China's 2015 White Paper specifies that the Navy "will gradually shift its focus from 'offshore waters defense' to the combination of 'offshore waters defense' with 'open seas protection'" (People's Republic of China. Ministry of Defence. 2015 Defence White Paper), and build a combined, multi-functional and efficient marine combat force structure. Acquisition of an aircraft carrier is termed as the ultimate symbol of any navy's blue-water strategy (Singh A 2017). An aircraft carrier also furthers China's Anti Access Area Denial (A2/AD) strategy, focused on maritime denial. It helps to increase its strategic depth. An important aspect of being a great power with a blue water navy, is the ability to project power far from the country's shores, that is, into the Indian Ocean, among other key areas. China's focus on the Indian Ocean[8] is revealed

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[7] A maritime force capable of sustained operations across the open oceans. A blue-water navy allows a country to project power far from the home country and usually includes one or more aircraft carriers.
[8] The 2014 Defence White Paper does not mention the Indian Ocean at all but this omission seems deliberate as the report discusses in detail, the need to protect the strategic Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) passing

in its Blue Book of Indian Ocean Region: Annual Report on the Development of the Indian Ocean Region (2014) released by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS).

Hypersonic weapons are game changing weapons, with ultra-high velocities (Mach 5 and above are the lower range hypersonic speeds), abilities to avoid detection by creeping under early-warning radars (Al-Rodhan 2015), and the ability to undermine missile defence systems with their extreme manoeuvrability (Kahlon 2015:3, Lele 2017: 41). Hypersonic technology can be used in space weapons, space-based weapons, and hypersonic weapons. The use of a nuclear warhead on these HGVs or hypersonic missiles is not far off. "Once these weapons become fully operational, they could challenge (or expand) the existing philosophy behind nuclear deterrence" (Lele 2017: 41). Hypersonic weapon proliferation could cause doctrinal change with regards to nuclear deterrence. These weapons further China's aims of force projection (when used in a Prompt Global Strike role) and area denial (especially when the glide vehicle Wu-14 is mated with the anti-ship ballistic missile (ASBM) DF-21D keeping America's carriers at bay). The HGV when clubbed with the ASBM, drastically extends strike ranges enabling the achievement of maritime depth in the face of threats.

China's declaration of its Air Defence Zone (ADIZ) over parts of the East China Sea (ECS) provides it strategic depth at its periphery in the ECS – both maritime depth and area denial. China's ADIZ also strengthens and legitimises its claims on disputed territories like the Senkaku/ Diaoyu Islands[9] and the Ieodo/ Suyan Reef. It strengthens claims over vast energy reserves believed to lie beneath the sea, and capabilities to influence Taiwan's sovereignty claims. Most importantly, China's ADIZ dovetails with its national security interests - to facilitate China's Anti-access Area denial (A2/AD) strategy. It works towards keeping the United States, the predominant regional hegemon, out of the area (Singh Manjit 2014: 29; Gupta A 2013) and gives China the ability to project power into the 'far seas' – into the region that it shares with its weaker territorial claimants.

All of these highlight China's focus on its national security goals listed in its various White Papers (for example, goals like "defence of a continental power with growing maritime interests", "fighting local wars under highly informationized conditions", Taiwan unification and "regime security and CCP legitimacy and longevity") (Fravel 2008:126-27). "China prepares to achieve its strategic goals by strengthening or developing three general military capabilities: internal

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through the Indian Ocean and "fulfilling China's international obligations" (The People's Republic of China. The State Council. 2015. China's Military Strategy) in the context of anti-piracy duties in the Gulf of Aden.
[9] Both Japanese-Chinese and Korean-Chinese names used for disputed territories to signal researcher's neutrality in the matter, to avoid inadvertently conveying a stance.

control, area denial around its periphery, and limited regional force projection" (Fravel 2008:129).

The three military actions used in this study, and the weapons and technology involved (for example, hypersonic vehicles and missiles or aircraft carriers) can be termed 'shashoujian[10]' (杀手锏) or assassin's mace weapons that alter battlefield outcomes asymmetrically and can overcome far advanced militaries or adversary nations. There is a continuing debate on whether China's advanced weapons would lead to a change in military doctrine and war fighting strategies – whether 'technology drives doctrine' or vice versa (Blasko 2011:355; also see Fravel 2008: 125-141 on China's military power enhancement and how it would employ its force structure; see Roy 1996 on China's intentions; Garthoff 1978 again on the intentions debate). This leads to the question whether these three Chinese military actions (the aircraft carrier and hypersonic vehicle tests and the ADIZ) would alter China's military doctrine and strategies.

The common logic would be that such advanced weapons would change the PLA's military strategy and war-fighting tactics, i.e. the PLA would revise their military doctrines to include more offensive tactics. Analysts like Blasko (2011) stress that how China fights in the future would definitely depend on the capabilities of its weapons and available technologies. However, others like Fravel (2008) argue that China's military efforts will be guided by its national security imperatives. "China is developing internal control, peripheral denial, and limited force-projection capabilities consistent with these objectives". Blasko (2011:380) also stresses that fighting localised wars is the primary objective for which these advanced technologies will be adapted. China's military doctrines will continue to remain guided by the overarching frameworks of 'Active Defense[11]' (*jiji fangyu*) and 'People's War[12]', and the acquisition of newer technologies/ weapons would not drastically change Chinese strategic thinking or doctrines (ibid.). Chinese advancements in military technology and force structure still remains within China's wider military strategic guidelines of Active Defense and People's War, which are keyed

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[10] This terminology covers a broad and vague conception of weapons (see RAND 2008 monograph 'Dangerous Thresholds: Managing Escalation in the 21st Century'; also see Blasko 2011:370)

[11] China's 1998 Defense White Paper (Part II-National Defense Policy) explains 'Active Defense' as "Strategically China pursues the defensive policy featuring self-defense and gaining mastery by striking only after the enemy has struck, and adheres to the principle: "We will not attack unless we are attacked; if we are attacked, we will certainly counter-attack". China's defensive nature spring from "excellent Chinese historical and cultural traditions". What the United States describes as A2/AD, China calls 'active defense' or 'counterintervention' (fan ganshe). For Indian perspectives, see Sahgal 2011:20 and Kanwal 2015.

[12] "People's War often is misrepresented merely as 'guerrilla war,' however, as pointed out in The Science of Military Strategy, People's War integrates military, political, doctrinal, and leadership factors along with technology into a broad framework intended to guide high level Chinese military calculations. Significantly, any type and level of technology can be utilized in People's War" (Blasko 2011:360)

in with national security goals. Unlike in the United States where doctrine seems to determine (even precede) technology, for the Chinese PLA "the relationship between technology and doctrine is not all one way … 'Technology determines tactics while tactics in turn promote technology'" (Blasko 2011:358). Technology together with military doctrine determines critical factors, for example, force structures, logistics and deployment patterns, command and control (Blasko 2011:371-72).

As in most other areas, Chinese military modernisation has its unique 'Chinese characteristics' – focusing on a 'transformational model', rather than the usual 'force modernisation' that militaries worldwide usually refer to. PLA modernization's two core components - mechanisation and informationisation[13] - are envisioned in military strategic thought as 'Two Transformations' that must occur simultaneously for achieving an advanced and professional armed forces (Sahgal 2011: 21, Blasko 2011:364, Chase et al. 2015:71). These two transformations are visible within Chinese strategic writing on its Armed Forces, stressing interoperability and joint operations (linking units vertically and horizontally), the prominent focus on the development of energy weapons, hypersonic weapons technologies, and space-based C4ISR.

The PLA's armament and technology advancements will therefore, not just be aimed at or portrayed as advance weapons to fight in new ways. Their roles will be guided within the overarching frameworks of Active Defense and People's War. They will also be influenced by underlying strategic thought on the 'Two Transformations', conceptual perspectives like Comprehensive National Power and doctrinal concepts like War Zone Campaign (WZC), on-ground manifestations of which are visible in the interoperability and integrated logistics of Theatre Commands (See discussion on restructuring of Chinese theatre commands in Chapter Four on the Chinese carrier programme).

Rapid modernization or leapfrogging in force enhancements seems highly unlikely, given the massive size of China's Armed Forces and budgetary constraints (Friedberg and Ross 2009: 25). China, unlike the United States, does not have allies to protect nor is it focused on fighting major wars beyond its borders. All of these factors, together with the strategic priority of economic development (2049 set as target date for national economic modernization), determine the way China envisions its military strategy and doctrine. Official statements and texts from the Chinese government highlight that its aims of military modernisation remain subordinated to and in

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[13] Informationization, "more complex and often misunderstood by foreigners" is "… developing new methods of electronic warfare, cyberwar, and information war (often employed in an asymmetric manner)…" (Blasko 2011:365). Also includes personnel education and training (see Blasko 2011:358-59 and Sahgal 2011:20).

service of national economic development (Blasko 2011:361). "Barring a major change in the strategic or domestic environment, we can expect that Beijing will continue to pursue the development of new weapons and technology in a manner consistent with the larger goal of national economic development" (Blasko 2011:355).

Given the fact that economic growth is a priority for the Chinese Communist Party's survival and regime legitimacy, and that peace and stability are required for uninterrupted economic growth[14], it is highly unlikely that China's military modernisation will adopt a revisionist nature, focused on high-intensity operations of an offensive nature. China is likely to stick to defensive campaigns. China also does not have unlimited resources to invest in force enhancement[15], nor would it want to initiate a security spiral in the region (Blasko 2011:357, 361, 366; Fravel 2008:137).

The year 2049 has been set as the target date for completing military modernisation of the Chinese Armed Forces (PLA, PLAN, PLAAF and PLARF). This is not an arbitrarily chosen date but coincides with the date set for China's main strategic goal of national economic modernization[16]. Deng Xiaoping launched economic reform in China[17]. Xiaokang (小康 literally meaning 'small well-being' or 'relatively comfortable life') is a term often repeated in Chinese governmental discourse and was Deng's China's main development target (Wong 1998:141). Over the years it has been a consistent theme in Party leaders' speeches and writings[18] (Leung 2000:11-12). And over the years the focus has shifted to a need to "achieve higher quality, more efficient, more equitable, and more sustainable[19] development" (13th Five Year Plan 2016-2020). The term has widened to encompass much more than just economic development.

Economic prowess is a currency that is soon converted into military power, diplomatic and bargaining power by countries – a means to achieve ends (Finnemore 1996:2). States often reinvent their hard power concepts to achieve ends like ideational power (soft power) concepts

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[14] "We need at least twenty years of peace to concentrate on our domestic development", Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping Vol. 3, pg 39, Available at https://archive.org/stream/SelectedWorksOfDengXiaopingVol.3

[15] On spending limits, Fravel (2008:137) argues that the PLA's budget in 2007 was still less than that of the US Navy. Friedberg contradicts this saying "between 1996 and 2008 China's officially disclosed (and likely understated) defense budget grew by an average of 12.9 percent per year, while gdp grew at around 9.6 percent" (in Friedberg and Ross 2009:20)

[16] Another area "of paramount importance" for the Chinese government is economic development (The 13th Five-Year Plan Page 13; Xinhua, 1 March 2018; Wildau and Liu 2018).

[17] "Therefore, we should do everything in our power to strengthen leadership in economic development", Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping Vol. 1, pg 66, Available at https://archive.org/details/SelectedWorksOfDengXiaoping

[18] For example, Jiang Zemin's speech at the 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China was titled "Build a Well-off Society in an All-round Way and Create a New Situation in Building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics" (en.people.cn, 2002).

[19] The word 'sustain' was used 34 times in the 13th Five Year Plan, illustrating its importance in the Party's strategic thought.

that are recognised and acceded to by other countries. Amassing weapons and armies to ensure national security is not only a "protective and preventive" means "but are also tools to allow the purposeful enforcement of a particular worldview or set of national interests upon others" (Ogden 2017: xvi). Such gains in national power, and regional and global prominence enhances the State's national security - by enhancing its abilities to negotiate outcomes in alignment with its interests and by deterring attacks on its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The state's ambition to become a pre-dominant power "… is, therefore, as much a national security interest as is protection against a specific fear" (or threat). Any threat to the achievement of this ambition is portrayed as an existential threat to the State's identity, sovereignty and therefore, its national security (Ogden 2017:27-28).

China's staggering economic growth and military modernisation efforts since the 1990s, and its assertiveness in achieving its strategic goals and national interests engendered a 'China threat' identity and a 'contain China' debate in the rest of the world, especially the United States[20]. China has often been perceived or interpreted, even 'Othered'[21]. It has been attributed an identity of the "last bastion of Communism", a revisionist state keen on overthrowing the liberal democratic world order and creating alternatives to the post-Bretton Woods institutions (Zhang 2001:252).

The Chinese government has, in turn, created an identity of and discourse around China's 'peaceful rise' (*heping jueqi*) and the benefits ensuing for the rest of the world, as China claims its rightful place in the world order. However, the word 'rise' had negative connotations and the Chinese government revisited the concept to then come up with 'peaceful development' (*heping fazhan*), the official foreign policy strategy of the Hu Jintao government, illustrating China's attempts to assimilate into the current world order. These were efforts to reassure the world of its benign intentions[22]. There has however been a plethora of critical voices on China's peaceful development (for the debate on China's identity as a status quo versus revisionist power, see Callahan 2005, Christensen 2011, Goldstein 2007, Ikenberry 2008 and 2008-a, Alastair Johnston 2003, Alastair Johnston 2013, Moss 2011). The coalescence of a State's national identity, its national interests (strategic goals) and the concomitant threats to the achievement of its interests are seen in China's construction of an identity of 'peaceful development'. To understand China's national interest in rapid economic growth and peaceful

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[20] According to Realism's security dilemma concept, in an anarchic system, when one state invests in its security, it creates spirals of mistrust, misperceptions, automatically decreases the security of the other state (Jervis 1978: 176, 214; Christensen 2006:87). "My defensive measure is your security threat…" (Finnemore 1996: 6)

[21] Erving Goffman's concept of the Self and the Other - as social constructions.

[22] Chinese government White Paper 2011 on Peaceful Development

development, it is first necessary to briefly conceptualise 'national interest' and 'national identity'.

The concept of national interest

National interest has long been a popular concept because of its appeal to common sense and because 'it can be used to mean whatever the user wishes' (Smith 1986:23-26). Across the spectrum, Realists like Morgenthau (1978) and Constructivists like Weldes (1996) have emphasized its indispensability in explaining state behaviour and therefore, for theories of international politics. "It is through the concept of national interest that policy-makers understand the goals to be pursued by a state's foreign policy … forms the basis of state action. Second, it functions as a rhetorical device through which the legitimacy of and political support for state action are generated" (Weldes 1996:276).

Hollis and Smith (1990: 166) called national interest the "internal language of decision". Before policy is framed or state officials can act on behalf of the state, they first need to interpret the event or the situation the state is faced with. Only after this process of interpretation can a course of action or response be agreed upon. This process of interpretation is based upon or "presupposes a language shared …", that is, the language of "national interest". "The content of 'the national interest' … is produced in, or emerges out of, a process of representation through which state officials (among others) make sense of their international context. The 'national interest'… is created as a meaningful object, out of shared meanings through which the world, particularly the international system and the place of the state in it, is understood (Weldes 1996: 276).

Finnemore (1996: 7-10) criticises the treatment of national interests or state preferences as inherent in states, emanating from within the state "as a result of material conditions and functional needs". "… state preferences are malleable. States may not always know what they want and are receptive to teaching about what are appropriate and useful actions" (Finnemore 1996: 11). This thesis treats national security or the preference for security (and consequently, the preservation of territorial integrity, sovereignty, prestige-seeking and achieving economic goals) as inherent in all states and a goal pursued by all states. It takes the interest of national security as a given, and does not problematize it. It assumes that the state knows what it wants, i.e. the achievement of its national security and elimination of threats (in the case of this thesis). The thesis also agrees with the assumption that the national interest in achieving security emanates from within the state "as a result of material conditions and functional needs" (ibid.). It however, does not support the idea that the national interest of security emanates solely

from within the state; accepting "international systemic or international societal influences" (ibid). National interests are informed by the domestic context and external or systemic conditions. They are also shaped by the reservoir of history, identity, culture, values and beliefs, geographical attributes, national memory – powerful determinants that guide a country's behaviour within the international system.

National interests are thus constituted through social interaction, and provide evidence of the socially constructed nature of international politics. A state's definition of its national interests and goals are predominantly influenced by the external threats it faces, domestic interests and politics, and the international normative context[23] prevalent at the time. Threats can be real or imagined. The delineation of a state's national interests and the threats preventing the achievement of these national interests is closely integrated with a state's national identity. "Perception, that is, the interpretation of interactions, events, and experiences, vitally underpins this identity …" (Ogden 2017:2). Threats to China's strategic goal of achieving internal security and the Communist Party's longevity and legitimacy comes from threats like "ethnic violence, unemployment, income inequality, and cross-border criminal activity" (Fravel 2008:127). Threats to China's goal of territorial integrity comes from conflict along its periphery, independence of Taiwan or Special Administrative Regions like Hong Kong or Macau, disputed territorial claims on the Sino-Indian border, etc. Threats to its maritime security come from threats to China's sea lines of communication (SLOCs)[24] - for example, Somali piracy, instability in the Middle East, threats to its sea bed mining and energy exploration, disputed claims on the islands in the South and East China Seas like the Senkaku/ Diaoyu, and in the Spratlys and Paracels, etc.

The national interest of ensuring security

National security is the "maintenance of a country's survival and well-being against a range of seemingly existential threats … country's ability to protect itself from others so as to ensure complete self-reliance and self-sufficiency" (Ogden 2017: xiii). Achieving its objectives and desired interests, by controlling or influencing conditions (or the security environment) within the country, regionally and globally, is of strategic importance to any country. This desire, to create conditions facilitating the achievement of its interests, influences the state's behaviour domestically and internationally. This leads to the deliberate construction of a particular self-image and the representation of threats (to its interests) in particular ways (threats could be

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[23] It is this international normative context that attributes an identity of a revisionist state to China.
[24] Vital energy and trade routes that pass through the Western Pacific, Indian and Atlantic Oceans.

material or perceptual, could be certain events, situations or even other countries). Such constructions are visible in the perceptions of and the discourse created by governments and strategic communities[25]. A country's interpretation of what constitutes its national security and what threats affect it are a matter of interpretation and attribution of meaning.

"Ensuring national security pivots around the protection of national interests – that is, key goals, objectives, and policy preferences that a country has concerning its desired international and national self-image" (Ogden 2017: xiv-xv). Achieving national security (and the tools employed toward this end) is not just a uniform and identical process of amassing armies, weapons and maximising hard power, but is also influenced by values, culture, ideology, history, national memory, geographical location and attributes, and such other core principles[26]. These underlying core principles and values influence the definition of themes and threats to national interests and national security. These are also the very same elements or traits underlying the constitution of national identity. An understanding of these elements or core principles helps comprehend the State's national security basis, and the specific approach the State adopts to achieve its national security.

> "These also form a temporal repository from which a country's identity is constructed and crafted. As a continuously gestating and synergistic entity, the values and the overall identity typifying national security is absorptive of a country's past experiences with others and, via the (frequent) repetition of interaction, represents a settled set of habitual behaviour, preferences, and precedents. These learnt responses are then transmitted across generations by elites and policymakers, as well as the country's bureaucratic institutions, along with the wider (and conditioned) emotional basis of the wider population concerning their country. Although open to new influences, such engrained essence shapes the relatively constant core of national security" (Ogden 2017:3).

National identity (and the State's concept of national security) is constituted by and constitutive of these core principles and values. "...these elements constitute an internal *self* that involves interaction with diametrically opposed *others*, both external and internal (ibid., italics original).

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[25] The role played by such discourses (similar to hard power, as "tools to allow the purposeful enforcement of a particular worldview or set of national interests upon others" Ogden 2017: xvi) is an area of much research in Constructivism.

[26] Ogden (2017: xxiv) discusses five analytical attributes to better understand the "parameters, make-up, and fundamental interests central to the delineation of Indian national security" – history, identity, culture, perception, interaction.

National identity is a complex concept that is defined by the State's unique experiences, influences, essences, interactions and interpretations (influenced by its perceptions and outlook of the world). An understanding of this complex concept is necessary to comprehend the State's national security basis.

Weldes (1996: 278) discusses how states first describe the situation facing them or the goals to be pursued. These goals can also be interpreted as the state's interests or national interest[27]. Political decision makers or policymakers interpret the international system, the place of their state in the system, threats facing them and possible actions to be taken. Their interpretations create particular identities for subjects and objects (Self and Other) within those representations. These representations of identities act as the foundation or basis for the definition of national interests (Wendt 1992:398). These constructed identities and the interactions between them[28], therefore, are simultaneously defining national interests of both (or all) parties involved (Weldes 1996:282). Such representations provide "warranting conditions" that rationalise or justify particular actions and signify particular threats (Jackson 2005: 89-91; Fay 1975:86). Doty describes this process (of discursive representations constructing national identities and interests) as a process of "'how' meanings[29] are produced and attached to various social subjects/objects, thus constituting particular interpretive dispositions which create certain possibilities and preclude others[30]". "What is explained is not why a particular outcome obtained, but rather how the subjects, objects, and interpretive dispositions were socially constructed such that certain practices were made possible" (Doty 1993:298).

Dittmer and Kim (1993: 13) describe national identity as the act of people of a nation "identifying with the state", a particular "relationship between nation and state". Anderson (1991: 6) calls it an "imagined community" facilitated by the ideology of nationalism. Oliver Zimmer (2003:173-74) stresses that "… national identity relates to the process whereby 'the

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[27] The goals have to be legitimised or widely accepted before they become national interest. Once these goals are legitimised, state action resulting from these goals are also legitimised. States use power to legitimise their goals and actions.

[28] With this construction of the subject state's identity, and interests flowing from that identity, national interests need not be specifically defined within government White Papers or strategic documents (although China engages in this practice). Indian governments do not follow this practice of listing national interests in a strategic or policy document. It could be a conscious practice to keep interests undefined or ambiguous, thus causing varied foreign policy options to be available.

[29] She stresses the importance of 'How' questions (how-possible questions) for this reason, rather than the 'Why' questions in conventional FPA or IR.

[30] Doty (1993:299) also examines "Power as productive … the kind of power that is productive of meanings, subject identities, their interrelationships, and a range of imaginable conduct".

nation' is reconstructed over time. National identity, thus understood, is a public project rather than a fixed state of mind".

National identities and interests are thus socially constructed and not static. They are created through the interaction of international and domestic structures and through the interaction of agents (states and individuals) within those structures. Identities and interests are intersubjective constructions influenced by the interactions and socialisation patterns among the agents. Agents (individuals or states) do not exist separate from their social environment and structures of meaning[31], and the social structure is created and reproduced through the purposive actions of agents (Doty 1997: 372). Language, and shared meanings and symbols are key to the social construction of these identities and interests.

To understand China's obsession with achieving national security (and the associated interests of national sovereignty and regime stability) through military and economic modernisation, it is necessary to examine its conceptions of national identity. An examination of Chinese national identity would reveal the underpinning concepts and representations, for example, the civilizational concept (and not a territorial concept) in the tianxi world system, its victim state identity and the territorial concept during, what it terms, the Century of Humiliation[32], its socialist and sovereign identity post the 1949 Revolution, etc.

Chinese conception of national identity

Chinese national identity is a complex concept[33]. Zhang discusses (2004: 281) Chinese self-identity as being "officially constructed into four faces: A socialist country with Chinese characteristics, a sovereign state in the strict Westphalian sense, a developing nation in the globalization era, and a potential responsible world power on the international arena". These were influenced by two historical complexes[34]. Shogo Suzuki (2007:31) claims that Chinese identity was based on a shared culture rather than being a territorial concept. "… the rise of Chinese nationalism is inseparable from China's encounter with the Western powers". The

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[31] According to 'structuration theory', structure and agency cannot be separated (Giddens 1979: 69).

[32] The era of Western imperialism in China.

[33] The traditional Chinese worldview was a tianxia ('all under heaven') concept of world order, a cultural concept of the Emperor God who had the Mandate of Heaven to rule the world, and who oversaw a tributary system of states placed in concentric circles around the Middle Kingdom, i.e. China. Ancient China's story is also one of invasions and assimilations. Resilience and continuity were defining themes of the ancient Chinese state. The stress was on "cultural superiority and the Confucian state … of the heartland". It was not focused on ethnic superiority of the Han or the Othering of barbarians at the periphery of the tianxia concept. "This fact suggests a very strong civilizational and rather weak ethnic attribute of Chinese self-identity as what is constructed by the Chinese elites" (Zhang 2004: 282-84).

[34] The Central Kingdom Complex and the Strong China Complex (Zhang 2004: 282-84). Either a horizontal or vertical worldview dominated in different periods of ancient Chinese history like the Eastern Zhou Dynasty (770-221 BC) or the Han Dynasty (206–220 BC) respectively.

Century of Humiliation played a role in the creation of a victim state identity, of being ensnared by unequal treaties. Achieving national cohesion was not easy among a people of varied identities and ethnic minorities, descended from various warring kingdoms. This shared historical memory of Western imperialism in China (together with a concept of territories lost to the West[35]) helped evoke nationalism and a Chinese identity that was thus propagated by the post-1949 government. It is through a repeated invoking of this historical memory and participation in commemoration events that the Chinese national identity is recreated (Suzuki 2007:32). The Chinese government and the Communist Party stoke these nationalist and patriotic sentiments when faced with a legitimacy crisis in the present day (for example, see Gries 2005: 848 for examples; Zhao 2000:17).

Contrary to Suzuki's claims, a territorial concept also plays a major role in the creation of Chinese national identity (some other determinants of identity being a collective national memory of the Century of Humiliation/ Western oppression and the self-image of a Communist Party-led economic power). The Chinese national memory of territories lost to the Western imperialism, during the Century of Humiliation (Carlson 2010: 96; Gong 1985: 175-180), still lives strong in the Chinese national psyche today. The claims China places over its disputed territories are thus framed as morally justified, even in the 21st century, as these are 'historical claims' over territories that belonged to China during its glorious tianxia past (Hayton 2018: 372, Malik 2013). China's obsession with its sovereignty and territorial integrity (and the resolve to reclaim disputed territories in the South and East China Seas) is often criticised as its desire to reclaim its rightful position as the Middle Kingdom in the Tianxia world system, to whom other nations paid obeisance or kowtowed. It is this preoccupation with sovereignty and an independent foreign policy that causes China to bristle when the West criticises it about its human rights record or the Tibetan and Uighur separatist movements or the Taiwan reunification. This obsession with Western meddling and the valued principle of self-determination is seen in the strategic thought of Chinese leaders, even at a time when China was opening up to the world and the forces of globalisation. For example, Deng in his talk to the Japanese trade delegation on 1 Dec 1989, after the Tiananmen massacre, illustrated, "Actually national sovereignty is far more important than human rights, but the Group of Seven … often infringe upon the sovereignty of poor, weak countries of the Third World. … Some Western countries, on the pretext that China has an unsatisfactory human rights record and an irrational

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[35] Which for example, resulted in present day claims on territory like the Senkaku/ Diaoyu islands, believed to have been usurped by Japan in the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), occupied by the United States after the Second World War and returned to Japan in 1969. Such Chinese claims led to actions like the declaration of the East China Sea Air Defence Identification Zone that covers the Senkakus.

and illegitimate socialist system, attempt to jeopardise our national sovereignty[36] …" (Linehan 2017:114-115). China's stress on the non-interference policy is also visible in its no-strings attached aid or loans to African states (Alden and Hughes 2009:563; Jiang 2009:594) and its rhetoric of "equality, non-interference and solidarity"[37] with countries of the global South.

The Chinese Communist Party has exploited the history of Western imperialism to create a concept of a national identity (amidst diverse cultural identities and ethnic minorities), and a sense of national cohesion. The identity of the victim that has been wronged, has been effectively leveraged using national memory of historical incidents like the Rape of Nanking[38], the Opium Wars[39] and the Boxer Rebellion[40]. Suzuki describes how Japan is employed as the 'Other' for Chinese national identity to be reinvented. The image of Japan is not only juxtaposed, instead identity is flipped to construct the Chinese identity as 'un-Japanese'. The process of 'Othering' has thus worked both ways. With China's rapid economic growth, a 'China threat' identity was constructed, that of a revisionist state bent upon threatening the current world order and overthrowing American hegemony. Chinese government and the Party have, since the formation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, worked towards using history to create a Chinese national identity, opposed to the victim identity in historical examples of imperialism and oppression.

China's strategic goals - of national security, economic modernisation, preserving its territorial integrity, preventing interference in its sovereign affairs - are closely intertwined with its underlying identity principles, ideology, history, national memory, culture, geographical location (flanked by Japan and the Western hegemon in the Pacific) and physical attributes (long and easily approachable coastline dotted with its wealthiest provinces and strategic instalments like Hainan, its energy and trade routes stifled by the Malacca dilemma, its rights to its historical territories/ islands in the South and East China Sea now threatened by international claims). China's national identity concept draws from this temporal repository of core elements.

"China sees its own military posture as defensive and nonthreatening" (Fravel 2008:136, Friedberg and Ross 2009:20). It sees its military modernisation efforts as aimed at self-defence and achievement of its strategic goals. China has always claimed that its repeated hypersonic

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[36] Official version here
[37] "During the Maoist period until the early 1990s, People's China mobilized a "thick" ideological foreign relations rhetoric – of sovereignty, equality, non-interference and solidarity – amidst what was mostly a "thin" content of actual aid, trade and political relations in Sudan" (Large 2009:611).
[38] Massacre of Chinese civilians by the Japanese Imperial Army in 1937 during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945)
[39] Two wars (between 1839 and 1860) over the British trade of opium.
[40] Uprisings (1899-1901) against Western colonialism and proselytising by Christian missionaries.

vehicle tests or its carrier programme and even its ADIZ are not directed at any country. China's actions however ignite the Asian security dilemma. Fravel (ibid) discusses Japan's investments in its naval capabilities and other Asian countries seeking improved security ties with USA. India, with its long standing antagonism towards China, sees China's military actions as threatening its national security and the achievement of its interests.

Indian strategic thinking and China

The China identity ('China as the Other') in Indian strategic thinking has been a constantly-evolving one. After Indian Independence (1947) and China emerging as the People's Republic of China (1949), the 1950s saw a period of partnership and cooperation. Although the border remained disputed and the Indian government remained empathetic to Tibet's fight for self-determination and the guerrilla resistance against the PLA, the decade largely remained a period of reconciliation influenced by Prime Minister Nehru's conception of 'Hindi-Chini bhai bhai' (Indians and Chinese are brothers). 1959 saw a rise in tensions over the Aksai Chin territorial dispute and issue of the Dalai Lama's Tibetan government in exile finding refuge in India's Dharamsala. The 1962 Sino-Indian war caught the Nehru government by surprise, proved the Indian government's naïve foreign policy, and rocked the foundations of the Panchsheel (Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence) signed in 1954. Nehru's reiteration that adherence to the Panchsheel ensured no future conflict, and the unprepared state of the Indian Armed Forces to cope with fighting in high altitudes was heavily criticised. The war was followed by a period of ramping up of Indian military strength, and the loosening of the grip of Nehruvian idealism on Indian national security strategy.

October 1964 saw China conducting its first nuclear test, and although India did not figure within its nuclear strategy, this added to India's threat perception together with the deepening Sino-Pakistan cooperation. China's first test of its H-bomb in May 1966 further alarmed Indian strategic thinkers and intensified the nuclear debate in India (Chakma 2005: 198, Mukherjee and Sagar 2018:24-27, Das 2008: 52-58). China's use of nuclear power to achieve its interests, coax its neighbours and improve its international standing, left a lasting impression on India and heightened the strategic rivalry. Yet much of the strategic discourse continued to dismiss the need to nuclearize and upheld Nehruvian ideals of global disarmament and promotion of peace, cooperation and non-interference. India remained focused on China's nexus with its western neighbour Pakistan during the 1965 Indo-Pak war. India did not nuclearize until the May 1974 PNE (Peaceful Nuclear Explosion), although the government believed it had a more advanced nuclear programme than China's (Nehru's 1962 statement quoted in Pardesi 2014:339).

The 1971 India-Pakistan war and the liberation of East Pakistan checked the growing Sino-Pakistan partnership aimed at exerting pressure on Indian interests from the East. Sino-US rapprochement after the Ping-pong diplomacy and President Nixon's visit in 1972 saw a normalization of relations. At the same time, India's alliance with the Soviet Union was gaining strength after the 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation (China and the Soviet Union had just emerged from the 1969 border conflict). This provided a strong counter to the US-Chinese nexus. India's move was seen as a counter to not just the United States' failure to support a democratic partner in the 1971 India-Pak War, but its action of sending the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise to the Bay of Bengal to threaten India (also see Pant 2009: 92). India's 1974 peaceful nuclear test led to varied responses within China (for Chinese perceptions on Indian tests, see Perkovich 1999, Yang Xiaoping 2016, Kondapalli 1998).

It was only in 1988 that the first official level visit (after 34 years) took place between the two countries. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Beijing was hailed as the thawing of the freeze in bilateral relations. The Panchsheel was invoked as the fundamental guiding principles for state-to-state relations (Chinese government statement [here](#)). Some degree of progress emerged on the border dispute with the setting up of Joint Working Groups. Cooperation in economy, trade, and science and technology took off [from US$62 million in 1984 to US$765 million in 1994 including border trade (Hongyu 1995:551)], and was followed by Premier Li Peng's visit in 1991, President Venkataraman's in 1992, Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's in 1993, Vice-President K. R. Narayanan in 1994, and a spate of Chinese official visits too (see Hongyu 1995: 548). With the opening up of the Indian economy (globalization) in 1991, China's interest in India as a market for Chinese goods and services increased. China's nuclear technology transfers to Pakistan also decreased after it signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and agreed to the MTCR in 1992. With the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, India found its strategic landscape changing rapidly and realised the need for new allies to counter the China (and American) threat. China remained preoccupied with the 1991 Gulf War that jolted its Party and PLA leadership, to realise its shortcomings and deficiencies in military capabilities, and set the ball rolling towards rapid military modernisation.

The years 1989 to 1996 thus continued as a period of Sino-Indian cooperation and closer bilateral relations, where both countries remained preoccupied with the massive changes in the global arena, after the end of the Cold War. Although there were sources of misunderstanding, for example, China's call for an international solution to the Kashmir dispute by adopting Pakistan's stance on the issue, bilateral relations remained on an even keel. It was in 1998 that the boat was suddenly rocked. In May 1998, immediately after India's nuclear tests in Pokhran,

Defence Minister George Fernandes termed China 'enemy number one' (Acharya 1999:1397) and Prime Minister Vajpayee's letter to President Clinton[41], explaining the rationale for the tests, also alluded to the China factor. It seemed surprising that on the one hand the Indian government wanted to improve relations with China, and on the other hand, openly named China as the enemy. The government's positioning seemed contradictory. Attributing China as the reason behind the tests caused much consternation in China and led to a strain in relations, while economic sanctions were imposed on India by the global community. Views within some quarters of the Indian strategic community pointed to a convergence of US-Chinese interests, in preventing India's acquisition of a nuclear power status. The United States, it claimed, wanted to keep India as a nuclear have-not, outside the prestigious nuclear club, while China did not want to have a nuclearized neighbour, a challenger to its status as the sole Asian nuclear power. India's strategic elite viewed the tests as increasing India's leverage as a responsible and respected global power, and putting an end to the discriminatory nuclear order forged by the Nuclear Five (those that conducted nuclear tests prior to the 1968 conclusion of the NPT) and Western powers, headed by the United States. However, after a period of economic sanctions, an increasingly close partnership with the United States materialised, both during the Clinton era and with the 2006 signing of the US-India Civil Nuclear deal with the Bush administration. The warming up of Indo-US relations was viewed with some amount of trepidation by successive Chinese governments.

Sino-Indian bilateral visits picked up after a lull after the 1998 Pokhran tests, with Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit in 2003 and the appointing of Special Representatives (SR) to work out a boundary settlement. Trade and investment remained the key factor in all the following bilateral visits and talks, for example, President Xi Jinping's in September 2014 (signing MoUs "on commerce & trade, railways, space-cooperation, pharmaceuticals, establishment of industrial parks, sister-city arrangements etc.") and Prime Minister Modi's in May 2015, and again in September 2016 (for the G20 Summit in Hangzhou) and September 2017 (sidelines of BRICS Summit in Xiamen). President Pranab Mukherjee too visited China in 2016 ("signing MoUs on collaboration in research and innovation and enhanced faculty and student exchanges"). "President Xi Jinping visited India in October 2016 to participate in the BRICS Summit in Goa. The two leaders also met along the sidelines of the SCO Heads of States Summit in Tashkent in June 2016 and in Astana in June 2017" (Indian Government. MEA. October 2017: p.1-2).

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[41] Text of the letter here.

The Sino-Indian relationship has overcome many roadblocks. In spite of periods of skirmishes, border incursions (blamed on both sides) and conflicts like the 2017 Doklam crisis, cooperation and coexistence has largely prevailed in the recent past. Yet, at the same time, the relationship is also characterised by competition and conflict. India cooperates closely with China on climate issues, energy exploration, and within multilateral regimes like BRICS, G20 and the East Asia Summit (EAS), redefining representations of the Global South within the extant post-Bretton Woods institutions. They cooperate on joint energy exploration too – ONGC and CNPC MoU in 2012, to strengthen future Exploration and Production (E&P) operations especially in Myanmar, Sudan, and Syria (OffshoreEnergyToday.com 2012). Together they invested $573 million for 37% stake in Al Furat oilfield in Syria (Roy Chaudhury 2017), and $800 million for 50% stake in Omimex de Colombia (Reuters, 15 Aug 2006). There were talks also, on joint development of Yadavaran oil field in Iran. Their coordinated behaviour and lobbying tactics within the climate change negotiations has played a crucial role in tilting concessions in favour of the BRICS countries.

> "… on 18 December 2009, both China's Premier Wen Jiabao and India's PM Manmohan Singh walked out of the conference room with their respective delegations when talks failed. In addition, together with Lula and Zuma, the leaders of Brazil and South Africa, Singh sided with Wen when the latter bargained with US President Obama over the final draft text. In other words, with support from India, China successfully weakened the international monitoring requirements on developing countries' emissions reduction pledges. Finally, the text hammered out by Obama and Wen, with the participation of Singh, Lula and Zuma, became the Copenhagen Accord, a non-binding agreement calling for voluntary limits on GHG emissions" (Wu 2012: 836).

China and India compete to woo the littoral states in the Indian Ocean and the wider region. Both are increasingly focused on the African continent (with two competing economic corridors or belts – China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) passes via Africa and the Indo-Japan Asia-Africa Growth Corridor). China's latest military base in Djibouti is key to its ambitious plans in the IOR (Indian Ocean Region) and Africa.

China's position within Indian strategic thinking and culture has been influenced by periods of cooperation and intense competition. Indian strategic thinking has represented China both as the 'enemy other' and as a brother and close ally (in Nehru's vision of 'Hindi-Chini bhai bhai', and in how the two states cooperate to achieve their interests on the world stage). How India perceives and represents China has been influenced by its own self-image, the global strategic

environment prevalent, and the interests it wishes to pursue (trade with China, negotiating critical issue areas in favour of the interests of the Global South, etc.). India's strategic culture influences the delineation of its national interests, the interpretation (and representation) of its strategic environment and threats to its interests, how responses are framed towards these threats and the type of image it portrays (both of Self and Other).

India's concept of national identity is briefly examined next, highlighting some underpinning themes that are similar to China's national identity (the civilizational identity concept in the tianxia system, a victim state and territorial concept in the Century of Humiliation, its socialist and sovereign identity after it became a republic, etc.).

Indian national identity and contestations in identity principles

India's strategic culture is often claimed to be determined by various factors – for example, its unique history, geography (a melting pot of invasions and peoples, races and languages), colonial experiences, cultural values (influenced by an eternal concept of time and the belief in destiny governing human lives) (Tanham 1992:1-23), Nehruvian legacy of non-alignment, its democratic nature, and so on. Indian national identity is described as a contested concept[42]. Adeney and Lall (2005: 280) call national identities "problematic creatures", especially Indian national identity which is defined in various ways. From the Harappa civilization (Indus Valley civilization circa 3300- 1700 BC) to the Maurya empire (circa 322-185 BC) and the Gupta Dynasty (circa 200 BC- 550 AD) to the Mughal Empire (circa 1526-1707 AD, the last Mughal emperor deposed in 1857) and British colonialization till 1947, Indian history has witnessed a merging of various cultures, religions and ways of life. Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism co-existed and also provided space for the arrival of Christianity in 52 AD and Islam [with the Ummayad (Arab) campaigns in early 8th century BC and later the Delhi Sultanate (Turkic origin) and the Mughal dynasty (Turkic-Mongol)]. There was never a conception of a nation state, as various empires and peoples ruled over the territorial expanse south of the Indus River. During British colonisation, with the beginning of the Independence movement and the founding of the Indian National Congress, people of different ethnicities and religions united for self-rule and self-determination[43]. India is a highly heterogeneous state without a shared national identity. There

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[42] Adeney and Lall (2005: 259) say that India's diversity in "religious, linguistic, regional and caste" makes the definition of the Indian nation "controversial".

[43] Although the first national uprising is regarded as the Indian Rebellion of 1857, often termed India's First War of Independence by nationalists; also called the Revolt of 1857 or the Sepoy Mutiny by European historians.

is, however, a structure to that heterogeneity (Adeney and Wyatt 2004:10) which prevented prolonged conflict.

According to Varshney (1993:234-35), since the rise of the Indian national movement, three competing themes (or identity principles) "have fought for political dominance". One, the "territorial notion is that India has a "sacred geography"" … Two, "the cultural notion is that ideas of tolerance, pluralism, and syncretism define Indian society. India is not only the birthplace of several religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism), but in its history it has also regularly received, accommodated, and absorbed "outsiders" (Parsis, Jews, and 'Syrian' Christians …). *Sarva Dharma Sambhava* (equal respect for all religions) is the best cultural expression of such pluralism. Finally, the religious notion is that India is originally the land of the Hindus, and it is the only land which the Hindus can call their own" (seeing the rise of Hindu nationalism later in Indian politics).

India's colonial history under the British had a powerful influence in shaping the Indian state's identity. After Independence in 1947, notions of national identity were disputed between an identity resulting from territorial residence and an identity from the dominant group[44] (not a pure Westphalian concept of nationhood). Adeney and Lall (2005) discuss how two different Indian governments [Congress government since the Nehruvian years and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)/ NDA government 1998-2004] proceeded to define Indian identity in different ways, especially after Independence, as they possessed different visions of the Indian nation's identity. Nehru's conception was closer to a civic interpretation of nationality (voluntary residence within Indian territory), and the BJP's vision was a more organic ethnic conception. However, these conceptions were influenced by "practical politics, including economic and electoral motivations" (Adeney and Lall 2005: 280). Systemic influences also shaped the Indian state's concept of national identity. This illustrates that political parties and powerful political actors or elites play a major role in defining national identity [also see Adeney and Wyatt's study (2004) that eschews a solely agency-centred or structure-oriented explanation of political phenomena like democratisation, and how India established a democratic identity despite its heterogeneity].

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[44] Similar to China's predominant identity being the Han identity, despite the presence of other ethnic minorities like the Zhuang, Manchu, Uighurs, Miao, Tibetan and so on

The rise of Hindu nationalism[45] in the mid-1980s saw India's national identity merging with a Hindu identity. The opposing view of secular nationalism focuses on preserving the geographical integrity of India. But Hindu nationalists view this as "the opposite of nation-building as for them assimilation is key to the Hindu identity – A salad bowl does not produce cohesion; a melting pot does" (Varshney 1993:230).

As discussed above, the themes on Indian identity since Independence has been organised around three competing identity principles - territorial, cultural, and religious - each having their political equivalents (Varshney 1993:234-35). Therefore, political discourse aligns the territorial strain with ""national unity" or "territorial integrity"; the cultural idea is expressed as "political pluralism"; and the religious idea is known as Hindutva, or political Hinduism" (though the official government discourse uses secularity[46]). According to Varshney (1993:235), these three identity principles "have yielded two principal imaginations about India's national identity - the secular nationalist and the Hindu nationalist. The former combines territory and culture; the latter religion and territory". Hindu nationalists consider religion as the unifying factor, while secular nationalists like Nehru considered culture as the glue that created Indian identity. The paradoxes of India's excessive shifts towards either ends of the continuum[47] of these strains of national identity are also illustrated.

Territoriality appears in both the competing secular and Hindu identities, as the common link or thread that unifies. "Therefore, just as America's most passionate political moments concern freedom and equality, India's most explosive moments concern its "sacred geography," the 1947 partition being the most obvious example" (Varshney 1993: 238). This view of a sacred geography in all imaginings of Indian national identity is pivotal in shaping India's interests in its territorial integrity, thus drawing the loudest rhetoric when the disputed border with China is in any way brought up in discussions.

India's secular nationalist leaders downplayed the territorial principle and "put the ideas of pluralism, tolerance, and syncretism at the heart of India's definition of national identity" (ibid.).

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[45] Competing strains in India's national identity according to Varshney are of four types - Secular, Hindu and the Separatist nationalisms of Kashmir and Punjab. These strains formed the underlying base for the rise of Hindu nationalism (Varshney 1993:227).

[46] The Indian Constitution and its Preamble mention secularity as an ideal or value that the Indian government aims to ensure its citizens. The word 'secular' was added to the Preamble by the 42nd Amendment in 1976.

[47] He quotes the example of past governments "undermin(ing) federalism on the grounds of "national integrity,"…", while at the same time giving Kashmir special status in the Constitution to protect pluralism; or even protecting religious pluralism in the context of the personal laws of the other religious minorities (and the repeated calls for a uniform civil code, a "set of common personal laws for all citizens", to protect national unity). The Uniform Civil Code is still a hotly debated topic in India. See Ohri 2018.

Gandhi's identity as a devout Hindu (though he espoused the principles of pluralism, tolerance and non-violence) and his vision of the Independence movement being a mass movement, not "confined to the educated and anglicised upper middle class", led to Hinduism being used as a force to unite (at the same time Hinduism served to alienate Muslim constituents like Jinnah and the Muslim League). Identities of powerful actors (like Jinnah and Sardar Vallabhai Patel) blended into perceptions about the nation. There were however, efforts to create a national identity, displacing the discourse of a common past or common origin, to focus on a common future. Leaders like Nehru "tried to make modernization and economic development the basis for national identity, something on which presumably everyone could agree" (ibid).

The Indian national identity has fluctuated among the concepts of territoriality, religion, culture and shared history, loyalty, pluralism and diversity, a shared future of economic development, etc. Ideologies and terminology are often overlapping and ambiguous. "For a secular nationalist, the two terms - religion and culture - are clearly separable: syncretism and tolerance are properties of all religions and communities in India … A celebration of Indian culture does not require one to be a Hindu. For Hindu nationalists, the two terms - India and Hindu - are synonymous" (Varshney 1993:238-241). Many of these concepts were in conflict with each other – for example Gandhi's concept of Hinduism's tolerance and non-violence as the binding force to bring the diverse masses together, versus the Muslim League's concept of an Islamic state with Partition as a pre-requisite for national identity.

Gandhian principles adopted by the early Indian leaders and Nehru's emphasis on enlightened national self-interest and self-sufficiency (similar to Gandhi's Purna Swaraj) were values and principles that enabled the Indian state's control over its own natural security. Belief in the endurance of the Indian civilization and its ability to absorb and amalgamate external influences within its national identity (without conflict) evolved into identity attributes – such as India as a non-aligned actor focused on equality, peace, global disarmament, working towards democratic values and against colonialism; India as a future great power determining its own course and self-reliant. Such ideational elements, like values and culture forming the core of the nation's identity and the 'idea of India', influenced its relationships with other countries, and helped to create a concept of a peaceful world (espousing principles of equality, non-aggression, non-interference, propagated by the non-aligned bloc during the height of the Cold War). This helped ensure a peaceful and stable regional environment, facilitating India's focus on its own strategic priorities or national interests of economic development, ensuring autonomy in

determining its domestic affairs, and an urge to avoid the distraction of the Cold War's power struggles (Chacko 2012:12, 22). India emerged as a rising power (i.e. was perceived to be more confident in its international actions) after achieving a nuclear power status (Cohen 2001:25) (For the India as a rising power debate, see Ogden 2014, Hall 2010, Narlikar 2011 and 2007, Smith 2012, Stephen 2012, Ladwig 2010, Cohen 2001).

As India's economic power increased, its identity also shifted from a balancing power[48] (that remained strategically autonomous from or non-aligned to both camps during the Cold War) to now being termed a 'leading power' by some parts of the Indian strategic circles (Pant 2009:91). India's conviction about leading the world as a major power is increasingly illustrated in Indian leadership's comments[49]. There are, of course, constituents who believe that India should focus on internal or domestic issues and not take up the call of major powers, especially the United States, to assume a more global role. The political leadership has remained cautious. Though it has aligned closer to the United States, it has bristled at any mention of an alliance and has continued to hedge to protect its own interests, sometimes working with China. "Indian officials bristle at any suggestion that their country is being courted by Washington as a bulwark against the Chinese …" (Sengupta 2008). India is also cautious about being seen as an American ally or a junior partner.

In the sphere of economic development (a key national interest; see Madan 2014), Indian leaders accept that India is still progressing on the development curve, while reaping benefits of the demographic dividend. It is far from being a major power in this sphere and would not like to upset relations with China on the economic front. Structural reforms have resulted in GDP growth by leaps and bounds, yet the perception of the Indian government is that there's a long way[50] to the goal of 'inclusive development' or "to bridge the income and opportunity divide". Prior to economic liberalisation in 1991, liberalized global economics and international

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[48] India is sometimes also termed a Swing power – aligning with the United States on particular issues and cooperating with China on others, to tilt the equation. See Kotasthane 2016 for discussion on Swing power, also see Ogden 2018: 9.

[49] For example, Prime Minister Modi's address in Kuala Lumpur (South East Asian business and investment summit 2015) where he talked about it being India's time to contribute to Asia's resurgence. Former Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao, in a Nov 2010 interview, reiterated India's emergence - "There is no questioning of India's arrival on the global stage" (Ministry of External Affairs Media Center, 21 Nov 2010). Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in his Budget Speech to Parliament on 24 July 1991 said, "But as Victor Hugo once said, 'no power on earth can stop an idea whose time has come'. I suggest to this august House that the emergence of India as a major economic power in the world happens to be one such idea" (indiabudget.gov.in).

[50] Modi's plenary address at Davos 2018 talked about the pressing need to upgrade physical infrastructure, speed up structural reform and FDI reforms, technology transforming governance and economic policy improvement.

finance were viewed as a national security threat[51] against India's autonomy and independence, a mindset resulting from India's economically exploitative colonial experience. "The economic liberalisation programme fundamentally disrupted a constitutive element of India's postcolonial identity[52], enabling a discourse of 'lost self-esteem'" and set in motion a process to revive its dormant nuclear programme which would emphasize India's sovereignty, and in the 'national security' realm too (Varadarajan 2004:337-38).

India's political elites have long been keen on India gaining global status or gaining great power recognition. Pant (2010: 134) calls it a "unique conundrum: its political elites desperately want global recognition for India as a major power and all the prestige and authority associated with that. Yet, they continue to be reticent about the acquisition and use of power in foreign affairs". Indian governments since the late 1990s have envisioned India's status on the global stage as increasingly influential. India's identity as a regional power, the leading power in South Asia, an Indo-Pacific power and an Asian power on equal terms with China, with the means to alter outcomes in international politics is an oft discussed theme in strategic discourse. However, this is at the same time an ambivalent identity, as Pant explains.

> "Unlike China, India is not at ease with the notion of exercising global power… India's ambivalence about power and its use has resulted in a situation where even as India's economic and military capabilities have gradually expanded, it has failed to evolve a commensurate strategic agenda and requisite institutions so as to be able to mobilise and use its resources most optimally … India's lack of an instinct for power is most palpable in the realm of the military, where unlike other major global powers of the past and the present, India has failed to master the creation, deployment and use of its military instruments in support of its national objectives" (Pant 2010: 133-136).

On the criticism that India is a reluctant and diffident power, former National Security Advisor Shivshankar Menon explained that "India has been very economical in its foreign entanglements but not engagements" (India. MEA. 13 December 2013). Other factors that could have contributed to this ambivalence could be its Cold War position of strategic autonomy or non-alignment, and the influence of leaders like Nehru [who vehemently believed that "the right approach to defence is to avoid having unfriendly relations with other countries" (Perkovich 1999:24)]. This ambivalence in identities is now visible in India's closer relationships

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[51] For details on the Indian state's determined efforts at "staving off greedy exploiters (the foreign investors – equated with the colonizers)…" and the construction of the Indian 'Self' versus the exploitative 'Other', see Varadarajan 2004:335-36."… an important aspect of state identities is that they are dynamic and are historically constituted in and through a relationship to global capital" (Varadarajan 2004:319).
[52] "What was being threatened was not merely Indian territory but 'India' itself" (Varadarajan 2004:339).

with various major powers especially the United States[53] - movement away from its Cold War identity as a non-aligned power, to strategic autonomy (Legro 2012) and how it works to facilitate its great power aspirations through strategic partnerships with the United States and other major powers like Russia and China (Ogden 2018:12). A vision of a multi-polar world and India's position within it as a great or leading power is another narrative that is causing ideational shifts within foreign policy-making circles. These multiple identities work in synergy enabling various foreign policy imperatives for India. The delineation and repeated enunciation of India's interests through discourse (for example, a multi-polar world order, visions of power in the Asian Century, shared constructions of the Indo-Pacific, new evolving alignments with other great powers while at the same time avoiding a total divorce from the Nehruvian identity of non-alignment) reinforces the identity concept, making it a meaningful object and a material reality.

History, culture, core values and beliefs, unique experiences have played major roles in shaping India's concept of national identity and its security interests. Various cultures, religions and ways of life have integrated over the centuries (the salad bowl or melting pot debate), to create a unique and contested Indian national identity. These fractious identities have over centuries blended to create continuity, and at the same time a conflicting concept of national identity. This shapes the nature of India's national security and foreign policy approach, and the tools employed to secure its interests. National interests and threats are defined (socially constructed) in the present day, by dipping into the reservoir of India's history, culture, core values and beliefs, unique experiences, even geographical attributes.

This section has illustrated some underpinning themes in India's concept of national identity. Territorial, cultural and religious notions merge within the two principal imaginations of identity, the secular nationalist and the Hindu nationalist. National identity's linkages to history, national memory, normative values of the post-colonial Indian and Chinese State, and the ambitions or national interests in achieving major power status has been delineated. The section also examined India's great power ambitions and its reticence in claiming such an identity. This is oft criticised as the India's lack of a strategic culture.

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[53] Although India is aggressive in quelling any talks of alliances (instead preferring 'partnerships'). Such terms immediately invoke images of Cold War alliances and ententes of the colonial era.

India's lack of a strategic culture

In Tanham's (1992:1-23) examination of Indian strategic thinking, he argues that India's history, culture and values, the Hindu view of life[54], etc. have contributed to the Indian foreign policy establishment's inability to thoroughly consider, plan for the long term and strategize its foreign policy. It has therefore, failed to assert itself and has muddled along in its foreign policy. Tanham is not alone in his criticism of India's lack of strategic thinking. Indian foreign policy is often termed reactive (Pant 2009-a:250-52; Mehta 2009) and lacking strategic planning and thought (Pant 2010:120-153, Mitra and Schottli 2007). India's actions appear contradictory and do not further its strategic interests (Pant 2009:90). Although India's international status has changed radically over the years, with "the cumulative effects of high economic growth, steady integration with the international market economy, rapid strides in business processing, successful introduction of new technologies of communication and the induction of nuclear weapons and delivery capacity to national defence strategies", India has exhibited an "uncertainty in foreign policy relative to its power" (Mitra and Schottli 2007:19-20). Pant attributes India's failure to exercise its heft in foreign policy commensurate with its rising status, to its lack of understanding of what that great power status or responsibility entails. Being a great power is a choice that rising powers have to make. They have to employ their capabilities in the combined areas of military, economic, territorial, demographic, and political wherewithal, at the same time overcoming structural constraints of the international system. "What is less clear is whether Indian foreign policy is up to the task and whether Indian policy-makers are willing to make the right kind of choices" (Pant 2009:91).

India has long been criticised for a lack of an 'instinct for acquiring power' and India's elites lacking a sophisticated understanding of power (Khilnani in Basu, Chellaney, Khanna and Khilnani 2005:3; Pant 2009a: 254-55). Mitra and Schottli (2007:19-20) examine the "deep contradictions and missing elements within (India's) foreign policy, creating a sense of vagueness and incoherence about India's intentions on, and likely reactions to, issues affecting her vital interests". They attribute it to problems unique to the Indian state, the "… Gandhian legacy, nostalgia for the halcyon days of Nehru's panchasheela and, most of all, the political anchor of foreign policy in the larger project of nation-building…" India's democratic nature is often ascribed as the cause, "… some degree of ambiguity and consequent uncertainty emerging out of internal dissent …" They (ibid.) argue that although "… India's vibrant political process effectively conveys the democratic 'noise' of India's domestic politics to the

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[54] "…life a mystery, largely unknowable and not entirely under man's control … he cannot forecast or plan with any confidence" (Tanham 1992:50). This discourages planning of any sort.

international arena ... there has been, in contrast, no corresponding *deep stateness*, or *residual reserve of basic national consensus* about the core interests of the country... India's likely response to a crisis remains uncertain". They question whether "Indian foreign policy is caught in a time warp", "acting as a self-appointed keeper of international morality", focused on non-alignment and finding a "third way in international politics" (Mitra and Schottli 2007:19-20). Pant (2010) claims that a lack of institutionalisation in Indian foreign policy-making also precipitates such reticent foreign policy behaviours.

Foreign policy analysts also discuss India's lack of a coherent or unified China policy (a policy that lacks direction and well-defined priorities) (Garver 2011:5-6, Pant 2010:120-153, Kainikara 2016, Samanta 2018, Chellaney 2017, Chatterjee Miller 2013-a: 14, Mukherjee and Malone 2011, Mitra and Schottli 2007:19-20). They claim that this contributes to its reactive behaviour towards China or its lack of response to Chinese actions. Pant (2010:122) argues that "India has from time to time oscillated from going ballistic over China to a sort of defeatist acquiescence, in the process failing spectacularly in evolving a coherent long-term strategy towards its most important neighbour".

Garver (2011:5-6) describes it as India watching warily and unable to respond, "Across the Indian Ocean and South Asian region, India watches warily as China expands its military and political roles, fearing that it is sliding into a state of "strategic encirclement" by China". India is claimed to genuflect to Chinese concerns (Pant 2009:90) and it is often "not clear what the Indian government was actually trying to achieve". India is blamed for "neither liv(ing) up to the ideals for which India often claims it stands nor did it clearly enhance India's strategic interests vis-a-vis China" (ibid.). "… India's approach towards China remains ambivalent, shifting from bombastic jingoism to defeatist acquiescence with dangerous alacrity. This lack of direction in policy is clearly revealed by the manner in which it has dealt with China in the past few years. While Sino-Indian bilateral relations have apparently improved, it is not clear if India has any idea as to what ends it wants to harness this improvement and what its strategic objectives with respect to China are. This has resulted in foreign policy flip-flops doing much damage to India's regional and global diplomatic stature ... Of course, even muddling through can be viewed as a strategic choice, but it is rarely the smartest one" (Pant 2010:139). "The China policy is in many ways symptomatic of a larger misunderstanding in the Indian political establishment with regard to what a nation's foreign policy should be" (Pant 2010:140). Brahma Chellany (Rediff India 19 Oct, 2002) explains this as "India has yet to recover from its 'battered victim' syndrome, especially in policy towards China. At the root of the feckless China policy is India's failure to build and exploit leverage". "… India should cease being defensive. India walks on shells for fear

of offending China, while China has no such compunction. India should have the self-confidence to stand up to China[55]" (Pant 2010:150).

India is portrayed as being out of touch with reality and the evolving geopolitical landscape and timidly accommodating China (Pant 2010:120-153). Indian discourse has often talked about "India caught napping in South Asia by China, needs new strategy to slay the dragon" (Samanta 2018), "China has become more assertive, so India needs a new containment strategy" (Chellaney 2017), "India has always approached the "China threat" with timidity", "India needs to be aware of the changing realities in the region", "… an urgent need for New Delhi to recalibrate Indian foreign policy in keeping with the changing geopolitical landscape in the region" (Venkatachalam 2016), "New Delhi had no clear-cut policy towards Beijing and that it was time the world's second-most populous country developed a strategy and showed preparedness". Brahma Chellaney (2018) often criticises this, "India's perennially reactive mode allows the PLA to keep the initiative in the Himalayas... In the absence of a coherent strategy to counter aggressive Chinese moves in the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean, a defensive India has signalled its intent to go soft on China ... But India will likely not only come away empty-handed from its new propitiatory approach but also give cover to China's designs against it". The "Indian government's China policy is 'mired in confusion, contradictions, and clichés'" (Pant 2007). A 2011 panel, at the College of Defence Management in Secunderabad, is believed to have "discussed New Delhi's having no clear-cut policy towards Beijing and how it was time the world's second-most populous country developed a strategy and showed preparedness". Subramaniam Swamy, then Janata Party President in 2011 and present BJP Rajya Sabha MP reportedly said at the same panel discussion that "India had a mindset problem[56] … To meet China's prowess and win the race, it was necessary for India to develop a long-term strategy, modernise its weaponry, understand China's vulnerabilities …" (in Garver 2011:5-6).

This criticism, of the lack of strategic thought or a culture of long-term strategic thinking in India, seems to fizzle out in the nuclear arena, the one area of foreign and security policy where India has had a long-term perspective. "Though at times the overall policy was contradictory and its

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[55] However, Pant (2017:13, see also Pant 2014) agrees that there has been a more confident China strategy under the Modi government – "On the security front, there is a new purposeful response against China with a focus on more efficient border management and defense acquisitions".

[56] Scholars in the opposing camp often talk about India's measured strategy. Finan (2005: 96) makes the argument of India playing poker and bluffing its way along. ""The Indian government is very careful about the way it handles the China rhetoric …, according to Shashank Joshi, a senior research fellow at the Royal United Services Institute, a British defence and security think-tank" (Kazmin 2016). Former National Security Advisor Shivshankar Menon has explained that India has been economical and strategic in its relationships (India. MEA. 13 December 2013). There has been criticism against the argument of Indian "pusillanimity" (see Dhruva Jaishankar tweet, Bobby Ghosh tweet).

various strands were at cross-purposes, yet India was able to carve out a coherent policy that served its needs with great efficacy" (Pant 2009:93). The 1998 nuclear tests and the Indo-US civil nuclear deal saw the most heated national debate in recent history, proving Tanham and other voices wrong.

Despite this criticism, there is strong evidence of Indian strategic thinking on China, as illustrated below. But first, it is critical to point to the foreign policy approach of multialignment, as contributing to the criticism on directionless foreign policy, mired in confusion. Foreign policy analysts like Hall (2016), M K Narayanan (2016), Basrur (2017), Panda (2013) have all attributed India's pursuit of multiple foreign policy moves (in partnership with various countries), as precipitating the criticism of incoherence in foreign policy. They have referred to the wide range of varied bilateral and multilateral foreign policy initiatives as multialignment (multi-directional engagement), an emerging foreign policy approach since the mid-2000s. This is aimed at achieving the national goals of economic development and national security (to counter security threats especially from China), and projecting its values and influence (soft power) to fulfil its great power ambitions (Hall 2016:279). Hall ascribes the semblance of a confused and directionless foreign policy to the underlying shifts taking place in Indian foreign policy (the shift from non-alignment to multialignment) and the waning Indo-US strategic relationship between 2008 and 2011 (2016:275). Three foreign policy practices predominantly constitute multialignment – "bids for membership of a range of established and new multilateral institutions and forums; the pursuit and management of informal and formal partnerships with multiple states in multiple issue areas; and … 'normative hedging[57]'" (Hall 2016:272). Multialignment is termed by Raja Mohan and Khanna (2006) as a "forward foreign policy" and a "neo-Curzonian foreign policy" aimed at gaining India leverage and access to multiple partners and major powers. Multialignment and its strategic partnership component is termed "a way for India to get its foot in the door for further diplomatic engagement on military and defense issues should circumstances change… Acknowledging that its foreign policy is driven primarily by its economic priorities, the proliferation of such partnerships begins to make more sense" (Panda 2013). The criticism, of directionless foreign policy, mired in confusion, seems further accentuated by India's emerging policy preference for multialignment.

Literature on Sino-Indian relations has also clearly evidenced the presence of Indian strategic culture, especially its strategic thinking on China. There exists a highly engaging debate, and deeply varied and segmented outlooks (or as Kanti Bajpai in Chambers (ed.) 2002 terms it

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[57] promote Indian values "without committing to a Western normative agenda" (Hall 2016:279).

"streams of strategic thinking") within the Indian strategic thinking on China. This is evident in the existing schools of thought on China and agential influences within them. According to Ganguly and Malik (Ganguly 2002: 96, Malik 2003: 6.5), India's China policy is influenced by three predominant schools that have very different perceptions of China – Hyper-realists/ hawks, Pragmatists and Appeasers. The Hyper-realists/ Hawks see China as an imminent threat, the Pragmatists see China as a long term threat, and prefer to "engage but balance China", and the Appeasers do not see China as a threat. Ganguly explains this as "the confrontationalists", the strategic engagement group and "the appeasement and muddling through group" (Ganguly 2002: 96).

Hyperrealists or the China hawks argue that "China will never be territorially satiated" and advocate that "India must do to China what China has done to India," that is, containment and encirclement (or "concirclement of China"). They often point to China's double-digit increase in military spending and advanced weapon imports. They advocate engagement with 'China-wary' countries and "also favour an Indian naval presence in the South China Sea to counter Chinese naval presence in the Indian Ocean". "Hyperrealists prefer a balance-of-power-based concirclement strategy toward China" (Malik 2003: 6.5). Armed Forces members are usually considered to be hyper-realists.

Pragmatists, India's predominant group, include the majority of government officials, academia, media, businessmen and the moderates. The business lobby includes both sides of the coin – ones who want to reap the benefits of China's economic boom and the others who focus on the adverse impacts of this economic boom on India – the dumping of goods in Indian markets, the burgeoning trade deficit, the race for international markets and FDI, and China's 'me first' strategy towards capturing energy resources. China is seen as a long-term threat that can be engaged and balanced only through intensifying trade. They note the mismatch between China's actions and her rhetoric. They advocate "emulate(ing) China" to be secure against Chinese overtures in the future, and more importantly, just like Beijing, to manage relations with great powers (Malik 2003: 6.5).

Appeasers form "India's pro-China camp" (consisting of Communists, Left-leaning academics, Left-leaning journalists, anti-nuclear, anti-US elements) (Malik 2003:6.7). Ganguly (2002:96) includes the Congress Party, and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) too. Appeasers do not see China as an aggressor or a bully, but rather "as a developing country trying to improve the lives of its billion plus people, much like India". "They mouth platitudes", adhere to the belief

that a lasting Sino-Indian relationship is possible as soon as bilateral relations are 'de-territorialised' and advocate engaging with China to counter US hegemony.

Various views exist on the terminology and composition of Indian strategic thinking on China. Hoffman (in Frankel and Harding eds. 2004: 33-74) discusses ideal types in the Indian strategic thinking on China, for example, the China as not hostile position, the China is hostile position and the mainstream position of uncertainty about China's long-term intentions (but not being a short-term threat). Scholars from the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and the Asia Society described them as "There are three identifiable perceptions on China within Indian strategic thinking, while most Indians fall into the 'mainstream view' that in the near term China does not constitute a military threat, but this is uncertain in the long term, and India needs to guard against future power projection by China in the region. In India, there are two other schools of thought, though neither is held by a large percentage of the Indian people: (a) that China is no threat, even in the long term, and (b) that China is a real and immediate threat" (Guihong 2006:94).

Ollapally and Rajagopalan (2012:75, 76) discuss four strands in India's foreign policy thinking that also influences its China strategy - the traditionalist (India as a great civilizational power), nationalist (Nehruvian non-alignment with international power blocs), regionalist (India as a South Asian power) and the globalist (post-1991 focus on security and economic issues). Kanti Bajpai (in Chambers ed. 2002:245) also refers to similar "streams of thinking" in Indian foreign policy - Nehruvianism, neoliberalism and hyper-realism – "focusing in particular on the elements of grand strategy in each". Rahul Sagar (2009:801) also lists four competing visions that influence Indian thinking of its place in the international system (and its relations regionally and globally) "*Moralists* wish for India to serve as an exemplar of principled action; *Hindu nationalists* want Indians to act as muscular defenders of Hindu civilization; *strategists* advocate cultivating state power by developing strategic capabilities; and *liberals* seek prosperity and peace through increasing trade and interdependence". Such schools are not limited to foreign policy; even the Indian naval doctrine is influenced by various traditions. Iskander Rehman (in Pant ed. 2016:56), discusses four of those traditions or schools of thought – the Indian Continentalist School, the Raj Pan-Oceanic School, the Soviet school and the Monrovian School – and examines possibilities of the domination of a particular school, impacting "Indian Navy's deployment patterns, force structure, and planned future acquisitions".

Indian strategic thought is syncretic and resultantly, its China policy and discourse is also highly varied and segmented. The various schools or streams of thought on China point to a dynamic

China debate existing within the strategic circles, proving Tanham's criticism one-sided. The shortcoming, however, is the lack of (publicly-available) evidence of the evolution of strategic thought on major security issues[58]. Evidence of the evolution of thought behind India's policy choices on China could have better illustrated the presence of Indian strategic thought and planning. This thesis is not aimed at understanding why there is a lack of official assessment from the Indian government on the three Chinese military actions. It does not delve into the reasons behind, or the evolution of such a policy choice. It instead examines the discursive constructions of the China threat by the Indian strategic elite.

Another shortcoming within the literature criticising India's lack of a coherent foreign policy, is the tendency to treat India as a unitary actor and anticipate a unified foreign policy stance on matters relating to China. Expecting a unified response from the Indian government on these Chinese actions would be simplistic, as this thesis illustrates. Strategic thought within a vibrant democracy like India would rarely be unidimensional in nature or see a consolidation or reconciliation of interests and agendas. It seems a logical reasoning that the Indian strategic community would variously interpret the three Chinese actions used in this study. There is a failure to analyse the creation of China policy and response with consideration to variables like the plurality of constituents involved in the foreign policymaking process, India's own contested identity/ self-image, its unique culture and historical experiences and core foreign policy aim of achieving great power status on the global stage. This chapter (and thesis) overcomes the narrow focus of the existing literature.

Conclusion

This chapter provided the background and context for the research problem and situates the concepts of 'national interest' and 'national identity'. It starts by examining Chinese military actions and how they further its strategic goal of national security. China's conflicting identity as a peaceful riser versus a revisionist threat led to an examination of the core concepts underlying national identities. Contested Chinese and Indian conceptions of national identity were examined and powerful ideational elements (for example, history and colonial experiences, culture, national memory, normative predispositions) were highlighted. India's great power ambitions and its reticence in claiming such an identity further illustrated conflicting identity principles (great power versus non-aligned power, etc.) This reluctance and

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[58] The evolution of thought on the nuclear debate is well-documented. However, this is not true for all issues, due to the paranoia about the classified nature of issues of strategic import and partly due to the lack of a research-oriented culture of archiving. For example, resources in the online archives of the MEA library are sometimes unavailable and not easy to identify.

diffidence is oft criticised as the India's lack of a strategic culture. The chapter proves the presence of Indian strategic thinking on China. It also supports Hall's argument that the Indian government's foreign policy approach of multi-directional engagement is partly contributing to the criticism on directionless foreign policy, mired in confusion.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Assumptions

India has long achieved its national security and its strategic priorities by leveraging its ideological heft, diplomacy and its soft power, especially in the post-Independence era (Sagar 2012:64-71 in Venkatshamy and George (ed.)). The nature of its national security priorities and the processes and tools India employs to achieve them, have its bearings in these ideological or ideational elements underpinning its concept of national identity. Some powerful ideational elements are India's self-image, national interests (for example, the national interest in seeking prestige and the national interest of economic development), India's unique history and colonial experiences, normative predispositions, India's unique interpretations of external threats i.e. the Sino-Pakistan nexus, etc. India's values of secularism, democracy, pluralism and peaceful coexistence are also influential.

A large part of the work on India-China relations rests within a Hobbesian sphere where rational/ realistic principles are preponderant - arms races, security dilemmas and the material reality of burgeoning armed forces, territorial claims, disputed borders, etc. Therefore, much of the literature on the Sino-Indian security dimension uses a Realist theoretical framework to explain the driving forces. Threats, however, are not a 'given', and do not simply exist externally in the material reality of arms races, nuclear instability or trade wars. Threats and security, like subjects and objects, are socially constructed, and situated within the discourse of national identity, national interests and national security (Wendt 1992: 396, Doty 1993:298).

This chapter outlines the theoretical assumptions underpinning this thesis. This thesis is situated within the fields of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) and Discourse Analysis theory, specifically Constructivist approaches within FPA and Discourse theory. This thesis specifically draws from Conventional constructivism as it examines the discursive interpretations of China's military actions by the Indian strategic community, and their 'construction' of the China threat identity. A key argument of the thesis is that the China threat (identity) constructions and response recommendations by the Indian strategic community enables discursive space for the pursuit of India's preferred foreign policy approaches. Constructivism, by revealing identity constructions and offering an account of how those identities imply certain actions, best suits the aims of this thesis (Critical constructivism is, therefore, not a suitable approach. More on this later). The chapter examines theoretical assumptions on the constitutive powers of language, and the concept of state identity as a social and discursive construction. The chapter

argues that constructivist approaches in Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) and Discourse theory are best suited for this study.

This thesis examines how the Chinese military actions are interpreted by India's strategic community. It looks within the state. This thesis therefore, cannot be situated within Strategic Studies' cultural approaches (see Snyder 1977, Katzenstein 1996, Johnston 1995 and Johnston 1995a for linkages between state identity and behaviour) with its ideological closeness to Structural or neo-realists, who focus on the structural level. Strategic Culture Studies does discuss the importance of culture, values, and norms for strategic decisions especially war and military strategy, but it still gravitates at the systemic level. The focus on the domestic level is a superficial one. Strategic Culture Studies criticise the neo-realist portrayal of states as similar black boxes engaged in power and interest maximisation, whose interests are exogenously derived. Not arriving at a "common methodological approach" (Greathouse 2010:58) to the application of the concept of culture is an area where Strategic Culture Studies failed.

FPA focuses on the influence of identity and cultural norms in foreign policymaking. Most importantly, it problematizes the domestic level and even progresses to the level of agency in foreign policymaking (Doty 1993, Hopf 2002, Weldes 1996). Discourse theories, on the other hand, explain the centrality of narratives to identity construction and threat or security representations. Discourse theorists portray discourses as 'regimes of truth' that sustain particular power relations. They study how linkages in identity narratives can be reconstituted and rearticulated[59]. From these emanate the core assumptions on which this thesis is based – i.e. a state's interpretation of threat and construction of identity is a social and discursive process, produced as a result of intersubjective interpretation or intersubjective construction of meaning[60]. It examines the use of language or shared symbols in the process of attribution of meaning (to events or situations) (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 33-42). This use of language or the discursive practice is "a social practice that shapes the social world" (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002: 18). Fairclough and Wodak (in Van Dijk 1997: 258) term language (and discourse) as "socially constitutive as well as socially shaped". Weldes (1999: 7, 278) explains the "centrality of the processes of interpretation" best, when she explains, "Determining what the

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[59] According to discourse theories, chains of connotations among different linguistic elements of identity can be broken and constituent parts reconstituted or represented in other ways (See Laclau 1994 and 1993 for chains of equivalence in discourse).

[60] Constructivism does not "take identities and interests for granted, and understanding the processes by which they originate and change has been a big part of the constructivist research program" (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001:394). Realists take state identity and interest as given, in the vein of the Wendtian anthropomorphic state with a single interest (Wendt 1992:397).

particular situation confronting a state is; what, if any, threat a state faces; and what the correct national interest with respect to that situation or threat is always requires interpretation. Rather than being self-evident, threats … are fundamentally matters of interpretation". "…who and what we are, who and what our enemies are, in what ways we are threatened by them, how we might best deal with those threats" is an exercise in interpretation and representation (Weldes 1996:283).

This thesis demonstrates that the Indian strategic community intersubjectively interprets the China threat (accentuated by these three Chinese military actions) and constructs the China identity using particular discursive strategies. Such a discursive construction of the China threat and attribution of a particular identity/ identities to China determine the choice of responses or the delineation of China policy by the Indian government. International Relations (IR) theory would interpret such force structure enhancements and military build-up as efforts by states to maximise national security, within an anarchic system. Common sense delineates that India's interpretations of these Chinese actions and its foreign policy behaviour/ responses would be best understood by examining it through the lens of its security imperatives. China's military actions would be expected to be perceived as threats to India's national security, and an aggressive and hostile intent immediately attributed to them.

This thesis demonstrates that the Indian strategic elites' discursive interpretations, though security-driven, illustrates the working of non-security imperatives like ideational elements. But before that, one needs to examine the use of language to construct 'meaning' and particular narratives, to construct identities (like the China threat identity and consequently create a binary opposite of a particular Indian identity). Definition of the 'Other' (as a threat of the way of life or security of the 'Self') is linked to the definition of 'Self' (identity of 'Self'). Language, thus, not only reflects "our world, identities and social relations but, rather, plays an active role in creating and changing them" (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:1). Language thus constitutes the social world. Objects and events do not carry an objective, ontological meaning; their meaning is created through intersubjective interpretation using linguistic resources available linguistically, culturally, and historically. "… meanings do not just exist …" (Louw 2001:1, 3). Events or the situations, within which states find themselves, are interpreted (or given meaning)

as conducive or threatening[61] (This position is shared by both Foreign Policy Analysis and Social Constructivist Discourse theories, the two fields within which this project is situated).

Discourses are thus imbued with power to create particular social realities. Discursive constructions of identity affect state interests, behaviours and preferences. Particular courses of actions dominate and become meaningful to the strategic community, which influence particular state preferences. Discourses are sites of struggle and negotiation and discursive construction of meaning is a process that is power-imbued (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:9, Louw 2001: 5-35).

The social construction of identity

Actions of actors cannot be understood in isolation. They can be understood only by examining how they are interpreted by other actors. Such interpretation of actions uses the lens of identity. The actions of actors make sense only when constructions of identity of Self and Other[62] are analysed. Identity is socially constructed, via the telling of stories about oneself and Others (Holstein and Gubrium 2000). Stories about 'Self'[63] and 'Other' exist within a complex system of interpretations and narratives (like historical and cultural narratives), all of which are evolving, and many of which are at conflict with each other. The previous chapter explained how the Indian and Chinese national identities are underpinned by historical and cultural narratives and influenced by powerful ideational elements emerging from shared experiences and memories. "Identities are forged out of shared experiences, memories and myths, in relation to those of other collective identities. They are in fact often forged through the opposition to the identities of significant others, as the history of paired conflict so often demonstrates" (Smith 1992: 75). Identity constructions (which provide the basis for social action) involve a process of story-telling, interpretation and representation. They use a shared language for this story-telling and representation. Such stories or representations of identity are conceptualised through binary opposition, or at the least, through 'differentiation'. This

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[61] When discussing 'meanings' that States attribute to particular events, or actions (even actors and objects), these are again not meanings existing objectively and held by an anthropomorphised state. These meanings are shared by individual actors (Statesmen's role on behalf of state in Morgenthau 1978:108) who are influenced by extant shared meanings. These individual actors influence the constitution of that meaning (Weldes 1996:280). These meanings then aid identity construction and the definition of national interest.

[62] First proposed by Hegel in 'Phenomenology of Spirit' (1977). Other important work in Erving Goffman's 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life' (1956). For Identity and Critical Discourse Analysis, see Wodak et al. 2009; Wodak and Meyer 2009, Van Dijk 2003.

[63] Sociology has various theories/ concepts of the Self, for example, Cooley's Looking Glass Self, Mead's Interacting Self, Goffman's Socially Situated Self, William James' Empirical Self and so on (see Gecas 1982: 5-17).

holds good for constructions of national or State identity too. Stories on the Self and the Other are constructed.

A powerful means to reinforce the self-story or self-identity is to construct the 'Other' as a binary opposite. Jackson (2005: 38-39, 48-49) explains the construction of the binary opposites of the 'Evil terrorist' and the 'innocent American hero', 'civilized and savage' and 'citizen and foreigner', depersonalising and dehumanising the 'Other'. Doty (1993: 310-315) best illustrates this process of 'Othering' in the construction of the Filipino identity as 'Othered' from the American. According to Doty, the process of 'Othering' uses discursive practices like predication, interpellation, subject-positioning, presupposition and so on. Self-identity can be understood as being conceptualised by the difference from the 'Other', defined by its distance from the Other [In Saussure's metaphor of a fishing net, "…meaning of individual signs is determined by their relation to other signs: a sign gains its specific value from being different from other signs" – the word or sign gets its meaning "precisely from everything that it is not …" (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002: 10-11)]. Hopf (2002: 159) discusses the identity of the New Soviet Russian understood through the delineation of its Historical Other, the Soviet Union. The "1999 Russian reality" was thus dichotomised into struggles between these two identities.

The attribution of particular qualities or characteristics to the 'Other' – be it an individual or group – is at the same time an act to bestow oneself (or the in-group, that is, the group the actor identifies with) with a different (not always opposite) identity. In the excerpt from British travel writer John Foreman (Doty 1993: 307), the Filipino people are portrayed, collectively, in a particular manner. "The reader, author, and European as speaking, writing, and knowledgeable subjects are "self" to the Filipino "other" who is the object of their knowledge. The European is established as a subject who can "know" the Filipino, is able to accurately describe the true nature of the Filipino, and from that nature derive various practices that are appropriate". Jackson (2005:154) refers to the construction by President Bush of the 'Axis of Evil' group identity after the 9/11 attacks. This automatically created a binary opposite American group identity of 'God's Chosen Nation' or 'Manifest Destiny' (for research on the effect of group membership on behaviour and how the salience of group affects group behaviour, see Charness, Rigotti, and Rustichini 2007).

This thesis shows that Chinese identity is at times constructed as the 'enemy Other' and the Indian identity as the binary opposite. The case study on the Chinese carrier programme demonstrates that although the Chinese carrier threat in the Indian Ocean is played up using

temporality and is constructed as an accepted and naturalised truth (reality), this threat is simultaneously also played down using counter-narratives questioning Chinese carrier capabilities. The binary opposite (an Indian identity with advanced carrier capabilities and operational experience since 1961) is constructed automatically via the discussion of specific Chinese shortcomings. A Pakistan enemy identity (involved in collusion) is linked to the Chinese 'Other' identity. Boundary markers of identity are used to 'construct' the enemy Other. This polarising of identities into 'us' versus 'them' bifurcates the options (responses) available too. The case study on China's declaration of its Air Defence Zone (ADIZ) illustrates that this construction of a Chinese 'Other' identity (enemy image) serves to simultaneously facilitate a binary opposite - an Indian identity of an adherent of international norms and the rules-based order, which respects the sovereignty of other states and pursues non-interventionist security strategies. Pakistan is constructed as a nuclear proliferator and China as not trustworthy in assurances. Particular identity markers and qualifiers are used to justify Indian government's bold responses to Chinese actions. Discourse's effects on a State's responses and actions is best illustrated in the previous example from Jackson (2005), where actions like the masking of captured 'terrorists' can be understood only by understanding discursive constructions of identity like the 'Evil terrorist' and 'faceless terrorist'. To understand state behaviour and its foreign policy actions, it is therefore, necessary to understand constructions of identity, attributions of meaning and the action emerging from its interaction with other states (Browning 2008:45).

These constructions, of the Other identity as different or opposed to the Self, are often linked to or situated within past experiences or events that the group experienced, and particular narratives or renderings of those events. "… the creation of meaningful personal or collective reality involves the intersubjective deployment of symbol structures through which happenings are organized into events and experiences" (Brown 1990: 191). American identity is constructed by reiterating the story of common experiences (like Pearl Harbour, the 9/11 attacks) – shared past, present, and future (Jackson 2005). Chinese identity is constructed through national narratives on the Century of Humiliation (western Imperialism). Chinese identity is also constructed as 'un-Japanese' through historical incidents like the Rape of Nanking, the Opium Wars and the Boxer Rebellion, as discussed in Chapter One. This thesis illustrates that the Indian strategic elite's discourse constructs the China identity by drawing from or linking it to historical events like the 1962 Sino-Indian War, Sino-Pak collusion and China's nuclear technology transfers to Pakistan, India's Cold War experiences and its perceptions of US' actions in the 1971 Indo-Pak war (War for East Pakistan), China's 1964 nuclear tests, India's nuclear journey as a

result of the discriminatory Western-created nuclear order, etc. History and unique experiences are ideational factors that underpin and influence the national identity concept (Tanham 1992, Ogden 2017:2-9). Othering of identity thus takes place through reiterating the story of common experiences. It is also constructed through a hierarchical, oppositional representation (Weldes 1996: 284; Doty 1993: 310-315; also see Derrida's (1978) Western conceptions of oppositions).

The process of creating a group identity (Self and Other) thus involves a process of discursive struggle. Discursive construction of meaning and identity is a process that is power-imbued, that is, discourses are sites of struggle and negotiation, between different knowledge claims and power relations (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:9, Louw 2001: 5-35). Discourse is "socially influential", helping to "sustain and reproduce the social status quo" and also "transforms it" (Fairclough and Wodak in Van Dijk 1997: 258). Fairclough (1989: 43; italics original) discusses "power *in* discourse and power *behind* discourse". Foucault (1980:119) described 'truth as a discursive construction' – discourse constructing the social world, as well as constructing social institutions and social practices. Actors/ agents create knowledge (terms and forms as social artefacts) during the process of social interaction and interpretation. These constructed truths vie for acceptance as the common truth (Burr 1995:2-5, Gergen 1985 cited in Potter 1996:3). This is also explained by Laclau and Mouffe as the discursive struggle for hegemony (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002: 6-7). This thesis has used a variety of discourse sources to overcome a predominance or hegemony of one type of discourse. Discourse from Armed Forces, Think Tanks, and news sources have been used.

There is not just one accepted common truth, but various constructed truths co-exist. Meaning creation (and identity construction) is a continuous and contested process (Philogene 2000: 394, Crossley 1996:101-107, 117). Actors play a critical role in the creation of these truths. Actors (President Bush in the previous example) use linguistic resources to construct a representation of the international system, the State's particular identity within that system and also the identities of significant Others – usually other States, but can also be officials/people of other states (like Saddam Hussein), non-state actors or transnational actors (Weldes 1996:281-82; Jackson 2005:16, 22). They construct the "who and what we are, who and what our enemies are, in what ways we are threatened by them, how we might best deal with those threats[64]" (Weldes 1996:283). Some identity constructions gain predominance over

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[64] Weldes explains how 'orthodox post-war US representation' gave the United States an identity of global leadership, with the burden 'thrust upon it' to be the guardian of democracy and freedom in the Western Hemisphere. Simultaneously the enemy, Soviet Union is represented as "aggressive, totalitarian and duplicitous" while Cuba was portrayed as a "puppet of the Kremlin". Weldes explains how particular linguistic representations such as "quasi-causal arguments" (the Munich analogy and the Domino theory), analogies (of Pearl harbour),

other interpretations. It is the linguistic practices of particular historical and social contexts which serve to create particular articulations of identities or chains of connotation to crystallise these identities (Jackson and Sorensen 2006:162-165). Wendt defines[65] identity as being in flux and changeable. Through a process of repeated, sometimes vigorous reproduction, one representation may gain currency or persuasiveness over the other. Only after an identity or a particular representation gains predominance, are interests then defined. "It is only once we know who we are that we know what we want" (Ringmar cited in Browning 2008:23).

In this thesis, identity constructions attributed to China are varied, sometimes contradictory. The Chinese carrier actions are constructed as threatening and increasingly aggressive, while simultaneously being rationalised as being in the interest of national security. In the case study on Chinese hypersonic glide vehicle tests, China is constructed as a very dangerous adversary, a manipulative actor, a shrewd, bargaining actor. An identity of China as a rational actor, focused on its national security and sovereignty, is simultaneously created too. In the Air Defence Zone (ADIZ) case study, China's declaration is constructed as increasingly aggressive, altering the regional status quo and challenging accepted norms. Yet China's use of the international practice of ADIZ declaration is at the same time commended. There is a juxtaposition of an aggressive Chinese identity with a norm-adherent's identity. All these identities co-exist in the same discursive space, in various degrees of dominance or non-dominance. Also as described in the previous chapter, India's concept of national identity is contested and its underlying basis is determined by India's unique history, culture, core values and beliefs, unique experiences, even geographical attributes. The changing interpretations of state priorities and national interests post-Independence, has seen fluctuating discursive validations of identity concepts based on territoriality, religion, culture and shared history, pluralism and diversity, which is now evolving into the narrative of a shared future of economic and inclusive development, aligned to India's identity of a rising or leading power.

This is where Wendtian Constructivism lacks, in its analysis of the State's 'intersubjectively constituted structure of identities and interests' (plurality). One area where Wendt (1992:397; also see footnote 21 on p.397) fails is his anthropomorphised reconceptualization of state

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metaphors (of dominoes), adjectives (totalitarian, aggressive), and nouns (terrorists and puppets) were used to create identities and interests (Weldes 1996:281-82;284)

[65] However, Wendt's (1996:50) corporate identity ("intrinsic qualities that constitute actor individuality", with "roots in domestic politics", is bracketed and ambiguously defined (see Zehfuss 2001:332; 2002:44). Wendt is "ambivalent" in "apologizing for bracketing what he concedes to be a crucial part of any constructivist theory of IR … to dismissing the domestic as reductionist foreign policy description" (Hopf 2000:372)

identities[66] and interests – where a state has a single identity (as domestic politics is bracketed) and single interest, which led to much criticism (see Zehfuss 2002: 44-46; Neumann 2004: 259-60, 264-67). Others like Doty (1996: 9) discuss the unity in 'first world' and 'third world' identities, attributing it to the "space or field of their emergence that discourses create". Discursive spaces facilitate unified/ single identity constructions, but representational practices reconstitute such unified identities.

Language, meaning and power of discourse

The power of discourse is thus summarised as "Language, then, is not merely a channel through which information about underlying mental states and behaviour or facts about the world are communicated. On the contrary, language is a 'machine' that generates, and as a result constitutes, the social world. This also extends to the constitution of social identities and social relations" (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:9). Discourse constructions directly influence identity constructions, and consequently influence social actions resulting from those particular identity constructions[67]. Jackson (2005: 21, also see 2004:20) provides a noteworthy illustration of the power of discourse in the constitution of social reality, as mentioned earlier; discourse as "… a form of social practice which both makes or constitutes the social world, and is at the same time constituted by other social practices". As noted earlier, he highlights how particular discursive usages like the 'faceless terrorist' and constructions of a 'supreme terrorist threat' resulted in practices like masking terrorists, shackling to gurneys and waterboarding in Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib. Doty (1993: 297, 316-317) provides the example of the United States' interventionist policy in the Philippines. She discusses "how a foreign policy discourse created spaces for certain kinds of subjects... which, in turn, made certain practices possible and precluded others" (more on this later). This thesis demonstrates that the Indian strategic elite's discursive interpretations and recommendations support and facilitate the Indian government's policy choices – for example, deliberate strategic ambiguity (especially in nuclear policy) and

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[66] Identity is created and reproduced through our interaction with the group, that is, with others. It is co-constituted. This is the same in the case of 'state actors' (Wendt anthropomorphises the state) within the world system, which Wendt describes as an on-going process of creating identities (and therefore interests) in relation to Others, creating counter-identities and "playing out the result" (Wendt 1999:327-334). Wendt also uses Mead's symbolic interactionism to distinguish between a state's social and corporate identities (1994:385). Wendt's conceptualisation of identity has been criticised as being a description of state behaviour, and identity transformation (and therefore change in interests) cannot be studied as a discursive process. Another criticism is that his description of corporate identity as exogenously derived and 'ontologically prior to the state system' strips off the social component of identity. This description of corporate identity gives it a static or fixed conceptualisation, which Cederman and Daase (in Guzzini and Leander ed. 2006: 117-122) criticise.

[67] "… each different construction also brings with it, or invites, a different kind of action from human beings" (Burr 2003:5), See Burr's fourth assumption ("Knowledge and social action go together").

multialignment (i.e. the discourse creates space to justify the pursuit of multiple policy practices).

Agents or policymakers work towards defining national interests[68] and legitimising state's actions. This thesis works at the state-level to understand the Indian strategic elite's interpretations of Chinese military actions, constructions of the China threat identity and their recommendations for responses. The defining of national interest is an intersubjective process, a process of interpretation to understand the situation (or international context) that the state faces and how they should respond[69]. This process of interpretation or making sense of the situation, is simultaneously also a process of representation or demarcation of the in-group and out-group, using shared language, symbols and already existing shared meanings. Representations and interpretations are not however, written in stone. Whereas some social representations are infused with ideological or hegemonic power (Howarth 2010: 317-320), alternative constructions[70] are created to dislodge popular or dominant narratives. This however, is not a complete re-interpretation or complete replacement of the earlier identity construction. The dominant narrative continues to co-exist. Alexandrov (2003:40) illustrates how the American identity of 'isolationism' before Pearl Harbour has not lost out to the later identity construction of 'internationalism'. Both co-exist, each one having been the non-dominant representation at some point of time. As described in Chapter One, in the delineations of Indian state identity, there are concepts that co-exist in non-dominance – the identity as a rising economic power focused on the liberal global order, while its Nehruvian socialist leanings are visible in its goal of 'inclusive development'. Indian national identity has fluctuated among the concepts of territoriality, religion, culture or shared history, diversity and secularism. The Indian state identity is at the same time constructed to conform to the dominant identity constructions of the extant global order – respecting sovereignty and integrity of other states, resolution of disputes through dialogue, working within multilateral mechanisms at the systemic level, adhering to the non-proliferation regimes, etc. Such fluctuating conceptions have played a role in the evolution of India's strategic priorities and national interests over the years.

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[68] Term 'state interest' is avoided to prevent state anthropomorphisation (Weldes 1996:305).
[69] "This process of interpretation presupposes a language shared, at least, by those state officials involved in determining state action and by the audience for whom state action must be legitimate. This shared language is that of 'the national interest'" (Weldes 1996: 276-77).
[70] 'Alternative constructions' used as term here, not to be confused with Gillespie's (2008:5-6) 'Alternative representations'- "ideas and images the group has about how other groups represent the given object" or "representations of other people's representations".

Discourse theories explain that, for an alternative construction or a counter-narrative, the chains of connotations among different linguistic elements of a particular representation (of an object or event, or an identity) can be broken and the constituent parts reconstituted or rearticulated in other ways (Laclau 1990: 63, 128). The shared nature of language and the intersubjective process of attribution of meaning to events is key here. Meanings (and these attributed identities) are constantly evolving and in a state of flux, influenced by the open nature of systems of language[71] and intersubjectivity. The case study on China's carrier programme (Chapter 4) illustrated that constituent parts of the narrative are reconstituted and rearticulated using indicators like temporality and capability (analysis of force structures) to construct the counter-narrative. Temporality of threat helps construct the accepted truth or reality, stressing the rationality of China in the IOR (Indian Ocean Region). The capability narrative questions it, highlighting China's shortcomings (technological and experiential) and India's long carrier experience. This does not mean that one is replaced by the other. These multiple narratives co-exist within the discourse. Varied discursive constructions open discursive space for varied narratives to co-exist and varied policy recommendations to be pursued. Interpretations of events and subject identities can therefore be rearticulated[72], as these representations of identities and interests are not written in stone but are in flux[73], as explained above. But that also does not mean it is frequently changing[74].

The next section situates the thesis within FPA, relating it to the work of leading Constructivist discourse theorists.

Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) and deciphering identity constructions

This thesis is justifiably situated within the discipline of FPA, as FPA examines a wider range of state behaviours, and decisions that emanate from state preferences and national interests. A state's perceptions and interpretations of an event, situation or object and how it responds,

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[71] This open-ended nature of language systems has, however, been contradicted by Saussure in his comparison of the structure of language to a fishing net where each sign has its fixed position as knots in the net (and interlinkages are fixed too) (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:10-11).

[72] According to discourse analysis, chains of connotations among different linguistic elements of identity can be broken and constituent parts reconstituted or rearticulated in other ways (See Laclau 1994 and 1993 for chains of equivalence in discourse). Linguistic practices of particular historical and social contexts serve to create particular articulations of identities or chains of connotation to crystallise these identities.

[73] Finnemore (1996:11) explains that state preferences are malleable and not wedded to material conditions or inherent within the state.

[74] "Once structures of identity and interests have been created, they are not easy to transform, because the social system becomes an objective social fact to the actors. Actors may have a stake in maintaining stable identities due to external factors such as the incentives induced by established institutions and internal constraints such as commitment to established identities" (Zehfuss 2002:43).

would explain how representations are created and policy actions emanate (first the interpretation, then representations created and later policy made (Weldes 1999:6-7)). For a state to act or respond, political decision makers need to be able to first identify and define what the situation facing them is or the ends and goals to be pursued are. These goals are the state's interests or national interest[75]. Pre-existing state interests together with the dominant interpretations (or shared meaning that predominates) shape state behaviour (Wendt 1992, Jepperson et al 1996).

The process of interpretation is simultaneously a process of representation (Weldes 1996:280). As seen previously, various representations exist within the discursive space in various levels of dominance or non-dominance. Through repeated, sometimes vigorous reproduction, one representation may gain persuasiveness over the other. Representations may even be reconstituted and re-articulated.

Within the study of FPA, state interests and behaviour are interpreted differently by the various schools of thought. Neorealists construct the state as unitary, rational actors, having unified interests. The focus is on structural factors and material determinants of power. According to them[76], states' national interest is 'defined in terms of power' as power ensures security and survival (Morgenthau 1952:964). "… culture and identity are, at best, derivative of the distribution of capabilities and have no independent explanatory power" (Katzenstein 1996: 9) Maximising material power to achieve state interests within an anarchic system is key, and states are all necessarily alike, differentiated only by the capabilities they have amassed. Threats (to the attainment of these state interests or preferences) are described as an external reality, existing as an independent entity out there. But this interpretation of threat ignores the "centrality of the processes of interpretation" by the actor or state (Weldes 1996: 278). Neorealism therefore, does not consider it important to study the influence of state identity and threat interpretation on state behaviour and policymaking. Traditional Realism did consider human nature (rational self-interest) and role of individual leaders in the delineation of national interests and identity, but Neorealists in their rush to distance themselves from Realists, fixated

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[75] The goals have to be legitimised or widely accepted before they become national interest. As these goals are legitimised, state action resulting from these goals are also legitimised. States use power to legitimise their goals and actions.

[76] Realists 'deduce' or infer that national interests would be survival, self-preservation and security, as the international system is anarchic, defined by perpetual competition and an inevitable security dilemma. Realists like Waltz et al (1979:71) remained focused on systemic influence upon the definition of national interest. He advocated against a focus on individual state responses to the systemic influence; or even individual decision makers' influence on the definition of national interests.

on the state as a unitary actor, with unified interests and ignored the construction of state identities and ideational elements that contributed to state interests (Katzenstein 1996).

Neoliberals focused on the "cultural-institutional context of state action" – regimes (norms, rules, principles) and economics as the determining factor. Cooperation and interdependence as predominant state behaviours are facilitated by economics, the liberal democratic world order, international law and systemic frameworks (the Kantian tripod). State identities are again taken as given, state interests are assumed, and state behaviour is rationalised as pursuit of those interests. National security thus, is often explained as defending those predetermined interests. States adhere and adapt to these normative standards of behaviour, and are thus claimed to "constitute the very actors whose conduct they seek to regulate" (Katzenstein 1996: 22). Neorealists and Neoliberals are criticized for their overtly structural focus (systemic influences that constrain state behaviour) and their minimalist yet overarching explanatory variable of rationality, which factors out the influence of interests and identity in determining state behaviour (Katzenstein 1996: 16-17).

Constructivists define state behaviour or actions being influenced by its unique interpretations and representations of the events and situations it faces. Threats to state interests are not external, clearly defined entities that can be subjected to empirical examination. They are a matter of interpretation; of meanings intersubjectively created and attributed to objects or events (Wendt 1992: 396-97). "Material structures … are given meaning only by the social context through which they are interpreted" (Checkel 1998:325-327). As Jackson (2010:36) puts it, it is impossible to conceptualise a material world existing separately from 'the activities of making sense of the world'[77]. Hansen (2006:22) explains that "neither ideas nor materiality have a meaningful presence separate from each other". Reality is therefore, socially and intersubjectively constructed through interpretation and actions (which are in turn influenced by thoughts and ideas). Ideas and the material world are inseparable, just as the agent (for example, the policymakers using language to represent threats, thus creating particular interpretations; or even the researcher's role in interpretation[78]) is inseparable from the material world, which is being constituted and created, in part, through the actions of the agent.

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[77] This is echoed in Wendt's oft-quoted phrase "Anarchy is what states make of it", where the agents (states at the systemic level) can co-create their own interpretation of anarchy - they "create and instantiate one structure of identities and interests rather than another; structure has no existence or causal powers apart from process" (Wendt 1992: 394).

[78] One must be cognizant of the role played by the researcher and how his/ her assumptions and interpretations of the problem and the methods adopted, influence the results obtained.

Foreign Policy Analysis itself has an "emphasis on agents, subjectivity, and the construction of meaning" (Houghton 2007:27). Its agent-oriented approach focuses on the social processes and on 'How' questions (Doty 1993:298) and therefore, is a more suitable framework for this study[79]. This thesis engages with the domestic level, in the examination of how the Indian strategic community constructs the China threat identity and recommends responses. The thesis, however, acknowledges that the discourses debated at the national level (in media, in discourse emanating from the government or from Think Tanks) are an effect or outcome of agent/individual construction[80].

FPA's Constructivist scholars focus on the processes by which identity construction affects state interests and state behaviour (Hopf 1998; see Houghton 2007 for a discussion on FPA and Constructivism). "…national identities of states are crucial for understanding politics and that they cannot be stipulated deductively. They must be investigated empirically in concrete historical settings" (Katzenstein 1996: 25). State identity is shaped by interactions with varied domestic and international environments. Identity (both self-identity and the identity attributed to the threatening State, event or situation) is socially constructed through the interaction of states and agents, and especially through a process of learning from experiences[81]. National identity is underpinned by these experiences and ideational elements like national history and memory, normative predispositions, self-image and perceptions, culture, values, etc.

Houghton (2007:43) lists "the specific benefits … of an increased dialogue between constructivism and cognitive FPA" (or the constructivist scholars within FPA, who deal with the study of ideas and ideational elements) – one buttresses where the other is weak[82]. He explains

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[79] This thesis examines the discursive process involved in creating a particular China threat identity and Indian national identity. This rendition of identities influence the foreign policy behaviours of the Indian state (this study, however, does not establish any causal links).

[80] This project does not examine the social processes that lead to the creation of the discourse or new interests (for example, like Checkel's study of bottom-up and top-down diffusion of norms and agent internalisation through a process of complex learning as advocated in cognitive and social psychology). It examines the discursive process alone and themes within the discourse. It also uses multiple agent positioning - within Think Tanks, military, scientific institutions, academia, media - to compare agent discourse creation, for example, How do agents in Think Tanks represent Chinese actions? How do the Armed Forces or media sources represent it?

[81] In the interaction, states "… not only accumulate experience but also learn from it; and that such learning can bring about new ways of doing things, whether at the level of the international system as a whole, aggregations of states within that system, individual states themselves, or groups and individuals within the state (Gaddis 1992:16)".

[82] "CFPA is often perceived as having no theory of structure and constructivism no theory of agency" (Houghton 2007:41)

the advantage of the "marriage" between individual and social construction – "each benefits from restoring the missing piece of the puzzle each leaves out; neither is complete without the other, and neither can fully claim to represent the process of making foreign policy in isolation[83]" (ibid.).

For FPA studies situated within the Constructivist camp, the individual and domestic levels are both critical to the understanding of policy choices, as are the agent and structural levels. "Constructivists emphasize a process of interaction between agents and structures; the ontology is one of mutual constitution[84], where neither unit of analysis - agents or structures - is reduced to the other and made "ontologically primitive" (see also Ruggie 1998:33). Social norms from the societal or domestic level is strongly intertwined with the individual-level influencers. In delineating state and individual level influences[85] on foreign policy making, Houghton (2007:42) explains that the "choice of one or the other depends on the thing we are trying to explain". He uses the Cuban missile crisis to explain that "*Social norms* are at their strongest in accounting for policy positions that are simply taken for granted across the board, while *individual beliefs* clearly allow us to differentiate further as we trace the details of the decision-making process" (2007:42, italics added). As Houghton (2007:34) underlines, "actors do not operate in a vacuum" and social norms, values and a nation's perception of Self and Others are key elements to gain a better understanding of state choices or responses. Agents or actors carry within them a concept of these social norms and the Self-Other dichotomy (individuals as culture bearers, see Houghton 2007:32). Sanjoy Banerjee (1991) explains the role of actors as "carriers and coauthors of cultures and discourse", in his study on the Cold War. "A group of state leaders who share a culture will respond to events deemed by that culture to implicate their state with common perceptions, causal attributions, emotions, and motives" (Banerjee 1991:20; also see Allison and Zelikow (1999) on the influence of individual actors in determining foreign policy). This thesis demonstrates the influence of powerful ideational elements underpinning identity constructions, by actors within the Indian strategic community,

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[83] He uses the example of the Cuban missile crisis -"If we are interested in why Kennedy and his advisers gave little or no consideration to the option of doing nothing in response to the discovery of missiles in Cuba, for example, beliefs about Cold War Communism and appropriate presidential behavior in response to security threats shared by practically all Americans (social constructivism's forte) seem so critical that it is difficult to understand how any useful explanation could conceivably leave them out. On the other hand, if we are interested in why Kennedy chose the naval blockade over the "surgical" air strike, society-wide beliefs tell us relatively little and individual constructions a great deal (Houghton 2007:42).

[84] Agents (individuals or states) do not exist separate from their social environment and structures of meaning; the social structure is created and reproduced through the purposive actions of agents.

[85] A large number of studies have dealt with agent influence in decision-making – for example, Jervis (1976) on misperception, Allison and Zelikow (1999) on rational choice, Freedman (2005) on tracked thinking, Axelrod (1976) on cognitive maps to overcome cognitive dissonance, Irving Janis (1972) on groupthink, to mention but a few.

in their interpretations of China's military actions. It is here that one can make the link with FPA's critical strands of continuity and change. The Indian state's self-image has changed over the years and its power ambitions have grown. Its interpretations of the Chinese identity has also evolved (for example, from a copying actor to a 'new' China, as will be explained in the case study on hypersonic tests). However, ideational elements (emanating from its experiences and history) continue to survive and exert influence on actor preferences (strategic community here) and state behaviours.

FPA thus uses a more holistic or comprehensive conception of identity and Constructivism[86] (as compared to the structure-focused Constructivism that Strategic Culture Studies uses). As mentioned previously, this thesis cannot work within the narrow framework of Strategic Culture Studies. With its Wendtian Constructivist focus, Strategic Culture Studies remains tied to the structural level with its study of the *impact* of State identity on behaviour. It does not progress to research the *social processes* that occur behind the scenes, for state identity to influence state behaviour (here, discursive processes that work to construct a particular China identity, which facilitate particular Indian policy responses or choices). Strategic Culture Studies focuses on the outcome while FPA's Constructivist scholars focus on the inherent processes (see Houghton 2007 for a discussion on FPA and Constructivism).

Among FPA scholars who study constitutive processes (especially discursive), "there is no single constructivist account …" (Houghton 2007: 35). The work of Constructivist thinkers like Roxanne Doty, Ted Hopf, and Jutta Weldes is critical in FPA research, illustrating the constitutive power of discourse. These FPA scholars are also the leading Constructivist discourse theorists, the other field in which this thesis is situated. But first a brief explanation of where Conventional and Critical constructivism[87] differ in their conceptions of identity and why a Critical constructivist approach does not fit this study.

Although Conventional constructivism "restores much variety and difference to world affairs and points out the practices by which intersubjective order is maintained" (Hopf 1998:180), it conceives change in world politics as hard to achieve (due to its imaginings of power as a disciplining force that reproduces status quo or systemic structures of anarchy (actors and structures reproduce these constraints) (ibid.) Although it focuses on multiple understandings,

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[86] To be differentiated from Holistic Constructivism. Holistic Constructivism as used by Reus-Smit (2005: 199-201) only focuses on the "domestic and the international as two faces of a single social and political order".
[87] Critical social theorists and those leaning towards Poststructuralism

interpretations, identities and differences, it still remains prescriptive in its "minimal or contingent foundationalism", and exerts, what Critical constructivists call an "illusion of control" in problematizing unobservable variables (like "practices, institutions, norms, and power relations that underlay the production of those identities (which) are somehow fixed or constant").

> "Conventional constructivists wish to discover identities and their associated reproductive social practices, and then offer an account of how those identities imply certain actions. But critical theorists … also wish to surface identities, not to articulate their effects, but to elaborate on how people come to believe in a single version of a naturalized truth… critical theory aims at exploding the myths associated with identity formation, whereas conventional constructivists wish to treat those identities as possible causes of action" (Hopf 1998:183-84).

This thesis is situated within Conventional constructivism as it examines the discursive interpretations of China's military actions by the Indian strategic community, and their construction of the China threat identity. A key argument of the thesis, apart from the argument on the influence of ideational elements, is that the China threat (identity) constructions and response recommendations by the Indian strategic community enables discursive space for the pursuit of India's preferred foreign policy approaches of multialignment and strategic ambiguity.

Returning to the discussion on Constructivist discourse theorists, Doty, Hopf, and Weldes analyse the influence of language and discursive constructions in the representation and construction of State or national identity. Their work analysing discursive identity constructions and its influence on foreign policy, is crucial for this thesis. Constructivists accept the power of language in not just depicting the social world, but in constructing and constituting it…"the power of knowledge, ideas, culture, ideology, and language, that is, discourse" (Hopf 1998:177; Browning 2008:42). Identity is constructed through the stories and narratives (using shared language and symbols). Actors act or perform in certain ways to affirm the identity and narrative told. And the narratives simultaneously reaffirm the performance or the actions (Doty 1993:316). Such a narration of actor's (self) identity and resultant actions provides the basis to interpret a state's actions, thus interlinking identity and foreign policy.

Doty (1993:316), as seen previously, interprets discourse as "representational practices" that create a "hierarchy of subjects". She explored "… *how* the subjects, objects, and interpretive dispositions were socially constructed such that certain practices were made possible" (Doty 1993:298, italics original). Using the example of the US' social construction of an identity for Philippines (as inept and wasteful, a problem child, requiring US guidance, etc.) and the Filipino people (as emotional, lacking deep thinking and vulnerable to propaganda, ready for violence and revenge), Doty (1993:307-316) illustrates how such a "linguistic construction of reality" enabled the pursuit of particular kinds of foreign policy practices and precluded others. Doty's study, working within the domestic and individual levels, shows how "discourse created spaces for certain kinds of international subjects to exist in particular relations with one another and thereby to naturalize certain global arrangements. Representational practices that relied upon a series of oppositions and other relations created a hierarchy of identities that in turn made certain practices possible and precluded others" (1996:98).

Weldes' (1996) analysis, on the other hand, is situated in the construction of national interest and national identity, again working from the individual level. Her research, on the Cuban missile crisis, examines constructions of Soviet (for example, the threat of 'Red Fascism') and Cuban identities within the American government's discourse (1996: 296-98).

> "… national interests are social constructions created as meaningful objects out of the intersubjective and culturally established meanings with which the world, particularly the international system and the place of the state in it, is understood. More specifically, national interest emerges out of the representations - or, to use more customary terminology, out of situation descriptions and problem definitions - through which state officials and others make sense of the world around them" (Weldes 1996:280).

Hopf's (2002:3-4) work on identity, analysed from the perspective of FPA and Constructivism, interprets identities as heuristic devices that help order and make sense of the world. Although he analysed identities at the domestic level in 1955 Soviet Union and 1999 Russia, he is also cognizant of the role of the individual level in foreign policy making.

> "Society is assumed to consist of a social cognitive structure within which operate many discursive formations. Identities constituted these formations. Individuals have many identities; they participate in a variety of discursive formations; and their daily social practices constitute both themselves and Others, and the identities and discursive

formations that constitute the social cognitive structure in which they live" (Hopf 2002: 3-4).

Influential work combining discourse analysis and Constructivism has been done by Richard Jackson (2005). His study on the Sept 11 attack and the War on Terror examined discursive constructions in US foreign policy discourse and counterterrorism policy that constructed and attributed particular identities. It analyses the language and the institutional practices used in the War on Terror, understanding "how it has been normalised and embedded in American popular culture and linked by the national identity narratives surrounding '9/11' and the negative ideograph of 'terrorism', to American identity" (Jackson 2011:390)

The works of these constructivist discourse theorists are significant in the context of this thesis, as their research examined the discursive construction of state identity (Self and Other) and state interests. FPA's treatment of state identity and interests as critical factors within foreign policy decision-making, supports the aim of this thesis. This thesis examines the Indian strategic community's interpretations of the three Chinese military actions. The Chinese identity constructed in the context of these actions is analysed. This thesis leans on the Constructivist assumption that actions of actors cannot be understood in isolation and identity conceptualizations form the basis of a state's actions and interests. A State's interpretation of threats and identity (and associated reproductive social practices) are an exercise in intersubjectivity. Meaning creation is seen as fundamentally discursive. Identity and discourse are seen as heuristic devices that facilitate the 'making sense of the world'. Through the telling of stories (of Self and Other), agents make sense of the world or attribute meaning to the situation facing them, and generate a collective identity. This thesis analyses the meaning attributed to Chinese military actions, and the discursive strategies used to construct the China threat identity. It also examines the reiteration of the Indian identity, created as a binary opposite of the Chinese identity. The focus here is on analysing the strategic community's discursive interpretations of the Chinese military actions (commonly considered a threat to India's national security).

The thesis treats national security or the preference for security (and consequently, the preservation of territorial integrity, sovereignty and achievement of economic goals) as inherent in all states and a goal pursued by all states. It takes the interest of national security as a given, and does not problematize it. It assumes that the state knows what it wants, i.e. the achievement of its national security and elimination of threats (in the case of this study). It is

necessary to keep in mind, as Finnemore (1996: 11) warns that "States may not always know what they want … and state preferences are malleable". The thesis also supports the assumption that state preferences or the national interest in achieving security emanates from within the state "as a result of material conditions and functional needs" (ibid.). It however, does not support the idea that the national interest of security emanates solely from within the state; accepting "international systemic or international societal influences" (Finnemore 1996:7). National interests are informed by the domestic context and external or systemic conditions. They are also shaped by the reservoir of history, perceptions, culture, values and beliefs, geographical attributes, national memory – powerful determinants that guide a country's behaviour within the international system. The limitation of the approach is that the emphasis on such ideational factors in the construction of identity, and the attempt to make sense of the Indian strategic elite's discursive interpretations using the Constructivist lens could provide an explanation of India's foreign policy choices or responses that leans heavily on the state and individual level analysis. State identity analysis, however, requires the domestic political level for interpretation, the bone of contention that invited Zehfuss' (2002: 44-46) criticism of Wendt's bracketing of domestic politics.

Conclusion

This chapter has situated the thesis within the field of Foreign Policy Analysis and Social Constructivist Discourse theories. It examined the state's interpretation of threat and construction of identity as a social process, produced as a result of intersubjective interpretation or intersubjective construction of meaning. It discussed the reinforcement of the self-identity through construction of the 'Other' as a binary opposite, and explained how the discursive construction of meaning and identity is a process that is power-imbued. The thesis illustrates the various identities attributed to China as the 'enemy Other', for example, the juxtaposition of an aggressive Chinese identity with a norm-adherent's identity. All these identities co-exist in the same discursive space in various degrees of dominance. It also explains how the Indian strategic elite's discourse constructs the China identity by drawing from or linking it to historical events like the 1962 Sino-Indian War. The chapter then moves to discussing the power of language as a 'machine' that generates and constitutes the social world. Whereas some social representations are infused with ideological or hegemonic power (Howarth 2010: 317-320), alternative constructions are created to dislodge popular or dominant narratives. The case study on China's carriers will explain how constituent parts of the narrative are reconstituted and rearticulated using indicators like temporality and

capability. The chapter lastly, related this study to the research done by FPA theorists Doty, Hopf, and Weldes, who are leading Constructivist discourse theorists too. They analyse the influence of language and discursive constructions in the representation and construction of State or national identity. Their work analysing discursive identity constructions and its influence on foreign policy, is crucial for this thesis. This thesis is thus also firmly situated within the field of Conventional constructivism - as it examines the discursive interpretations of China's military actions by the Indian strategic community, and their construction of the China threat identity. A key argument of the thesis is that the China threat (identity) constructions and response recommendations by the Indian strategic community enables discursive space for the pursuit of India's preferred foreign policy approaches. Constructivism, by revealing identity constructions and their associated reproductive social practices, and offering an account of how those identities imply certain actions, best suits the aims of this thesis.

Chapter Three: Research Design and Method

This chapter presents the research design and methods used for the study. It begins with a discussion on the case study approach and the choice of cases for this study. Next it reviews the discourse sources used for the study and the application of critical discourse analysis (CDA as a tool and why it is effective for this study). The chapter then explains the use of semi-structured qualitative interviews, the employment of interview data and challenges faced while conducting interviews. The chapter closes with a consideration of the limitations of the chosen research design and methods.

This thesis aims to understand how India's strategic community interprets the three Chinese military actions. Indian strategic community's discourse on the three Chinese military actions were examined to understand how they were interpreting these actions [i.e. the Chinese aircraft carrier programme, the seven tests of the hypersonic missile delivery or glide vehicle (HGV) and the unilateral declaration of the Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) over parts of the East China Sea]. The focus here is on how the three Chinese actions are represented and constructed within the discourse written by India's strategic elite.

The central research question for this study is 'How are the three Chinese military actions being interpreted by the Indian strategic community?'

The research sub-questions are

1) What is the 'China identity' being represented in the Indian discourse?
2) What is the 'Indian identity' being constructed in the Indian discourse?
3) How are these identities constructed discursively?

A case study-based research design was most suitable, as Indian discourse on each of the three Chinese military actions could be isolated and examined to analyse both, the discursive constructions and recommendations to the Indian government for responses. Each of these case studies is a different type of Chinese action, in a different domain [carriers for naval power, HGV as weapons with nuclear implications even in Space (see Pillai Rajagopalan 2013), an ADIZ enveloping land and sea outside territorial spaces], although all are aimed at force enhancement. The case studies are also three different types of military action – 'development' and 'launch' of China's carrier programme, 'testing' of China's hypersonic vehicle, and 'declaration' of China's air defence zone. The first few of these Chinese military actions occurred

in close temporal proximity to each other (end of 2013) and were termed by the Indian strategic community as typical examples of China's increasing aggression and expanding ambitions. These cases were, therefore, the most effective for examining Indian interpretations. They also provided the best illustrations of Chinese identity constructions within Indian strategic discourse (see Friedrich and Kratochwil 2009:718 on pragmatic case sampling). A commonly-expected Indian government assessment or statement was missing in all these three instances[88] (i.e. unavailable in the open-access domain). These case studies aided a deeper level of analysis. According to Sartori (1991:253), "case studies sacrifice generality to depth[89] and thickness of understanding, indeed to *Verstehen*: one knows more and better about less".

The use of the case study method is, however, not without limitations. Nisbet and Watt (1984) discuss problems like generalizability[90], selection bias of the individual researcher, the challenge of cross-checking information, "... the possibility of selective reporting and the resulting dangers of distortion" (Bell 2005:11). Researcher bias is a problem, despite efforts to ensure researcher reflexivity. The use of the case study method, however, contributes to research validity, by facilitating the identification and measurement of "…indicators that best represent the theoretical concepts the researcher intends to measure" (George and Bennett 2004:19). However, case studies alone may not provide reliable empirical findings that can be generalised (Soy 1997, Hodkinson and Hodkinson 2001: 10). Interviews and discourse analysis were used in this thesis, as other methods to triangulate the findings from the case studies, thus strengthening the validity of the findings.

Time period - November 2013 was chosen as the starting point for this study. There were a spate of Chinese military actions in Nov 2013 that seemed to alter the status quo, as discussed previously. July 2017 was the cut-off date for various reasons – the seventh hypersonic glide vehicle (HGV) test had been conducted on 22 April 2016 and there seemed to be a lull in tests in the year that followed[91], and the Shandong carrier had been launched in April 2017. Most

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[88] When placed within the wider literature on Indian strategic thinking and Sino-Indian relations, this seemed to justify the predominant criticism that the Indian government lacked a coherent China response or unified China policy.

[89] "…case study … provides an opportunity for one aspect of a problem to be studied in some depth" (Bell 2005: 13). Cases are the 'object of study'; "a specific instance that is frequently designed to illustrate a more general principle". "… sometimes it is only by taking a practical instance that we can obtain a full picture of this interaction" (Nisbet and Watt 1984: 72, see also Shen Qi 2009:22-23).

[90] Bassey (1981: 85) stresses on the relatability of a case study, rather than its generalisability. "…an important criterion for judging the merit of a case study is the extent to which the details are sufficient and appropriate... The relatability of a case study is more important than its generalisability".

[91] Although two tests of the version DF-17 took place (1 Nov and 5 Nov 2017). The DF-17 tests were first flight-tests of a ballistic missile with a hypersonic glide vehicle (Panda 2017). China also successfully test fired the Star Air2 Waverider aircraft system on 5 August 2018 (The Times of India Aug 6, 2018).

importantly, the only authoritative open-source Indian study on hypersonic weapons was published in July 2017, by a senior member of the MoD-funded Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA). In the interview conducted with the author, Group Capt. (Retd) Ajey Lele (in March 2016), the then soon-to-be-published study was claimed to be the only available Indian analysis on global hypersonics programmes, especially the Chinese programme. Lele's analysis (published July 2017) could therefore, be considered the only unclassified one from a senior member of the Indian strategic community and a key text for this thesis' case study on hypersonics. July 2017 was therefore chosen as the cut-off date for data collection.

Choices in the sources of Indian discourse

Discourse written by the Indian strategic community [i.e., Armed Forces personnel (currently serving and retired), Think Tank experts who advise or consult with the Government (i.e. mostly retired bureaucrats and diplomats, civilian scientists from ISRO and DRDO[92], China researchers and academics, experts involved in Track II diplomacy with China, etc.), and China correspondents or China bureau chiefs of major Indian newspapers] was examined. Their writings incorporated the predominant themes that the Indian strategic community was analysing in the context of these three Chinese actions. "Within India's democratic set-up, the interaction between the elected leaders and the public is not direct, but occurs through the mediation of a limited number of strategic thinkers and opinion leaders referred to as the strategic elite…More significantly, they indirectly dominate opinion leadership through their extensive media presence and newspaper publishing" (Frey 2006:3). The audience that they write for is an informed public, termed by Malik and Medcalf (2011:13) as "…India's television-propelled middle-class opinion… (who) continue to shape discourse that will harangue governments, demand instant action and escalated rhetoric regardless of the international repercussions".

As explained previously, the term 'strategic community' or 'strategic elite', used in this study, does not include current bureaucratic officials and office-bearers within the Indian government (and the South Block[93] which executes China policy). It was difficult to gain access to them for interviews, or access any reports or policy papers from within the government. Discourse written by some serving Armed Forces officers was included, as were a couple of interviews too. The discursive sources used for this study are, therefore, mostly from elite situated outside the

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[92] The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)
[93] The Ministry of External Affairs, Defence Ministry and the Cabinet of the Indian government

institutional framework of the Indian government. This thesis explores the discursive interpretations (of the Chinese military actions) by the Indian strategic elite. It does not make a simplistic inference that the strategic elite's interpretations are representative of the wider, informed public or the Indian government. Their interpretations may possess some amount of overlap with the normative thinking of the Indian foreign policy machinery (given their past roles within the Indian government or their current advisory roles), but establishing such similarities and predicting future Indian governmental policy choices is not the fundamental aim of this thesis.

Obtaining Indian discourse for the study was not easy. The Indian government's documents on Chinese hypersonic tests or aircraft carrier programme remain classified. According to the Indian Public Record Rules 1997, most classified records are transferred to the National Archives after twenty-five or more years. If deemed necessary, these documents can be retained as classified even after the stipulated 25 years. Broad information and updates (meant for public consumption) on individual components of India's hypersonic programme can sometimes be available on the websites of BrahMos, ISRO and DRDO, but these are sometimes taken down with no explanations offered, the details are masked or webpages redirected to other sources. Other sources for obtaining general information on the Indian government's defence policies or acquisitions is by following the questions asked in Parliament - Lok Sabha (Lower House) and Rajya Sabha (the Upper) - addressed to the Defence or External Affairs ministers, and of course, via the websites of Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), and the Press Information Bureau (PIB).

The main source, for access to the elite's strategic debates, were through published commentaries of Indian Think Tanks and through the major English-language daily newspapers. "Newspaper and magazine commentary is probably the largest single source on Indian thinking. In addition, the strategic community has produced a corpus of scholarly writings on security" (Bajpai in Chambers ed. 2002:246). Only publicly available documents were used for this empirical study (this also ensures external validity or generalisability of the study).

Discourse by the Indian strategic elite
The Indian Armed Forces have long remained outside the realm of strategic decision-making, post-Independence, with the Nehruvian conception of the predominance of the civilian leadership. The Forces role was restricted to internal security and maintaining territorial

sovereignty (Ogden 2017:84; see VP Malik 2011: 3 on the ambiguous role of Indian Service chiefs in defence committees of the Cabinet). However, with the creation of the National Security Council, soon after the nuclear tests of 1998, and the Strategic Policy Group in 1999, the role of the Armed Forces Chiefs within policymaking is now more institutionalised. There still remains much resistance from the civilian leadership on "…empowering the military through building of integrative procurement and joint service structures, which could enhance the development and commissioning of new technologies" (Ogden 2017:86). The military leadership has started slowly emerging from the long self-imposed restraint on publicly expressing opinion and writing op-eds in newspapers, aimed at not interfering with policymaking. Comments from the more outspoken members of the Services like General Bipin Rawat are more visible today in media debates, at foreign policy practitioner conferences like Raisina Dialogue, or even at university seminars. Retired members of the Armed Forces community are an influential constituent group within many of India's Think Tanks (see Ogden 2017:35).

To understand the interpretations of the Armed Forces community of these Chinese military actions, commentaries and working papers from defence and aerospace journals (for example, Vayu), editions of The War College Journal and The United Service Institution of India Journal were surveyed. Articles from the three Indian Defence-incubated Think Tanks – CLAWS, CAPS and NMF[94] were examined. Issue briefs written by Armed Forces personnel for the Indian Ministry of Defence-funded IDSA[95] were also used.

Indian Think Tanks[96] regularly publish issue briefs, policy papers and commentaries. They provide interpretations by a heterogeneous group of elites (now employed in Think Tanks) - retired diplomats and bureaucrats, China researchers and academics, retired civilian scientists who previously worked on India's weapons and space assets, retired politicians, etc. Opinions cover the entire spectrum of perceptions on China and India's position or status within the regional and global security architecture.

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[94] Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS) and the National Maritime Foundation (NMF)

[95] Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses is an MoD-funded but autonomous, non-partisan body. The Defence Minister is the ex-officio President of IDSA. Its Executive Council comprises retired Armed Forces officials, bureaucrats and reputed journalists. Its ex-officio members are the Foreign Secretary and the Defence Secretary, Government of India.

[96] For example, the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS), Vivekananda Foundation, South Asia Analysis Group, National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Takshashila Institute, Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), National Maritime Foundation (NMF), Brookings India, etc.

News editorials and op-eds from China correspondents and editors (for example, Ananth Krishna, China correspondent, The Hindu, India Today; Atul Aneja, China Correspondent, The Hindu; Sutirtho Patranobis, Associate Editor of Hindustan Times in Beijing; Shishir Gupta, Executive Editor of the Hindustan Times and author; Shaurya Karanbir Gurung, Defence Correspondent for The Economic Times; Ramu Patil, Chief of News Bureau, The New Indian Express, etc.) were included to understand how the Press was representing these Chinese actions. News articles and archives were also used in the study due to their pivotal role in communicating the government's and the strategic community's interpretations to the wider public. Retired bureaucrats, Armed Forces personnel, academics and the Think Tank community regularly write articles/ opinion pieces, or are interviewed by the Press (even on news and media channels) about the Indian government's China policies. This was an important reason why news articles were analysed for this research project.

Newspapers, therefore shape, not just public opinion, but play a critical role in the narrative representation of national identity (Self) and the Chinese 'Other' identity. Major debates that shaped the Indian nuclear discourse played out within the major English newspapers (see Frey 2006). The MEA also conducts regular briefings for foreign policy journalists and commentators, as does the Press Information Bureau (PIB). It is, however, important to note that governmental influence on the Indian press and media/ TV channels is minimal within the democratic framework and as per the Indian Constitution. Indian media houses were often owned by corporates and conglomerates[97], even pre-Independence. After the 1991 liberalisation (opening up) of the Indian economy, government influence declined further. It is quite common to see heated editorial commentaries, op-eds, even political cartoons criticizing the government, in the major newspapers.

Although the MEA, PIB, etc. contribute to shaping the interpretations of the Indian Press and digital media, it is, however, not a top-down, trickle down channel (for the strategic elite to shape public opinion on China). The Press in turn influences the government's decision-making in various ways. Reputed journalists serve in advisory roles, or are elected as Ministers of the Indian government (for example, M J Akbar[98], former Minister of State for External Affairs), Members of Parliament (for example, Pritish Nandy, Swapan Dasgupta as member of the

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[97] For example, the Times Group and its parent company Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd. are owned by the Jain family; Hindustan Times Group and HT Media by the Birlas; The Hindu Group by Kasturi and Sons Ltd.; and the Indian Express and The New Indian Express by the Goenka Group. For details, see here.
[98] The Minister stepped down after allegations of sexual abuse were raised against him as part of India's #MeToo movement.

Parliamentary Committee on External Affairs, Shobhana Bhartia the chief executive of Hindustan Times), and they even sit on the Executive Council of the Ministry of Defence-funded IDSA.

The strategic elite used for this study, wrote in English and therefore, it was not necessary to run searches in Hindi and other vernacular languages. Hindi and vernacular news articles (Malayalam, Tamil and Kannada are the Indian languages the researcher is familiar with) covered the same themes that the English dailies discussed, mostly being a translation of the English and Hindi articles.

News articles and archives[99] of major English-language daily newspapers used for the study were – The Hindu (widely perceived to be Left-leaning and Marxist in editorial tone), The Times and The Indian Express (leaning to the centre of the political spectrum, but at times incorporating hawkish and pacifist analyses), The Hindustan Times (with strongly nationalist editorial leanings). Circulation figures also played a role in determining what major English dailies to use for the study, as these influence perceptions of extensive parts of the population. The Times of India stood first with average sales of 3.18 million copies per day in July-Dec 2016[100]. It was followed by The Hindu with 1.46 million in sales, the Hindustan Times at 1.19 million and The Indian Express at 0.4 million. These newspapers were also chosen as they represent the various metropolitan cities - The Times of India and The Hindustan Times are headquartered in Delhi, Indian Express in Mumbai, and The New Indian Express and The Hindu from the southern city of Chennai. Online versions of these newspapers were used for the study.

Employing such a wide spectrum of Indian discursive sources ensured a broad, yet balanced view of the Indian strategic discourse. These sources of discourse were also chosen because they fulfilled Hansen's (2006: 85) three criteria for appropriate selection of texts - they are "widely read", "have the formal authority to define a political position" and are "characterised by clear articulation of identities and policies".

Discourse containing explicit mentions of the three Chinese military actions were identified using Google's search engine. Newspaper archives (online only) of the Indian newspapers mentioned above, were also used. Scopus and Web of Science databases were also used for

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[99] ProQuest archives for media articles were accessed, if they were not available in the web-based archives of the newspaper.
[100] Figures as per data from Audit Bureau of Circulations India and Registrar of Newspapers for India

wider searches of citations and bibliographies. Articles and texts were collated by affiliation of speaker (whether from the Armed Forces, Think Tanks or newspapers), and date of publication (according to the time period of this study). Manual coding was carried out and themes and categories emerged from the discourse ('grounded theory' approach) (Charmaz 2006, Creswell 2007: 62-67). The researcher also applied the themes previously identified from the wider literature. A combination of the two approaches was thus used to identify important themes within the Indian strategic community's discursive interpretations of the Chinese military actions.

Informed and rational choices were, therefore, made about the types of Indian discourse to be included for analysis, for effectively answering the chosen research question. Limiting the case studies pragmatically and targeting specific discourse material, allowed the study to be focused. Articles containing no clear description or analysis of the Chinese military actions were not included. However, for the case study on China's hypersonic vehicle, all publicly available Indian discourse was included (i.e. if the article was within the time period for the study, and explicitly mentioned the Chinese programme). This was due to the paucity in extant open-source Indian analysis i.e. the pool of available Indian sources was very limited. While discourse analysis for the hypersonic case study used a lower number of overall data sources, they were detailed enough, thus also ensuring research validity and reliability. The inclusion of Lele's (2017) study, i.e. the IDSA research paper on the Chinese and Indian hypersonic programmes mentioned previously, further strengthened the data sources.

Discourse analysis was not done on the interview data collected, as this was discourse created with the inputs of the researcher (co-constructed discourse). It was a discursive act in response to the questions asked by the researcher and influenced by the presence of the researcher (more on this in the section on interviews). The interview data may thus lack or contain themes that would or would not ordinarily be discussed, if the interviewees were to provide analysis in the absence of this researcher. This interview data therefore, mostly served an explanatory function, serving to explain and provide context/ background to a researcher far removed from the Indian strategic community. Also as obtaining access to India's strategic elite is not easy, the decision was therefore made, early on, to predominantly employ discourse analysis of textual material. Interview data thus served as a support and illustrated the themes that emerged from the discourse analysis of textual material.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA)

The two main traditions in discourse analysis are descriptive discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis. The descriptive focuses on the 'local' (immediate situation of the speaker) while the critical focuses on the "higher levels of the social institution and the social formation" and how discourse contributes, shapes and reproduces the macro-structure (Fairclough 1985: 753). Descriptive discourse analysis is an approach "whose goals are either non-explanatory, or explanatory within 'local' limits, in contrast to the 'global' explanatory goals of critical discourse analysis …" (Ibid). Critical Discourse Analysis or CDA describes "the ideological loading of particular ways of using language and the relations of power which underlie them" (Fairclough and Wodak in Van Dijk 1997:258). Discourse is shaped by the event or situation, social institutions and social structures, and in turn shapes them (constituting and constitutive). It is thus often termed as having a dialectical or two-way relationship – "socially constitutive as well as socially shaped". As discussed in Chapter Two, discourse is "socially influential"; it "helps sustain and reproduce the social status quo" and also "transforms it" (ibid). Fairclough (1989: 43; italics original) discusses "power *in* discourse and power *behind* discourse. Within CDA, discourse is thus considered "… as a form of 'social practice'" (also see Jackson 2005: 21).

CDA focuses on how something is said, how language and discourse elements are used, rather than what is said. CDA questions the assumptions and thinks of how things can be improved. It provides a critique and thus is 'critical' in this sense. Foucault (in Rabinow & Rose (eds.) 2003:172) explains, "A critique does not consist in saying that things aren't good the way they are. It consists in seeing on what type of assumptions, of familiar notions, of established, unexamined ways of thinking, the accepted practices are based … To do criticism is to make harder those acts which are now too easy". CDA examines how discursive techniques are used to shape social reality. The use of CDA is significant in the context of this thesis, as it tries to understand how Indian strategic elite are interpreting and representing the three Chinese military actions, thus providing meaning to and portraying the 'social reality' of Chinese actions. Constructions or attributions of Chinese identity in the context of these actions are key. This research also analyses how particular discursive techniques are used to construct a particular China identity. Discursive constructions of Chinese identity also enabled the discursive re-interpretation and reiteration of the Indian state identity.

Other discourse analysis methods not effective or suited for this study were Process tracing, Content Analysis, Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA). Now, a very brief explanation on why they did not work for this thesis. Process tracing often employs causality, analysing in depth, the

hypothesized cause (or intervention) and how it led to the outcome or effect through various events (Punton and Welle 2015:2). It emphasizes the understanding of all the events or steps that lead to a particular outcome (in a cause-effect relationship). Employing process tracing would also require access to classified government documents to understand the step-by-step decision-making process related to China. It would also require interviews with Indian government officials involved in foreign policymaking. This was a challenge, within the constraints of this study.

Content analysis examines discourse to identify recurrent themes, ideas, topics or words. It then counts their frequency of appearance and postulates if a particular theme or word is relevant or not. Content analysis often starts with a hypothesis, then proceeds to test it. This thesis did not aim to identify frequently used themes or words. Also, the discourse used for this study varied across genres, authorship, and purpose; therefore, it would not be correct to assume that a high frequency of a particular word/ theme was positively correlated to high relevance of that theme.

Similar to content analysis, Qualitative Content Analysis also examines documents, and employs a set of categories to identify the major or recurring words, themes or topics. Segments of text are coded into relevant categories, and the beginning and end of each segment is clearly demarcated (Schreier 2012: 5). The entire text has to be segmented, analysed and nothing can be left out, thus providing better understanding of context, genre, historical details, etc. This also ensures that the researcher does not hand pick segments that fit his/ her selected categories. This thesis does not identify frequently-used words nor identify all the themes discussed. This study examines the discursive act or strategies used to provide meaning to and portray the 'social reality' of Chinese military actions. Particular discursive constructions create a particular kind of social reality (Milliken 1999:29).

CDA was thus the most effective tool, as this was a critical evaluation of Indian discursive constructions. Various forms of CDA were employed, but were not effective for this study. Van Dijk's form of CDA (tools like the four presupposition categories, the 'within frame and cross-frame negation' and 'ground and figure' in Van Dijk 2005) was first used, but provided granularity at sentence level (of negation, triggers and frames), which did not serve the aim of this thesis. Later, Polyzou's (2015) socio-cognitive pragmatic approach to CDA was also attempted but was also not effective for this study, and proved tedious. Its excessive focus on

presupposition in truth-conditional (TC) semantics meant that an examination of Lexical level (Presupposed Frames) and Clause/Sentence Structure level Presuppositions was necessary. Similarly, Fairclough's (1995) analysis of semantic structures (examining syntax, evidentiality markers, modalities, rhetorical and literary usages and cultural references) provided unnecessary word-level granularity, which failed to highlight any discursive patterns of usage, from which to make inferences. These CDA tools were thus discarded.

CDA tools used by Roxanne Doty (1993, 1996) and Richard Jackson (2005) were the most suitable and effective, as identity constructions could be better identified by examining the discursive strategies employed (especially to differentiate the Self and the Other). Tools like opposition, predication (or articulation), and subject positioning are used in this study. Doty's study highlighted that "US foreign policy was organised around two guiding or core oppositions" (Reason/Passion and Good/Evil) and various other sub-categories of oppositions (for example, Asian versus non-Asian thinking, parent versus child, and order versus chaos). Under the core opposition of Good/Evil, the discourse created the "US and the USSR as "two distinct kinds of subjects; free world/ Communist world, moral/totalitarian, good/evil". The second level of opposition "worked to objectify the Philippines as 'objects' at stake (Doty 1993: 32-13). Jackson (2005: 38-39) illustrates levels of oppositions such as 'terrorist and soldier', 'civilized and savage' and 'citizen and foreigner', depersonalising and dehumanising the 'Other'. These served to examine oppositions within the discursive constructions of the 'China' and 'India' identities.

These core oppositions were, at the same time, a form of Predication, which "involves the linking of certain qualities to particular subjects through the use of predicates, and adverbs and adjectives that modify them. A predicate "affirms a quality, attribute, or property of a person or thing... texts construct worlds is by attaching various labels to subjects through predication" (Doty 1993: 306). Weldes (1996:285) termed it 'articulation', whereby, "particular phenomena, whether, objects, events or social relations, are represented in specific ways and given particular meanings on which action is then based. With their successful repeated articulation, these linguistic elements come to seem as though they are inherently or necessarily connected and the meanings they produce come to seem natural, to be an accurate description of reality". Meaning (and reality) is thus constructed intersubjectively, within society or within a group

possessing power, for example, the Indian strategic community or foreign policymakers, embedded within the structures of foreign policy decision-making[101].

Such a labelling or predication of subjects also created a link between particular subjects and objects, between particular kinds of 'Self' and 'Other' (subject positioning) (Hansen 2013:45). "The production of subjects and objects is always vis-a-vis other subjects and objects. What defines a particular kind of subject is, in large part, the relationships that subject is positioned in relative to other kinds of subjects. Some of the important kinds of relationships that position subjects are those of opposition, identity, similarity, and complementarity" (Doty 1993: 306). Jackson (2005:38-39, 81) elaborates this further by linking the discursive construction of a terrorist (the subject as evil, alien, inhuman) to the American (the object as innocent, heroic, and possessing good qualities) using relationships of opposition and complementarity. Simultaneously, particular identities are attributed to the subjects, creating imagined communities; with subject positioning (of the American identity and values) even used as a linguistic device or a discursive strategy to comfort and inspire a suffering country.

Discourses in this way are also "structures of significations which construct social realities" (Milliken 1999:29). Discourse enables the spaces necessary for interpreting and understanding the world[102] (Doty 1993:302). Articulations are neither natural nor permanent, but dynamic and constantly in need of re-articulation and reinforcement; other articulations are always possible (Weldes and Rowley 2012: 182). Identity descriptors and qualitative attributes have to be reinforced and reproduced for a particular social reality or a particular interpretation of social action to gain wider acceptance. Particular Chinese, Indian (and Pakistani) identities are articulated and reinforced through the discourse. Language or shared meanings and symbols are key to the social construction of these identities and interests. To better understand the strategic community's interpretations, it was necessary to examine what 'meaning' was given or what identities were attributed to the subjects within the discourse. "What is explained is not why a particular outcome obtained, but rather how the subjects, objects, and interpretive dispositions were socially constructed such that certain practices were made possible" (Doty 1993:298).

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[101] This reiterates the Constructivist focus on structure and agency being in a co-constitutive relationship with each other.
[102] However, it also "produces interpretive possibilities by making it virtually impossible to think outside of it" (ibid.). That does not mean that alternative representations are impossible.

Texts or articles were analysed (in their complete length) using the above CDA tools. Discourse analysis was stopped once findings emerging from it did not provide any significant new insights, different from what had already been discovered (i.e. the discursive field was saturated – see Saunders et al 2017). Critical discourse analysis was conducted on texts or articles on the three case studies, and together with the interviews of Indian strategic elite, provided a fuller picture of how they were interpreting and representing the Chinese military actions.

Interviews with the Indian strategic community

Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with members of the Indian strategic community in New Delhi and Bangalore (List of interviews in Appendix One). This helped cross-verify if the themes discussed in the textual discourse matched with what the strategic elites were discussing or debating. Interviews also helped to clarify and situate topics in the broader national security and identity contexts, which were not explained within the textual discourse. Many of the foreign policy experts interviewed for this project were the ones writing (creating) the Indian discourse on China's military actions. They were serving or recently retired[103] diplomats, bureaucrats and Armed Forces personnel, experts in Think Tanks, scientists involved in India's weapons and space programs, academics, Track II diplomacy experts, and China researchers.

Access to interviewees and open-source literature were key factors that influenced the design of this study. Obtaining access to potential interviewees was not easy and the Official Secrets Act 1923 was often cited, when requests for interviews were made. Retired interviewees were not privy to the Indian government's current thinking and stances, possibly leading to incomplete information or even misinformation, partly caused by faulty memories. Interviews also quickly highlighted personal perceptions and biases, and some inconsistencies in response. Interviews were therefore used to support and complement discourse analysis. This study therefore relied upon more than one method of data collection - a case study approach and semi-structured qualitative interviews - and uses critical discourse analysis tools.

Interviews with retired scientists and retired defence personnel corroborated the fact that very little open-source textual material (on the implications of China's hypersonic programme, the

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[103] Some of these retired officials continue to serve in advisory functions on Indian government ministries, committees and panel. For example, Ambassador TP Sreenivasan, former diplomat, former Permanent Representative of India to the UN, Vienna and Governor for India of the IAEA. Also retired ISRO scientist Rajaram Nagappa. Bharat Karnad, a Research Professor at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi served in advisory functions on the National Security Council, Nuclear Doctrine Drafting Group, and was advisor for Defence Expenditure in the Finance Commission. Arun Viswanathan previously served as Assistant Director in the National Security Council Secretariat, Prime Minister's Office (2008-2011).

Indian government's assessment of it or even on the Indian hypersonic programme) was indeed available for discourse analysis. The researcher attempted to compensate for such a paucity in open-source textual material, by conducting a larger number of interviews on the topic of hypersonics. However, the limitations of security and time played a major role in obtaining access to Indian defence personnel and scientists working on these advanced weapons systems.

Potential interviewees were first contacted via email, well before the start of fieldwork. The purpose for the interview was clearly explained. Documents were sent across, explaining informed consent, the right to withdraw at any point, the option of anonymity and interview data storage details (where applicable). Some very broad sample questions were also sent, highlighting the broad topics of discussion, as this facilitated a faster, more positive response or an acceptance to be interviewed. The research plan and supporting documents[104] were reviewed by the University of Leicester Research Ethics committee, prior to the start of fieldwork (Ethics Reference number: 4949-amg45-politics&intrelations; please see Appendix Two). The ethics application required just the light-touch review, as interviewees (or the researcher) were not being put at risk or their privacy invaded[105] (they spoke in their official capacity or within their professional roles).

At the outset of each interview, verbal consent and signatures on the informed consent documents were obtained. Interviewees were again verbally informed of their right to withdraw at any point and offered the option of anonymity. The participant information sheet contained the researcher's postal and email address, and phone number, if the interviewee had any further questions or wanted to withdraw at a later time. Interviewees were also reassured that if anonymity was requested, then data collection instruments (like field notes, audio recordings) and transcribed documents would not contain any identifying information. One of my interviewees requested anonymity. Interviews were conducted in different locations – interviewees' offices, homes, in universities or cafes, even at conference venues – according to the interviewees' convenience, but the interview situation remained formal, as they were speaking within their official capacities.

A basic checklist of questions was used, keeping the interview focused (Berg 2007: 39). Questions were almost always open-ended and 'Why' questions were avoided as much as possible, as this sometimes tended to provoke an attitude of defensiveness among the

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[104] Participant Information sheet, Letter of invitation to participate, Consent documents.
[105] Strict adherence to time allotted for the interview was also observed, as a means to avoid any further intrusion into privacy.

interviewees (McNamara 2009) (for example, why did the Indian government not release an official statement/ assessment?) Such 'Why' questions tended to soon act like 'leading questions', that then elicited responses that emphasized a cause and effect relationship where such a relationship may not always be present. Although questions were prepared beforehand, these were rephrased and tweaked during the interview session, depending on the previous responses from the interviewee. Follow-up or probing or 'reply' questions were asked, thus enabling further clarification of responses (Kvale 2007:11; Qu and Dumay 2011:250). Although interviewees were encouraged to share analysis and opinions, an attempt was made to keep the interview focussed on the wider topics being researched (rather than meandering on to, for example, rambling personal accounts of the 1962 Sino-Indian war by some retired armed forces personnel).

Open-ended questions were predominantly used in the interview. Leading questions (ones that would lead to answers reinforcing preconceived notions) or contentious topics were avoided. To avoid biasing interviewees' responses (leading them to say what they believe this researcher would want to hear; or answering questions to align with their earlier published material), the researcher's opinions were deliberately kept vague[106]. Just enough information was shared on the overview of the project, without revealing normative aims (Qu and Dumay 2011:253, Kvale 2007:26). However, this may have reinforced power relations of the interview situation (Karnieli-Miller, Strier and Pessach 2008:280-81). Such vagueness in research aims or information on the researcher's part[107] may have led to the researcher being viewed as having very little knowledge in the area/ topic and a very junior analyst, concurrently reinforcing the interviewees' positions as experts or strategic elite. This may also have facilitated a more open discussion of issues, even to the extent of some interviewees disclosing value judgements on government actions.

Although "the prevailing power asymmetry of the interview situation may be cancelled out by the powerful position of the elite interviewee" (Kvale 2007:70), the researcher is also placed in a power position. "The interviewer is in a power position and sets the stage by determining the topic of the interchange; it is the interviewer who asks and the interviewee who answers" (Kvale

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[106] See Schensul and Compte (2013: 166) for interviewer bias. Also, in a good interview situation, the researcher cannot be impersonal and stony-faced; "he or she has to give something of himself or herself in order to merit an open response" (Kvale 2007: 9, 70).

[107] "… prior knowledge about the research might create demand characteristics altering the interviewee's responses. Thus, prior knowledge of the researcher's intent may cloud the subject's response" (Qu and Dumay 2011:253). "… the qualified naiveté and a bracketing of presuppositions imply openness to new and unexpected phenomena. The interviewer should be curious, sensitive to what is said – as well as to what is not said – and critical of his or her own presuppositions and hypotheses during the interview" (Kvale 2007: 12). But a prior knowledge about the topic may help in the development of sensitivity to the interviewee's expressed opinions.

2007:2; Brinkmann and Kvale 2015:157, 159). The "researcher alone contributes the thinking that goes into the project, and the subjects contribute the action or contents to be studied" (Reason 1994:42).

In the interviews conducted for this study, power relations were discovered to be fluctuating or shifting between the researcher and interviewee. For example, when exploring both the factual and meaning levels, sometimes it was necessary to delve into what Kvale (2007:11) calls the "implicit message" or "what is 'said between the lines'"; and "'send it back' to the subject" for reconfirmation. This sometimes led to the interviewee gaining the power position by declining to confirm or deny. This could have also been an attempt at pushing forth agendas or "prepared talk tracks" (Kvale 2007:70). A couple of interviewees tried to gauge the researcher's knowledge of the topic[108], with some preliminary questions prior to the interview. Though the researcher initially interpreted this as an effort on the interviewee's part to take control of the interview, this ultimately led to a more open interview situation and the building of rapport and trust – described by Kvale as "achieve(ing) an extent of symmetry" (2007:70; see also Ceglowski 2000:90).

Another action that put interviewees more at ease was reiterating the fact that the researcher was an Indian citizen (although this was clearly mentioned in the first letter of invitation to participate). Of twenty five interviewees, twenty two questioned at the outset, if the researcher were a British citizen and if so, why was she interested in the Indian strategic community's interpretations of China's military actions. The researcher's name was the cause of much of that confusion. This also brought into focus the researcher's position as an 'outsider' (a young female academic studying abroad), which may have played a role in determining access to interviewees (see Fonow and Cook 1991; Mullings 1999).

On the role of the outsider, Marschan-Piekkari and Welch (2011: 130) claim that it's better to have the insight of an insider and the neutrality of an outsider. An insider status helps overcome cultural barriers, creates easier access to potential interviewees and thus, puts interviewees at ease, facilitating openness in conversations (Sands et al 2007: 355). An outsider status, however, is also beneficial in that such interactions may lead to new perspectives and discussions, and therefore a clearer understanding of many taken-for-granted cultural or contextual meanings (Rubin and Rubin 2012: 20). The outsider is also able to maintain neutrality by remaining outside "internal crosscurrents and politics" (ibid. pg 76; Marschan-Piekkari and

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[108] "The interviewer should be knowledgeable about the topic of concern and master the technical language, as well as being familiar with the social situation and biography of the interviewee" (Kvale 2007:70).

Welch 2011: 445). The researcher's position as an insider (an Indian citizen) did create a more open environment, where interviewees were able to openly criticise government policies; whereas her role as an outsider to the strategic community facilitated her asking of basic questions that led to better conceptual clarity (for example, questions to naval officers on the differences between 'joint naval patrol' and 'coordinated patrol'. Such details are commonplace among naval officers and the strategic community, but the position of an 'outsider academic', enabled the clarification of basic concepts and details). Talking to an outsider far removed from policy circles may also have been interpreted as 'less risky' by interviewees. 'Outsider' researchers, however, need to also be aware that they could be used as mouthpieces or tools to push agendas.

Power relations between the researcher and participant (interviewee), therefore, are constantly shifting and evolving. Both the researcher and participant use multiple 'positions' at different points in the interaction. Positionality is defined as "where one stands or where one's 'position' is in relation to others" (Merriam et al 2012: 315, Sands et al 2007: 356). In interviews for this study, the interviewee held more power because of their current or past roles within the Indian government and their contributions to China policy-making. Their power positions were highlighted when they declined interview requests, allocated very short time slots in their schedules, or refused to answer particular questions. Retired officials sometimes placed the researcher in the position of power, as an academic closely following latest developments in the area (by reiterating that they no longer closely follow such developments and the researcher could provide them with insights). The researcher's positionality was also affected by gender, age, institutional affiliation, etc.

Locating interviewees (bureaucrats, diplomats, scientists or those within Armed Forces-incubated Think Tanks[109]) was more difficult. Cascading interviewees within each hierarchy was attempted, using a top-down approach. Snowballing was also pursued, by asking participants to suggest or refer other respondents. Though this sometimes helped in accessing the "more impenetrable social groupings", it posed issues like similarity in the respondent network (see Atkinson and Flint 2001). Participants were also asked for suggestions about who they would term as experts on each of the three Chinese military actions[110]. It is however, necessary to guard against individual perceptions and biases by further researching such suggested interviewees' backgrounds and biographies. The researcher attempted to include as many of

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[109] CAPS, CLAWS, NMF
[110] Loosely based on the reputational method used by Saunders (1979) in his study on local government in Croydon.

the textual discourse writers within the interview sample, thus preventing a predominance of such suggestions or referrals.

Snowballing also helped the researcher acquire an 'insider' status, to some extent (Atkinson and Flint 2001). Another approach was sending the researcher's recorded television interview (with a prominent retired diplomat), in the preliminary contact email. Being invited as a guest on a prominent international affairs television chat show facilitated access and built trust with other diplomats.

Interviews were documented as field notes during or after the interview. Distracting or disruptive note-taking was avoided. Most of my interviewees did not consent to being audio recorded and clearly asked for all quotes, if used, to be first vetted by them, prior to thesis completion. Participants from the Armed forces refused to be quoted and requested that a disclaimer be added (about opinions being one's personal views and not in one's official capacity).

Field note analysis during fieldwork helped, as this practice aided self-reflection on what was working and what had to be corrected (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009:180). Analysing participant responses provided insight on what topics needed further clarification and dissection with follow-up questions. It is important to analyse if ambiguous or contradictory interview responses are due to a failure of communication or inconsistencies or ambivalence emanating from interviewee's interpretations (Kvale 2007: 4, 13).

Interview data was considered to be co-constructed discourse (i.e., it was created in conjunction with and in the presence of the researcher, and was more a reflection on and explanation of interviewee's personal interpretations). Interview data is partly shaped by the discursive situation also – interviewees responded only to the specific questions they were asked and were influenced by directives or protocol on what could be spoken or not (Alshenqeeti 2014: 43, Hammersley and Gomm 2008:100, Kvale 2007:1). Interview data was therefore, treated differently from the published textual discourse collected and analysed.

Conclusion

This chapter dealt with how the study was designed and what methods were used to answer the chosen research question. This chapter has justified why particular methods were chosen over others.

Limitations have shaped the design of this study – major limitations being time and practical considerations like security clearances for interviews, and cost of fieldwork. It is important to

keep in mind that the discourse and the interviews accessed and used for this thesis are a fragment of elite thought, and not representative of Indian strategic thinking as a whole. The Official Secrets Act 1923 and security clearance requirements prevented access to other closed sources or classified reports.

The thesis utilises three empirical case studies, employs discourse analysis (that is, analysis of the textual discourse, available in the open-source domain) and interviews, conducted within the boundaries of non-security-cleared access to the strategic community. The choice of these three case studies was a deliberate decision, as the research question aims to study China's military rise and the Indian strategic community's interpretations. Choice of these particular Chinese military actions, however, could lead to a preponderance of particular qualities and attributes in the constructed Chinese and Indian identities. For example, discourse analysis on military technology advancements could enable the predominance of particular identities attributed to China, like that of an 'actor that steals and reverse-engineers technology'. To draw overarching or broad inferences on India's China policy based on these three military (actions) case studies alone would be oversimplifying the matter, and failing to acknowledge the influence of various other intervening variables. However, using similar types of case studies ensures depth of analysis.

The choice of these case studies within the Sino-Indian security context, situates the study as analysis within an existing security dilemma framework (where India and China have for decades been engaged in a security dilemma, see Garver 2002:2-3, Holslag 2009). Research outcomes and choices are likely to differ in the analysis of states that are not engaged in a prolonged and exacting security dilemma. Similarities between the two rising powers (i.e. rising within the same region, both nuclear powers witnessing soaring GDP rates and economic growth in the recent past, both large energy consumers possessing large demographic dividends, having fought a war in 1962, and capable of changing the Asian balance of power; last but not the least, both possessing complex and contested national identities) need to be kept in mind when designing comparative studies of other states.

The next chapter is the first of the three case studies. It analyses China's aircraft carrier programme and the Indian strategic community's discursive interpretations of the carrier threat.

Part II - The case studies

Chapter Four: China's aircraft carrier programme

The previous chapter examined the research design and methods employed to effectively answer the research question. This chapter begins the examination of the Chinese military actions (the case studies). The aim of this chapter is to understand how the discourse created by Indian strategic community interprets and represents China's aircraft carrier program - which includes a refurbished Soviet carrier (China's first) called Liaoning, its movement into international waters in Nov 2013; and China's first indigenously-constructed carrier Shandong, launched in April 2017. Much of the available Indian strategic discourse on the Liaoning's capabilities and maritime role was published around the time of the Shandong launch, and even within the discourse on the Shandong. The launch of China's first indigenous carrier Shandong soon after Liaoning's international moves, seemed to persuade the Indian strategic elite to analyse and assess these moves closely.

The chapter makes three significant arguments - Firstly, it highlights that the China threat identity construction and the Indian self-identity are not fixed, but fluctuating. It illustrates that identity constructions attributed to China are contradictory – for example, while China is portrayed as an aggressor and a formidable threat, it is also portrayed as a rational actor focused on its own national security. China is also depicted as an actor that steals, copies and reverse-engineers technology and technical know-how, thus achieving exceptional advances in military technology (compared to other rising powers). China's carrier strategy together with its expansionist tendencies into the "far seas" are termed a long-term, formidable threat. This is, however, played down in Armed Forces narratives.

Secondly, the chapter argues that a number of discursive strategies are employed to construct the Chinese and Indian identities; for example, the juxtaposition of identities, use of historical metaphors, leveraging a Pakistan threat and silences or omissions of contexts help to build up the China threat. The discursive strategies employed and the China threat identity constructions within the discourse illustrate the presence of powerful ideational elements that underpin national identity, as discussed in Chapter One.

Thirdly, the recommendations to the Indian government support and facilitate varied policy practices to counter China. They seem to support the pursuit of varied foreign policy choices,

for example, alignment with other Asian states like Japan, or being a Swing power (Ogden 2018:9, Hall 2016:282) between China and the United States, or balancing even containing Chinese influence through the Act East policy and other evolving Indo-Pacific architectures, and so on. The discourse (i.e. the varied recommendations) seems to support India's emerging foreign policy approach of multi-directional engagement (called multialignment), as described in Chapter One.

This chapter's significant contribution is that it highlights the presence of non-security imperatives (i.e. ideational elements) in the Indian strategic elite's discursive constructions of the China threat. The chapter begins with a general overview of the Chinese carriers and their implications for China's blue water naval strategy, its Anti-Access Area Denial (A2/AD) strategy and its Indian Ocean strategy. It then moves on to an examination of discourse written by the Indian strategic elite, to understand how they interpret and represent the Chinese carrier launches. Next, the discursive strategies employed are discussed, in particular the silences in the discourse, the use of metaphors and the leveraging of a Pakistan threat. Lastly, the chapter analyses varied recommendations to the Indian government, and differences between the narratives constructed by various constituents of the strategic community, discussing site of publication as a factor contributing to such differences. The details on articles examined for Indian discourse can be found in the Bibliography.

First, some details on China's carrier programme.

China's carriers

China's carrier ambitions began in 1985 when the Australian government sold a Majestic-class aircraft carrier HMAS Melbourne to China for scrapping. The Melbourne served as the core of the PLAN's carrier R&D program, with the flight deck "kept intact and used for pilot training in carrier takeoffs" (Storey and Ji 2004:79). China's second acquisition was the Kiev, a Soviet vessel, which became a military theme park and later a luxury hotel (Daily Mail, 11 Aug 2011).

China's first aircraft carrier, the Liaoning (航空母舰 辽宁 or CV-16), was a refurbished Admiral Kuznetsov-class-ship, purchased from Ukraine in 1998 (Head 2013, Pant 2017, Yhome 2017). Refitting was carried out in the Dalian shipyard and it was named Shi Lang[111] in 2011 (Frossard

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[111] Chinese signalling through the name discussed in Frossard 2012 and Godbole and Parmar 2011.

2012), before being renamed Liaoning after the province where Dalian is located. It was commissioned in 2012 and set out on its maiden voyage on 26 November 2013.

On 26 April 2017, China launched its first indigenously[112] designed and built aircraft carrier, called the Type 001A or tentatively Shandong (航空母舰 山东), named after the port city in Dalian where it was built (Huang 2017, Yao 2017). This 50,000-ton carrier is expected to be commissioned before 2020. It is similar to the Liaoning in many aspects – both are of a Kuznetsov-class design, have oil-fueled steam turbine power plants (not nuclear-powered) and their aircraft will take off from a ski-jump style (not catapult) deck (called a STOBAR [Short Take Off but Arrested Recovery] type ship) (The Indian Express 27 April 2017). Two more carriers are planned with one (a Type 002) being currently built at the Jiangnan Shipyard, near Shanghai. These future carriers will be closer in design to USA's nuclear-powered 100,000-ton Nimitz class carriers (Keck 2014a, Torode and Martina 2017, The Times of India 26 April 2017).

The Liaoning set out on its maiden voyage into international waters, along with its Carrier Battle Group (CBG)[113] (Thayer 2013), crossing the Taiwan Straits to the South China Sea on 26 November 2013, testing its combat system and conducting a formation practice. This was a 37-day deployment that concluded on 1st January 2014 (CCTV English 2014). Liaoning's sea trials in the South China Sea, a show of "expressive force", were compared to 'gunboat diplomacy' (Collin 2013, Misra 2017). Poudel and Kam (2014) claim these sea trials were manifestations of Beijing's concerns over new developments in South East Asia (the increasing American regional naval presence under the Pivot/ Rebalance to Asia; Japan aiming to revise Article 9 of its Constitution and thus giving up its pacifist stance, and the regional alliances taking shape).

With these aircraft carriers, China's maritime doctrine is claimed to be shifting[114] from the long-valued 'sea denial' strategy to 'sea control' (Khurana 2017a) – the aim of China's blue water navy being to control large swaths of international waters, project its power and enhance its

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[112] In August 2014, the Ministry of National Defence spokesman Yang Yujun, while discussing the Liaoning, said "there will surely be more in future". Research fellow at the PLA Academy of Military Science, Du Wenlong, talked about China needing at least three aircraft carriers to form a "basic battle force".
[113] "The Liaoning was accompanied by two destroyers, the Shenyang and Shijiazhuang, and two missile frigates, Yantai and Weifang and a supply ship" (Thayer 2013). Abhijit Singh (2017) has called this a 'token logistical flotilla'.
[114] The 2015 Military Strategy White Paper (Panda 2017a) is claimed to illustrate the Chinese government's shifting focus from 'near seas' and territorial waters protection to a focus on both 'offshore waters defense' with 'open seas protection'- "It is necessary for China to develop a modern maritime military force structure commensurate with its national security and development interests, safeguard its national sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, protect the security of strategic SLOCs[114] and overseas interests, and participate in international maritime cooperation…"

long-range operational capabilities (see Chinese government's 2015 White Paper). China's bold challenge to United States' influence in the Asia Pacific was seen in the 5 December 2013 incident involving the American cruiser *USS Cowpens*[115], during Liaoning's maiden voyage (Kapur 2014, Krishna 2013).

India's experience with carriers began in 1957 when it purchased its first carrier from Britain, HMS Hercules (commissioned as INS Vikrant on 04 March 1961). It was decommissioned on 31 January 1997. India's second aircraft carrier, the Centaur class HMS Hermes, again from Britain, was commissioned as INS Viraat on 12 May 1987[116]. India's third was Admiral Gorshkov (commissioned as INS Vikramaditya in Russia on 16 Nov 2013 and reached its home port Karwar on 7 January 2014).

The Indian Navy is currently building its first indigenous carrier INS Vikrant, launched in 2013 and expected to be commissioned in 2020 after severe delays (Yadav 2017, Peri 2018, The Business Standard 11 June 2015). India is planning the next indigenous carrier INS Vishal, likely to be a nuclear-powered CATOBAR and will most likely incorporate the US-offered EMALS technology[117]. An Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) source attributes India's indigenous carrier building programme to China's rise[118]. The Chinese carrier programme is ramping up at a time of Indian naval modernisation and procurement (for details see Jha 2018, Shukla 2017, Miglani 2015, The New Indian Express 20th July 2017, Mizokami 2014 for details).

Implications of China's aircraft carriers: How the carriers aid its blue water naval, Anti Access Area Denial and the Indian Ocean strategies

China's carriers are "a signal that PLAN has arrived as a force to be reckoned with" (Pant 2017). "Navies are inherently inclined to see aircraft carriers as combat assets first - meant to control the seas, project power and convey strategic intent" (Singh A 2014). Navies today have an

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[115] Chinese Communist Party's *Global Times* claimed that "The USS Cowpens was tailing and harassing the Liaoning formation." Chinese officials claimed that the US cruiser had entered "within 45 km of the inner defence layer" of the Liaoning carrier group. Kapur (2014:3) claims Cowpens was shadowing and spying for a "better understanding of the Liaoning's capabilities and vulnerabilities". The incident is represented as a rational actor's focus on ensuring its security interests. Ananth Krishna (2013) claims that the Cowpens was "forced to take evasive action". Various Indian authors interpret this incident differently. The US Pacific Fleet denied spying on Liaoning and accused a PLA Navy ship in the Liaoning CBG of aggressive manoeuvring (Thayer 2013).
[116] For details on Indian carriers, see here
[117] The Trump administration decided "to release to India the Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS)" (The Times of India 18 Oct 2017) after Secretary Rex Tillerson's India visit in October 2017 (Jaishankar 2017). It is likely that INS Vishal or probable later carriers would incorporate the EMALS technology, with a CATOBAR propulsion or steam-driven catapult for aircraft. The carrier could also have Air-borne Early Warning (AEW) systems, which are missing in Vikramaditya and the 2020 commission-targeted Vikrant (for air arm options, see Prakash 2016:16).
[118] India-China talks hint at radically changed globe (Accessed 14 Aug 2018)

"increasing role as guardian of sea-lanes" (ibid) using platforms of (hard) 'power projection', at the same time using those "versatile asset(s) … in diplomacy and regional outreach, disaster relief and humanitarian missions" (Singh A 2014), and anti-piracy patrols. "The advent of superior technology and weaponry has increased the potency of aircraft carriers, thus resulting in an increased capacity to affect the outcome of not only maritime engagements but also of those on land too. Further, the nearly unlimited reach of today's nuclear powered aircraft carriers makes it possible for a nation to protect its interests – uninhibited by constraints of distance" (Misra 2017:4; see Suri 2016 for Liaoning's role in land and shore defence). A carrier can even "… assist in influencing events ashore" (Singh Manmohan 2014:34). A "carrier's entry can have a major impact on regional deterrence" (Pant 2017). Manmohan Singh (2014:37) terms carriers as the "best message of deterrence to our potential adversaries and the best insurance against their inimical plans".

Converting the PLA Navy (PLAN) into a 'blue water navy'[119] (蓝水海军) is an important goal of the Chinese government. Having a blue water navy helps achieve China's strategic interest of national security. Shen Dingli (2010), a Fudan university professor, argues that China needs"… to enhance the power in safeguarding our overseas interests … There are four responsibilities: the protection of the people and fortunes overseas; the guarantee of smooth trading; the prevention of the overseas intervention … and the defense against foreign invasion. The purpose of the tasks is to deter the threats posed on our legal interests … China is in need of a strong power to maintain the world peace". China's 2015 White Paper specifies that the Navy "will gradually shift its focus from 'offshore waters defense' to the combination of 'offshore waters defense' with 'open seas protection'" (China. Ministry of Defence. 2015 Defence White Paper[120]), and build a combined, multi-functional and efficient marine combat force structure. The PLAN has so far gained valuable blue-water naval competencies from the counter-piracy missions in the Gulf of Aden and the task group deployments in the western Pacific (deployed nine times in 2013 alone) (Pendergast 2010).

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[119] A maritime force capable of sustained operations across the open oceans. A blue-water navy allows a country to project power far from the home country and usually includes one or more aircraft carriers. Smaller blue-water navies are able to dispatch fewer vessels abroad for shorter periods of time ('Special Focus Area: Marine Sensors', US Department of Defense 2010). According to the US' Department of Defense Report (2013) "… missions of a blue water navy include protecting important sea lanes from terrorism, maritime piracy, and foreign interdiction; providing humanitarian assistance/disaster relief; conducting naval diplomacy and regional deterrence; force projection; and training to prevent a third party, such as the United States, from interfering with operations off China's coast in a Taiwan, East China Sea, or South China Sea conflict" (United States of America. Department of Defense. Annual Report to Congress. 2013. Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2014)

[120] Full Text: China's Military Strategy 2015 (Section IV Building and Development of China's Armed Forces)

Acquisition of an aircraft carrier is termed as the ultimate symbol of any navy's blue-water strategy (Singh A 2017). The Liaoning's CBG and its air wing (when completely created) will help China project offensive power (Yoon 2012, Frossard 2012) beyond its First Island chain[121] and into its 'far seas' (international waters of the South China Sea, the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean), thus moving from defensive to pro-active intentionality.

Aircraft carriers "can be as much a fighting instrument as it is a national symbol" (Supriyanto 2014). Liaoning's deployment into international waters and China's rush to indigenously build aircraft carriers are claimed to be efforts to evoke nationalism and pride within China. China's state-owned Aviation Industry Corporation released two music videos extolling the greatness of the Liaoning[122] and encouraging young Chinese to dedicate lives to fulfilling the 'China dream' (People Daily China 21 April 2014). The Liaoning was again used as a public relations tool when the then US Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel boarded it on 7 April 2014 (Economic Times 7 April 2014, BBC News 7 April 2014), the first tour of the Liaoning by a foreign official[123] (Deccan Chronicle 17 Nov 2013) (termed in some quarters as a carrier visit race, when US Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter visited India's Vikramaditya[124] in April 2016).

An aircraft carrier also aids China's Anti Access Area Denial (A2/AD) strategy[125]. The concept of A2/AD is best explained in the Krepinevich, Watts, Work's (2003) definition, "If anti-access (A2) strategies aim to prevent US forces entry into a theater of operations, then area-denial (AD) operations aim to prevent their freedom of action in the more narrow confines of the area under an enemy's direct control". Chinese thinking on the A2/AD[126] strategy seems to have originated in the mid-1980s and is tied to the military strategic guideline of Active Defense (*jiji fangyu*) (as discussed in Chapter One). China's strategic goal of sea denial (Yoon 2012), has long

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[121] The Chinese term it as Inner and Outer Island chains. American strategists refer to the three Island chain strategy (Erickson and Wuthnow 2016)

[122] An instrumental music video called 'The Flying Sharks' (Liaoning's J-15 fighters) and the other, a ballad called 'Leading the Dream' sung by a Tibetan folk singer (released April 21, 2014). See [video] and [video] (Accessed 22 July 2017). Article on videos - http://military.people.com.cn/n/2014/0421/c1011-24923990.html (Accessed 22 July 2017).

[123] This was close on the heel of Russian Deputy PM Dmitry Rogozin attending the commissioning of India's aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya in Severodvinsk on November 16, 2013, causing some to term it a race of carrier tours.

[124] Carter visit details - https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/content/visit-dr-ashton-carter-secretary-defense-usa-karwar

[125] The United States Defense Department's 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (page 31) defines anti-access strategies as "seek(ing) to deny outside countries the ability to project power into a region, thereby allowing aggression or other destabilizing actions to be conducted by the anti-access power".

[126] Though the A2/AD concept is a Western concept, China's broad equivalent is 'active defense' or 'active strategic counter-attacks on exterior lines' (ASCEL) (Permal 2014), loosely translated as 'active strategy of counter-attack on the outside/ exterior'. The Chinese A2/AD strategy is well-explained in the words of Major General (Retd.) Peng Guangqian (Wishik II 2011:48), where he stresses on force asymmetry and targeting the enemy's weakness. This concept seems to equate active defense with 'assured attack', thus varying from the America definition of 'defense'.

served it well, being much less expensive, robust and reliable. An aircraft carrier though interpreted as fortifying the 'sea denial strategy', at the same time, also reinforces the contradictory strategy and naval posture of 'sea control' ('sea denial' using its submarine fleet, land-based aircraft and missiles, and 'sea control' using its aircraft carriers). Contemporary navies maintain a balance of both these strategies and China seems to be doing the same (White 2011). China's strategy, like the US', emphasises the navy's role in an asymmetric strike as far from Chinese territory as possible. An important aspect of being a great power with a blue water navy, is the ability to project power far from the country's shores, that is, also into the Indian Ocean (Frossard 2012). The movement of China's aircraft carriers and submarines to and from its bases in the Indian Ocean and Western Africa will soon give it greater control over the Indian Ocean (Som V 2017, Gurung 2017) and its strategic SLOCs passing through it, carrying its trade and energy.

China's focus on the Indian Ocean[127] is revealed in its Blue Book of Indian Ocean Region: Annual Report on the Development of the Indian Ocean Region (2014)[128] released by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) (also see Krishnan in the Hindu 9 June 2013; Shergill 2015:72). China sees entry into the Indian Ocean as a necessity. PLA Admiral Yang Yi emphasizes, "expansion into the Pacific and Indian Oceans is a prerequisite for China's rise to a global great power" (Sun Y 2013). Indian discourse also represents Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean as a foregone conclusion (Upadhyay 2014, Singh Manmohan 2014:34, Pant 2017, Singh Puyam Rakesh 2017, Rajan 2015), presenting serious challenges to the Indian Ocean security initiatives (Teshu Singh in Shikha and Hukil 2014). Zhao Nanqi, Director General, PLA Logistics Department, is believed to have claimed in 1993, "We can no longer accept the Indian Ocean as only an ocean of the Indians" (Patel, Malik, and Nunes (eds)2017, Unjhawala 2015). China's Global Times (30 Nov 2014) claimed that "China's military logistics infrastructure will soon be mature enough" to "break the 'first island chain' and gain access to the Indian Ocean" in the near future. China's increasing presence in the Indian Ocean (reports of nuclear submarines docking at Colombo port and Gwadar port's role as listening post and role in Chinese naval forward deployment [see Sakhuja 2013]) threatens India's energy, trade and security interests in the IOR and challenges

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[127] China's Defence White Papers 2013 and 2014 stress the Navy's aims such as "'protecting national maritime rights and interests', '… armed forces providing reliable support for China's interests overseas'" (Ranade 2013). The 2014 Defence White Paper, called 'China's Military Strategy', does not mention the Indian Ocean at all but this omission seems deliberate as the report discusses in detail, the need to protect the strategic Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) passing through the Indian Ocean and "fulfilling China's international obligations" (The People's Republic of China. The State Council. 2015. China's Military Strategy) in the context of anti-piracy duties in the Gulf of Aden.

[128] Though the Book criticises China's lack of strategy in the Indian Ocean (IO), it points to China's long-term quest for influence in the IO.

India's "ongoing domination of the IOR as her natural domain" (Ogden 2017:93). India's control over the IOR littorals and the larger South Asian region is critical for her identity as the regional power and her great power ambitions (see debates on 'net provider of security' and 'net security provider' in Khurana 2016 and Basrur 2017).

Construction of the China identity

Indian discourse represents the Chinese identity in varied and contradictory ways. The Chinese carrier actions are simultaneously constructed as threatening and increasingly aggressive; while also rationalised as being in the interest of China's national security. China is also described as an actor that copies and steals military technology, thereby giving it an undue advantage in timelines and R&D. China's carrier strategy together with its expansionist tendencies into the "far seas" are termed a long-term, formidable threat. This is, however, played down by the Armed Forces narratives in three ways- one, China's lack of operational capability in the Indian Ocean; two, the low annual operational ratios and minimal deployments of the PLAN's strategic maritime assets like submarines even in China's near seas; and most importantly, a representation of the Indian Navy's advanced capabilities.

China as aggressor versus China as a rational actor

The carrier Liaoning's movement into international waters is portrayed as a part of China's increasing expansionism and aggression, especially into the Indian Ocean. Threat words used by Armed Forces writers are ones of expansion and build up – "growing footprint of Chinese in IOR" (Indian Ocean Region) (Singh Manmohan 2014:34), "… engaging IOR littorals to gain a foothold in these countries to facilitate PLA Navy's sustenance in Indian Ocean" (Singh Manmohan 2014:37), 'growing lethality' (Pant 2017) 'expansionist' mind-set, China's ambitious naval modernisation program, 'expand its presence into', 'Chinese and its Navy push towards India in the Indian Ocean Region', "challenge the Indian Navy's primacy as a 'Net Security Provider' in the region and erode its strategic influence" (Shergill 2015:64-66). Analysts like Shergill (2015:65) even portray the PLAN Marines as an invasion force. 'Growing', 'expanding', 'challenging', 'eroding', 'pushing' are words that represent actions that are spreading and building up Chinese threat.

Analysts predominantly use three strategies to represent the China threat. One, they use action words to construct increasing threat like challenge, aggressive, expansionist; Two, they use metaphors like the 'silk noose' to portray an image of being suffocated or restricted by Chinese

encirclement (much on the lines of the Indian argument of the Chinese 'String of Pearls'[129]) (Shergill 2015, Suri 2016); and Three, use a numerical asset comparison of US and Chinese navies (Pant 2017, Singh Puyam Rakesh 2017, Rajan 2015, Gurung 2017, Chopra 2016).

Using action words (or words representing magnitudinal growth or multiplying by proportions, not in a linear fashion as 'size') to represent China's growing appetite for expansion, "China's extra-territorial ambitions are no longer growing – they are galloping!", quoting "Xu Guangyu, a senior advisor to the China Arms Control and Disarmament, …"China will build ten more bases for six aircraft carriers", adding that they can be built around countries friendly to China, like Pakistan" (Bhaskar Roy 2017)**. This not only magnifies the China threat but at the same time links the threat to Pakistan, India's arch rival. (For PLA ramping up arguments also see Pant 2017, Ranade 2015, Upadhyay 2014, Singh Manmohan 2014:34).

China's "growing aggressiveness, its 'anti-access/area denial capabilities' and creation of the Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ)" are interpreted as a Chinese strategy to restrict the space of operation[130] in the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific for both the US and Indian Navies (Upadhyay 2014). Restriction of space of operation brings to mind an image of strangulation [The silk noose is used as a metaphor (Shergill 2015:69)]. Metaphors are more prevalent within Armed Forces discourse (For other metaphors used, see the section below on Metaphors).

A numerical assessment of maritime assets of the Chinese navy (sometimes compared to the United States) is also employed by some Think Tank writers (Pant 2017, Singh Puyam Rakesh 2017, Rajan 2015). Such a strategy emphasizes the ramping up of naval modernisation. It is a data-driven approach to convince the reader about the China threat, and at the same time highlights China's focus on its strategic goal of national security. This construction of a formidable China threat and an unequivocally hostile neighbour, multiplying its asset dimensions rapidly, thus facilitates the argument justifying massive defence spending.

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[129] India believes China uses the 'String of Pearls' strategy to encircle and contain ('concircle') it (Holmes and Yoshihara 2008). The term 'String of Pearls' was "coined by Christopher J. Pehrson in a 2006 paper for the US Army War College…" (Lintner 2015). The term is also reported to have been coined by USA's Booze-Allen Hamilton defence consultancy firm in 2005 (Rahman 2012). Some assessments term the String of Pearls theory, "a speculation, backed by frail and somewhat disjointed evidence". See Khurana 2008 for perspectives on the theory, and China's objectives in the Indian Ocean and Indian security implications. See Brewster 2014 for Sino-Indian security dilemma in the Indian Ocean.

[130] Abhijit Singh (2018) also refers to this in the context of the Indian Ocean – "India needs a better PLAN in the Indian Ocean"

China is at the same time portrayed as a rational and calculating actor that needs to protect its SLOCs and economic interests (its trade, energy and security interests enmeshed within its image of a rising great power with a global span of interests). Authors justify China's need for an aircraft carrier, "This vulnerability of China's economic interests to interdiction by IN (Indian Navy) necessitates PLA Navy's presence in IOR and an aircraft carrier is the only platform that can provide its merchant men as well as Fleet with air power support in the absence of bases in IOR. Hence, it is inevitable that the Chinese CBG will operate in the IOR" (Singh Manmohan 2014:37). "The burgeoning Chinese economy is dependent on assured access to raw material, resources and markets. Hence, safeguarding of these interests is one of the primary missions of PLA Navy" … "Presently, China relies on global security initiatives to ensure safe passage of these commodities through IOR. However, this architecture may not be able to protect Chinese ships during hostilities and PLA Navy will have to safeguard its national interests" (Singh Manmohan 2014:34). An expanding Chinese economy, is also cited by Suri (2016) as causing China's projection of power and feeding "China's ambitions of developing into a maritime power". Shergill (2015: 64) also mentions the economic motive behind China's increasing interest in the Indian Ocean, quoting China's 2015 White Paper. As China grows "economically and militarily", it gets "less and less tolerant of foreign spying or surveillance, especially by US forces on its military capabilities" (Kapur 2014:2). All of these constructions rationalise China's military efforts at ensuring national security and achieving economic interests.

China's carrier ambitions are justified by the military community[131], in the light of its vulnerabilities and insecurities caused by the powerful regional navies (Prakash 2016:9; Khurana 2017: 1; Yadav 2017). There is also discussion of "China's right to protect its territorial integrity and its maritime interests" (Suri 2016). Colonel Bhat (2017) portrays China as a transparent and rational actor and China is lauded for its work culture and speed of construction of the second carrier. It is also a goal-oriented and logical actor, "consistently keeping pace with the Chinese goals regionally and globally" (ibid.)

Think Tank discourse also illustrates that some analysts rationalise China's need for aircraft carriers and the PLAN modernisation. Rajan (2015) refers to the need to protect Chinese "investments, trade, energy, imports and the surging presence of Chinese living abroad …" and to keep away 'external countries' 'meddling in South China Sea'" especially the United States.

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[131] Another Armed Forces analyst justifies it thus, "… an aircraft carrier is the only platform that can provide its Fleet with air power support in the absence of bases in IOR" (Singh Manmohan 2014:38). It is surprising that most Armed Forces writers do not discuss Djibouti as a base in the IOR and the development of Gwadar [Shergill (2015) discusses this]. More discussion on the silence on Djibouti in the section on silences or omissions in discourse.

Ranade (2015) lists various threats faced by China to its national interests. There are, however, those that disagree, like Yhome (2017) who state that the PLAN position (on the Liaoning drill being "entirely for research purposes") and the position of some Chinese naval experts (that as the world's second largest economy, China "requires aircraft carrier battle groups with long-distance capability to protect its national interests") "do not go hand in hand … Rather, it signals the country's ability to act as a deterring force in the face of the presence of the US and other countries in these waters". China's aircraft carriers are thus linked with the themes of economics and securing national interests, even ensuring its national security, by dissuading meddlers and Western spying on its capabilities. China's actions in the USS Cowpens incident are also represented as a rational actor's focus on ensuring its security interests. Counter narratives criticise the United States[132] for spying on Liaoning and thus instigating a Chinese response (see Singh A 2014).

Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean is represented as inevitable (accepted and naturalised truth/ reality) by some Armed Forces authors, interpreted as the natural progression in PLAN's acquisition of operational capabilities in the 'far seas'. Liaoning's arrival in the Indian Ocean is constructed by Armed Forces analysts as if it were a foregone conclusion. The Indian Ocean is termed as Liaoning's 'likely combat deployment area' (but later there is a negation of this, citing Liaoning's limited capabilities). "… PLA Navy will have to operate in IOR to safeguard its national interests" (Singh Manmohan 2014:35-36). The first steps of that move are the "peacetime PLAN deployments to the IOR … gain carrier operating experience in its likely combat deployment area" (Singh Manmohan 2014:37). The construction of IOR as Liaoning's 'likely combat deployment area', foretells a conflict of interests in the IOR. But such constructions are negated too by the same writer, "… unlikely that Liaoning with its limited capabilities will be deployed in the IOR in the eventuality of Sino-India hostilities" (Singh Manmohan 2014:38). Sino-Indian hostilities are also written as an eventuality. There are counter narratives questioning the operational capabilities (see section 'India's advanced capabilities') and territorial span of Liaoning, with some representing it as employed in the near seas and largely used for training purposes, not combat. Chopra (2016:76) also constructs the Chinese carrier threat in the IOR as justifying India's need for a CATOBAR carrier.

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[132] ... the storytelling subject positions various events, incidents and actors (including itself) in a framework of negative and positive relationships " (Browning 2008: 46). White (1985) and Ricoeur (1983) term this emplotment ("it is only in the process of emplotment that future action becomes possible and intelligible") (ibid.)

China as an actor that copies and steals (technology)

China is simultaneously also represented as copying or stealing technology, thus not possessing the inherent capability to become a threat in terms of advanced military technology or R&D. It is interpreted as reverse-engineering advanced technology, and engaging in state-sponsored industrial espionage. Armed Forces analysts often stress the fact that Chinese technology is copied, for example, the Liaoning's fighter J-15 is claimed to be copied from Russia's Su-33 (Suri 2016); "…the J-15—a Russian Su-33 clone …" (Singh A 2017); "The Chinese claim that it is an indigenously developed aircraft while some critics say that it is a derivative of the Su 33 Flanker (Suri 2016); "The J15 fighter (Su-33 reverse engineered)…" (Bahadur 2016: 46); "development of J-15 was facilitated by Su-33 prototype acquired by China from Ukraine in 2001. Avionics of J-15 are more or less similar to that of J-11B (Su-27) (See Mongia 2013a:1 for charges against China's reverse engineering of the Su-27). The Chinese refit and building of the ski jump of Liaoning is also attributed to Ukrainian construction drawings from the Nikolayev Yard, which later aided the construction of China's indigenous aircraft carrier, Shandong (Suri 2016).

Chinese identity is constructed as stealing mineral wealth, stealing information and communication – for example,"… give the Chinese access to 99.8 per cent of the world's ocean floor and the capability of harnessing the lode of mineral wealth, especially oil, besides capability of viewing and examining submarine cables that carry other nations communications and objects of intelligence value that were hitherto unreachable" (Shergill 2015:65; see Chinese spying on Talisman Sabre exercises in Singh, Puyam R 2017). This represents a calculative China identity that will go to great lengths to achieve its interests. "Beyond that China is striving to gain mining rights in the central IOR which will eventually became an excuse for its naval presence in the area" (Yadav 2017). China's Maritime Silk Road (MSR) is another example cited where China initially starts "economic projects leading gradually to achieving strategic and military ends" (Yadav 2017).

Constructing an identity of a stealing and copying (disruptive) China, that has an undue advantage in timelines and R&D, creates the discursive space to rationalise the Indian government's slower pace of military technological acquisition and development; specifically, the continued delays in Indian carrier launches[133] and decisions on crucial naval assets like the naval LCA and harriers (Prakash 2016:16-17, Singh A 2014). Such constructions of the Chinese identity predicates the 'idea' of India as a non-disruptive, norm adherent, and constructs a sub-

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[133] India's next two indigenous carriers Vikrant and Vishal have been delayed. Bhat (2017) lauds China "The construction of CV-17 (Shandong) has surprisingly taken only about two years for its launch".

narrative of difference, where a democracy like India cannot mobilise resources in the way China does, due to the government being constrained by popular mandate. The process of interpretation or making sense of the situation, is simultaneously also a process of representation or demarcation of the in-group and out-group, using shared language, symbols and already existing shared meanings (Jackson and Sorensen 2006:162-165). "Identities are… in fact often forged through the opposition to the identities of significant others … (Smith 1992:75).

Counter-narratives: Temporality of threat versus capabilities

Temporal adjectives are used in Armed Forces discourse to portray the long-term threat. Threat words are associated with the temporal dimension, creating an impression of a threat there is no escaping from (Jackson 2005:100). Constructions like "imminent threat" contradict others, for example, "It is therefore a matter of time before …", "long term threat from the Chinese CBG in IOR", "It is therefore likely that Liaoning will undertake near sea missions in the near/medium term to gain operational experience…" (Singh Manmohan 2014:36-38). "Hence, IN needs to prepare for countering the inevitable long term threat from the Chinese CBG in IOR" (Singh Manmohan 2014:38). "Long Term. China is engaging IOR littorals to gain a foothold in these countries to facilitate PLA Navy's sustenance in Indian Ocean… Short Term. The peace time deployment of Liaoning with its escorts in the IOR is likely to materialise in the near future…" (Singh Manmohan 2014:37). "In the longer run, however, a sustained maritime presence in the Indian Ocean Region will not only allow Beijing to strategically dominate the region, it will also take the regional security initiative away from India" (Shergill 2015:66). The China threat is temporally continuing and infinite (Jackson 2005:9).

Think Tank analysts also discuss long-term Chinese ambitions in the Indian Ocean "Since the mid-1970s, China has had a deep desire of exerting its influence in the IOR… China has ensured continued legitimacy in the region for a long period" (Ranade in Shikha and Hukil 2014). In the same manner, China's strategy to win over the IOR littorals and invest in huge infrastructure projects in them, is another of China's long-term plans. As a formidable threat, China is described as willing to go to any length to ensure PLA Navy presence in the Indian Ocean, "… China may use its space based assets[134] for developing MDA[135]. This may facilitate Liaoning's

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[134] However, in the very next sentence there is talk of the limitations of "present space technology" and time delays that may preclude this. There are also contradictions in the calculation of the carrier threat. Though it is constructed as not being able to threaten "against any nation with a credible Air Force", the very next sentence claims that the J-15s and escorts in a maritime strike role will threaten Indian fleet in the IOR (Singh Manmohan 2014: 35, also see Gurung 2017).
[135] Maritime Domain Awareness in Indian Ocean (here).

operations in IOR during peace" (Singh Manmohan 2014: 35, also see Gurung 2017). Chinese identity is also constructed as a 'formidable neighbour' ramping up its maritime power (Gurung 2017).

Although the China threat in the IOR is played up using temporality and is constructed as an accepted and naturalised truth (reality), this threat (and Liaoning specifically) is simultaneously also played down using counter-narratives questioning Chinese carrier capabilities. For example, "China will have to take the long arduous journey of building its own aircraft carrier and evolving its own operating procedures …" (Singh Manmohan 2014:36). "The past four years have seen the PLAN hesitantly feeling its way towards operationalising the Liaoning and its complement of J-15 Tiger Shark fighters" (Prakash 2016: 14). "All these issues require time for fusion .... This could take time as China is operating an aircraft carrier for the first time… could make mistakes that would stretch the time period" (Parmar 2014; also see Misra 2017: 4). "…even though equipping the Carrier with its permanent air wing may take some time" (Shergill 2015:66). "It would take decades for the Chinese aircraft carriers to exercise sea control in the IOR … signaled their intention, translating it into capability would take many years" (Khurana in Shikha and Hukil 2014). China's carriers are "unlikely to erode New Delhi's operational and political leverage in the Indian Ocean" (Singh A 2017). "…development of doctrines and standard operating procedures for air operations at sea is a far bigger challenge for the PLA Navy, one that can really only be surmounted after a long gestation period" (Chopra 2016:74-75). All these narratives use time as a factor, i.e. temporality. As explained above, temporal adjectives are used to portray the long-term threat of PLAN presence in the IOR. Temporality is, however, also used to 'play down' the threat, pointing to the long gestation period required for China to develop carrier capability.

The binary opposite (an Indian identity with advanced carrier capabilities and operational experience since 1961) is constructed automatically via the discussion of specific Chinese carrier shortcomings. Armed Forces' analysis illustrates that Liaoning's smaller size and ski ramp capabilities pose critical challenges to China's carrier plans in the Indian Ocean (Suri 2016, Prakash 2016:16). Other factors delaying Liaoning's deployments away from China's shores are, issues in integrating the air-wing with fleet operations of Liaoning, training of pilots and deck crew, training required for refuelling and rearming in close proximity to other fighters, fitment of sensor suite and weaponry, working out the operational co-existence of the Chinese carrier command-teams and the highly regimented, rigidly structured Chinese air force, and importantly, logistics (Liaoning has only a 'token logistical flotilla' so far (Singh A 2017)). The

shortcomings of Liaoning's airwing are also analysed. The disadvantages of the Shenyang J-15 fighter (Flying Shark, forming the major part of Liaoning's air wing[136]), are explained and supported (in the Armed Forces discourse) with calculations of weapon and fuel payloads (see Mongia 2013a; Singh A 2017). Liaoning's STOBAR ski jump[137] take-off and its ordnance and fuel payloads are also claimed to inhibit the J-15s, "effectively crippling its attack range and firepower[138]". Other disadvantages are the "absence of an ECM (Electronic Counter Measures) Pod" (thus requiring multiple J-15s to be deployed[139] for long range projection and land-sea control), ejection seats and landing gear (Suri 2016). Armed Forces narratives also lean on criticism within Chinese media, Sina Military Network and the blogosphere on the abilities of the J-15s (such criticism ridicules the Flying Sharks, calling them 'Flopping Fish') (Mongia 2013a).

Reasons cited to support the Armed Forces narrative that Chinese carriers will take a while before they arrive in the IOR are – One, China's lack of operational capability in the Indian Ocean[140], far from its sphere of influence. Two, an emphasis on Indian Navy's capabilities (with the Indian Navy possessing carrier operating experience since 1961) (Yadav 2017, Parmar 2014, Khurana 2017, see Prakash 2016:16 for India's experience with carrier Vikramaditya). India's carrier capabilities are used to play down the Chinese carrier threat and build reassurance. India's long experience and advanced capabilities with its carrier aviation (for example the MIG-29K and the Kamov-31 ASW[141] helicopters of Vikramaditya, and possibly the LCA[142]-Navy in future) are discussed in Prakash (2016:14-18) and Mongia (2013a:1-2). "India need not panic at the launch of China's first indigenous aircraft carrier … speed of construction is certainly a matter of concern and worry for the Indian Navy. However, the Chinese navy still has a long way to travel to reach fully operational capability (Bhat 2017). Three, PLAN's other assets like submarines are claimed to have low annual operational ratios and minimal deployments even

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[136] Liaoning's air wing – "36 aircraft comprising 24 J-15 fighters, 6 anti-submarine warfare helicopters, 4 airborne early warning helicopters, and 2 rescue helicopters" (Suri 2016). However, according to Abhijit Singh (2017) Liaoning can carry only 12 J-15s and Shandong will carry 24. Various Armed Forces writers estimate the composition of Liaoning's air wing differently. Suri (2016), Mongia (2013a) and Manmohan Singh (2014) discuss just the J-15s. Colonel Bhat's satellite imagery-based analysis illustrates the possibility of JL-9G being used as part of Liaoning's air wing.
[137] The J-15 fighter taking off from Liaoning in the Bohai Sea (drills in 2016), see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4y0X4yY1o8c (accessed 22 May 2018).
[138] "… boxed into less than 120 Kilometers of attack range" (Mongia 2013a:2). These ranges, if launched from the Liaoning in the Indian Ocean, provide only limited air cover.
[139] Colonel Bhat's satellite imagery based analysis (dated 9 May 2017) of Huangdicun naval aviation training facility discusses the shortage of J-15s for training.
[140] "PLAN does not have any capability to ensure 'Sea Control' or 'Air Superiority' in the Indian Ocean" (Shergill 2015:66)
[141] Anti-submarine warfare
[142] Light Combat Aircraft

in China's territorial waters and surrounding seas[143], "… only 67 patrols in 28 years, averaging about 2.4 patrols per year" (Shergill 2015:66). These minimal deployments hinder development of operational depth and experience in varied operational scenarios (also see Kristensen 2008 on minimal deployments).

Chinese maritime assets are thus represented as posing no threat to India, "liable to be outsmarted and outmanoeuvred by the Indian Navy… In the end, PLA-Navy does not constitute a threat to India in the near term, but it would not be prudent for Indian Navy 'not to constitute adequate precautionary measures'" (Shergill 2015:72). "It would take the PLA Navy many years to operationalize a full-fledged Carrier Task Force, and possibly decades to make it effective enough to achieve sea-control against advanced navies" (Khurana 2017: 2).

Indian news sources also seem to vouch for the Chinese carriers' lack of maritime prowess – "The Liaoning has taken part in previous exercises… but China is years away from perfecting carrier operations" (India Today December 28, 2016). "Although being a formidable neighbour, China may not fall in comparison with decades of experience in carrier operations which India has, but the former is building itself as a naval power" (juxtaposition of threat, reassurance and threat) (Gurung 2017). "While India has a long history of naval aviation and operates two aircraft carriers, including INS Vikramaditya, China's sole aircraft carrier Liaoning was launched in 2012 but is still under trial stage and far from active service. India is the only country in Asia that fully operates aircraft carriers …" (Gupta Shishir 2015).

This constant juxtaposition of China threat and the reassurance in Indian capabilities is visible in some Think Tank writers too (Bhaskar Roy 2017). Pant (2017) also uses this switch in threat and reassurance, "PLAN is ramping up the construction of nuclear powered submarines ... China does lack trained manpower to build its submarines, cruisers, destroyers, frigates .... But that too is being rectified with single-minded purpose".

The description of China as a formidable threat and the juxtaposition of the binary opposites (Indian identity of a strong naval power versus the identity as a weaker state in comparison to Chinese technological advancements) illustrates the conflicted imaginings of India's identity as a major or regional power (Pardesi 2015). Constituent parts of the narrative are reconstituted and rearticulated using indicators like temporality and capability (analysis of force structures)

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[143] Some think tank analysts discuss China's substantially increasing naval activities in its near seas (Yhome 2017)

to construct the counter-narrative. Temporality of threat helps construct the accepted truth or reality, stressing the rationality of China in the IOR. The capability narrative questions it, highlighting China's shortcomings (technological and experiential) and India's long carrier experience. This does not mean that one is replaced by the other. These multiple narratives co-exist within the discourse. There is a discursive struggle between the constructed China identities. Different groups build up and play down different themes perceived to be national security interests. As will be explained later, Think Tank analysts, in their representation of the China threat, examine it in the context of *structural factors* - like India's regional security environment, the currently existing Indian Ocean architectures and the Asia Pacific order with United States as the security-providing hegemon. The Armed Forces narratives are more focused on *unit-level factors* like military capabilities, lack of governmental will and shoddy planning, governmental and institutional resistance to military-technological acquisition and development, domestic debates (for example, the need for carriers), etc. All these narratives co-exist within the discourse.

Construction of the Indian Identity

Indian identity constructed in the discourse is dichotomous. India's carrier-operating experience since 1961 is stressed and China's CBG capabilities questioned. At the same time, India is represented as only being able to 'react' to Chinese maritime actions and PLAN presence in the Indian Ocean. Within the discourse, the Chinese carrier programme is portrayed as being focused on curbing US naval supremacy in the Pacific. This automatically constructs the Indian state identity as not figuring within Chinese strategic priorities and therefore, a weak and insignificant player, in spite of India's self-affirmed identity of a major Asian power.

A weaker, reactionary India

As discussed above, there is a juxtaposition in building up the China threat and playing down of the threat (questioning Chinese capabilities and highlighting India's long carrier experience). Some narratives attribute weaker capabilities to India, and construct an Indian Navy that has limited resources and capabilities. "The presence of a Chinese CBG will *mandate* allocation of resources by Indian Navy and Air Force to address the threat-in-being and *complicate* the force allocation matrix for the Indian defence planners" (builds the China threat). However, the very next sentence reassures, "The acquisition of additional carriers, overcoming of sustenance, ASW and MDA vulnerabilities by China will take time. Hence, IN should *judiciously utilise the available time* to prepare for an encounter with PLA Navy's CBG in the eventuality of hostilities with China" (Singh Manmohan 2014:37, italics added). The first part builds the China threat image.

The second sentence appears to reassure and negate an imminent threat. However, the words "prepare for an encounter with PLA Navy's CBG …" again plays up the imminent threat with the temporal adjectival clause 'available time'. This construction seems to assume an encounter as inevitable, and the word 'available' creating a sense of urgency or an imminent threat. This constructs not only an impending and formidable threat from the PLA Navy, at the same time it represents the Indian identity as *merely reacting* to China's actions, allocating its resources in response to China's actions, and having no say in the matter (for example, China complicating India's planned force allocations). It seems to emphasize that Indian advanced capabilities aside, the Indian government needs to focus on Chinese intentions and monitor the CBG. It recommends preparedness/ alertness and the wise use of the available time. New Delhi is portrayed as reactionary and lacking a strategic response in Bhat's (2017) analysis, "New Delhi's fear of a Chinese takeover of maritime South Asia is unlikely to come to pass in a way imagined by commentators. Indian maritime planners and policymakers must breathe easy and calmly plan for the future". Mentions of (unexpected) criticism by the Indian media against the Indian government (Bhat 2017) again highlights a state of unpreparedness, being caught by surprise and being reactive to China. This criticism at the time of the Shandong launch may be partly because it was indigenously-built in such a short time span[144] and India's next two indigenous carriers Vikrant and Vishal have been delayed[145]. If the China identity constructions (within strategic discourse and in the corridors of power in New Delhi) represent a China that steals or copies, then the pace of construction of Chinese indigenous carriers should not be perturbing. The concern expressed within certain narratives seems contradictory to the China identity constructions within the discourse.

In the above example from Manmohan Singh (2014) (three consecutive sentences), the image of China needing time to overcome its MDA vulnerabilities simultaneously creates an image of the Indian Navy having much experience in carrier integration and being at a more advanced

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[144] "The construction of CV-17 has surprisingly taken only about two years for its launch. The speed of construction is indeed commendable" (Bhat 2017)

[145] Some of the Indian Armed Forces discourse on Liaoning have gone so far as to question the need for aircraft carriers, to counter the Chinese (see Singh A 2014). "Pointing to key threats like enhanced battlespace transparency, better anti-ship missiles, improved submarine capabilities, and the hazard from shore-based ballistic missiles, critics are again predicting that the carrier's days are numbered" (Prakash 2016: 18). "The emergence of China's 'Anti-Access and Area-Denial' (A2AD) strategy seemed to further bolster the case against carriers. There was active debate about the justification for building any more of these expensive behemoths, accompanied by the proposition that landbased air power – naval or air force – could take over their roles at sea. However, Britain's hugely expensive programme to revive its fixed-wing ship-borne aviation; China's new-found enthusiasm for aircraft carriers; and the US 'air-sea battle' concept seem to have provided a pause in this debate. India, too, has embarked on an ambitious carrier building programme, with one ship due to be delivered in 2019 and another on the drawing board" (Prakash 2016: 7-8). Think Tank analysts seem to support the need for carriers (see Prakash 2016:7-8, Abhijit Iyer-Mitra (2017; 'The problem with India's naval build-up'); and Pant (2017) for argument against).

stage of MDA, at least in the Indian Ocean (also see Prakash on India's possession of maritime game changers[146] (2016:11)). And the next sentence, a recommendation to wisely use time to prepare, represents an Indian identity that usually does not have a propensity to counter China, more reactionary and not strategic in framing responses to Chinese actions. Yadav (2017) discusses the Indian inability to counter China's "'containment-cum-counter-encirclement' policy". Other narratives that emphasize India's weaker status compared to China are – for example, Shergill (2015: 71) calls for a "need to shed a 'false sense of security'". Prakash (2016: 8) refers to the 'maritime awakening' among India's decision-makers in part due to the "dramatic exposure of India's soft coastal underbelly in November 2008, the trauma of rampant piracy and the looming menace of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN)". He emphasizes the failure of politicians and the bureaucracy to share the Indian Navy's aspirations for a blue water force. Other disadvantages he lists are the slow pace of acquisitions in the Ministry of Defence (MoD), "severe economic constraints as well as strategic tunnel-vision at the national level", the fact that INS Vikrant and INS Viraat being small-sized carriers capable of only carrying "sub-sonic aircraft of limited range and endurance" (Prakash 2016:15). Yadav (2017) also emphasizes this lack of governmental will and shoddy planning, "The Indian Navy too is working on its carrier battle groups but delays and shoddy planning continue to mar Indian aspirations" (Pant 2017). These narratives describe India in a weaker position faced with bureaucratic, political challenges, an India that usually does not plan to counter China (thus the call to use time judiciously to prepare). Pant (2017) again seems to build a reactive India that needs to prepare and mitigate China's challenge, "Given the challenge that China poses to Indian interests, PLAN's growing lethality should be a serious worry for India... India needs to find ways to mitigate that threat with some urgency".

An interpretation of India's identity through the eyes of China is also portrayed. "Chinese official media took a swipe at Indian efforts recently when it argued that 'New Delhi is perhaps too impatient to develop an aircraft carrier... New Delhi should perhaps be less eager to speed up the process of building aircraft carriers in order to counter China's growing sway in the Indian Ocean, and focus more on its economy,' it said" (Pant 2017).

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[146] Game changers that Prakash lists are multi-layered surveillance capability (aircraft and UAVs for each layer), GSAT-7 communication satellite, carrier "INS Vikramaditya with its complement of MiG-29K fighters and Kamov-28/31 helicopters", "first indigenously-built nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) Arihant", and the nuclear-powered attack submarine INS Chakra.

Indian narratives also play down the carrier threat by emphasizing the growing PLAN submarine presence in the Indian Ocean and the increasing Chinese alignment with littoral states of the IOR. Abhijit Singh (2017) discusses the PLAN submarine threat in the Indian Ocean, that is progressively growing "to a steady, all-year-round presence" and "whose constant deployments in the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea since 2012 has been a source of deep anxiety". "PLAN is ramping up the construction of nuclear powered submarines, very significant for the short- to medium-term priorities of China" (Pant 2017). India's overwhelming focus on the China carrier threat is criticised, "India's fretfulness over China's aircraft carrier plans serves to distract attention from this more serious and immediate issue, particularly since India is left with just 13 operational submarines[147]" (Singh A 2017, also see Gurung 2017, Prakash 2016:9, Rajan 2015, Singh Puyam R 2017: 2-3; Khurana in Shikha and Hukil 2014) (See debate on the Indian need for aircraft carriers mentioned earlier in Prakash 2016, Khurana 2017, Iyer-Mitra 2017).

PLAN's use of maritime facilities in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh is discussed, as is its naval outreach efforts and increasing influence (Singh Puyam R 2017, Pant 2017). Philippines and Malaysia drawing closer to China is cited (Yhome 2017). This constructs an image of an India watching warily and unable to react (Garver 2011:5-6). As "… China's increasing influence in the Indian Ocean would enhance defence cooperation between China and the coastal states… The competition for regional supremacy is on the rise… likely to escalate as China modernises its navy to deal with overseas challenges and establishes itself as a maritime power" (Singh Puyam R 2017). India's major power aspirations are highlighted here. This seems to support the criticism on India's reluctance to assume its rightful position as a major power, and its failure to exercise its heft in foreign policy.

At the same time, China's carriers and PLAN modernisation are portrayed as aimed at countering the superiority of the US Navy (Pant 2017, Yhome 2017, Rajan 2015; Ranade counters this in Shikha and Hukil 2014). This construction of China automatically creates Indian identity as not figuring in China's strategic priorities, a smaller weaker state that China is not focussed on.

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[147] "We should be worried the way we have run down our submarine fleet. But with China bearing down on us, the way it is on the Himalayas, the South China Sea and now the Indian Ocean, we should be even more worried," said Arun Prakash, former chief of the Indian navy (Miglani and Wilkes 2014).

India's advanced capabilities

As discussed above, the China carrier threat is played down in some Armed Forces narratives that reiterate India's capabilities – India's geographical advantage in theatre dominance, growing air wing capabilities, anti-Ship Warfare (ASW) helicopters, P8i and towed array sonar systems, surface-to surface missile capabilities, Brahmos integration, even the fact of India being a pioneer in UAV operations at sea, are all cited as reasons (Prakash 2016: 11-18, Singh Manmohan 2014:36, Singh A 2017).

News articles also usually report on naval assets, technological advances and R&D initiatives. They may include quotes by naval experts, but they usually do not contain analysis on implications and force assessments. There are exceptions, however. Gurung (2017) examines the Indian Navy's strengths in operating carriers for decades and the areas of weakness (like owning minimal anti-submarine helicopters, and issues with the engine, airframe, etc of MiG 29K/KUB, the air wing of Vikramaditya) (also see Shishir Gupta 2015).

Commissioning of carriers in itself is not a major threat. But examining it within the backdrop of PLAN modernisation and China's aggressive infrastructure expansion in its near seas, justifies the apprehension in the region. Think Tank analysts seem to situate the carrier actions within China's wider naval modernisation drive and President Xi's defence reforms "which are taking away resources from land to air and naval power" (Pant 2017, Ranade 2015, Bhaskar Roy 2017, Rajan 2015, Singh Puyam R 2017- see discussion in section on 'silences and leaving out context'). They construct a discourse of India being the receiver of Chinese actions, and being reactive, "India should also recognize the negative fallout from the PLA Navy's "open seas protection" role with respect to its Act East policy. The rising tensions in South China Sea (SCS) may not be conducive to India's promotion of its economic interests in the SCS region. India has only a limited capacity to directly influence events in that region" (Rajan 2015). The headlines/ titles of some of the texts explicitly convey this threat and are written in a hawkish tone; for example, headlines like 'China's got big naval plans and India should definitely be worried', 'China to build a stronger navy', 'China: Signs of an Expansionist Nation' are but a few.

Discursive strategies

India's enviable, strategic position in the Indian Ocean has in the past been described using metaphors like "India is just like a giant and never-sinking aircraft carrier and the most important strategic point guarding the Indian Ocean" (Zhang Ming quoted in Holmes and Yoshihara 2008:51). Various strategies have been used within the Indian strategic discourse to represent the Chinese threat in the IOR and the Liaoning. Prominent is the use of historical

metaphors, an allied Pakistan threat and the employing of silences in the discourse. These discursive strategies illustrate the working of powerful ideational elements that underpin India's national identity and security concept, as explained below.

Historical metaphors and comparisons

Metaphors (mostly used by Armed Forces writers) buttress the predominant themes they are discussing. Shandong is compared to HMS Dreadnought, the British battleship which played a role in early 20th century naval warfare (Khurana 2017:1). Historical comparisons to the Battle of the Coral Sea (The first aircraft carrier battle ever fought - Australia and United States against Japan during the Second World War), is used (Misra 2017). Misra (2017:3) replaces 'China' for 'Japan' through usages like 'common enemy'. India's China threat is blown up to the proportion of a World War enemy (Axis power), which a group of allies must counter. Such constructions open the discursive space to rationalise the Indian government's policy choice of increased maritime alignments[148] with Japan, the United States, Australia, Singapore, and other Asian powers (recalling the historical Allied Forces) through security initiatives like the Democratic Diamond and the Quadrilateral. This also justifies efforts to strengthen the Indian Ocean multilateral initiatives like the IORA (Indian Ocean Rim Association) and IONS (Indian Ocean Naval Symposium).

Historical details on British and American naval air aviation are examined in Admiral Prakash's article, as are Japan's use of "carrier-borne air power" in the Pearl Harbour attack (2016:2-5). Examples of battleships and carriers used in the First and Second World Wars in these Armed Forces narratives provide historical context to the development of present day naval aviation (Prakash 2016:2-5). Such detailed coverage, especially on the Royal Navy Air Service history, however, provokes some debate on the Indian Navy's extant umbilical ties to the Royal Navy, contrary to the independent entity envisioned in the nationalist narrative of Panikkar (1945:84, 23). India's colonial history continues to influence the mindset and thinking on the Indian Navy's dominance in the IOR and how China's growing influence in the IOR is perceived. The themes discussed and metaphors used are influenced by the still-surviving Curzonian mindset (the Indian Navy inheriting it from its colonial ties).

Other metaphors employed compare Chinese capabilities to a fledgling/ novice/ baby – "Their Navy, a 'brown water one' as yet, is in the process of 'spreading their wings'" (*Fledgling*

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[148] This is best explained by Weldes, "… because defining the self as something already implies the national interests that flow from that definition. Once 'we' have been depicted as something there is no need to go searching for legitimacy for the implied interests which that 'we' entails, since legitimacy for those interests is produced in the narratives constructing identities" (Weldes quoted in Browning 2008: 53-54).

metaphor) (Shergill 2015:67) and "China is taking baby steps in this field whose strides are growing rapidly (Suri 2016). Such metaphors are used to play down the Chinese threat. These contribute to the Indian naval superiority narrative. China's acquisition of retired carriers in the past is compared to collecting a menagerie (Chopra 2016: 74).

The Chinese containment and encirclement of India is portrayed through the *strangulation or constriction metaphor* – like the silk noose, previously mentioned, "The new Silk Road is likened to a new 'silk noose' around the Indian peninsula and Gwadar, a crown jewel in that noose" (Shergill 2015:69). "…China could soon be 'chipping away' at India's regional maritime influence besides capable of surrounding/ choking the Indian peninsula, enforce 'blockade'/'maritime quarantine' … to force capitulation" (Shergill 2015:69). This strangulation or encirclement metaphor seems to support India's argument of a Chinese String of Pearls, aimed at choking India's influence and ambitions.

The *human body metaphor* is often used to paint an image of China being a calculative, cunning actor and India often involuntarily exposed to China's surreptitious or covert actions. For example, Chinese fishing vessels are described as "the 'eyes and ears' of coastal security and fitted with electronic Automatic Identification Systems" (Shergill 2015:69), India's 'sea blindness', the dramatic exposure of India's soft 'coastal underbelly' (Prakash 2016: 8). This stresses India's weak state identity in comparison to Chinese capabilities. Sometimes China is at the receiving end of India's actions in some metaphors, "China's exposed 'jugular vein' could be gainfully exploited by the IN…" (Prakash 2016:10)

Even Think Tank analysts sometimes use the 'human body' metaphor, for example, China's military modernisation and secretiveness being a headache; also "Both the US and China have been butting heads…" (Upadhyay 2014). The US' decline in influence is illustrated through "… superpower like the US could be expected to handle it with a flick of the wrist. Instead, it was Indian and other navies that had to beat the pirates back" (Yadav 2017).

The *Stealth, sabotage and vandalism metaphor* – "Our Cyber cables laid on the ocean floor will be susceptible to unauthorized Access/Alteration/Destruction by Midgets/Unmanned Underwater Vehicles carried on submarines/ merchant ships" (Shergill 2015:69). "China is becoming more confident … willing to shed its sheep clothing to show its fangs where it feels that its national interest may be adversely affected" (Kapur 2014:4). This points to a characteristic of untrustworthiness for China.

The *opera metaphor* – "The US today being the numero uno operator of aircraft carriers with ten carriers, is also the prima donna in the ongoing China Seas–Korean peninsula 'opera' that is currently being played out" (Misra 2017:4). This stresses US' primacy and hegemony over the Asia Pacific.

There is also an illustration of a cynical riddle on China's carrier (Chopra 2016: 75), which is used to contrast China's carrier advancements.

Through the use of historical metaphors of naval battles of the world wars, some Armed Forces narratives seem to create China as an evil power (that Allies would eventually defeat using maritime power), and play down Chinese naval power (fledgling). Most of the metaphors used, however, construct a looming China threat that could strangle India's ambitions and capabilities.

Leveraging the Pakistan threat

The Pakistan threat is often referred to closely in conjunction with the China threat, especially in the Armed Forces narratives (Prakash 2016, Shergill 2015, Singh Manmohan 2014, Misra 2017). In some constructions, sentences on these two threats are used simultaneously, one after another. For example, "There is evidence that China's carrier construction programme may run into 3-4 ships ... domination of Indian Ocean Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs). Our western neighbour[149], Pakistan, has created a potent sea-denial capability with a few submarines equipped with Air-Independent Propulsion..." (Prakash 2016: 9).

The Sino-Pak nexus in warships, submarines (see Gady 2016 for details) and arms supply is stressed. This is often explained as "the opening ...of a "second front[150]" that troubles Indian military planners" (Prakash 2016: 10) (See Prakash 2016 for Armed Forces recommendations on Indian strategy in case of a Sino-Pak axis in attack). This illustrates Indian Armed Forces analysts' preoccupation with the Pakistan threat. The psychological baggage and obsession with Pakistan is extant, even amidst the clamour for de-hyphenation[151]. The clamour over the Chinese transfer of naval assets and technology to Pakistan seems to contradict the narrative

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[149] Most Armed Forces narratives on the three case studies use this adjectival phrase 'our wester neighbour' to describe Pakistan, while other countries are just referred to by their names (no descriptors).

[150] Two fronts – China and Pakistan. General Bipin Rawat stressed that the Indian Army was prepared for a two and a half front war in June 2017, during the Doklam stand-off. Lt Gen Surinder Singh, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Command (at a Panjab university seminar in March 2018) clarified that a two-front war was not a "smart idea".

[151] Here referring to relations with India independently, not influenced by the Pakistan angle or the Kashmir issue. De-hyphenation is a foreign policy strategy that stresses relations with countries individually, independently and pragmatically to further interests. For example, the Indian government stresses that its diplomacy with Palestine and Israel is not influenced by its relations with the other. The same goes for India's relations with Iran and Israel.

of India as a major maritime power, far experienced than the Chinese PLAN, in carrier experience, and especially in CBG and air wing integration.

Words like 'collusivity' (Singh Manmohan 2014:35), used in the context of Pakistan, convey treachery, deviousness and underhand deals. It clearly differentiates the enemy 'Other' (China and Pakistan) from 'Self'. These boundary markers of identity are used to 'construct' the enemy Other. This polarising of identities into 'us' versus 'them' bifurcates the options available too – not only is there a requirement to take a stance[152] against 'collusivity', there is also the need to counter it too, a moral need to 'act' quickly and respond. There are also however, reassurances, by illustrating the lack of interoperability between the Chinese and Pakistani navies (ibid.) There is often this building up of threat (through the use of particular words like 'collusivity') and then a playing down of threat.

Shergill (2015:67) and Manmohan Singh (2014:35), both refer to the threat of the Sino-Pakistan nexus, but they do not use constructions to justify the pre-emption of a Pakistani attack or use the context of the two-front war that other Indian Armed Forces personnel often refer to.

News sources rarely mention Pakistan, in the context of China's carrier programme. Pakistan is mentioned only in reference to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Gwadar (Gurung 2017). News articles 'report' events and are heavily reliant on syndicated newsfeeds, usually not incorporating detailed individual analysis.

Think Tank analysts too refer to Pakistan in the light of the Gwadar deep sea port (being the "first Chinese overseas base where its carrier task force will be placed") and the CPEC (Bhaskar Roy 2017). They do not stress excessively on the Sino-Pak collusion in arms or technology transfers. They also provide a broader context to understand Chinese maritime actions. For example, Ranade (2015) refers to China's Lanzhou Theatre Command being an important factor in Sino-Pak synergies. This is an important contextual detail, to explain China's force structure expansion. PLA restructuring and downsizing started in the late 1980s. Under President Xi's defence reforms, the focus has further shifted from land to sea and air (Pant 2017, Permal 2014, see Friedberg and Ross 2009: 19 on shifts in focus) as did resource allocation, doctrinal overview and structural deployments. In the Indian context, it is important to note that the Lanzhou and Chengdu Military Regions to the West and Southwest of China (Sharma, Jain and Khanijo 2016) have been retained as independent Theatre Commands and have not faced major cuts in personnel and assets (due to their strategic proximity to India) (Ranade 2015). Examining the

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[152] Such usages "…obliterates all neutral ground and denies any possibility of withholding judgement or weighing up the evidence" (Jackson 2005: 86).

Sino-Pak nexus in the light of the importance of the Lanzhou Theatre Command and protecting Chinese investments in northern Pakistan provides better context. Describing the Chinese carrier threat by falling back upon the historical affliction with the Sino-Pak relationship or pointing to Pakistan's sea-denial capability (with submarines) fails to provide the necessary context required to understand China's maritime power projection (as part of its renewed focus on 'Sea and Air'- More on this in the section on 'silences'). Such discursive constructions on Pakistan's sea-denial capability automatically portrays a weak Indian state identity (and an Indian Navy that is fixated on the Pakistan submarine threat, when other narratives portray an advanced Indian navy capable of thwarting Chinese ambitions in the IOR). These narratives seem to contradict each other.

Silences or leaving out the context

Discursive interpretations and representations of social reality may contain silences on issues or topics, revealing the actor's unique process of attribution of meaning or his/ her way of making sense of the event or situation. As mentioned above, Think Tank analysts place the Chinese carrier actions in the wider context of PLAN restructuring and modernisation, and the building of a naval force commensurate with its national security interests (i.e. PLAN's gradual shift of focus from 'offshore waters defense' to the combination of 'offshore waters defense' and 'open seas protection'). Armed Forces analysts do not deal with PLAN restructuring, budget and force structure allocations in detail. The omission of this context by Armed Forces writers, in all three case studies, is probably due to a service requirement to refrain from commenting on early stages in doctrinal changes of adversarial armed forces. This could also probably be the result of their excessive focus on China's military capabilities (the capabilities versus intentions argument). Exaggerated claims about its capabilities could be "an effort to prop up continued levels of defence spending in the face of severe budgetary pressures" (Austin 1995:4). Think Tank commentators also examine China's expanding maritime prowess in the context of the increasing territorial disputes and claims in the South and East China Seas (Pant 2017, Rajan 2015, Roy 2017, Yhome 2017).

There is also very little mention of India's carrier programme in the discourse on the Chinese carriers (exceptions being Parmar 2014, Prakash 2016: 11-17, Abhijit Singh 2017, Pant 2017, Gurung 2017; although Chopra 2016:75 is a personal account). India's programme is discussed in separate articles that deal solely with India's Vikramaditya (Singh A 2014; Shishir Gupta 2015), or ones that deal with naval aviation in general (Prakash 2016).

Discussing the Indian carrier programme within the discourse on China's carriers would have provided a well-rounded, comparative picture in relation to China's carrier capabilities; rather than examining Chinese carriers in isolation and building up the China threat (Chopra's analysis in Vayu Aerospace May-June 2016, p. 75 contains a discussion on India's carriers but that is due to the article being a carrier comparison of most major navies). Challenges facing the Indian carrier programme[153] would also provide a clearer comparison.

In the limited discussions on Indian carriers, there is almost no mention of Washington's offer of the Electromagnetic aircraft launch system (EMALS) for India's next indigenous carrier, Vishal. Suri (2016) and Khurana (2017) consider China's next generation carrier employing either a steam-assisted catapult or the EMALS, however there is no mention of the United States having offered EMALS technology to India or discussions having started as far back as the Obama administration (this Indo-US partnership in carrier technology is part of the Defense Trade and Technology Initiative (DTTI)). This omission paints a very one-sided picture of the Chinese carrier threat. Gurung (2017) and Prakash (2016) do mention the US offer.

Another missing theme is the debate on the effectiveness of an aircraft carrier for power projection, given current scenarios of rapid technology advancements in anti-ship missiles, submarine, radars, space and counter-space capabilities, evolving A2/AD strategies and diminishing defence budgets worldwide (see Prakash 2016:7-8, Khurana 2017:2, Iyer-Mitra 2017, Chopra 2016:76 for 'smaller ship diehards'). This debate[154] though very vociferous in Indian strategic circles (and worldwide too), is sparingly mentioned in the Indian discourse used in this study. This would have provided some amount of context to the Indian government's hesitation to invest in carriers.

Most think tank writers discuss Djibouti and Gwadar as Chinese bases in the IOR, aimed at gaining blue water naval experience and power projection in the Indian Ocean (Pant 2017, Rajan 2015, Singh Puyam R 2017, Bhaskar Roy 2017, Sakhuja 2014-a: p.7). They also warn of similar bases in the Seychelles, Maldives, Myanmar and Bangladesh. Armed Forces writers, on the other hand, rarely mention Gwadar or China's new base in Djibouti (mentioned in Armed Forces analyst Prakash 2016). In fact, Manmohan Singh (2014:38) refers to the absence of Chinese

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[153] Abhijit Singh (2014) discusses INS Vikramaditya's lack of air defence systems and its role within the Indian Navy's operational strategy.

[154] Debate advocates adopting the Chinese strategy of investing in submarines. Ross (in Friedberg and Ross 2009: 27) also agrees that a more effective access-denial capability is provided by submarines.

bases in the Indian Ocean. He rationalises China's carrier presence in the IOR to safeguard its economic interests, attributing the absence of a Chinese base as the reason.

The Armed Forces discourse seems to have limited the parameters of the debate and failed to pursue further avenues to interpret Chinese carrier actions. Armed Forces and Think Tank analysts highlight different factors or themes within their interpretations of China's carrier actions. Such discursive representations could thus be termed "sites of struggle and negotiation, between different knowledge claims and power relations" (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:9, Louw 2001: 5-35). There is never just one representation of an event, situation or social group. "Frequently many stories are available and in contestation as different individuals and groups attempt to secure the right to narrate on behalf of the we, whilst at the same time trying to either co-opt or exclude and marginalise competing discourses" (Carr 1986, cited in Browning 2008:53)

Recommendations for Indian responses

Almost all Armed Forces commentators provide recommendations and analysis on steps the Indian government needs to take, to counter this increasing China threat, especially in the Indian Ocean (Bhat 2017, Prakash 2016:22, Singh Manmohan 2014:37, Shergill 2015:71, Yadav 2017, Khurana in Shikha and Hukil 2014). However, the recommendations are not just varied, some are quite contradictory. Singh Manmohan (2014) and Shergill (2015) recommend aligning with China's maritime neighbours and the ASEAN to counter China's rising influence. Shergill (2015) also recommends increasing India's influence in the South China Sea (SCS) to counter China. There are recommendations that are more counter-capability focused (that is, internal balancing focused), for example, recommendations to evolve an Air-Sea Battle Doctrine, like the United States (Prakash 2016:22), even stepping up on Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) capabilities especially in the Indian Ocean (Bhat 2017). There are also suggestions that India's carrier INS Vikramaditya should be deployed in a HADR or humanitarian role with a sea-going hospital ship[155] (which India does not possess so far), for past experience shows that naval ships "deployed in a non-traditional mission, … most often created opportunities for navies to also play a hard-power role…" (Singh A 2014). Yadav (2017) and Khurana (in Shikha and Hukil 2014) recommend aligning more closely with the United States, rather than working in isolation. Proactively engaging the Indian Ocean littorals is also suggested by Yadav and Khurana. Khurana

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[155] For example, the United States' USNS Mercy and PLAN's Peace Ark

(ibid.) also recommends the development of operational coordination within the Services and operational compatibility among navies to build trust, and a code of conduct for international naval encounters (an example of India's normative behaviour). Such recommendations seem to align with the three prongs within India's emerging foreign policy approach of multialignment – i.e. strategic partnerships with the United States and Asian powers, normative hedging and working with multilateral organisations like the ASEAN.

Think Tank analysts do not seem to be pitching specific recommendations that suggest ramped up efforts or measured strategies to counter China's increasing influence. Rajan (2015) seems to be a milder voice that emphasizes India's need to focus on economic priorities (national interest), "… rising tensions in South China Sea (SCS) may not be conducive to India's promotion of its economic interests in the SCS region[156]. India has only a limited capacity to directly influence events in that region…" and with a wary China, India therefore needs to focus on "diplomatic options" to diffuse tensions. This is contradictory to Armed Forces writers who advocate for the Indian government building influence in the South China Sea using hard power (Shergill 2015) and carrier deployments (Singh A 2014). Armed Forces narratives are more focused on hard power, i.e. Indian capabilities and naval superiorities. The Indian military strategic community remains consistently concerned about China's growing footprint in the Indian Ocean. Armed Forces discourse seems to be constrained between rationalising Chinese maritime interests in the Indian Ocean (Prakash 2016:9; Khurana 2017: 1; Yadav 2017; Singh 2014:35-36), and a need to play down China's carrier programme, simultaneously highlighting Indian naval experience with carriers for close to 60 years. This could cause the constant discursive juxtaposition and contradictions.

Publication within Armed Forces journals (site of publication), audience and editorial requirements could have also contributed to the nature of the analyses and the predominance of certain themes. Discourse published within Armed Forces and War College journals, United Services Institute (USI) analyses, etc., is aimed at a particular audience that is focused on military or weapon capabilities and advancements, and thus could be guided by particular editorial requirements. Think Tank issue briefs and opinion pieces require a wider, more context-oriented approach, as they are aimed at a more general foreign policy-interested audience. Some of the pieces written by these analysts are featured as op-eds within the major English dailies. They are not written in a style stressing military technology and doctrinal matters. Their

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[156] Approximately $3.37 trillion worth of global trade passed through the SCS in 2016 (CSIS China Power Team 2017).

analysis therefore incorporates multiple levels (like structural, domestic and individual) and themes or frames to appeal to a general audience. On the other hand, most of the news sources incorporated in this study were syndicated feeds, involving only a reporting of events and very little analysis on them. A broad debate within the editorials of Indian news dailies is virtually non-existent. These Chinese force structure enhancements are represented as a 'given', an axiomatic indicator, among many others, of China's aggressive ambitions in force projection. The site of publication could also, thus, contribute to particular representations and silences within the discourse. Consequently, the site of publication could also aid the dominance of particular representations (which may later be replaced by currently non-dominant themes; see Howarth 2011, Hall 1997: 269). Discourses are sites of struggle for power, and various themes are in dominance or non-dominance at various points of time.

The identity of United States constructed in Indian discourse is still that of a superpower with an enormous wherewithal and leverage over the Indo-Pacific (use of terms like 'the reigning hegemon' in the region). Such an image is also clubbed with a 'US in decline' narrative[157], probably to justify the Indian policy of aligning with Asian powers like Japan, Vietnam, etc. India is advised to take more responsibility for security in the immediate neighbourhood and the Asia Pacific (net security provider debates).

Think Tank discourse interprets the Chinese maritime threat using multiple themes. It analyses various factors and provide more details on context and background. Their analysis also considers factors at the systemic (Indian Ocean architectures), domestic (domestic debates, governmental and institutional resistance) and individual levels (for example, President Xi, also incorporating voices from Central Military Commission (CMC), PLA's General Logistics Department (GLD), the Chinese Foreign Ministry and other princelings[158]). The discourse analyses Chinese actions within the wider context, i.e., examines the Chinese action by first placing it in the context of other domestic, regional and international events, not in isolation.

"Just as different countries will have competing visions concerning what represents their national security interests, within countries there will also be a plurality of opinion concerning

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[157] "As US deals with fiscal constraints, it wants responsibility to be shared among the regional players…" (Upadhyay 2014); "…US influence is relatively decreasing in the IOR… (Khurana in Shikha and Hukil 2014); "The strategic dynamic is changing with the emergence of China and India rising as naval powers at a moment of relative American decline (Yadav 2017). Such narratives are reminiscent of the 2012 Non Alignment 2.0 document (published by experts on India's foreign policy) that discussed both the decline of US' global influence and threats to India's strategic autonomy in an alliance with the United States (Khilnani et al 2012: 32). Hall (2016:279) illustrates that India's normative hedging keeps the US and the West at a distance, abstaining from alliances and alignments, instead engaging in multialignment with various countries.

[158] The "children of veteran communists who held high-ranking offices in China before 1966, the first year of the Cultural Revolution" (Zhiyue 2015).

them" (Ogden 2017:33). While the constituents of the Indian strategic elite agree that a Chinese maritime threat in the IOR would undermine India's national security, making it vulnerable in its own area (Khurana in Shikha and Hukil 2014), their recommendations for Indian responses and their interpretations shaping their concept of India's security are varied and evolving (Ogden 2017:33). Varied actors create various narratives, shaped in part by their positions within the strategic community. These contradictions and shifting identity constructions emanate from these variously-placed constituents. Agent positions within government departments and bureaucracies, and their interests and agendas influence discourse construction. Discursive interpretations and the construction of meaning is thus "a process that is power-imbued, that is, discourses are sites of struggle and negotiation, between different knowledge claims and power relations" (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:9, Louw 2001: 5-35). Varied discursive constructions create discursive space for varied narratives and policy recommendations to be pursued in the future. This supports the Indian government's emerging foreign policy approach of multidirectional engagement.

The operational roles, tactics and field doctrines for China's carriers are yet to be defined, as the programmes are still at nascent developmental stages (Frossard 2012, Godbole and Parmar 2011). Synergies between the air wing and the CBG are still being developed i.e. the integration between Liaoning's CBG and its air wing are still underway. There are challenges ahead, in both the capability and budgetary arenas. Resource allocation on specific naval technologies would provide some inkling into shifts within military doctrines and also in Chinese leadership's thinking (Fravel 2008:138). Choices that China makes regarding its air wing (the tactics for extended air cover, payloads etc. of the fighters) and the composition of its CBG is critical in the type of threat perceived in India (there are reports of China's UAV Lijian being spotted near the Liaoning's CBG). China's UAV and carrier programmes are claimed to be progressively being interlinked[159] (Lin and Singer 2018). Future UAVs are designed to be used as aerial tankers to overcome fuel payload challenges of the carrier's air wing, thus extending operational radius and air cover ranges (listed as challenges in the Indian Armed Forces discourse). The third Chinese carrier CV-18 under development (with electromagnetic catapults) could carry these heavier drones (Lin and Singer 2018), thus overcoming present Chinese challenges of power projection in the IOR.

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[159] Sputnik News (6 April 2018) reported the start of testing of joint manned and unmanned aviation operations, but this was not corroborated by the Asia Times source.

Conclusion

This chapter analyses how Indian strategic discourse interprets and represents the Chinese carrier programme. It makes three arguments. Firstly, it highlights that the China threat identity construction and the Indian self-identity are not fixed, but fluctuating. Identities are never fixed nor a given; they are unstable and are constantly reconstructed "in view of unfolding events and developing relationships" (Browning 2008:11). The Chinese carrier actions are constructed as threatening and increasingly aggressive, while simultaneously being rationalised as being in the interest of national security. China identity is constructed as an actor that copies and steals military technology, thereby giving it an undue advantage in timelines and R&D. Although the China threat in the IOR is played up using 'temporality' and is constructed as an accepted and naturalised truth (reality), this threat is simultaneously played down using counter-narratives of 'capability'. A constant juxtaposition of China threat and reassurance in Indian capabilities is visible. The Indian self-image constructed also fluctuates between a strong state identity (that questions Chinese carrier capabilities) and weak, reactionary representations.

Secondly, it shows that a number of discursive strategies are employed to construct the Chinese and Indian identities; for example, the use of historical metaphors, juxtaposition of identities, the construction of an allied Pakistan threat and the employment of silences. There are silences on or omissions of particular themes or frames, and a failure to examine the carrier actions in the light of the PLA restructuring and modernisation as part of President Xi's defence reforms. It is, however, important to keep in mind the sites or the vehicle of discourse publication, discussed above. Certain constituents of the strategic community are silent on specific themes or create representations which might appear contradictory. For example, the Armed Forces remain focussed on capabilities, rather than debating the wider context instigating China's carrier-building drive or Chinese intentions behind it. Examining the Chinese carrier actions in isolation, without the wider context, also makes the China threat seem unprecedented and unwarranted. This could facilitate a narrative on the need for the Indian government to focus on internal balancing and increase military spending and acquisition[160] (see details on India's "$8 billion warships project to counter Chinese navy" in Miglani 2015 and planned acquisition of six submarines (New Indian Express 20 July 2017)). Exaggerated claims about China's capabilities could be "an effort to prop up continued levels of defence spending in the face of severe budgetary pressures" (Austin 1995:4).

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[160] India's military expenditure rose from $48.5 billion in 2013 to almost $51b in 2014. Its 2017 military expenditure increased by 5.5 per cent in real terms on 2016 (SIPRI Trends in world military expenditure Report, 2017).

The discursive strategies employed and the China threat identity constructions within the discourse illustrate the presence of powerful ideational elements that underpin national identity. India's colonial history continues to influence the mindset and thinking on the Indian Navy's dominance in the IOR and how China's growing influence in the IOR is perceived. The themes discussed and metaphors used are influenced by the still-surviving Curzonian mindset (the Indian Navy inheriting it from its colonial ties). Discursive strategies, like leveraging the Pakistan threat, help build a Chinese identity as an Enemy 'Other', an aggressor and formidable threat. This could serve to unite divisive elements in a diverse democracy like India. Pakistan remains the unifying element in a very divisive political system, and functions to keep the nuclear deterrence debate alive. "For sizeable and diverse collectivities such as states, the existence of abiding and multiple exogenous threats is indispensable for bolstering the unity of the 'imagined community'" (Jackson 2004:14).

Thirdly, it argues that just as the construction of an unprecedented and unwarranted China threat in the IOR could facilitate the narrative on the need for Indian naval modernisation, the recommendations to the Indian government could enable varied policy practices to counter China. The chapter points to the discursive recommendations (to the Indian government) of multiple responses or policy actions towards China (which may appear contradictory and could be criticised as a confused China response). The recommendations seem to advocate actions that are in line with the three prongs within India's foreign policy approach of multialignment. Though such a pursuit of a number of these recommendations or policy options could lend credence to the criticism of the Indian government's lack of a China strategy, it is important to remember that multialignment is the Indian government's preferred approach to ensure the three goals of economic development, national security, and projecting its values and influence (soft power) to fulfil its great power ambitions (Hall 2016:279).

This chapter's significant contribution is that it highlights the presence of non-security imperatives (i.e. ideational elements) in the Indian strategic elite's discursive constructions of the China threat. The strategic community's discursive interpretations and identity constructions works in linkage with these "ideational elements – that is the identity of countries and the values and culture that make them…" (Ogden 2017:109; for ideational elements see Ogden 2017: 2-9 and Tanham 1992).

The discursive presence of ideational elements seem more prominent in this case study, which highlights India's fear of China's increasing influence in and a carrier threat in the IOR. This threatens India's self-image as a naval power (legitimate successor to the historical dominance of the Royal Navy) and its security imaginings of the IOR as its natural sphere of influence. The chapter briefly mentioned the debate on the Indian Navy's role and identity as a 'net security provider' in the IOR. Chinese actions threatening India's self-image and power ambitions seem to provoke much discursive interpretations that clearly illustrates the link to powerful ideational elements like history and national memory.

Chapter Five: China's hypersonic glide vehicle tests

The previous chapter examined the Chinese carrier programme. This chapter discusses the seven tests of the Chinese hypersonic glide vehicle (HGV) called DF-ZF or Wu-14, and the Indian strategic community's discursive interpretations. Hypersonic weapons are game changing weapons, with ultra-high velocities that have major destabilising effects, as they compress the available decision-making time window in a crisis situation (Ni 2018). As described in Chapter One, these weapons further China's aims of force projection (when used in a Prompt Global Strike role) and area denial. They would drastically alter nuclear deterrence equations, as explained later. The aim of this chapter is to analyse how Indian discourse interprets and represents China's HGV tests, and what identity is attributed to China. These narratives help understand the construction of the Chinese and Indian identities – i.e. the separation of Self from the 'Other', the contradictions in identity creation and the discursive strategies used.

The chapter makes two arguments - First, it argues that the discursive strategies and identity constructions employed, serve specific purposes. The construction of a formidable and "very dangerous adversary" strengthens the Indian identity concept and justifies Indian actions at safeguarding national security. An identity of the copying and re-engineering actor seems to play down China's technological expertise and massive R&D investments (this may also preclude criticism against the Indian government from the audience or readers).

Second, such representations or discursive constructions "make various courses of action possible" (Doty 1996: 5). A narrative of nascence and operational weakness is deliberately constructed and utilized to buy time and space for development at the scientific establishments' (or government's) desired pace. Any unwanted attention could be discouraged by constructing and propagating such narratives. At the same time, the representation of the HGV tests as aimed at the United States, precludes criticism or comparisons of the Indian programme with China's technological and R&D prowess. Indian policymakers or strategic commentators do not need to immediately state their position or frame a response. Discursive constructions therefore, serve to further India's use of deliberate strategic ambiguity, especially in its nuclear policy and responses.

This chapter also contends that the discourse points to ideational elements (for example, India's historical path to nuclearisation, its past perceptions of a discriminating Western-created nuclear order, and its normative underpinnings as a non-aligned, non-proliferating power

focused on global disarmament). The preponderance of ideational and normative elements seem to influence the Indian government's behaviours and responses towards China within the hypersonics arena.

This chapter is structured like the previous case study – first, with a general overview of the hypersonics weapons arena and its global implications, to provide the context for the argument. The chapter then moves to an analysis of the seven Chinese hypersonic tests (conducted between 9 Jan 2014 and 22 April 2016). Next, the chapter analyses discourse constructed by the Indian strategic elite and how they interpret, represent and construct these Chinese tests. Discursive strategies, like the attribution of a nuclear role for the HGV, and silences or omissions of contexts, used to build up the China threat are discussed. Recommendations to the Indian government (for responses to China) are also examined. Lastly, the chapter concludes with a brief reference to how these constructions affect India's policy choices. The details on articles examined for Indian discourse can be found in the Bibliography.

Overview of the hypersonic arms race

Hypersonic weapons will be at the heart of the world's next arms race. With the United States, Russia, China, Iran, Israel, Italy, France, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Sweden, Australia, Brazil, Canada, India, Pakistan, South Korea, Taiwan, Japan all having at least a nascent hypersonic programme, it is only common sense that the next race in the aerospace technology sector will be that of hypersonic (manned or unmanned) vehicles, and hypersonic weapons.

Hypersonic technology has been under development for decades (see Gibbs 2014, Bhat in Aroor 2017, Lele 2017). Hypersonic boost glide vehicles (HGV) and hypersonic cruise (powered flight) missiles are the two varieties commonly in development (Tucker 2016). Glide vehicles could be used for the delivery of warheads against bunkers, hangars, C4ISR (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance) facilities, and even against moving targets like ships. The types of missiles being developed are hypersonic cruise, ballistic and boost-glide missiles. As they travel at extremely high speeds and are manoeuvrable, existing missile defences would find it difficult to track and intercept these weapons (President Putin boasted that the Russian Kinzhal hypersonic missile could not be outmanoeuvred by any defence system (Baynes 2018)).

Origins of hypersonic flight began with the world's first long-range guided ballistic missile, the German A-4, commonly called V-2 and the Silbewogel (Lele 2017: 10). The United States has long had a weapons programme that included hypersonic glider missiles, hypersonic cruise

missiles, hypersonic spy planes, orbit planes and so on. The North American X-15 rocket plane was the first hypersonic experimental aircraft tested by the US Air Force and the NASA between June 1959 and December 1968 (Gibbs 2014).

Hypersonic weapons are part of America's Conventional Prompt Global Strike[161] (CPGS) weapons programme, a term coined by the George W. Bush administration[162] and became a priority for subsequent administrations. Prompt Global Strike is an example of 'doctrine driving defence technology', where US' alliance commitments requires them to have weapons that can rapidly and precisely strike anywhere in the world. In 2017, hypersonic research has received a 50% hike in the US Department of Defense budget (Tucker 2016).

Some hypersonic programmes pursued by the United States that are at advanced stages -

1. High-Speed Strike Weapon (HSSW) project – for eg: Boeing's X-51A WaveRider hypersonic scramjet - investment of $600 million – planned completion in 2019 and flights in early 2020s.

2. Falcon HTV-3X - planned completion 2023 - less than $1 billion

3. Hypersonic Air-Breathing Weapon Concept (HAWC) – Two components
   a) Air-breathing missile
   b) Tactical Boost Glide (TBG) – prototype in 2022-2023 - DARPA funding of $20 million to Raytheon and $24 million to Lockheed (Tucker 2016, Mehta 2018)

4. Advanced Hypersonic Weapon (AHW) – US Congress funding of $71 million in 2014 (army-technology.com 2014)

Russia is claimed to have tested a Mach 10, 2000 km range hypersonic missile, Kinzhal, launched by a Mig-31 aircraft, in early March 2018 (Baynes 2018). Details on the Kinzhal, and Russia's re-entry vehicle Avangard were leaked to "Western spies" in July 2018 (BBC 20 July 2018). These systems have been played down by former US defence secretary James Mattis as changing nothing and not contributing to its nuclear assets – just propaganda tools (BBC 20 July 2018, Baynes 2018; also see Gent 2018).

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[161] The United States' CPGS program substitutes their nuclear warheads with conventional warheads. At the end of the Cold War, as part of the START I (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty I), many strategic nuclear delivery systems were slated to be destroyed. The US CPGS programme worked on whether these systems could then play cost-effective non-nuclear roles. That meant placing conventional warheads on existing nuclear delivery systems.
[162] The Bush administration initiated the programme in 2003 (immediately after the 9/11 attacks and also partly influenced by the failed Tomahawk strike against Osama bin Laden in 1998 by the Clinton administration).

Hypersonic weapons have ultra-high velocities[163] (Mach 5 and above are lower range hypersonic speeds), abilities to avoid detection by creeping under early-warning radars (Al-Rodhan 2015; see Letzter 2018 and BBC 20 July 2018 on Russian missiles and US defences), and abilities to undermine missile defence systems with their extreme manoeuvrability (Kahlon 2015:3, Lele 2017: 41). They are thus termed destabilising weapons or game changing weapons[164]. Presently, the parabolic path of ballistic missile facilitates reaction time for end-phase interception. The manoeuvrability of hypersonic weapons negates the "core technology of end phase interception of anti-missile system" (Joshi M 2014). They extend ranges of warheads (compared to traditional free fall parabolic paths). For example, when an HGV is used atop China's carrier killer DF-21D missile, it extends its reach to any moving targets or bases anywhere in the world (as the concept of Prompt Global strike enables strike anywhere in the world under 60 minutes from when the decision is made) (Hilborne 2017, Gady 2015a). Accurate terminal guidance systems of the HGV allow precision targeting. There are even claims that "boost-glide weapons have high manoeuvrability, and can avoid flight over third party nations when approaching the target" (Lele 2017:22). These weapons can carry a single-warhead and also multiple-warheads (Joshi M 2014, Letzter 2018).

Research on reusability of vehicles is also at advanced stages worldwide. Reusable weapons or launch vehicles could reduce costs drastically. For example, when powered by air-breathing scramjets, they do not require oxidisers to be carried on-board, reducing weights and costs drastically. They thus enable heavier payloads to be carried (warheads or satellites, depending on military and civilian roles). Also scramjets have few or no rotating parts, reducing costs of manufacture and maintenance (Kahlon 2015: 2).

Hypersonic technology can be used in space weapons, space-based weapons, and hypersonic weapons. "Hence, the possession of hypersonic weapons could add more teeth to the existing nuclear deterrence potential of states developing such technology" (Lele 2017:36). Currently, the few countries involved in hypersonic technology research are ones that already possess expertise in ballistic missiles, or are space-faring powers or have nuclear weapon capabilities.

The use of a nuclear warhead on these HGVs or hypersonic missiles is not far off. "Once these weapons become fully operational, they could challenge (or expand) the existing philosophy

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[163] Speed alone is not a potent threat. What the missile does with the speed makes interception difficult (see Atherton 2017 for speed of hypersonic missile claim).

[164] There is much research taking place worldwide to counter the threat of advanced hypersonic technology (Wang 2017), that is, on Directed Energy Weapons (Jeffress 2018) like electromagnetic rail gun, High Power Microwave weapons, etc. The Chinese are believed to possess a rail gun (Gohd 2018). Biswas (2015) discusses US counter measures like the Zummwalt DDG 1000 destroyer, "field directed energy weapon systems" and rail guns.

behind nuclear deterrence" (Lele 2017: 41). Hypersonic weapon proliferation could call for doctrinal change with regards to nuclear deterrence. Still at a nascent stage of development (that is, weaponisation has not yet happened in many countries), there are calls for moratoriums and global bans (Gubrud 2015, Zhao 2015). "The presence of hypersonic missiles in the nuclear triad architectures of countries would change the face of existing nuclear deterrence mechanisms. In the near future, these weapons are likely to emerge as instruments for decisive power projection" (Lele 2017: 42).

Hypersonic technology plays varying roles within military doctrines – for the United States, these weapons fulfil the purpose of Prompt Global Strike. For China, they could also serve the Anti-Access Area Denial (A2/AD) role (Lele 2017:28, Gady 2015c). To summarise, the qualities that make hypersonic weapons or aircraft, 'game-changers', are their default global ranges, ability to "reach sub-orbital altitudes", achieve high speeds, their manoeuvrability and invulnerability (Kapur 2014a:3).

Various challenges exist in hypersonic programmes worldwide, like vehicle design to counter extreme friction and heat in exo- and endo-atmospheric conditions (i.e. aero-heating up to 3000 degrees Fahrenheit melt air-frames of aluminium and titanium, requiring vehicle protective skins and airframe adjustments). Airframe stability at hypersonic speeds (where aerodynamic centre could approach gravitational centres) is another challenge (Kahlon 2015:3). Most importantly, weapons have to be operational at hypersonic speeds, therefore, guidance and propulsion systems have to be modified (Osborn 2017). Radio communications and video signals are interrupted at high temperatures and friction, blanking electronic circuits (Coleman and Faruqi 2009). Research continues for solutions to overcome these challenges.

Next a brief examination of the seven Chinese hypersonic tests.

Chinese hypersonic weapons

China's hypersonic boost glide vehicle or hypersonic missile delivery vehicle called DF-ZF (or Wu-14 by the Pentagon as it was probably first tested at Wuzhai[165]), was tested seven times since 9 January 2014[166], with the seventh test on April 22, 2016 in western China (Gertz 2016).

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[165] "Chinese internet has dubbed it DF-ZF (的ZF可能指的是"再飞"=再入飞行器, Z for re-entry, F for flying vehicle)" (Bhat in Aroor 2017).

[166] Previous tests took place on 9 Jan, 7 Aug and 2 Dec 2014; 7 June and 27 November 2015 (Gady 2015a). China's Aug 7, 2014 test of the DF-ZF was a failure, as was the US' August 25, 2014 test of the Advanced Hypersonic Weapon from the Kodiak Launch Complex in Alaska (Bender 2014). "China's (April 2016) hypersonic glide vehicle test was reportedly a success and occurred just days after Russia carried out its own test. Its proximate timing to that of Russia recalls China's previous flight tests, which often came on the heels of those conducted by the USA.

China also flight tested the HGV equipped with a ballistic missile twice, the first one on 1 November and the second on 15 November 2017. The HGV, mated with the ballistic missile, is together called the DF-17 (Panda 2017). China also successfully tested the Xingkong-2 or Starry Sky-2, its first hypersonic aircraft which could carry a nuclear warhead and penetrate missile defences, on 5 August 2018 (The Times of India Aug 6, 2018).

Preliminary details on the seven Chinese tests in table below.

Date	Range (km)	Notes
January 9, 2014	1,750	Only one keep-out zone declared. That zone was, however, identical to one of the zones for August 2014 test, strongly suggesting an identical flight path.
August 7, 2014	1,750	Probable failure.
December 2, 2014	1,750?	Flight path closures but no keep-out zones declared. Flight path possibly similar to the previous two tests.
June 7, 2015	1,750	Flight path similar but not identical to August 2014 test.
August 20, 2015	2,100	Terminal manoeuvring possibly planned
November 23, 2015	1,250	
April 22, 2016	1,250	Flight path identical to November 2015 test.

Source: www.livefistdefence.com

The seven tests of the HGV in little over two years illustrates that the DF-ZF is of utmost importance in the PLA's plan for national security (Gertz 2015; Lele 2017: 29; Biswas 2015). After the first test of the Chinese HGV (9 Jan 2014), the Pentagon reported the test saying the HGV was "detected flying at 10 times the speed of sound during a test flight over China" (Chen 2014). The Chinese Defence Ministry confirmed the test only after it was first reported by the Washington Free Beacon on 13 January 2014 (with excerpts from the Pentagon) (Gertz 2014).

This is more than mere coincidence. A review of more than a decade of Chinese writing on hypersonic and boost-glide technologies reveals growing interest in and research on Russia's hypersonic glide vehicle programme" (Saalman 2017).

China's official statement on 15 January 2014 reiterated that these tests were not targeted at any particular country, but were just for scientific study, terming it scientific research and experiments (Gady 2015a; Chan 2015; Joshi M 2014).

The DF-ZF hypersonic[167] glide vehicle (HGV) is believed to "travel at 10 times the speed of sound (Mach 10), or 12,231.01kph" and manoeuvre during flight, even flying at the edge of space. Existing American missile defences are claimed to be only capable of bringing down ballistic missiles that follow a fixed predictable trajectory (that is, the parabolic trajectory that the missile would take after propulsion has ended and the missile is controlled only by gravity and aerodynamic drag[168]) (see Butt 2015, Biswas 2015; see Letzter 2018 on US missile defence and ballistic missiles). "Professor Wang Yuhui, a researcher on hypersonic flight control at Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics said, "With a speed of Mach 10 or higher, it cannot be caught or tracked because defence systems don't have enough time to respond…" (Chen 2014).

Butt (2015) calls the boost glide trajectory "vastly different from the traditional parabolic path". After the rocket/ booster is launched just like a ballistic missile, it then releases the glide vehicle. The vehicle skims the edge of the atmosphere (like a stone tossed along the surface of a pool). As it re-enters the earth's upper atmosphere, the Reaction Control System (RCS) and the aero-controls take over. The HGV then performs a lift function/ pull up manoeuvre to control speed and altitude for glide. Thus, it glides to its target at high speeds and precision, unlike the parabolic path taken by ballistic missiles (Butt 2015). The United States termed this as "extreme manoeuvres" aimed to counter US' missile defence systems (RT.com 2015).

The DF-ZF is said to be capable of delivering both conventional and nuclear warheads. It can also be used together with anti-ship ballistic missiles (or ASBMs, thus holding at risk America's aircraft carriers [Friedberg and Ross 2009:21] in the western Pacific[169]). The United States' CPGS programme seems to have served as a motivator and as a threat against which the Chinese hypersonic programme was developed (Singh Kriti 2014, Biswas 2015). According to Dean Cheng of the Heritage Foundation, China's DF-ZF is intended "more for anti-ship or other tactical purposes than American cities", more in conjunction with anti-access of China's naval assets

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[167] Hypersonic speed is defined as Mach 5 to Mach 10, that is, 5 - 10 times the speed of sound.
Supersonic is speed between Mach 1 and Mach 5.
Sub-sonic is less than that speed of sound in air.
High hypersonic falls between Mach 10 and 25.
[168] Detailed explanation of trajectories and aerodynamic drag in 'Missile Aerodynamics', NATO AGARD Lecture Series No.9 (1979), (p. 2-6 to 2-7).
[169] Possibly even its carriers worldwide, when combined with China's DF-21D.

and bases (in Gady 2015c) [Blasko (2011:375-77) expresses a dissenting view, based on principles of People's War, on why the Chinese would refrain from the use of ASBM as a stratagem against American carriers].

The DF-ZF could be launched by an intermediate range ballistic missile (IRBM) like China's DF-21 or the medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM) and the ASBM DF-21D[170]. The hypersonic vehicle DF-ZF or Wu-14 could be used in conjunction with the following weapons (according to Indian and Chinese open source material) -

1) The ASBM[171] DF-21D – Described as the 'aircraft carrier killer'. The DF-21 ballistic missile could be armed with the HGV and together they are called DF-26 (Biswas 2015, Lele 2017, Kapur 2014a:4, Joshi M 2017: 78, Joshi M 2014). Modified and advanced versions of DF-21 are the DF-25[172] and DF-26C. Chinese sources claim these are advanced versions of the ASBM (see Friedberg and Ross 2009: 28-29 for a discussion on the Chinese ASBM).

2) Medium-range terminally guided ballistic missiles like (Dong Feng or East Wind) DF-21C - Reported to have been first tested in 2002 (Acton 2013:100).

3) The DF-41 – A nuclear ICBM (tested eight times since 2012, reported range of 8,699 miles and set to be incorporated into PLA arsenal in 2018. Claimed to be capable of carrying 10 nuclear warheads, each targeting separately according to Xu Guangyu, a senior adviser of the China Arms Control and Disarmament Association (Mizokami 2017; Xiaoci 2017).

India's hypersonic weapons programme

India is a relatively new entrant in the hypersonics field (Lele 2017: 30, 31) and its programme is highly classified. India's hypersonic programme takes place within a framework that involves three organisations (according to open-sources) -

1) The BrahMos Aerospace (a private sector agency that is a joint venture with Russia) - It researches the BrahMos-II hypersonic cruise missile. Reusable BrahMos hypersonic

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[170] There seems to be a mismatch in details of the launch platform in various reports. The researcher's analysis of Indian sources shows that the DF-ZF was launched atop an inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM) for the first and third tests, and by an IRBM for the fourth test.

[171] Pentagon estimates a range greater than 1,500 km (930 miles). The MRBM "has C4ISR functions for tracking and geo-location and on-board guidance systems for terminal homing to strike surface ships" (Stokes 2009). Successful demonstration was reported against "stationary target in the Gobi Desert". No evidence so far of any testing that tracked and homed in on moving targets like a ship off China's coast.

[172] However, Subramanian (2014:1) claims the range has not changed, after analysing its Transporter Erector Launch and the size of the canister. He says the only way they could attain higher re-entry velocity is through use of a different fuel or reshaping the re-entry vehicle for higher ballistic coefficient.

(boomerang) missiles is another project that is being pursued (Chakraborty 2017, The Hindu 16 February 2007).

2) Indian government's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has projects like HSTDV and HSTDV-2. The Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle (HSTDV) is a scramjet-propelled unmanned aircraft, using a solid rocket launcher. The DRDO's Shaurya (surface-to-surface ballistic missile) is also a part of the hypersonic missile development programme.

3) ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation) tests reusable launch vehicles and scramjet engines[173], which are important components of a hypersonic programme (Kapur 2014a:2-3).

The S-400 Triumf air defence system that India intends to purchase from Russia is claimed to be capable of taking out ballistic missiles and hypersonic targets (Vayu Aerospace and Defence Review 2016 Jan-Feb, Issue1: p.18)

The ISRO tested a scramjet engine as part of its Advanced Technology Vehicle (ATV) test on 28 August 2016 (isro.gov.in 26 Aug 2016). It was the first test of an Air Breathing propulsion system, the next-generation of air-breathing engines which will drastically reduce weight of rockets (thus increasing the rocket's capacity for greater payloads, i.e. satellites for civilian purposes). The test is claimed to have achieved Mach 6 speeds. The scramjet[174] was tested only for 5 seconds (Krishnan Nair 2016).

The ISRO's Reusable Launch Vehicle Technology Demonstrator (RLV-TD) was tested on 23 May 2016 at hypersonic speeds (isro.gov.in May 23, 2016; Clark 2016), one of the objectives being the testing of "aero-thermodynamics of hypersonic flights" (Vayu Aerospace and Defence Review July-Aug 2016:37). This would be a test bed for various technology evaluations, for example, hypersonic experiment flight (HEX) and scramjet experiments which test atmospheric re-entry, design features, "thermal management, autonomous mission management and ability to land at a specific location" (Krishnan Nair 2016-a: 2). The RLV-TD was just a test and the ISRO clarified that the vehicle is intended to launch satellites into space. RLV technology is being developed to serve in the drive towards miniaturisation and microsatellites. A second RLV-TD test is planned for 2019 where the vehicle will land on land, "on an undisclosed Air Force airfield in the eastern sector" (Singh Surendra 2018, Rajwi in Indian Express 17 July 2017).

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[173] Supersonic ramjets – air combustion at supersonic speeds in combustion chamber
[174] Hypersonic programmes relied on rocket systems for propulsion so far making such programmes very expensive. Air-breathing scramjets drastically alter costs involved.

The Indian scramjets tests or the reusable launch vehicle component of India's hypersonic programme is not highlighted within the Indian discourse and is left out. Krishnan Nair (2016-a:4) explains that "Operationalisation of an Indian RLV makes more sense when viewed in light of India's quest of using space for national growth and civil development" (national interest). Its role in launching satellites is highlighted, but not other potential capabilities within the hypersonic programme. Reusability of vehicles and missiles is a key focus area worldwide. A reusable BrahMos hypersonic (boomerang) missile is a project pursued in India even before 2007 (The Hindu February 16, 2007, Chakraborty 2017, Joshi V 2017), but there is no mention of this in the Indian discourse. The discourse portrays India's hypersonic programme only partly – mentioning some projects and failing to discuss others. Of course, like Lele stresses, India's hypersonic programme is highly classified, and "only some limited information is available". Piecing together open-source information on individual projects or weapons systems, however, paints a picture of a more advanced Indian hypersonics programme than is widely claimed. One can link this with India's long-standing practice of deliberate strategic ambiguity, especially within the nuclear realm (see Debak Das 2012, Jaishankar 2017, Jagannathan 2016, Perkovich 1996, Ollapally 2001 for 'ambiguity in terminology'; for general details on use of strategic ambiguity see Libicki 2011, Baliga and Sjostrom 2008, Hummel 2015). Silences on important components of India's hypersonic programme or a failure to mention India's hypersonic programme builds up a one-sided China threat picture.

The Indian programme is portrayed as nascent and being highly classified; its advancements and the challenges it faces are very rarely discussed in open sources. Both China and India are reluctant to reveal any details, a probable reason being lest it reveal any weaknesses to the outside (transparency and security spirals discussed in Fravel 2008:138).

Although the so-called 'hypersonics arms race between India and China' (see Bhat in Aroor 2017) needs more conclusive evidence in the Indian discourse, it is clear that India is closely monitoring China's tests and programme, *"The Indian government has not issued any statement on the (Chinese) tests. However, the DF-ZF's ability to travel at hypersonic speeds and attack any target is quietly being considered in Indian decision-making[175]"* (Interview with Prof Kondapalli). T P Sreenivasan claims that there are no immediate shifts in Indian responses towards China. This is because the Indian government does not want to provoke China. *"We cannot assume that India is not responding because these are all things we study deeply at the External Affairs Ministry, the Ministry of Defence, the DRDO, RAW etc. Because China is our enemy number one,*

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[175] Researcher's interview with Srikanth Kondapalli (Professor in Chinese Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University and Honorary Fellow at Institute of Chinese Studies, Delhi), 15 March 2016

though we don't shout it off the rooftops. So, do not think that India is not noticing or reacting. But our strategy of course is not to provoke China unnecessarily and that is the policy we pursue. We realised and also at the same time try and do these things in a way that does not provoke China. But wherever we feel that action is necessary we are countering it by buying more equipment or getting involved with our neighbours. So, they don't announce it but I'm sure it will be done. The closeness with Japan and Vietnam … it is part of the strategy. So, it is not part of the Look East. It is because of the China threat. Well you can cover it up by saying Look East/ Act East[176]".

The Indian government has not issued any official assessment on the seven Chinese tests. There is also not much writing on the Chinese tests from authentic Chinese sources (Bhat in Aroor 2017). India's hypersonic programme remains highly classified (Lele 2017:31). Therefore, only two kinds of discourse was analysed for this study –

- Discourse on China's hypersonic programme, specifically the Wu-14/ DF-ZF tests
- Discourse on India's hypersonic programme or individual missiles, only if it contained a clear mention of Chinese Wu-14 tests

Only if the text/article clearly mentioned China's HGV tests was it included in the Indian discourse examined. Articles analysing India's individual weapons systems like Shaurya or Agni ICBM were excluded, if they did not clearly mention China's HGV tests. Indian writing on the American and Russian programmes were also excluded, as this project examines Indian strategic elite's discourse on China's hypersonic tests and analyses how they interpret these Chinese actions. Only discourse within the time period Jan 2014 (first Chinese HGV test) and July 2017 was used.

Construction of the Chinese identity within Indian discourse
Chinese HGV as a threat

Armed Forces commentators rarely use threat words to describe China's hypersonic tests. Their analysis is more focussed on the scientific and technological details. The few threat-conveying words used are "creating quite a few global ripples…" Bhat (in Aroor 2017), "pose fresh challenges…", "recent Chinese tests of the Wu-14 hypersonic glide vehicle has stirred fears in the US…" (Kapur 2014a:1, 4).

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[176] Researcher's interview with T P Sreenivasan (Retired diplomat, the former Permanent Representative of India to the UN, Vienna and Governor for India of the IAEA), 6 May 2016.

In the Armed Forces discourse examined, Sameer Joshi's (2017: 71) analysis illustrates the advances in the Chinese hypersonic programme[177]. It discusses the Chinese J-28. There is very little interpretation on implications for India. Much of the narrative points to a neck-to-neck race between the United States and China for dominance in hypersonic technology, for example, the usage, "stirred fears in the US…"; "This evidence appears to somewhat blunt the U.S.' temporal edge over China in hypersonic arena" (Bhat in Aroor 2017), "…instead of catch up, China seeks to leap-frog, even while simultaneously developing technologies which will degrade US systems", "Experts like James Acton say that it is less advanced than US…", "The clear trend in China's modernisation efforts is towards creating a world class military, capable of taking on the United States" (Joshi M 2017: 78, 83, 84). Manoj Joshi's analysis is again a technology update on China's military modernisation, and does not include Indian thinking or perceptions. It is important to remember that publication within Armed Forces journals (site of publication), could have contributed to the analyses' nature as scientific and technological studies. Although the China threat is often linked to US capability, the Armed Forces have clear recommendations for the Indian government (see section 'Constructions affecting India's policy choices' below).

Some Think Tank analysts link the China threat to India specifically, "China's WU-14 also increases the threat to India" (Biswas 2015). "We must consider Communist China a potentially very dangerous adversary, not a reliable trading partner", (Kriti Singh 2014 employing a Frank Gaffney quote). Of course, there is the 'US-China contest of hegemony' narrative too (Joshi M 2014, Kahlon 2015). Most of the discourse is still written in the manner of scientific and technical analyses on advances and challenges, and comparisons with American projects (see Kahlon 2015, Joshi M 2014). In Karnad's (2015) admonishment of the Indian government's pace of hypersonic technology development, there is historical reference to India's Pokhran nuclear tests in 1998 conducted in defiance of the Western-created discriminatory nuclear order of the NPT. Karnad, former member of the National Security Advisory Board and the Nuclear Doctrine-drafting Group, Government of India, has been a vociferous critic of the Indian government's defence acquisitions and capabilities (for other criticism on Indian Armed Forces' "glaring gaps in inventory credibility", see Bhaskar 2018). It is again important to keep in mind the site of publication, i.e. Karnad's personal website. News sources also construct the Chinese missile

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[177] It discusses the J-28, a Chinese sixth generation fighter, a "hypersonic platform, capable of sub space operations, nuclear capable, have stealth technology, … with artificial intelligence, prepared for advanced electronic/cyber warfare of the futures and coated in 'smart skin'" and will carry laser weapons. There is much speculation within defence forums and blogs whether the sixth gen fighter is the Huolong Fire Dragon or the An Jian Dark Sword unmanned combat aerial vehicle. But Jane's clarifies the unmanned vehicle is a "highly manoeuvrable supersonic … platform" (Wong 2018).

development as a response to US' pivot to Asia (Hindustan Times 5 Oct 2014, Aneja in The Hindu 13 Dec and 14 Dec 2014).

Much of the Indian discourse represents the Chinese hypersonic capability as a 'given', and aimed at catching up with the US programme, an axiomatic indicator not needing further analysis. There are few narratives constructing it as having implications for India, and others admonish the government's reluctance in pursuing technological advancements. These various narratives highlight that "discourses are sites of struggle and negotiation, between different knowledge claims and power relations" and the "construction of meaning is a process that is power-imbued" (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:9, Louw 2001: 5-35). Discourses sustain particular power relations and determine what can be articulated and practiced at specific times. The construction of a formidable and "very dangerous adversary" justifies massive investment in India's hypersonic programme and in defence acquisition.

China as a manipulative and rational actor

China is also described as a manipulative actor that is keen on maximising its bargains and degrading US capabilities, "Chinese believe that US relies on space for 70-90 per cent of its intelligence and 80 per cent of its communications. Loss of critical sensors would drastically degrade US military capability" (Joshi M 2017: 81). To counter an identity of a China that copies technology, there is an identity of a 'new China' that is no longer looking to catch up by copying, but to leap-frog and degrade US capabilities, thus pursuing technologies related to hypersonics, directed energy and counter-space (Joshi M 2017: 78). China's intent in pre-emptive strike is emphasized.

China is portrayed as a shrewd, bargaining actor in the three Indian news articles (dated 14 June 2015[178] that discuss the fourth HGV test), timing the HGV tests a day before Fan Changlong's (Vice Chairman, Central Military Commission) visit to the United States to meet the then US Defence Secretary Ashton Carter. This image of China emerges from the original source, the South China Morning Post article (SCMP), but the source of this interpretation, the military observer Antony Wong Dong is omitted in the Indian versions. This is constructed to appear as an Indian interpretation of the goal of the HGV tests (obtaining bargaining power), and the ambiguous term 'experts' are referred to in the articles. The calculative China image is reinforced in the Indian news sources. These three Indian articles seem to be republishing the accepted official Chinese version, that is, the SCMP article. This could be an effort at appeasing

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[178] The Times of India, Hindustan Times and The Indian Express.

the Chinese government by adhering to the language used in approved Chinese narratives, and not providing Indian analysis to counter it. This could also be an attempt to only 'report' and not analyse in detail an important area of defence and security, that is still at a very early stage of evolution and is also highly classified both in India and China.

An identity of China as a rational actor, focused on its national security and sovereignty, is simultaneously created. The need for hypersonic weapons to counter US's hypersonic Mach 10 vehicles and "ensure its national security and maintain the balance of power in East Asia" is of critical importance to China (Singh Kriti 2014:2, Joshi M 2014, Kahlon 2015).

There is an effort to portray China as a rational and peaceful actor, but immediately thereafter it is refuted with examples of Chinese aggression or ambiguity (juxtaposition of identities). The reasoning of Chinese military modernisation for its own national security (rational actor) is very soon countered, and a pre-emptive motive is alleged (Joshi M 2017: 80), "All this is not defensive as stated and there is enough leeway for pre-emptive strikes …" China is not portrayed one-dimensionally as an actor focused on its own national security, displaying rational and justifiable behaviour. There is an effort to portray China as a rational and peaceful actor, assuring no first strike, but immediately thereafter there is rhetorical questioning of China's responses in the event of precision-attacks or a Taiwan contingency. The answers to those questions seem self-evident and China's response is clear. The construction seems to imply that China's aggression is assured and Chinese commitments to peaceful rise or peaceful development narratives are suspect (Other discursive strategies, like the construction of a nuclear threat, are described later). Narratives by Indian strategic elite create spaces for certain kinds of subjects and rely upon oppositions to create subject identities (Doty 1993:317).

China as a copying and reverse-engineering actor

Armed Forces analysts sometimes construct a Chinese identity of a copying and reverse-engineering actor. Some examples are, "… PLA was overwhelmingly equipped with reverse engineered Soviet-era weapons" (Joshi M 2017: 78). China has "… introduced technologies ahead of programmes, signalling the end of an era where Chinese copied concepts and re-engineered[179] the technologies of others" (Joshi M 2017: 83). Such copying of technology has

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[179] Another example is the discussion on the Shenyang J-11 fighters, how Chinese cancelled the contract in 2000 and "in their usual manner shrewdly reverse engineered the original Su-27SK into a version called the J-11B, which used Chinese-made parts instead of the original Russian components. Though accused by the Russians of flying an unlicensed copy of the original Su-27SK, the Chinese went ahead with the production of the J-11B in 2007…" (Sameer Joshi 2017: 67).
The J-20 'Mighty Dragon' stealth combat aircraft is also claimed to have incorporated stolen technology (Sameer Joshi 2017: 69-70). Project 310, the nascent project to develop Shenyang J-31 fighters "is reportedly also inspired from 'stolen' F-35 designs" (Sameer Joshi 2017: 70). China is claimed to have a "strong inclination to market this J-

helped reduce costs of the Chinese HGV programme according to Bhat (in Aroor 2017). China's achievements are viewed with doubt too, "China's HGV achievements are almost matching the US achievements in such a short span of time. This although commendable, creates doubts about its efficacy of the HGV at the target end" (Bhat in Aroor 2017). This seems to lend support to physicist Mark Gubrud's conclusion, "Most 'reporting' on (Chinese) emerging military technology can be characterized as a rumo(u)r mill" (Bhat in Aroor 2017).

Construction of the Indian Identity

The discourse provides very limited information on India's hypersonic programme. In some articles, India's nascent hypersonic programme is highlighted. Its lack of resources in technology and R&D is illustrated, for example, "These developments have implications for countries such as India because we are, as it is, finding it difficult to get some momentum in the current modernisation deficit. We do not have the resources to put into futuristic technologies or an R&D and manufacturing ecosystem to develop them. The options before India are not too many and we would have to evolve asymmetrical systems of our own to deter the Chinese - and thus lower the nuclear threshold" (Joshi M 2017: 84).

There is almost no mention of the Indian hypersonics programme, in most of the Indian discourse on the Chinese HGV tests. The Indian programme is almost never analysed 'within' the articles on the Chinese HGV. Kahlon (2015:4) talks about the US, Russian and Chinese hypersonic programmes, but is deliberately silent on India, not even listing India among the countries "taking interest in this technology". Only few authors discuss it (Kapur 2014a:2-3, Joshi M 2017: 84; Joshi 2014, Karnad 2015). The researcher, therefore, researched articles on Indian weapon systems like Agni-5, BrahMos or India's ballistic missile defences, for any references to the Chinese HGV tests. Some had references to the China threat in general or Chinese hypersonic missiles in general, but not the HGV tests in particular. They were therefore, not included in the discourse analysed. To illustrate, The New Indian Express 15th October 2016 quoted an unknown Indian Air Force officer as saying "IAF has plans to deploy these (S-400 Triumf air defence systems) on western and eastern sector bordering Pakistan and China to counter threats from hypersonic cruise missiles, to UAVs, airborne early warning aircraft, stealth fighters and even precision guided munitions". The eastern sector here is a reference to China. Another example, "The technological momentum driving the Indian missile programme is going to take it well beyond the 5,000-kilometre range Agni-5 and into producing genuine ICBM

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31 fighter (fourth generation+) as a stealth platform for export to "friendly allies", notably Pakistan (Sameer Joshi 2017: 70).

category delivery systems, if only to match China" (Bharat Karnad quoted in Simha 2012). News sources on India's intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) Agni-V's final test firing[180] (on 26 Dec 2016) also have references to China – "a strike range over most of China". These are, however, all generic references to the China threat and thus not included in the discourse for analysis. Only specific Indian analysis on the Chinese HGV tests were included.

Although there is not much discussion on the Indian hypersonics programme within the Indian discourse on China's hypersonic tests, there is much talk on the possibility of the Chinese ASBM DF-21D being armed with the HGV (called DF-26 in conjunction) (Biswas 2015, Lele 2017, Kapur 2014a:4, Joshi M 2017: 78, Joshi M 2014). The 'carrier killer' DF-21D was discussed earlier. Such a mating of these weapon technologies would extend ranges of the DF-21D drastically [Chandrashekar et al (2011: 22) conclude that it is "likely that the first and second stages of the existing DF-21 missile would have been modified to provide the increase in range for launching a 1700 kg warhead"]. The mated HGV would also alter the predictable warhead flight path achieved with ASBMs, avoiding detection for longer. Of course, being a land-based ASBM, 'sea denial' will be primary aim of this assassin's mace weapon. 'Sea control' can be achieved with carriers that can powerfully project power, a programme that China is pursuing diligently. The Indian scientists retired from ISRO and DRDO and the naval officers drew attention to the ASBM's sea denial capability, in the researcher's interviews (see also Chandrashekar et al.2011).

This illustrates that a threat to India's maritime interests is perceived, in China's carrier killer missiles and in its employing of the Active Defense strategy. With its ELINT (electronic Intelligence) satellite cluster (comprising Yaogan 9,16,17,20 and 25), China can detect and track an aircraft carrier anywhere in the Pacific (Chandrashekar and Perumal 2016). China has the technical infrastructure and the operational capability to deter access and preserve its national security anywhere in the Pacific, and soon will be able to project that to other strategic areas like the Indian Ocean, which is becoming predominantly significant for its strategic goals (discussed in Chapter Four).

India's weaker capabilities

When mentioned in the context of the Chinese HGV tests, the Armed Forces discourse constructs the Indian hypersonics programme as nascent (see Lele 2017:30-31; Manoj Joshi 2017: 84) and mostly relying on Russian technology (Joshi M 2014). Think Tank analysts also construct the programme as very early in its developmental stage and incipient. "…India's DRDO

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[180] The next version, Agni-VI is claimed to carry "manoeuvring warheads or intelligent re-entry vehicles" (Pandit 2016). Agni-V is claimed to be hypersonic, with speeds of Mach 24 at terminal stage (military-today.com, accessed 3 Jan 2019).

is reported to have embarked on experimental projects in similar areas - UAVs, hypersonic-speed systems, and in related research" (Marwah 2013, Biswas 2015). "India has also talked about a follow-on to the Brahmos supersonic missile" (Joshi M 2014) (usage of words 'embarked' and 'talked about' signalling very early stages).

In most of the Indian discourse, China's HGV tests are portrayed as directed at the United States[181]. Projection of power, leap-frogging and countering the United States are described as China's goals. This indirectly constructs an 'India', not figuring anywhere in China's strategic plans and mostly reacting to Chinese actions. Some examples of the Chinese focus on the US capabilities (in both Armed Forces and Think Tank discourse) - "stirred fears in the US…"; "This evidence appears to somewhat blunt the U.S.' temporal edge over China in hypersonic arena" (Bhat in Aroor 2017), "…developing technologies which will degrade US systems", "… capable of taking on the United States" (Manoj Joshi 2017: 78, 83, 84), "… shifts the deterrence equation between the US and China in latter's favour. This has been captured by growing concerns in the US accompanied by calls to counter-balance China's WU-14 … Observers in the US are particularly concerned…", "The investments made by China and Russia in hypersonic are bound to make the USA concerned" (Lele 2017:39; see also Kapur 2014a:4).

Think Tanks describe this focus on United States as, "… yet another signal that the People's Republic of China intends to contest the hegemony of the United States across the spectrum" (Joshi M 2014). Singh K (2014:1-2) also constructs China's hypersonic tests as a "tough challenge to the United States hypersonic capabilities …" "US dominance in this area can be dubbed as one of the concerns for the Chinese to conduct this experiment…" (Singh K 2014: 2, see Chinese military expert statement). Biswas discusses the probability of the HGV Wu-14 atop ASBM DF-21D[182], making it a second-generation ASBM[182] and extending range, speeds and precision against US' moving carriers in the Pacific. Kahlon (2015:1) talks about Russia and China developing hypersonic technology to counter US BMD technology. "The test of WU-14 by China is definitely

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[181] It is true that the United States is China's main rival. But it's important to keep in mind Frey's (2006:119-20) argument "China postponed its medium-range ballistic missile programme in favour of its long-range and intercontinental ballistic missile programmes, clearly signalling its strategic orientation towards its American rival. One could argue that Chinese long-range ballistic missiles also threaten medium range targets like India… however, a deployment of Chinese inter-continental missile against medium range targets is unrealistic" due to complexity and extreme costs.

[182] US Congressional Research Service Report (Dec 2014, page 6) terms it so (Biswas 2015) - (accessed 8 June 2018). For long, the only confirmation of the existence of the DF-21D, at the official level in the Chinese Ministry of Defence, was in a 2011 interview with Chen Bingde, chief of PLA Staff, found here. Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense had also confirmed its presence and deployment in its 2011 report (page 71 and 73). Both the ASBM versions were publicly displayed at China's V-Day military parade on 3 Sept 2015 (Erickson 2015). But there is no information on its warhead type. An archived Sinodefence article claims that it's a "single 500 yield kT nuclear" warhead. There has been much speculation among analysts that the Wu-14 would be used atop the DF-21D to extend its range.

going to speed up the US' quest for enhancing both its offensive and defensive technological capabilities … Although these nuclear developments in China are primarily US-centric …" (Biswas 2015). News sources also depict China's HGV tests to be a response to the United States' Pivot strategy (Aneja in The Hindu 13 Dec and 14 Dec 2014). The articles point to China's goal of breaching the existing US missile defence shield (Also see Economic Times Dec 10, 2014 – "Chinese military experts … said the hypersonic missile could render a number of US defence systems useless").

It is true that the Indian hypersonic programme is not as advanced as China's or the US', however, piecing together open-source information on individual projects or weapons systems, paints a picture of a more advanced Indian hypersonics programme than is widely claimed (see Nair 2016, 2016-a, Kapur 2014-a, Chhatwal 2014, Sheel Kant Sharma 2014, Marwah 2013, Majumdar 2017: p.54, 116 - all these are not included in Indian discourse as they do not mention the Chinese HGV test). A narrative of nascence and operational weakness could be deliberately constructed and utilized[183] to buy time and space for development at the scientific establishments' (or the government's) desired pace. Any unwanted attention could be discouraged by constructing and propagating such narratives. India's past normative behaviour related to its path to nuclearization illustrates this fixation on non-interference.

India's advances in hypersonic research

The Indian hypersonic programme is not as nascent a programme as described within the discourse. Although Lele (2017:30-31) claims "India is a relatively new entrant in the field of hypersonic, and its programme appears to be on a much smaller scale as compared to those of (other) countries…", in the very next paragraph, he claims the DRDO's ballistic missile Shourya was "first flight tested on 27 October 2004[184]". This illustrates that individual components/ projects of India's hypersonic programme were started quite early in the day, maybe in the form of experimental programmes and technology demonstrators [see Ollapally (2001) argument on ambiguous terminology like 'technology demonstrator' serving the purpose of deliberate strategic ambiguity]. Other open source material illustrate timelines too. For example, Press Trust of India (PTI) sources dated 2007, illustrate that plans for the hypersonic BrahMos-II or BrahMos-2 hypersonic cruise missile seem to have started way before 2007. The conceptualisation of the missile seems to have taken place before 2007, the design stage of BrahMos-II completed in October 2011 and tests started in 2012 (Naumov 2007). News articles

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[183] Blasko (2011:376) discusses information manipulation to hide capabilities and send a desired message, especially in the case of the ASBM.
[184] Shaurya was inducted into service in 2013.

from Oct 2011 claimed that the hypersonic version of BrahMos was being evaluated and "companies in India and Russia are working overtime to design and develop various components for it" (The Hindu 28 June 2012). The Agni-V ICBM (that can reach hypersonic speeds in terminal phase) project seems to have started before 2007 and was first tested in 19 April 2012 (news18.com 2016). These sources point to an Indian hypersonics programme that is not as nascent as constructed in the discourse. Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, Director Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL), Hyderabad is claimed to have, as far back as 1990, highlighted "conceptual studies to develop a futuristic 'Hyperplane' using the consortium approach successfully applied for indigenous fabrication of the 'Agni' missile" (Vayu Aerospace and Defence Review Journal Jan-Feb 2015: p.182).

Another example, the planning for India's HSTDV (India's Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle) seems to have started before 2004. The first flight trial was forecasted for the end of 2010, after five or six tests (Centre for Aerospace Research, Anna University 2008). Bharat Karnad explains that India's DRDO has been working on hypersonic missile technology for a long time. He discusses the cancellation of tests of HSTDV-2 in Moscow, highlighting the advanced stage of missile development. The reason cited is not a lack of funds but India being pliable to Western pressure in stalling the Indian programme (Karnad 2015). This seems to contradict the constructions within some narratives (Joshi M 2017:84), which points to the Indian lack of funds to invest in technology and R&D. Kapur (2014a:4-5) also seems to point to a more advanced programme.

Some Indian analysts sceptically question Chinese advances in hypersonics, doubting its ability to design weapons and create the technical infrastructure required, "China's accelerated achievements in HGV testing have raised doubts in many a minds as to the efficacy of its project (Bhat in Aroor 2017, also Joshi M 2014). "...it will take China some years before it could bring WU-14 into service for offensive application" (Biswas 2015). Some others question the widely-acclaimed successes of the Chinese HGV tests, "Without access to the Chinese test results it is impossible to gauge the success of China's hypersonic weapons programme" (Joshi M 2014). Some point to India's inherent capacities, "For India hypersonic research presents more opportunities than challenges given India's environment and engineering and scientific abilities as showcased by recent achievements of the country's scientific community" (Kapur 2014a:3). Lele (2017: 32) even discusses Indian plans for hypersonic sales to interested countries. Considering the nascence (in development) of the Indian hypersonic programme constructed within the Indian discourse, this seems a surprising development. Although it was not possible

to corroborate this claim using available open-source material, a follow-up interview with Captain Lele has confirmed this.

One could question the constructed nascence of the Indian hypersonic programme (weaker state identity), based on the timelines cited above (illustrating the early start dates for individual projects of the Indian hypersonic programme) and the instances of analysts questioning Chinese HGV advances. Other evidence of the maturation of a defence scientific project is an ecosystem of defence establishments, research institutes and academia. The literature on hypersonics often throws up references to Chinese collaboration of the various technical institutes (like Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC)'s Shenyang Aircraft Design Institute, CASIC, the 10th Research institute) and universities like Shanghai Jiaotong University (see Solem and Montague 2016). Wider literature on Indian hypersonics also refers to research being conducted in Madras Institute of Technology, Anna University and of course, in the civil aerospace agency ISRO's various research institutes. One could infer that maturation of programmes lead to such well-established synergies and ecosystems of collaboration (Blasko 2011:379 discusses Chinese synergies in the link between doctrine and technology).

Discursive strategies

Various strategies are used within the Indian discourse, each serving a different purpose.

Construction of a nuclear threat

The HGV tests are constructed as a nuclear development by some Indian Think Tank analysts, though China has not yet mentioned future roles or operational doctrines for the HGV. Biswas' (2015) article is titled '*China's WU-14 nuclear device'*. He discusses the HGV tests in the context of Chinese nuclear programme, terming it part of a larger strategy of "rapid modernisation of its nuclear forces... accompanied by certain doctrinal shifts, for instance the omission of no-first-use from China's defence white paper". This construction assigns an imminent Chinese nuclear threat and builds on the China threat and aggression discourse. (For the discussion on whether an omission of the 'No first use' (NFU) clause suggests a Chinese nuclear doctrinal shift, see Oswald 2013, Zhang Hui 2013[185]). Some authors like Joshi M (2017: 80) seem to buffer this nuclear threat argument with a numerical illustration of China's growing nuclear arsenal. Such a building up of the nuclear threat seems contradictory to the 'China as a rational actor' identity,

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[185] China's creation of the PLARF heading a joint missile command and also the omission of the NFU clause from its 2013 White Paper has kindled much debate and criticism on its progressive nuclear ambiguity (Oswald 2013). There is some evidence of China's "weakening commitment" to its NFU and minimum deterrence doctrines (Zhang, B 2015:2).

previously discussed. Similar 'nuclear threat' constructions are visible in other Indian news articles, for example the Oct 5, 2014 Hindustan Times article[186] on the DongFeng-31B missile has the same construction. This nuclear qualifier for the HGV tests is also visible in the headlines of the Times of India[187], the Indian Express[188] and the Hindustan Times[189] news articles (dated 14 June 2015).

Indian newspaper sources on China's hypersonic tests seem to primarily report the positions of Chinese newspapers or sources. The articles usually do not contain Indian analysis or comments, just a reporting of the event. For example, the articles (all dated 14 June 2015), reporting on the fourth test of the HGV, seem to use the South China Morning Post (SCMP)[190] as their source. Claims from the Chinese Defence Ministry [that the test was "part of China's strategic nuclear programme" (Economic Times Dec 10, 2014)] are used to point to China's nuclear intentions within the hypersonic arena. This illustrates the propensity of Indian media sources to be overtly focussed on China's asymmetrically growing nuclear capabilities; although, China identity constructed is that of a rational actor (also see Aneja in the Hindu Dec 13 and 14, 2014).

China's HGV could have a global strike role defined for it and remain conventional in nature, like the United States' prompt global strike weapons. With preliminary tests on Chinese hypersonic technology (including scramjet engines) still underway, it is too early for roles and doctrines to be defined yet. China does not have to protect global alliance partners nor does it fight wars far from its borders. The argument on 'doctrine driving technology' fails in the case of China. "In contrast to the US armed forces, most evidence from Chinese military sources indicates that for the PLA 'technology drives doctrine' or, as the Chinese say, 'technology determines tactics' (技术决定战术). The relationship between technology and doctrine is not all one way…" though.

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[186] These again come from the South China Morning Post source article (Chan 2014). These articles contain references to the failed HGV test (second test) in Shanxi, Aug 7, 2014 (also mentioned in The Economic Times Dec 10, 2014).

[187] PTI (Jun 14, 2015), China confirms test of supersonic nuclear delivery vehicle, TOI, http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/china/China-confirms-test-of-supersonic-nuclear-delivery-vehicle/articleshow/47661441.cms

[188] The Indian Express (Jun 14, 2015), China Defence Ministry confirms test of supersonic nuclear delivery vehicle, http://indianexpress.com/article/world/asia/china-defence-ministry-confirms-test-of-supersonic-nuclear-delivery-vehicle/

[189] The Hindustan Times (Jun 14, 2015), China confirms test of supersonic nuclear delivery vehicle, http://www.hindustantimes.com/world/china-confirms-test-of-supersonic-nuclear-delivery-vehicle/story-8XUlV2GqGwEZXB6859aP1H_amp.html

[190] Chan (2015), China's latest hypersonic vehicle test seen as 'nuclear deterrent' amid US interference, SCMP, http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/1820762/latest-test-hypersonic-vehicle-designed-reinforce. The South China Morning Post is described by The Guardian as "an award-winning broadsheet famed for chasing stories the Communist party forbade its state-run competitors … in mainland China from touching". Alibaba Group, the Chinese internet company, purchased the newspaper on 5 April 2016, provoking fears of the SCMP towing the Communist Party line. But there were claims that the SCMP under previous owners, the Kuok family was already pro-Beijing (Custer 2015).

Tactics and doctrine are developed to suit the existing technologies and weapons, and considers the human operating them (Blasko 2011:355, 358). China pursues a defensive policy of no first attack, but assured counter-attack. The Chinese government's overarching goal of economic development and their operating within the strategic framework of active defence and fighting a People's War seem to be at odds with the Indian-attributed nuclear purpose for the HGV, also its imagined purpose of first attack or first use of nuclear weapons. Indian analysts, though, seem to assume and portray a nuclear threat emanating immediately from the HGV. They point to its underlying doctrinal purpose of a nuclear first strike.

The nuclear threat by the Chinese HGV is constructed within the Indian discourse, either by linking it to the omission of the NFU clause in the 2013 White Paper, or by using numerical comparisons of the growing Chinese nuclear arsenal or even by leaning on the South China Morning Post 'nuclear construction' (used by syndicated news articles). Actors and groups interpret the situation facing them by creating a particular kind of social reality (Jackson and Sorensen 2006:162-165). Discourse"… constrains how the stuff that the world consists of is ordered, and so how people categorize and think about the world. It constrains what is thought of at all, what is thought of as possible, and what is thought of as the 'natural thing' to do in a given situation" (Neumann 2008:62). Once the Other has been defined, it "implies the national interests that flow from that definition" (Weldes 1996:303). These discursive nuclear constructions are illustrative of the Indian strategic community's long-standing fear of a Chinese and Pakistan nuclear threat[191] (ideational element, linked to history and India's obsession with Chinese nuclear technology transfers to Pakistan). Indian discourse on the Chinese HGV, however, did not contain many references to Pakistan, which would have supported the Perkovich (1996) and Cortright and Mattoo (1996) arguments (see footnote).

Omissions of context
What is left out of the discourse (omissions) is also important to better understand the discourse constructions. Most Armed Forces analysts do not mention[192] the HGV tests in the context of China's military reforms under President Xi Jinping (with the shift in focus from "land to sea and air", that is, Army to the Navy and Air Force). They do not place Chinese actions, like the launching or indigenous construction of aircraft carriers or the repeated tests of the HGV,

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[191] India, which lagged far behind China in nuclear capability, uses its nuclear weapons posture ambiguously and aimed its nuclear posture to portray Pakistan as the threat (Perkovich 1996). Cortright and Mattoo (1996: 559) describe this as replacing the original China threat with the Pakistan threat). India later seemed fixated on the Pakistan program, making the nuclear competition "self-perpetuating" (ibid.).
[192] Sameer Joshi (2017:57-58) discusses the Chinese PLA Air Force's "state-enforced organisational reforms, institutional restructuring" in detail.

in the context of these efforts at force structure enhancement. They also do not mention other contextual details like rapid militarization of the Western Pacific or maritime disputes in the South China Sea. This failure to interpret the HGV tests in the light of possible contextual or background events, tacitly builds up the China threat (when Chinese actions are analysed in isolation and seem unwarrantedly aggressive). The construction of a formidable enemy could warrant frenzied internal balancing on the part of the Indian government[193].

To provide some context with regards to China's missile and nuclear commands, these were under the command of the Second Artillery Corps since 1985 (Lele 2017:28). However, on 1 Jan 2016, the nuclear and conventional missile commands were co-located and placed under a new force[194] named the PLA Rocket Force (PLARF). This became the 4th Service, after the PLA Army, PLA Navy, PLA Air Force. This is part of the ongoing military modernisation (making the PLA a modern, streamlined fighting force) under President Xi, which involves "reshaping of the PLA organisation, its doctrine and its command and control structure ... the upgradation of its military hardware" (Joshi M 2017: 78). PLA has downsized troops by 300,000 (see September 3, 2015 announcement in Ranade 2015) as part of this effort. Manoj Joshi (2017) situates the HGV tests in this force modernisation context. Others like Biswas (2015), interpret the HGV tests again using a one-sided lens of China's nuclear modernisation, thus building up the China threat.

Lele's work (the only comprehensive and authoritative one[195] on hypersonics from an Indian strategic analyst involved in policy-making), especially on the Chinese and Indian programmes, mentions the context of the PLARF creation, but leaves out the wider context of the PLA modernisation taking place Armed Forces-wide in China. Instead, Lele (2017:28) seems to suggest that maturation in hypersonic technology has emboldened the Chinese to create the PLARF. This assertion (of Chinese creation of a missile command (PLARF) as an outcome of maturing hypersonic technology and induction) seems a limited argument and merits further examination. Examination within the wider context of PLA restructuring and defence reforms under President Xi better explains not only the PLARF creation, but also explains the renewed focus and investment in the Chinese hypersonic programme.

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[193] India's military expenditure rose from $48.5 billion in 2013 to almost $51b in 2014. Its 2017 military expenditure increased by 5.5 per cent in real terms on 2016 (SIPRI Trends in world military expenditure Report, 2017).
[194] As a result of unified command, any attack aimed at North Korea or the Chinese conventional weapons could be interpreted as an attack on its nuclear arsenal and could evoke a nuclear response from the Chinese (Allen, Blasko, Corbett 2016).
[195] As mentioned previously, discourse by India's strategic community is in English. The researcher has run discourse searches in vernaculars and Hindi, but English remains the language of India's strategic discourse. Government documents and parliamentary debates may contain Hindi translations too, but as previously stated, no government documents were used for this study.

Placing the Chinese HGV tests in the context of the wider Chinese focus on naval, air and space-based assets, or viewing the tests as a response to the increasing American naval engagement in the Pacific under the Pivot strategy or the South China Sea skirmishes, would have reduced the threat perceived in these Chinese actions. In such an examination of a single action, without details on the wider context, it appears to be yet another one of China's aggressive actions and seems to build up the China threat identity. This silence within most of the Armed Forces narratives creates a China identity of aggression and unwarranted, disproportionate threat. There is, however, clear mention of the context in the VAYU Aerospace article (Indian Air Force journal), "… with the shift in focus from "Army to the Navy and Air Force"" (Joshi M 2017: 78)]. One must however, keep in mind that Joshi (ibid.) is not a member of the Armed Forces. He is only writing for the VAYU journal, and that could explain his providing a wider context to the Chinese actions and discussion of details. He was a member of the National Security Task Force and NSC's Advisory Board and now is a fellow at the Observer Research Foundation, a New Delhi-based Think Tank. Aneja (in the Hindu 13 Dec 2014) places the HGV tests in the context of the rapid militarization of the Western Pacific (under the Pivot to Asia strategy) and maritime disputes in the South China Sea (even supports his argument with quotes from senior officials stressing the US threat to China's national security).

The other discursive construction – HGV tests as part of China's strategy of rapid nuclear modernisation – also results is a very one-sided interpretation that builds up an aggressive China identity. China has not officially stated plans for the HGV to carry a nuclear warhead, or defined the HGV's role within its military doctrine. In fact, Lele (2017:35) emphasizes otherwise, "… weaponisation of hypersonic technology is normally expected to take place, or is taking place, in the conventional weapons arena".

Most Armed Forces and Think Tank analysts seem to focus on examining the HGV tests devoid of the wider context and China's historical claims narratives. They seem to stress a nuclear role for the HGV. Such an interpretation narrows the discursive space for other interpretations, building up an aggressive China identity. An identity of the copying and re-engineering actor seems to play down China's technological expertise and massive R&D investments (this may also preclude criticism against the Indian government). India's democracy acts as an enabler towards frequent criticism aimed at the Government, Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces [for example, Karnad's (2015) criticism on delay in Indian HSTDV testing in TsAGI, Moscow[196] or

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[196] Due to the Indian Finance Ministry not approving necessary funds, "because of pressure from certain Western quarters rattled by the prospect of India's acquiring such a potent weapon" (Karnad 2015). The Indian govt is

Bhat's (in Aroor 2017) account of criticism aimed at the Indian government just after the Shandong aircraft carrier launch]. In fact, Bhat (in Aroor 2017) even expresses surprise at the Indian media's lack of "signs of alarm or interest — and has in fact been surprisingly quiet on this issue" (i.e. Chinese HGV tests). Karnad's criticism uses examples from India's nuclear journey (see footnote below). Such references to India's nuclear journey point to ideational elements discussed previously. The strategic elite's mindset (of being forced into the 'nuclear not-haves' club as a result of the unfair Western-created non-proliferation regimes[197] and India's adherence to normative principles of global disarmament and non-alignment) continues to influence its security interpretations.

Such constructions of an aggressive China identity also act as identity markers in separating 'us' from the enemy 'Other'. Attributing an identity of a "very dangerous adversary" (Singh K 2014:3, see use of quotes from particular American actors) "also function(s) to enforce national unity, (re)construct national identity …" (Jackson 2004:1) against a common threat. This Self/ Other nexus strengthens the constitution of the entity of 'Self'.

Constructions affecting India's policy choices

Construction of a formidable nuclear adversary strengthens the Indian identity concept and justifies Indian actions at safeguarding national security. At the same time, the representation of the HGV tests as aimed at the United States (to counter threat from US hypersonic programme or to leapfrog US' technology advancements) and the reiteration of Chinese statements (that the tests are not targeted at any country or at specific goals) (see Singh K 2014:1, Joshi M 2014, Biswas 2015, Aneja in The Hindu 13 Dec and 14 Dec 2014), narrows the discursive space for counter-narratives. It precludes criticism or comparisons of the Indian programme with China's technological and R&D prowess, providing the Indian government leeway or flexibility and a wider timeframe to design its choices or responses. Indian policymakers or strategic thinkers do not need to immediately state a position or frame a response. This enables the Indian government to continue monitoring the situation, weigh its options, and calculate its risks. All the while India's own hypersonics programme continues to mature, weaponisation begins and after technology maturation has occurred on Indian terms,

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portrayed as making the same mistakes of the past (in the Nehru and Indira Gandhi era), in tarrying and "did not quickly weaponise once the threshold was reached in March 1964 and the country paid the price with the 1968 non-proliferation treaty shutting India out. Meanwhile China first tested a fission device in 1964 and by 1969 had gone thermonuclear and weaponised, and look where that got the Chinese!" Such references to India's nuclear path illustrate the ideational elements underlying India's security concept.

[197] "The strong presence of equity norm within India's society and the (perceived) inherent injustice of the international nuclear order constitute a major driving force in the quest for nuclear bomb" (Frey 2006:3)

then operational roles (within doctrines) for the weapons could be defined. Factors like the cost of hypersonic programmes (Lele 2017:42; Krishnan Nair 2016-a: p.3), the lack of futuristic technology, R&D and manufacturing ecosystems (Sheel Kant Sharma 2014) and the "cautious optimism of ISRO that stays clear of adjectives and self-adulation ..." (Krishnan Nair 2016-a: p.1) contribute to an overall image of a nascent Indian hypersonics programme.

The Indian government continues to monitor the Chinese HGV programme. It could be stalling on releasing an assessment/ statement on its own hypersonics programme or a response to China's, as it does not want to define or restrict or prematurely foreclose its options. These 'game-changing weapons' would massively alter defence architectures, technology, rules of engagement, existing deterrence mechanisms and military doctrines (Lele 2017: 41, 42). At present, in its early evolutionary stages, countries have yet to specify strategic purposes and operational roles for hypersonic weapons within their military or nuclear doctrines.

Operational status and doctrines of the Chinese programme would take a while to be defined. Lele (2017:37) explains that it is "...too early to identify exactly the nature of such a mechanism... Presently, the various aspects of the relevance and future of hypersonic weapons are being debated. The views are varied amongst the experts". The Indian government would refrain from commenting on the Chinese programme until such time. It would also not want to specify operational or doctrinal purposes for its yet-to-mature hypersonics programme. Past trends support this conclusion. India has pursued deliberate nuclear ambiguity[198] for decades, loosely defining various aspects of its nuclear doctrine (it does not define what 'massive retaliation' would entail, whether it would be a countervalue or counterforce[199] retaliation). Ambiguity is also introduced with crucial stakeholders in the Indian government publicly questioning[200] its No first-use [NFU] policy, etc.). The Indian government restricts the availability and dissemination of information on sensitive security issues, through "state patronage of research institutes and universities" and using the Official Secrets Act and the Atomic Energy Act of 1962 [Section 18 (i)] (Cortright and Mattoo 1996:546). Ollapally (2001: 929) explains the lack of public

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[198] For India's strategic ambiguity, see Debak Das 2012, Jaishankar 2017, Jagannathan 2016, Perkovich 1996. Ollapally (2001: 930) cites examples of governmental hesitance, and perceptions that nuclear matters were not key issues. Ollapally also discusses deliberate ambiguity in terminology.

[199] Countervalue strike is the targeting of enemy's cities, civilian infrastructure and population with a nuclear strike. Counterforce strike is the targeting of an opponent's military infrastructure.

[200] Manohar Parrikar, then Indian Defence Minister, on 10 November 2016, questioned the need to be bound by the NFU; also BJP's 2014 election manifesto calling for revision of nuclear doctrine. Prof Vipin Narang of MIT ignited a debate on 20 March 2017, stating there was clear evidence that India has moved away from NFU, and would launch a full comprehensive 'first strike' against Pakistan (instead of the commonly accepted "pathway of nuclear first use in South Asia").

information available on India's nuclear programme as partly caused by its portrayal of nuclear weapons as immoral (at odds with India's values on disarmament) and, at best, expensive.

The Indian government has always been hesitant to take a stance on nuclear matters until absolutely necessary. For example, it waited for over two decades to conduct nuclear tests (Pokhran 1998), and only did so when faced with insurmountable pressure to sign the CTBT[201]. Stalling the definition of responses or specifying operational purposes for its hypersonic programme could help buy the Indian government some much needed manoeuvring space.

It is unlikely that the Chinese government too would clearly define purposes or even restrict its hypersonics programme to self-defence or conventional use only. Recent Chinese actions in co-location[202], qualitative changes in its nuclear force structure[203], and its evolving thinking on 'deterrence', (i.e. a multifaceted version of 'strategic deterrence' combining space, cyber and electronic warfare") all point to changes in China's nuclear stance (Johnson 2017). Experts also point to China's dropping of its NFU clause in its 2013 White Paper. China's actions portray a power that is not willing to foreclose any options. The Chinese government is keen on portraying its peaceful rise and positioning itself as an adherent of international norms. At the very same time, it is not willing to give up any available options for maximisation of its interests. The Indian government will thus reciprocate by keeping its own options alive, and its responses vague.

It is important to also consider the Indian government's long-standing desire to join non-proliferation regimes like the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), MTCR, the Australia Group and the Wassenaar Arrangement. India became an MTCR member in June 2016, the Wassenaar Arrangement on 8 Dec 2017 and the Australia Group in Jan 2019. Such an increased focus on membership of multilateral organisations is in adherence with India's emerging foreign policy approach of multialignment (see Hall 2016, M K Narayanan 2016, Basrur 2017, Panda 2013) to increase India's heft and soft power in the global arena. With long-planned efforts to join these three control regimes, the Indian government would not want to be viewed as violating regime commitments in any way[204]. This would prevent clear and fixed positions on its own programme

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[201] After the first tests in 1974 (often called the PNE or Peaceful Nuclear Explosion), Indian government stated it had the technology to make a nuclear weapon, yet for many years it maintained a recessed nuclear status without weaponising. This ensured that adversaries or nuclear neighbours remained uncertain and the government could focus on other priorities without pursuing a costly nuclear weapons race.

[202] China's nuclear and conventional missiles were placed under a unified command, the PLARF.

[203] For e.g., road-mobile nukes with multiple warheads, next-generation nuclear-powered submarines, refitted long-range bombers with deterrence missions, and the possible inclusion of dual-payload ballistic and cruise missiles (Johnson 2017).

[204] "Sensitivities about being counted as an exporter of lethal weapons in a region rife with proliferation has always stalled decisions" (Aroor 2017a). Claims of Indian sale of the supersonic BrahMos to Vietnam in Aug 2017, immediately instigated a plethora of criticism about India violating MTCR commitments (Rajagopalan 2017).

or China's hypersonic programme. Construction of a narrative or discourse that represents China as challenging American hegemony, a narrative that reiterates Chinese statements (of the tests not being aimed at any country) facilitates the Indian government's silence on China's tests and its pursuit of ambiguity related to its hypersonic programme, enabling its quiet entry into its desired regimes.

The discourse provides varied recommendations for the Indian government. "…hypersonic technology could deliver benefits out of proportion to its costs of development and operationalization (Kapur 2014a:4-5, Bhat in Aroor 2017). Bhat calls for a moratorium on hypersonic testing, but soon advocates "Development and fielding of phased array radars and a credible BMD … to detect and monitor Chinese hypersonic activities better". Lele (2017: 40-42) recommends "multilateral and/or United Nations supported" moratoriums and the development of BMD or electronic counter-measures.

Conclusion

This chapter illustrates how the Indian strategic discourse interprets and represents the seven Chinese HGV tests. This chapter makes two arguments — First, it concludes that the discursive strategies and identity constructions employed serve specific purposes. For example, construction of a formidable nuclear adversary strengthens the Indian identity concept and justifies Indian actions at safeguarding national security. Attributing an identity of a "very dangerous adversary" or enemy Other "also function to enforce national unity, (re)construct national identity …" (Jackson 2004:1). The construction of a formidable and "very dangerous adversary" justifies massive investment in India's hypersonic programme and in defence acquisition. An identity of the copying and re-engineering actor seems to play down China's technological expertise and massive R&D investments (this may also preclude criticism against the Indian government).

The Armed Forces discourse constructs the Indian hypersonics programme as nascent. It is true that the Indian hypersonic programme is not as advanced as China's or the US'. However, piecing together open source information on individual projects or weapons systems, paints a picture of a more advanced Indian hypersonics programme than is widely attributed. A narrative of nascence and operational weakness could be deliberately constructed and utilized[205] to buy time and space for development at the scientific establishments' (or government's) desired pace.

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[205] Blasko (2011:376) discusses information manipulation to hide capabilities and send a desired message, especially in the case of the ASBM.

HGV tests are constructed as a nuclear development by some Indian think tank analysts, though China has not yet specified future roles or operational doctrines for the HGV. These nuclear constructions are illustrative of the Indian strategic community's long-standing fear of a Chinese and Pakistan nuclear threat (ideational element, linked to history and India's obsession with Chinese nuclear technology transfers to Pakistan over decades).

Most Armed Forces analysts do not place Chinese tests in context of China's current military modernisation efforts and defence reforms under President Xi. They also do not mention other contextual details like China's perception of the rapid militarization of the Western Pacific or its maritime disputes in the South China Sea. This is an omission of or silence on context. This failure to interpret the HGV tests in the light of possible contextual or background events, tacitly builds up the China threat. In such an examination of a single action, without details on the wider context, it appears to be yet another one of China's aggressive actions and seems to build up the China threat identity. Such constructions of an aggressive China identity also act as identity markers in separating 'us' from the enemy 'Other'.

Secondly, the chapter argues that such representations or discursive constructions "make various courses of action possible" (Doty 1996: 5). These various narratives (and juxtaposition of identities) highlight that "discourses are sites of struggle and negotiation, between different knowledge claims and power relations" (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:9, Louw 2001: 5-35). A narrative of nascence and operational weakness is deliberately constructed and utilized to buy time and space for development at the scientific establishments' (or government's) desired pace. Much of the Indian discourse represents the Chinese hypersonic capability as a 'given', and aimed at catching up with the US' programme. This (together with the nascence narrative) indirectly constructs an 'India', not figuring anywhere in China's strategic plans and mostly reacting to Chinese actions. At the same time, the representation of the HGV tests as aimed at the United States, precludes criticism. Indian policymakers do not need to immediately state their position or frame a response, providing the Indian government leeway or flexibility and a wider timeframe to design its choices or responses. Discursive space thus narrowed (by limiting counter-narratives) enables the Indian government to continue monitoring the situation. India's experience with nuclearization supports the argument that it would not want to take a position or state its aims or even respond to China's hypersonics programme which is still under development. Considering the fact that the Chinese government too would not prefer to clearly define purposes or restrict its hypersonics programme to self-defence or conventional use, it is highly unlikely that the India government would state its position. The Indian government will most likely reciprocate by keeping its own options alive, and its responses vague. India has

pursued nuclear ambiguity for decades. An "in-between stance fit in well with India's strategic culture, economic constraints and normative proclivity" (Ollapally 2001: 930).

Discursive constructions therefore, serve to further India's use of deliberate strategic ambiguity, especially in its nuclear policy and responses. Discursive space is created (through the predominant narrative of a US-focused Chinese hypersonic programme) to facilitate the Indian government's silence on China's tests and its pursuit of ambiguity related to its hypersonic programme, allowing its quiet entry into the desired proliferation regimes. Such membership of multilateral institutions and forums helps increase India's leverage on the global stage, supporting its great power ambitions, and facilitating the pursuit of its foreign policy approach of multialignment.

Some of the narratives and criticism (for example, Karnad's), point to the presence of ideational elements (through references to India's past nuclear journey). It highlights that the strategic elite links the narrative to the mindset of being forced into the 'nuclear not-haves' club as a result of the unfair Western-created non-proliferation regimes and India's adherence to normative principles of global disarmament and non-alignment. India's unique path to nuclearization and its prolonged national debate on the symbolic aspects of nuclear weapons versus their security value still have continued effects on the strategic elite's narratives, even on this game-changing hypersonic technology. India's policy responses and foreign policy behaviours in the hypersonics arena are linked to its self-image and normative values.

Chapter Six: China's Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ)

The previous chapter examined the seven tests of the Chinese hypersonic glide vehicle (HGV), and the Indian strategic community's discursive interpretations. The aim of this chapter is to understand how Indian discourse interprets China's declaration of the ADIZ over parts of the ECS. These narratives help understand the construction of the Chinese and Indian identities – i.e. the separation of Self from the 'Other', the contradictions in identity creation and the discursive strategies used.

An ADIZ facilitates aerial control beyond a country's territorial airspace. Declaration of the Chinese ADIZ is an action aimed at force projection[206], area denial and attaining strategic depth (both maritime depth and area denial) at its periphery (Permal 2014). As described in Chapter One, China's area and continental denial capability is enhanced, not just through efforts like the ADIZ, but also through the use of "advanced tactical multirole fighters", ballistic and cruise missiles (in future, probably mated with the HGV) and air-defense platforms (Fravel 2008:133).

This chapter makes two specific arguments - First, it argues that discursive interpretations of the Chinese ADIZ are linked to ideational elements underpinning India's national identity concept. Discursive constructions illustrate that mindsets, perceptions and interactions remain predominantly driven by historical events, experiences, memories and fears. The discourse highlights India's long-standing distrust of China, often linked to its deceiving of India in the 1962 war. History and India's experiences at the hands of China in the 1962 war continue to influence mindsets and security interpretations.

Second, the chapter argues that such representations or discursive constructions "make various courses of action possible" (Doty 1996: 5). The discourse recommends or calls on the Indian government to "back Japan", "reinvigorating its ties with Vietnam, Japan, Australia, Singapore and the littoral states", and "engage with Taiwan, actively, across the board and especially on security issues" (Saran and Iyer-Mitra 2013, Joshi M 2016, Chhatwal 2013). This seems to support the Indian government's preferred foreign policy approach of multialignment. The creation of a particular Japanese identity, within the discourse, facilitates a stronger Indo-Japanese alignment to counter China's rising influence. Indian discursive interpretations of the Chinese ADIZ being primarily aimed at curbing US influence in the region, also serves the

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[206] Fravel (2008:134) terms the intent as limited regional force projection, "projecting force in a well-defined area for a specific duration of time as opposed to all along China's coast and over all disputed areas".

purpose of supporting alignments with Japan and Asian countries. The discourse utilises the 'decline in US influence' argument to debate US ambiguity on the Chinese ADIZ.

This chapter is structured like the previous two case studies – first, with a general overview of the Chinese ADIZ declaration, to provide the background and context for the argument. It then moves on to examining discourse written by the Indian strategic commentators to understand how they interpret this Chinese action. Next, discursive strategies employed are discussed, in particular the leveraging of a Pakistan threat, and the silences or omissions of wider context in the discourse. It closes with a discussion on possible alternative discursive constructions. It also reveals the varied recommendations from the strategic community to the Indian government, for responses to the Chinese ADIZ. Such varied recommendations provide the discursive space justifying the pursuit of various policy practices with regard to China. First, some details on the Chinese ADIZ declaration. The details on articles examined for Indian discourse can be found in the Bibliography.

China's Air Defence Identification Zone

On 23 November 2013 at 10 am local time, China declared an Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea (Singh T (ed) 2014:2, Gupta, R 2014:3, Osawa 2013, Jagota 2013). "An ADIZ is an additional zone of aerial control beyond territorial airspace, allowing the declaring state to identify approaching aircrafts before they enter that airspace. The legality of an ADIZ per se is relatively well settled: in principle, states have a legal basis for declaring an ADIZ adjacent to their airspace" (Lee 2014; Pratnashree Basu 2013, Singh Manjit 2014, see also Mongia 2013, Kalha 2013 on ADIZ having no basis in international law).

China's action is not illegal or against international practice. Demarcated zones have existed in the past, on earth, in the sea and in the air, in the form of man-made moats, dykes, walls (like the Great Wall of China) and ramparts. These were more prevalent during wars. During the World Wars, the United States set up maritime control zones in the sea. An example is the 'neutral zone' set up in the waters of the Atlantic and the Pacific by twenty-one American Republics, using the 1939 Declaration of Panama (McDougal and Schlie 1958: 684). Another example of a protective zone in the air is the US' first ADIZ, established soon after the Second World War, in December 1950 (Page 2013).

An ADIZ is not to be confused with a no-fly zone, Flight Information Region, an Exclusive Economic Zone or Territorial airspace. It is useful to outline clear definitions of each, in order to distinguish them from an ADIZ.

Territorial airspace: International law prescribes a country's territorial waters or seas to extend up to 12 nautical miles from its coastline. A country's sovereignty extends to airspace over the territorial sea as well as to its bed and subsoil (UNCLOS Part 2, Section 1 Article 2[207]). Any foreign aircraft has to seek permission before it enters another country's territorial space.

No-fly zone: An area set up in a military context, over which aircraft are prohibited. Recent examples were the no-fly zones set up by the Coalition forces in Northern and Southern Iraq after the 1991 Gulf war.

Flight Information Region: A specified airspace established for the facilitation of airspace and air traffic management. Air traffic service and alerting service are present within the FIR, as prescribed by the International Civil Aviation Organization.

Exclusive Economic Zone: An EEZ is defined by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS, Part 5 Article 56, 57[208]) as an area of up to 200 nautical miles from a coastline that any signatory state can claim and exploit for marine resources. There is freedom to navigate or transit through Exclusive Economic Zones (UNCLOS Article 87). If EEZs overlap, the states are expected to negotiate mutually acceptable boundaries. While foreign vessels and aircraft have to respect the rights of the coastal states, the coastal states in turn, cannot prohibit aircraft or vessels from entering an EEZ– whether by establishing an ADIZ or otherwise (UNCLOS Article 87). However, countries disagree on EEZs being used for non-aggressive military operations. "China often intercepts and tracks foreign military planes over its Exclusive Economic Zone, but usually does not try to repel them or force them to land" (Mongia 2013:2; Page 2013).

Air Defence Identification Zone: "An ADIZ is an area in airspace over land or water in which ready identification, location and control of all aircraft is required in the interest of national security. It is principally for the purpose of pre-emption and prevention based on the principles of self-defense, national security and precaution" (Bautista and Amador III, 2013; also see Jagota 2013, Shankar 2013, Manjit Singh 2014:26, Kalha 2013, Chhatwal 2013). "The established zone is then covered within the operational envelope of the Air Defence systems such as radars, interceptor aircraft, command and control and surface to air missiles" (Jagota 2013).

"The authority to establish an ADIZ is not given by any international treaty nor prohibited by international law and is not regulated by any international body" (Shankar 2013; Kalha 2013). An ADIZ is "unilaterally declared designated areas of non-territorial airspace where states

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[207] United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone Part 2
[208] UNCLOS Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone Part 5

impose reporting obligations on civil and military aircraft" for the purpose of national security (Lamont 2014: 187). Therefore, an ADIZ is not illegal or against international practice. Today many countries like Britain, Norway, South Korea, Japan, Pakistan, India, Taiwan, the United States, Canada and China possess ADIZs (Heydarian 2013, Shankar 2013, Muralidharan 2014, Yadav 2016). Countries with an ADIZ now make filing flight plans a requirement, as in the age of high-speed flight it is not possible to wait for an aircraft to enter territorial airspace and then determine if it poses a security threat (Lamont 2014:189; Manjit Singh 2014:26; Shankar 2013).

On 23 November 2013, China declared its first ADIZ, demarcated over parts of the East China Sea. This was outside China's territorial airspace, extending to around 312 nautical miles from the coastline (Lamont 2014:188; Singh Manjit 2014:29). According to international law, 'territorial waters or airspace' extends to 12 nautical miles (UNCLOS Part 2, Section 2 Article 3). An 'Exclusive Economic Zone' (EEZ) extends to 200 nautical miles.

China claims that the ADIZ is not directed against any particular country. China's Ministry of National Defence defines an ADIZ "as a buffer zone over land or water established by a maritime nation, to guard against potential air threats. This airspace, demarcated outside the territorial airspace, allows a country to identify, monitor, control and dispose of entering aircraft. It allows for early warning and helps defend the country's airspace[209]" (Xinhuanet 23 Nov 2013). Colonel Yang Yujun, Chinese Defence Ministry spokesperson clarified that "The objective is to defend national sovereignty and territorial and air security, as well as to maintain orderly aviation," (Shanker 2013). He "defended the move, saying it followed international practices" (Krishnan in the Hindu Nov 24, 2013). The ADIZ, according to the Ministry, "is in accordance with the Law of the People's Republic of China on National Defence (March 14, 1997), the Law of the People's Republic of China on Civil Aviation (October 30, 1995), and the Basic Rules on Flight of the People's Republic of China (July 27, 2001)" (Paul 2014). Chinese sources say that the ADIZ "conforms to the Charter of the United Nations, which gives the right of self-defense to all sovereign countries" (Zhang 2013).

However, there are three reasons why the Chinese ADIZ goes against accepted international norms. First, it includes disputed territory – the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands[210] (claimed jointly by

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[209] Official statement by the Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China, please see "Statement by the Government of the People's Republic of China on Establishing the East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone"

[210] China requires Japanese aircraft to provide flight plans and identification over Japan's own islands, the Senkakus (Guha Roy 2014; Shankar 2013).

China, Taiwan and Japan), and the Ieodo or Suyan Reef/ Socotra Rock (claimed both by China and South Korea[211]) (Bhaskar Roy 2013). Second, it overlaps[212] with Japan's and South Korea's ADIZs (See Fig. 1 in Appendix Three). Third, China does not distinguish between aircraft intending to enter its territorial airspace and aircraft that are just flying through the zone 'parallel to the coast line', not headed towards Chinese territorial airspace (Muralidharan 2014:12, Shankar 2013). All aircraft, even commercial, flying through this zone are required to abide by the Air Identification Rules and provide Flight plan identification, Radio identification, Transponder identification and Logo identification (Paul 2014, Bhaskar Roy 2013, Permal 2014, Xinhuanet News 2013; Rinehart and Elias 2015:40).

All aircraft are required to adhere to Chinese Air Command requirements, and "need to respond to Chinese queries… as well as maintain two-way radio communications" (Gupta R 2014:3). Non-compliance would lead to "emergency defensive measures", that is, China "could use military measures to deal with those who do not comply with ADIZ requirements" (Arvind Gupta 2013). Duality of control [where civil aircraft need to maintain communications at all times with "internationally designated Air Traffic Control (ATC) authority or appropriate international distress radio frequency" (Guha Roy 2014:7) and also maintain communication with the Chinese Air command] could increase the probability of air incidents. Non-scheduled flights and reporting obligations of military aircraft further complicates this ambiguity of command and control (Jagota 2013; Gupta R 2014:3).

"India has not officially reacted to these developments though the government has issued a NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) for all carriers to comply with the Chinese requirements but it is not clear whether Indian military aircraft passing through that area will comply with the Chinese requirements" (Chhatwal 2013:3; Krishnan in the Hindu 7 Dec 2013). Details from the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) point to two questions asked in the Indian Parliament [that is unstarred question no.948 in the Rajya Sabha (Upper House) to the Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs, Retd. Gen. V.K. Singh on July 17, 2014[213] and unstarred question

[211] On 8 Dec 2013, South Korea also unilaterally extended her Korean ADIZ (KADIZ) to include the disputed Ieodo Reef, and the Marado and Hongdo islands [Manjit Singh 2014:30; Keck 2013a; Singh T (eds.), 2013:2; Paul 2014; Guha Roy 2014:8]. Korea added over 66,000 sq km to its 62-year old KADIZ (Singh Manjit 2014). "South Korea is equally rattled by these developments as the newly drawn ADIZ encroaches on the airspace west of Jeju Island and over the Ieodo Ocean Research Center, an unmanned station built atop an outcropping of rock 149 kilometres South of Mara Island" (Jagota 2013).
[212] It is also not a coincidence that the area formed by the overlap of Japan and China's ADIZs and their disputed Exclusive Economic Zone are centred on the disputed Chunxiao/Shirakaba gas fields (Shankar 2013).
[213] See https://www.mea.gov.in/rajya-sabha.htm?dtl/23674/q+no948+east+china+sea+air+defence+identification+zone (Accessed 3 Jan 2019)

no.3333 in the Lok Sabha (Lower House) to then Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs on February 12, 2014[214]]. The Indian government's position was clarified thus "The Government has made efforts to underscore the importance of freedom of over flight and civil aviation safety in accordance with the recognized principles of international law and the relevant standards and recommended practices of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)".

China is also said to be planning to declare a second ADIZ over the South China Sea (SCS) that includes various disputed territories. China's Defence Ministry spokesperson Yang Yujun, when asked about a future ADIZ in the disputed South China Sea, said other "zones to be set up to boost China's territorial defences "at an appropriate time after completing preparations"" (Krishnan in the Hindu Nov 24, 2013, CCTV and Xinhua sources, 23 Nov 2013; Vuving 2016, Shanker 2013, Jagota 2013, Yadav 2016). At the Shangri-La Dialogue 2015, Admiral Sun Jianguo, deputy chief of staff of the PLA, also referred to the possibility of an SCS ADIZ (Wong 2015). Although declaration of ADIZs is the sovereign right of nations, the international norm is that countries do not unilaterally declare them and that too overlapping those of other nations, and over disputed territories or air spaces (Muralidharan 2014:10, Mongia 2013: 3).

Chinese intent behind declaring the ADIZ could be varied. The Chinese government stresses the ADIZ's intended aim to protect national security. However, analysts like Lamont point to other Chinese intentions. Lamont (2014:198) compares China's and US' ADIZs, explaining that the aims behind their declaration were very different[215]. While the US' ADIZs[216] were established for territorial security (which became more important after the 9/11 attacks), China's East China Sea ADIZ seems to be established to strengthen and legitimise claims on disputed territories. China's declaration came soon after the Japanese government's September 2012 purchase of the disputed Senkaku/ Diaoyu[217] islands. Though China claimed the ADIZ "move was not

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[214] See https://www.mea.gov.in/lok-sabha.htm?dtl/22880/q+no3333+air+defence+indentification+zone+by+china (Accessed 3 Jan 2019).

[215] Burcu (2014:5) contradicts Lamont and argues that China's ADIZ is similar to other ADIZs especially Japan's, which was extended quite unilaterally in 2010 to include parts of Taiwan's ADIZ. Though Taipei condemned this action, there was not much international criticism on Japan's action, which could partly be due to divided opinion within Taiwan itself. Opposition in Taiwan criticised the ruling Kuomintang of employing the Japanese ADIZ issue to spread anti-Japan sentiments nationally and thus cater to Beijing (Kastner and Jyh-Perng 2010).

[216] The United States has five ADIZs (East Coast, West Coast, Alaska, Hawaii, and Guam) and jointly operates two more with Canada (Welch 2013). The Washington ADIZ, now called DC Flight Restricted Zone and Special Flight Rules Area, which surrounds the National Capital Region, was established in 2003.Some sources claim it was a response to the 9/11 attacks (Wikipedia).

[217] The islands were purchased and nationalised to prevent provocative moves by right-wing Tokyo governor Shintaro Ishihara (Ryall 2012; Shaheli Das 2016; Muralidharan 2014:9).

directed against any specific country or threat", it appears to be aimed at strengthening its "claims over the disputed island territories in the East/South China Seas…" (Muralidharan 2014:10; Singh T (ed) 2014:15; Gupta A 2013; Gupta R 2014:3). Alka Acharya (in Dikshit 2013) terms the ADIZ as "superimposed on the existing tensions over the islands".

The Chinese believe that Japan obtained control over the Senkaku/ Diaoyu illegally and in an unjustified manner. The United States, just after the Second World War, declared an ADIZ over Japan that included the Senkaku/ Diaoyu (traditionally believed to be a part of Chinese territory, usurped by Japan in its pre-World War II imperialistic days). This ADIZ was transferred to Japan in 1969[218] (Chatterjee Miller 2013). When the United States transferred its ADIZ to Japan, the Chinese believe it illegally transferred control over the Senkaku/ Diaoyu islands. Chinese nationalists still rankle under the memories of the defeats in the Sino-Japanese wars, Britain's colonisation and the Opium Wars, and the Century of Humiliation under Western powers (Permal 2014). Anti-Japanese sentiment works to stoke nationalist fervour within China and binds people together (Das 2016, Chatterjee Miller 2013, Pratnashree Basu 2013, Bhaskar Roy 2013). According to the Chinese government[219], the Senkaku/ Diaoyu issue was shelved in August 1978 during discussions between Deng Xiaoping and then Japanese Foreign Minister Sunao Sonoda, leaving it for future generations to resolve the thorny issue (Zhai 2014). After the Japanese government's purchase of the islands in 2012, China was irked that Japan had renegaded on the promise (Shaheli Das 2016) and considered this an act of violation of the Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1978 (Shaheli Das 2016, Bhaskar Roy 2013). "This one act was confirmation to the Chinese leaders that Japan was moving quickly to establish full sovereignty over these islands" (Bhaskar Roy 2013). The Japanese administrative control over the Senkaku/ Diaoyu is recognised by the United States, and as a consequence, Article 5 of the US-Japan Mutual Defence Treaty[220] covers the islands (although in the process the United States would be "dragged into the dispute too") (Gupta R 2014:4; Hashmi 2013:1; Kalha 2013; Chhatwal 2013).

The Senkaku/ Diaoyu are also of strategic importance. They lie just 410 km west of Okinawa (Masahiro 2013), which houses around 26,000 US troops[221] (BBC News 2014) and includes the Kadena air base too. Having airspace control (using an ADIZ) over the Senkaku/ Diaoyu would

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[218] The Japanese ADIZ was later unilaterally extended twice in 1972 and 2010 (Jagota 2013, Hashmi 2013:3).
[219] The Japanese MOFA reiterates that there was no agreement to shelve the issue (Japan. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Senkaku Islands. March 2013).
[220] Signed after the Second World War.
[221] The US military base is being relocated to Nago (BBC News 20 January 2014).

be of strategic importance to China. The ADIZ declaration and the constant presence of Chinese ships and aircraft in or over the disputed waters, keeps the "conflict alive" (especially since Japan claims that the Senkakus' sovereignty is not disputed with China).

The East China Sea ADIZ could also be a reaction to the Oct 3, 2013 US-Japan agreement to base drones in Japan[222]. China's ADIZ declaration also came immediately after Japan's warnings in 2013 to shoot down any Chinese unmanned aerial vehicles encroaching upon their airspace (Bronk 2013, Taylor Fravel quoted in Krishnan in The Hindu Nov 24, 2013; Muralidharan 2014:10; Paul 2014; Hashmi 2013:3).

Another factor behind China's interest and assertiveness in the East China Sea could be the vast energy reserves believed to lie beneath the sea. China's interest is claimed to have increased since the 1970s after two incidents – a 1968 UN report pointing to rich hydrocarbon resources in the sea[223] and the formulation of UNCLOS in 1968 and its codification in 1982 (Shaheli Das 2016). Energy resources, for example, the Chunxiao gas fields, are an important determining factor behind the ADIZ demarcation (Shankar 2014:13, Pratnashree Basu 2013, Hashmi 2013:3, Chhatwal 2013:5). China's key Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC), that carry vital oil and natural resources from Africa and the Middle East, pass through the East China Sea and these need to be protected. China's control over large swathes of the East China Sea using its ADIZ and its Exclusive Economic Zone ensures that Chinese SLOCs and ships remain safe.

The Chinese ADIZ also has capabilities to influence Taiwan's sovereignty claims. Analysing the landing vectors or air routes of commercial aircraft, one would realise that all commercial aircraft originating or terminating in Taipei would cross through China's new ADIZ (See Fig. 2 and 3 in Appendix Three). China is, therefore, able to monitor all commercial aircraft in and out of Taipei. This is another way of bringing Taiwan under Beijing's control and setting up a de facto degree of sovereignty (Sacharski 2013). The East China Sea ADIZ and the planned ADIZ over the

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[222] On Oct 3, 2013 the United States obtained basing rights in Japan for the Global Hawks, US' unmanned surveillance drones. The stated mission of the drones is to spy on North Korea. This has irritated China, and increased fears that this is Japan's first step to obtain its own Global Hawks. According to the agreement, in addition to the drones, US would also deploy the "P-8 maritime surveillance patrol aircraft" in Japan and "build a new antiballistic radar station in Kyogamisaki, in southern Japan", which was planned to become operational sometime in the 2014 (Whitlock and Gearan 2013).

[223] The United States Energy Information Administration (2012) estimates that the East China Sea contains 60-100 million barrels of petroleum reserves. China's estimates stand as high as 70 to 160 billion barrels for the entire East China Sea (mostly in the Xihu/Okinawa trough). Natural gas reserve estimates are as high as 900 trillion cubic feet (United States of America. Energy Information Administration. 2012). The East China Sea also contains rich fishing grounds.

South China Sea together would lead to a coercive squeeze effect on Taiwan's airspace (Stokes 2013) (See Fig. 4 in Appendix Three).

China also tried to portray the ADIZ as intended to prevent trafficking ("man, material and narcotics") and reduce the risk of mid-air collisions, but this was soon disproved (see Shankar 2013). Most importantly, China's ADIZ dovetails with its national security interests - to facilitate China's Anti-access, Area denial (A2/AD) strategy. It works towards keeping the United States, the predominant regional power, out of the area (Singh Manjit 2014: 29; Gupta A 2013) and gives China the ability to project power into the 'far seas' - into the region that it shares with its weaker territorial claimants. China's ADIZ is allegedly aimed at testing the United States' commitment to its alliance partners in Asia (Gupta A 2013; Indian Express November 28, 2013; Paul 2014; Vinod Anand 2013). By testing its commitments to allies, the ADIZ simultaneously tests the American 'rebalance' to Asia (the Pivot strategy) (Gupta A 2013, Paul 2014). In the discourse, China's ADIZ declaration is cited as proof of the rise of a hegemon focused on becoming the power in Asia and countering the current dominant power, the United States (Shankar 2013, Gupta A 2013, Singh T (ed) 2014:15; Paul 2014, Hashmi 2013:3, Bhaskar Roy 2013, Upadhyay 2014, Mahapatra 2014:6, Singh Manjit 2014:29). The ADIZ is termed as another move to keep the United States, out of the region, progressively denying the US operating space[224]. "It is definitely aimed at countering US military deployment in Asia. China is playing the game of 'weiqi' where it is slowly expanding its influence through steps that are not at the threshold of violence and do not trigger a forcible response" (Singh T (ed) 2014:16).

Implications of the Chinese Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ)

The Chinese ADIZ action is termed to have increased brinkmanship and tensions in East Asia (Gupta, A. 2013, Jagota 2013, Singh Manjit 2014:29, Anand 2013, Gupta, R 2014), and affected freedom of overflight over some disputed territories in the East China Sea[225]. It also "increase(s) the risk for clashes and collisions which could easily escalate into a larger and more serious

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[224] "Pentagon is focusing attention on countering China's growing aggressiveness, its 'anti-access/area denial capabilities' and creation of the Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ), that could be used to restrict its military ability to operate in the region in the future. Washington is therefore making attempts to bolster its alliances" (Upadhyay 2014).
[225] Bao (2014) argues that China's ADIZ does "not contravene customary international law (and) its establishment and operation rules are well justified". According to him, Japan unilaterally extended its ADIZ in 2010 to cover areas disputed with Taiwan (Burcu [2014: 5-6] countered this using five points, especially stating that it was for self-defence and "allowing residents to have a life free of anxiety"). Bao tries to illustrate with other precedents, like the Canadian example. He claims the Canadian ADIZ rules, like the Chinese ADIZ, require flight information not just from flight entering its ADIZ, but any flights headed elsewhere, but passing through.

conflict" (Bautista and Amador III 2013)[226]. It is ironical that the Chinese argue that the zone reduces the risk of mid-air collisions.

There have been various instances of pushback and challenging of the Chinese ADIZ rules by the United States and regional neighbours like Japan and South Korea. Soon after the ADIZ declaration, "on 24 November 2013, China flew a TU-154 and another Y-8 aircraft on patrol over the Senkaku, eliciting an air defence reaction from two Japanese F-15s who intercepted them" (Muralidharan 2014: 9). On 26 Nov 2013, the United States flew unarmed B-52 surveillance bombers from their Guam base (Shankar 2013; Branigan 2013; Muralidharan 2014:9; Mahapatra 2014:5), through China's ADIZ. China is believed to have scrambled fighters to monitor them (Hashmi 2013:2); though there are reports that China did not respond to it (Shankar 2013; Bautista and Amador III, 2013[227]). The United States portrayed the flying of their bombers as a long-planned exercise. Pentagon reiterated that the sortie underscored US "commitment to preserving traditional rules of international air space…"and US commitment to allies and partners (Shankar 2013). The cat and mouse game of challenging the ADIZ continued. Soon after, Japan and South Korea also challenged the ADIZ by flying their warplanes through, without notification. "Undeterred, the Chinese in turn sent their war planes though the zone and also naval ships to the islands" (Gupta A 2013, Hashmi 2013:2; Indian Express November 29, 2013). With these air challenges "the potential for miscalculation and a resultant 'air incident'[228] is therefore rife" (Muralidharan 2014:9, Singh Manjit 2014:27).

Authors also point to a ramping up of bilateral or joint military naval exercises by affected partners in the region. Japan and South Korea's naval drill in 2014 near the disputed Ieodo Reef in the East China Sea, covered by China's ADIZ, although part of a previously planned and regular biennial exercise, did not notify the Chinese and ignored Chinese ADIZ requirements (Paul 2014, see Gupta A 2013 for US-Japan Okinawa naval exercises). "The first ever joint naval exercise between India and Japan is also a fall out the ADIZ" (Singh T 2014a:16)

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[226] Chinese planes also regularly encroach the Japanese and South Korean ADIZs. A recent instance is a Chinese Y-9 transport aircraft spending more than four hours in the South Korean ADIZ on 27 July 2018 and flying near the disputed Ieodo/ Suyan Reef, believed to be "gathering information on South Korea's defences, including the US-backed Terminal High Altitude Area Defence system in the country's south". South Korea scrambled F-15K fighter jets to counter it (Huang 2018).

[227] "Chinese netizens and news media have derided their government's non-response to the US' flying of its Stratofortress over the area" (Bautista and Amador III 2013:4).

[228] Such probable air incidents were compared to the US Navy EP-3 incident over Hainan in 2001 (Chhatwal 2013:5) or clashes between Turkish and Greek airplanes "over disputed island territories in the Aegean Sea" (Muralidharan 2014:10).

Another potent risk from the Chinese ADIZ is that different constituents may understand and interpret the ADIZ requirements in varied ways. This is illustrated in comments made by PLA air force major general Qiao Liang that "Chinese pilots had the right to shoot down any aircraft that disregarded warnings…" Hu Jixian, the editor-in-chief of the Chinese Communist Party's Global Times, expressed opinions in contradiction to this. Each could be reflecting the views of the government entities that they belong to - Maj. Gen. Qiao Liang voicing the PLA's and Hu Jixian, that of the civilian hierarchy within the Chinese Politburo, which focuses on negotiation and peaceful means to achieve national interests (Bhaskar Roy 2013). What remains of concern here is that individual perception or interpretation could lead to brinkmanship, seen in accidents like the EP3 air crash over Hainan (Chatwal 2013:5, Muralidharan 2014:10). To add to this brinkmanship and cat and mouse game, China is speculated to be preparing for another ADIZ in the South China Sea (SCS).

Construction of the China identity

Indian strategic commentators interpret the Chinese ADIZ action differently. It is simultaneously constructed as threatening, increasingly aggressive and altering the regional status quo (Gupta A 2013, Gupta R 2014:3, Anand 2013, Mahapatra 2014:5, Bhaskar Roy 2013, Shaheli Das 2016); while also being rationalised as being in the interest of national security (Singh T (ed) 2014:15, Gupta R 2014:3).

Chinese ADIZ as aggressive, altering the status quo

The Chinese ADIZ threat is constructed using words like aggressive, reduce(ing) the room for manoeuvre (Alka Acharya quoted in Dikshit 2013), "escalating brinkmanship … raised the chances of conflict… muscular and assertive foreign policy" (Gupta A 2013, Gupta R 2014:3), "increased the probability of a clash between Japan and China, and the likelihood of involvement of the US in the region[229]…" (Singh T (ed) 2014:2), "aggression versus defence wrangling between China and its eastern neighbours…" (Paul 2014). Metaphors are also used to convey competing claims and competition, for example, "cat and mouse game" (Jagota 2013), "Clash of Titans in East China Sea", "dangerous game of chicken" (Gupta R 2014:3-4). The ADIZ is compared to "a Great Iron Wall in the Blue Sky" (Shaheli Das 2016).

China's ADIZ is described as having made the regional strategic environment "volatile and risk prone" and altering the status quo (Anand 2013), "create(ing) ruckus in the region"… "altering

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[229] India prefers not having extra-regional actors like the United States involved in the region where it has strategic interests. This is illustrative of India's still extant non-aligned mindset focused on strategic autonomy.

the dynamics of East Asian Security Architecture", "nerve wracking for" neighbouring countries (Hashmi 2013:1), "immediate spiking of tensions with its neighbours"… "an increased risk of either a deliberate or accidental incident involving military aircraft" (Chatterjee Miller 2013 in the Hindu 10 Dec 2013), "unnecessarily inflammatory … destabilising impact on the region" (White House spokesperson quoted in Lakshman 2013), "… regional political turbulences has been sparked once again by China…" (Mahapatra 2014:5, Jagota 2013, Mongia 2013:1); "The Chinese announcement has raised the tensions several notches in the already tense East China Sea where there is a raging dispute…" (Gupta A 2013).

China's ADIZ is termed controversial and challenging the accepted norms (Permal 2014:25), an audacious foreign policy gambit (Kalha 2013), unilateralist (Mahapatra 2014:5, Bhaskar Roy 2013, Shaheli Das 2016), guided by stealth and lack of consultation. China is portrayed as upsetting international norms and practices, a state that has "jumped the normative gun challenging air norms to possibly buttress its maritime and territorial claims" (Saran and Iyer-Mitra 2013). The ADIZ declaration is portrayed as "sudden and abrupt, projecting its impudent foreign policy attitude…. tendency to impose unilateralism as per its national interests…" (Guha Roy 2014:8, Mahapatra 2014:5, Bhaskar Roy 2013, Shaheli Das 2016, Jagota 2013). "This announcement by China of the new air defense identification zone … reinforces the idea of an aggressive China that seeks to establish expansionist territorial claims through intimidation or military means" (Gupta R 2014:4).

China's use of the international practice of ADIZ declaration is at the same time commended. "China is engaging in "lawfare" ... using international institutions to achieve strategic goals..." (Chatterjee Miller 2013). Chatterjee Miller commends China's adherence to international norms[230] and participation in the current international order; without revisionist tendencies (Pratnashree Basu 2013, see also Schweller and Pu 2011 for Chinese revisionism).

This juxtaposition of an aggressive, threatening Chinese identity with a norm-adherent's identity seems contradictory. It illustrates that though most Indian authors agree that the Chinese ADIZ altered regional status quo and increased brinkmanship, there are isolated voices that credit China's efforts to work within the current global order. As discussed above, while some Indian analysts talk about the legal basis for China's ADIZ (Pratnashree Basu 2013, Singh

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[230] "In an article published in The Diplomat on November 30, Zachary Keck makes an interesting point, saying that China's recent moves of linking international legal aspects of territorial claims with its efforts at exerting sovereignty (sic). The ADIZ is the best example of this practice" (Pratnashree Basu 2013).

Manjit 2014), others like Mongia (2013) and Kalha (2013) term it as having no basis in international law and point to the international norm of countries not unilaterally declaring them (Muralidharan 2014:10).

China as a secretive, manipulative actor and a rational actor

China is also interpreted as a manipulative actor that is always looking to maximise its bargains and achieve its strategic interests. Beijing is claimed to have timed the ADIZ declaration well, with Foreign Minister Wang Yi supporting John Kerry in Geneva, at the Iran nuclear deal discussions on November 24, the day after the ADIZ declaration (WPS Sidhu 2013, Jagota 2013). Guha Roy (2014:8) uses an Ian Bremmer quote, "Beijing wanted to maximize the chances of getting this done with limited pushback from the US…With that as the goal, it was good timing…the Iran nuclear deal was underway, for which the Chinese foreign minister was supporting John Kerry in Geneva". "China is following the old Maoist strategy of "two steps forward, one step backward" … (Bhaskar Roy 2013), "chipping away at international resolve to discourage Beijing's efforts" (Pratnashree Basu 2013); "Chinese policy of taking calculated risks and testing the resolve of the opponents…" (Gupta A 2013). Muralidharan (2014) explains that China was "extra careful not to provoke the United States, the hegemon in the Pacific", but "keenly watched how the Japanese and South Korean governments reacted to the ADIZ, and not the least, how neighbours like India would respond". The ADIZ declaration is compared to the 2007 Chinese test of an anti-satellite missile in space. "Everyone was concerned but no one was able to take any action…" (Gupta A 2013).

Parallels are also drawn between the unexpected ADIZ action and other "unpredictable behaviour" like the Chinese incursions into Indian territory in May 2013, just a few days before Prime Minister Li Keqiang's visit to India (Gupta A 2013). This is illustrative of India's long-standing distrust of China, often linked to its deceiving of India in the 1962 war (overturning the principles of peaceful coexistence and non-aggression in 1954 Panchsheel Treaty and Nehru's call for Sino-Indian brotherhood/ 'Hindi-Chini bhai bhai'). The unilateral ADIZ is also compared to the "creation of the Sansha military garrison in the South China Sea … to seek de facto control of" the disputed islands (Gupta R 2014:4), unexpected actions for the world but well calculated by the Chinese. China is also portrayed as not trustworthy in its rhetoric of 'peaceful rise/ development' (Gupta R 2014:4). Former Indian ambassador to China, Nalin Surie is quoted in Dikshit (2013) as saying China will be judged by its actions and no longer by its rhetoric.

China's lack of transparency and secretiveness is criticised, "No one can be sure of the Chinese motives. The world knows little about the decisionmaking processes in China" (Gupta A 2013; Upadhyay 2014). "China has enormous capacity to surprise the world" (Gupta A 2013). "Chinese foreign policy decision-making is highly opaque, so all anyone can do is to speculate…" (Chatterjee Miller 2013). Other Indian analysts refer to a probable Chinese ADIZ over Arunachal after the Dalai Lama's death, disregarding previous Chinese assurances against such moves. "Once the Dalai Lama passes away, the ADIZ is just a matter of time… And I don't think they ask anybody what they should do … (Researcher's interview with Dr Priya Suresh 15 April 2016)

Simultaneously (to this narrative of a secretive, manipulative actor) China is also portrayed as a rational actor focused on achieving its own national security. Some Indian strategic commentators justify China's ADIZ move as being an attempt to safeguard its own interests and sovereignty (Singh T (ed) 2014:15, Gupta R 2014:3). "China's move is essentially in line with the operations concept of A2/AD and her policy of defending national sovereignty and territorial airspace security; it is a fundamental goal and is considered a sacred mission" (Permal 2014:26). "China is within its right to designate such a zone, just like Japan has done …" (Jagota 2013). "…primacy and control over its neighbourhood is very important for internal stability and development. Power ensures peace" (Bhaskar Roy 2013). Economic development is a key theme cited for China's pursuit of peace and national development. Arvind Gupta (2013) explains that the ADIZ move is China getting ready[231] for the "next round of ambitious economic reforms … benefit the Asian countries greatly" (also see Paul 2014).

In the description of the Chinese ADIZ as a rational act of ensuring security and enforcing its claims of territorial sovereignty, there is disagreement within the Indian discourse, on whether the ADIZ actually gives China any sovereignty over the disputed territory. Saran and Iyer-Mitra (2013) believe that an ADIZ "extends a sort of sovereignty, a type of territoriality to airspace beyond one's geographic territory". Shankar (2013) contradicts this. Vinod Anand (2013) commends Chinese novelty in advancing claims over the disputed Senkaku/ Diaoyu, but agrees with Shankar that the ADIZ does not confer any sovereignty rights on the islands. Muralidharan (2014:9) emphasizes that the Chinese ADIZ does not enhance China's claims over the disputed islands, as it is "sovereign control of any land territory (that) is tantamount to control of its air space and maritime boundaries and not the other way around". Chhatwal (2013:4) also criticises China's ADIZ saying that any ADIZ "over international waters does not give that country any sovereign rights in that area". Such a debate illustrates that the Indian strategic elite

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[231] At the end of the third plenum of the 18th Party congress (Nov. 9-12, 2013).

question China's intent behind the ADIZ. It points to the growing fear of the possibility of a future unilateral ADIZ declaration over the disputed Sino-Indian border and its implications on the sovereignty of Indian territory.

Playing down the China threat

With the building up of the Chinese ADIZ threat also comes a playing down of the China threat. Indian Armed Forces discourse questions China's ability to enforce its ECS ADIZ (Muralidharan 2014:9, Chhatwal 2013:5, Permal 2014, Yadav 2016:2). According to them, China lacks the technological infrastructure necessary for ADIZ enforcement, that is,

> "… seaborne air defence radars, several numbers of AWACS/AEW aircraft, aerial refueling aircraft to augment the ranges of interceptors, AWACS platforms, and effective, secure communications, modern identification - friend or foe (IFF) systems throughout the air defence order of battle. Only a country such as the US has the wherewithal to undertake such an air defence mission in remote sea territory, given its nine carrier battle groups and a preponderance of AWACS/ AEW and other radar assets … China is not there yet in terms of Air Defence capability, especially over the sea. Therefore, the whole exercise appears to be one to score political points" (Muralidharan 2014:11).

"Surveillance radars have a maximum pick up range of 400 km at high level. So, PLAAF will have to deploy its scarce AWACS aircraft to supplement ground radar cover in the ADIZ. Therefore, enforcing the ADIZ will not be easy" (Chhatwal 2013:5, see also Yadav 2016:2).

In the researcher's interviews, Indian analysts also questioned China's capability in enforcing an ADIZ in Arunachal far from Chinese territory, "*I don't really foresee that (an ADIZ over Arunachal) happening, partly because of very practical reasons that China does not really have the capability to be having ADIZs from Arunachal to the South China Sea and so I don't see them having that sort of a capability to protect and to maintain that sort of air preparedness*" (Researcher's interview with Dr Harsh Pant, 13 Aug 2016).

There is a juxtaposition of building up the China threat and questioning of Chinese capabilities (playing down the China threat) within the Indian discourse. China identity constructions in the discourse are shifting and contradictory, varying between a revisionist actor and a norm-adherent, and between an aggressive, calculative versus a rational actor.

Construction of the Indian Identity

Indian discourse engages at length with the possibility of a Chinese ADIZ declaration over the disputed Line of Actual Control with China or other disputed areas like Ladakh and the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, that China claims as southern Tibet (Bhaskar Roy 2013, Manjit Singh 2014:30; Vinod Anand 2013; Gupta A 2013, Chhatwal 2013, India Today November 28, 2013; Krishnan Nov 28, 2013; Saran and Iyer-Mitra 2013; Guha Roy 2014:8; Mongia 2013:1; Shankar 2013; WPS Sidhu 2013). China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Qin Gang assured that there would not be an ADIZ over the Sino-Indian disputed land borders[232] (India Today November 28, 2013; Krishnan in The Hindu Nov 28, 2013; Times of India Nov 28, 2013). Some Indian authors have questioned this assurance (Anand 2013). "Beijing has sought to assure New Delhi that it will not do so, there is no guarantee that this decision is irreversible" (WPS Sidhu 2013). Others have linked a possible Chinese ADIZ over Arunachal with past trends in the Chinese government's behaviour on Arunachal (Gupta A 2013; Chhatwal 2013:6). There is often an ominous warning for India, "While this zone may be a geographic span encompassing most of the East China Sea, its strategic shadow falls on the Himalayas" (Saran and Iyer-Mitra 2013, Gupta A 2013; Chhatwal 2013:6). "… Indian helicopters will require Chinese permission to land in Indian Territory" (Saran and Iyer-Mitra 2013).

This construction of a Chinese 'Other' identity (enemy image) serves to simultaneously facilitate a binary opposite - an Indian identity of an adherent of international norms and the rules-based order, which respects the sovereignty of other states and pursues non-interventionist security strategies. China is portrayed as upsetting international norms and practices (Saran and Iyer-Mitra 2013, Hashmi 2013:3), and unilateralist in behaviour (Guha Roy 2014:8, Mahapatra 2014:5, Bhaskar Roy 2013, Shaheli Das 2016, Jagota 2013). Compared to this, the Indian identity constructed is one that incorporates public opinion and works in consultation with partners. This identity is reinforced in the discourse's recommendations for the Indian government to "back Japan", "reinvigorating its ties with Vietnam, Japan, Australia, Singapore and the littoral states", and "engage with Taiwan, actively, across the board and especially on security issues" (Saran and Iyer-Mitra 2013, Joshi M 2016, Chhatwal 2013, see Yadav 2016 and Gupta A 2013 on China's diplomatic isolation, Permal 2014:28). The discourse calls for a "range of options including economic and hard options" to be considered by the Indian government – even if that

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[232] "… air defence zones are established for coastal areas beyond the 12 nautical mile-territorial waters but not the land borders which have well-defined airspaces" (India Today November 28, 2013; Krishnan in The Hindu Nov 28, 2013)

means upping the ante by "augmentation of its air force to ensure air superiority in each of its fragile border zones", even being prepared to go to the limits of irking Beijing by "revoking recognition of Tibet's accession to China, and the status of the Dalai Lama …" (Saran and Iyer-Mitra 2013) ; "strength … the only currency China respects" and therefore, the need to situate economics within a "robust, security architecture" (Saran and Iyer-Mitra 2013).

The Indian government's preoccupation with economic and trade relations with China is also stressed, its inability to respond due to a lack of capabilities and a need for continued economic engagement with China ("…wary of even a diplomatic response due to the interdependence of their economies with the Chinese economy" (Manjit Singh 2014). This illustrates the Indian government's focus on the national interest of economic development affecting its national security concept and behaviours. Interests such as these exert influences on strategic decision-making, pulling it in conflicting directions.

There is a dichotomy in identity constructions – where India is portrayed as an adherent of international law and conventions, yet at the same time criticised for its passive diplomacy. The Indian identity of a democracy focused on peace and economic interdependence, a willing member of the global liberal order, is simultaneously tempered with criticism[233] for the Indian government's pursuit of passive diplomacy (Manjit Singh 2014; Saran and Iyer-Mitra 2013; Anand V 2013, Chhatwal 2013).

How India should respond to China is a theme discussed within the discourse. A response in keeping with India's self-image is debated. "Problem for India … how to respond to such policies … declaration of ADIZ over the disputed border areas, if and when declared, would only be one manifestation of the larger problem of as to how should India respond to China's rise and its attempts to dictate a new strategic discourse. The Indian predicament is how to deal with such a situation" (Anand V 2013). "Countries of the ASEAN have privately expressed their desire for India to play a greater (read: balancing) role vis-à-vis China in the region. But just how India should do so is not clear" (Joshi M 2016). India's self-image as an Asian heavyweight and its normative standing as a non-aligned and non-interfering player, together with its national interests in (economic development) trade and commerce with China seem to pull it in conflicting directions and India is portrayed, in the discourse, as searching for an appropriate

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[233] "Passive diplomacy is now not an option…Given how supine India was at Dempsang, and the lack of public support for its position in the international community, India may find itself having to grapple with a far more ominous ADIZ with greater bite (Saran and Abhijit Iyer-Mitra December 5, 2013).

response to China's strategic moves, incapable of forging a clear path or even rising up to the calls from ASEAN powers. This ties in with the criticism on India's reticent and confused China policy, discussed in Chapter One.

The Indian identity constructed, in some narratives, is one where India is viewed as a major Asian power, with the wherewithal to influence the Asian architecture and strategic environment (Anand V 2013, Joshi M 2016). As seen above, some Armed Forces analysts question China's ability to enforce the ADIZ. There are strong voices within the strategic community that call upon the Indian government to exercise its influence and rights as a major Asian power. The discourse calls upon the Indian government to exercise increased influence in the East and South China Seas and restrict China's growing influence in the Asia Pacific. China's unprecedented expansion needs to be checked by Asian countries, and India has an important role to play via alignments with Japan, Vietnam, Australia, Singapore and even through a security relationship with Taiwan. India's and the Indian Ocean's importance is stressed ("The term "Indo-Pacific" was long overdue") and the Indian government is implored to "burst out of the South Asia conundrum, a cage into which India was pushed during the cold war by the US-China axis …" (Bhaskar Roy 2013). Such discursive constructions of India point to the strategic elite's perceptions of India reclaiming the place it deserves on the world stage, and overcoming discriminatory systems and ententes of the past (ideational elements).

India's preoccupation with non-alignment, its "long cherished … aspiration of achieving strategic autonomy" (Anand V 2013), would prevent the Indian government from bandwagoning with the United States (in the next section US' ambiguous responses to the ADIZ are discussed). Nor would the Indian government be "disposed towards accepting a China led order in Asia[234]" (Anand V 2013, Permal 2014:28). The Indian government is described as uncomfortable with the United States and China cooperating (similar to the suggestion of G-2) to carve out areas of influence in Asia (Anand V 2013). Indian responses are still largely influenced by its non-aligned Cold War-era predispositions and distrust of the United States. Its reticence to join either camps is clear[235] and that in turn would influence the Indian

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[234] There is an attempt to portray itself as not the only spoiler to a China-led Asian order, leaning on the Japan, Vietnam, Indonesian cases for support.

[235] In the wider Indian foreign policy literature, there are repeated mentions of the aversion to choosing sides. The choice between "US global hegemony and Chinese continental dominance" is not in the Indian government's interests (Rajagopalan and Sahni 2008:6). "For India, 'the danger is that we must not be drawn into choosing sides or becoming a pawn of either side in their game'" (Shivshankar Menon quoted in Pramit Pal Chaudhuri 2016:28). This sentiment is linked to India being constructed as a Swing power, engaging in issue-based swinging between the sides, providing the required leverage and heft.

government's actions, responses and lack of official statements on China's actions. The Indian identity created seems focused on the pursuit of its national interests and avoiding inserting "itself in a conflict situation" (Anand 2013, Joshi M 2016, Upadhyay 2014). Not only does it appear that the Indian government aims to avoid any situations (like Asian spheres of influences), where its interests may be threatened, the Indian government appears conflict-averse in a general sense. Avoiding conflicts not only aids in the achievement of its interests, it also stalls situations developing where the Indian government would be forced to take a position or choose a 'camp', thus accepting outcomes not of its liking. This, however, creates an Indian identity that is hesitant, reticent and muddled in its foreign policy choices, precipitating the criticism that India lacks any unified China policy.

The discourse on the fear of a Chinese ADIZ over Arunachal (especially citing China's past actions in Arunachal and past Chinese incursions into Indian territory), however, constructs an Indian identity that is at the receiving end of Chinese actions. Indian identity of a reactive state with no power to influence China or chart its own course of action is described. China's identity as the stronger power is also emphasised when analysts describe China asserting its position at a time and place of its choosing, on issues such as the Sino-Indian border disputes. "Some in the Indian media wrongly see this as real softening of the Chinese stand. It is nothing of the kind and Beijing will take up with vigour at a time of its choosing. Rest remains unchanged..." (Bhaskar Roy 2013). This again portrays China having the ability to call the shots, and gives India the identity of the weaker state, abiding by the terms laid down by the major power.

India's identity as a weaker state, lacking capabilities and infrastructure is again illustrated in interviews conducted for this study- *"Yes, it's very highly possible (ADIZ declaration over Arunachal). Infrastructure on the Chinese side is so advanced and developed that now the Indian Airforce is thinking of revising those airstrips which were used in the Second World War. So I have a fair hunch that it would happen. Let's not get into the game of soothsaying but it will happen"*[236]. This seems to contradict the Armed Forces' questioning of the Chinese capability in enforcing the ADIZ.

The discourse also constructs Chinese actions (like the ADIZ) as primarily targeted at the United States (Bhaskar Roy 2013, Singh T 2014:16, Mahapatra 2014:6, Gupta A 2013, Paul 2014) or aimed at achieving power parity with the United States, where India does not figure in the

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[236] Researcher's interview with Guru Aiyar, ex-naval officer and scholar working with the Geo-strategy Programme at The Takshashila Institution, 14 April 2016.

Chinese scheme of priorities. "... unpalatable as this may be to the Indian power elite, given the focus on the "China threat", India, currently at least, simply does not factor into China's strategic priorities. China is intently focused on the United States" (Chatterjee Miller 2013). "India still seems to be near the periphery of China's new assertiveness ..." (Bhaskar Roy 2013). "India may not be a priority in China's security calculus but there is no need for us to not understand the long term Chinese threat" (Chhatwal 2013:6). "As China spends more and more on military in order to reach some kind of parity with the US in the long term, would it disregard the interests of its weaker and not so weak neighbours in order to realise its 'core interests'?" (Anand 2013). This points to India's insignificance within China's span of priorities. This fact that India "simply does not factor into China's strategic priorities", could help maintain status quo (Chatterjee Miller 2013) (for example the lull on border disputes) and provide the Indian government with manoeuvring space (see Roy 2013).

Indian discourse's interpretations (of the Chinese ADIZ being primarily aimed at curbing US influence in the region[237]) could aid in muting criticism against the Indian government's lack of response. With the Chinese ADIZ constructed as focused on the United States, Indian policymakers or strategic thinkers do not need to immediately state a position or frame a response. This enables the Indian government to continue monitoring the situation, weigh its options, and calculate its risks.

United States' ambiguous ADIZ responses and Indian constructions

Whether it is wise relying on the United States' declining influence, for protection, is another theme that is reiterated in the discourse (Bhaskar Roy 2013, Pratnashree Basu 2013, Anand 2013, Mahapatra 2014). Indian discourse interprets the United States' responses to the Chinese ADIZ as weak and contradictory, even ambiguous. According to Indian Think Tank writers like Paul (2014), Mahapatra (2014), Roy (2013) and Armed forces analysts like Muralidharan (2014), the United States has remained ambiguous[238] in its responses to the Chinese ADIZ. The United States has been very careful in framing its responses, with an aim to safeguard its ties with China (Shaheli Das 2016, Mahapatra 2014, Paul 2014, Gupta A 2013). Hashmi (2013:2) discusses

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[237] There were claims that the Chinese airplanes flying through the ADIZ on Nov 28, just ahead of Vice President Biden's visit, was a signal to the United States. Beijing's statement reiterates that "... its military has "unwavering" will to enforce it" (Times of India Nov 28, 2013).

[238] "The US is watching these developments quietly, but closely... It has not fully committed to any clear action in all three areas, but maintained a strategic ambiguity... China is following the old Maoist strategy of "two steps forward, one step backward", this is, acquire new ground but retreat only half way when there is opposition" (Bhaskar Roy 2013).

former US Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel's criticism of China's ADIZ. He "drew a direct line between Russia's takeover of Crimea and Chinese "coercion and intimidation" in the region" (Upadhyay 2014). However, he did not call for the ADIZ to be revoked. Secretary of State John Kerry too criticised the Chinese ADIZ declaration but did not call for a retraction (Muralidharan 2014). Vice President Biden too did not call for the ADIZ to be rescinded[239], during his East Asia visits immediately after[240] (Kalha 2013).

Though the United States flew its bombers through the ADIZ without notifying the Chinese, it was wary about irking the Chinese whose help it needed "to free a US citizen held by the North Koreans and to keep in check North Korean nuclear ambitions" (Kalha 2013). The United States, asked its civilian airlines to "comply with the Chinese ADIZ requirements[241]" on Nov 29th 2013. Of course, the fear of air incidents involving passenger aircraft was acknowledged as the reason for this compliance (Gupta A 2013). However, contrary to common perceptions, "senior Obama administration officials … refuted any instructions to American commercial carriers to comply …" (Indian Express Dec 4, 2013). This added to the ambiguity in US' behaviour (see Friedberg and Ross 2009:21 for credibility of America's security guarantees). "… but President Obama's vacillations undermined this response… contradictory messages are coming out of DC" (Saran and Iyer-Mitra 2013). Such discursive constructions of United States giving in to China and the questioning of the reliability of US' security guarantees point to India's long-term distrust of a formal dependence on the United States, fearing a resulting erosion of its strategic autonomy (Khilnani et al. 2012:32). This points to the working of powerful ideational elements like history, past Cold War experiences and its perceptions of US' actions in the 1971 Indo-Pak war.

US' passive response to the Chinese ADIZ and factors contributing to such a response[242] are also analysed in the Indian discourse; for example, the US' constant reiteration that it does not take

[239] Though Biden did term "the ADIZ as 'illegitimate and a provocation'" (Kalha 2013), "he neither endorsed the Japanese demand of 'retract the decision' nor condemned strongly the Chinese action" (Paul 2014). The US stance is justified by some Indian authors in that "The last thing that the US wants is a military confrontation between China and Japan over the insignificant Diaoyu/Senkaku islands" (Kalha 2013). Biden's efforts at defusing tensions are termed as successful when the Chinese Foreign Ministry called the ADIZ "a 'zone of co-operation and not a zone of confrontation'" (ibid.)

[240] "… the focus of attention to the disputed island, more than the Vice President's intended agenda of North Korea…" (Paul 2014)

[241] Japanese civil airliners first stated that they would comply, but were later pressured by the government not to (Gupta A 2013; Paul 2014). Taiwan and South Korea have asked their civil airliners to comply with the Chinese ADIZ (Muralidharan 2014:12). About 55 airliners worldwide followed the US example and now comply with the Chinese ADIZ (Kalha 2013).

[242] Some interviewees cited US' self-image as a great power. Captain Gurpreet Khurana, of the National Maritime Foundation, explained that the bombers challenging the Chinese ADIZ were not armed. The greater the power, the greater is the risk of loss of face, and the greater is the downfall. According to him, this explains why India will not respond (Researcher's interview with Captain Khurana on 22 March 2016).

a position on sovereignty issues[243]. However, many Indian analysts term the instruction to US' civil airlines as an illustration of the United States giving in under Chinese pressure tactics, and "…throwing in the towel" (Saran and Iyer-Mitra 2013; also see Chhatwal 2013:6; Muralidharan 2014:12, Pratnashree Basu 2013). However, this is immediately contradicted too, as not being an act of the United States conceding, but of deliberately sending a mixed signal (Pratnashree Basu 2013, Muralidharan 2014:12). Another factor causing US passivity or ambiguity to China, according to Indian commentators, is the economic angle (Paul 2014, Indian Express Dec 4, 2013, Gupta A 2013). Contradictory interpretations of American actions (in flying the B52 bombers to challenge the Chinese ADIZ and the later directive to civil airliners) are showcased in the Indian discourse.

Not all writers term US actions as ambiguous (see Mahapatra 2014:5). However, very soon Mahapatra (2014:6) terms it 'ambiguous' (citing US Secretary of State John Kerry's behaviour in Beijing). Such shifting positions, ambiguity and contradictions are also attributed to China and sometimes praised by some Indian authors, "Changing positions on geopolitical affairs should be a lesson we must learn from the wise mandarins in Beijing…" (Saran and Iyer-Mitra 2013). "Beijing's 'Nine-Dash Line' claims in the South China Sea have largely been vague as officially it has never clearly defined the geographical coordinates of these claims…" (Yadav 2016:3).

Indian strategic commentators interpret the US' ADIZ responses differently, with some attributing its ambiguity to its declining influence and the rise of a challenger to the hegemon. Others commend the US' calculated moves (and China's too), calling them lessons India should imbibe from.

Discursive strategies

The China identity section examined the strategy of juxtaposition of China threat and playing down the threat (by questioning Chinese capability in enforcing the ADIZ). This was done especially within the Armed forces narratives. Think Tank narratives seem to examine the ADIZ action within the broader contexts of the Senkaku/ Diaoyu sovereignty dispute and the PLA modernisation. The Sino-Pak nexus is also exploited in the discourse to build up the China

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[243] "Then US president Barack Obama publicly said that "we don't take a position on the sovereignty of the Senkaku Islands"" (Chellaney 2018). State Department spokesperson Jen Psaki, when asked if the US was dragged into the dispute, responded, "I don't think that there's been any bait taken… When there are concerns that need to be expressed, we are not shy about expressing them… We don't take a position on the question of sovereignty. That hasn't changed" (Lakshman 2013).

threat, alluding to a two-front threat. The discursive strategy of constructing a temporal threat, helps portray China as a perpetual threat.

Temporal threat

Using the 1962 Sino-Indian war and historical examples like China's usurping of Tibet and claims over Indian territories along the disputed border (especially in Ladakh and Arunachal), Indian analysts construct a threat that has been perpetual and will be ongoing into the future. China is claimed to be in for the long haul, a patient player that will bide time to achieve its interests, "The message from Beijing seems unequivocal "China will wait you out". China has abundance of patience and resolve and in its own view, it is on the right side of history" (Saran and Iyer-Mitra 2013); "…China is willing to instigate strategic confrontation against Japan and are prepared for it to last a 'long time'" (Kalha 2013), "… not going to end anytime soon (Pratnashree Basu 2013).

Omissions or silences in the discourse

Think Tank analysts seem to analyse China's ADIZ action within the context of the Senkakus/ Diaoyu sovereignty claims (see Gupta R 2014:3-4, Kalha 2013, Shaheli Das 2016, Bhaskar Roy 2013, Gupta A 2013, Paul 2014, Pratnashree Basu 2013, Mahapatra 2014, Guha Roy 2014, Permal 2014, Joshi M 2016, Singh Teshu 2014) and the context of PLA restructuring (that is, the Chinese leadership's shifting focus and reallocation of assets "from land to sea and air") (Permal 2014:27, Saran and Abhijit Iyer-Mitra 2013). Armed Forces writers mostly seem to leave the PLA contextual details out and focus on examining the ADIZ action in isolation. Some attribute it only to the Senkaku/ Diaoyu territorial claims (Jagota 2013, Chhatwal 2013:5, Muralidharan 2014:9, Gupta A 2013, Anand 2013, Manjit Singh 2014, Mongia 2013). As discussed in the chapter on China's carrier programme, this could be a result of their keen focus on China's military capabilities (the capabilities versus intentions argument). Exaggerated claims about its capabilities could be "an effort to prop up continued levels of defence spending in the face of severe budgetary pressures" (Austin 1995:4).

Leaving out the context and examining the Chinese action in isolation, whether inadvertently or as part of a deliberate strategy, builds up the China threat identity. When examined in the light of China's disputed claims in the East and South China Seas, China's need to project power into the "far seas" (White Paper 2015) and its preoccupation with denying access to the United States in its contiguous zones or spheres of influence, the ADIZ action does not seem so immensely threatening to India nor does a future Chinese ADIZ on the disputed Sino-Indian border seem a possibility. However, when not examined within the wider context, or when

examined in isolation, the ADIZ seems threatening and a first step towards targeting Indian borders and interests.

Some analysts like Chatterjee Miller (in The Hindu, 10 Dec 2013) and Acharya (quoted in Dikshit 2013) broaden the context further than the Senkaku/ Diaoyu dispute or PLA restructuring. They focus on factors like "domestic political pressure" and a new President "exerting authority for regional dominance …" (see also Chhatwal 2013:5). Acharya focuses on a broader perspective, pointing to Japan's ADIZ declaration in 1969, its arbitrary ADIZ extensions, and Japan's shadowing of Chinese planes.

Also omitted is a discussion on or comparison of the Chinese ADIZ with India's ADIZs[244]. It is important to note that India's own five ADIZs mostly cover land areas[245]. WPS Sidhu (2013) discusses the challenges in detection and defense capabilities of India's own ADIZs, which "still lags way behind China's apparently superior and ever improving early detection ability". A discussion on Indian capabilities in the area would have provided for a balanced debate (especially a discussion on India's Eastern ADIZ which covers Arunachal). Indian government's NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) on the Chinese ADIZ is also not discussed in the discourse, only referenced to in Chhatwal (2013:3) and Krishnan (in The Hindu 7 Dec 2013). This would have provided better clarity on actions the Indian government took after the Chinese ADIZ declaration (in the absence of an official Indian statement). In the researcher's interviews with former Armed Forces personnel, the Indian Air Force's air strength in the Eastern Command was discussed and there seemed confidence that any Chinese ADIZ would be challenged (Interviews with Admiral Raja Menon 11 March 2016 and Captain Guru Aiyar 14 April 2016).

Leveraging the Pakistan threat

The discourse also uses Pakistan as an 'Other', in conjunction with the creation of a Chinese 'Other' identity, thus separating and reinforcing the Indian identity. For example, "China is a country which has provided missile and nuclear weapons technology to Pakistan, a known rival of India. In such a situation there is no reason for India to keep quiet on the East China Sea ADIZ issue. India can tactfully express disagreement with Chinese actions, without worrying about China's response" (Chhatwal 2013:6). Identity markers and qualifiers are used to separate the

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[244] India has five ADIZs – ADIZ North, West, Central, East and South – which cover the entire country including the island territories of Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar (Chhatwal 2013:4).
[245] Details on India's five ADIZs in https://aim-india.aai.aero/eaip/PUB/2012-04-01/html/eAIP/EC-ENR-1.12-en-GB.html (Accessed 30 July 2018).

identities. Pakistan is not only identified as India's rival (identity marker), the adjective qualifier 'known' makes it seem that this is a widely accepted, well-known fact and China's action (of arming Pakistan) is not justified, as it behaves contrary to a widely accepted fact. Consequently, the Indian government is justified, even absolved of any future response on China's ADIZ. This is a call for the Indian government to respond boldly to Chinese actions, without worrying about adverse Chinese responses.

Pakistan's identity is marked as a nuclear proliferator, and Chinese assertions (not trustworthy) and partnership with Pakistan is constructed as fraudulent (Bhaskar Roy 2013). Indian analysts both within the Armed Forces and Think Tanks have yet to move away from their Pakistan-focused mindset, though they stress on de-hyphenation in relation to Pakistan. Some analysts seem to bring in the Pakistan angle only in the narratives on Chinese ADIZ in the ECS. This illustrates fears of Sino-Pak ambitions over disputed territories (for example, Aksai Chin[246], which lies very close to India's strategic hold on the Siachen Glacier [Manjit Singh 2014: 30]). Chinese assurances of no ADIZ declaration over land does not seem to have reassured Indian analysts. While this does not appear surprising, given constructions of Chinese identity as not trustworthy and a manipulative actor focused on maximising its interests, what seems like an exaggeration of the implications of the ADIZ on India is the linking of the Chinese ADIZ narrative with the 'Pakistan as a nuclear proliferator' discourse. The Indian obsession with a China-enabled Pakistani proliferation race (ideational factor) is illustrated here, when most other analysts examine the Chinese ADIZ in the context of the Senkaku/ Diaoyu sovereignty dispute with Japan.

Alternative discourses

There are alternatives possible and this discourse is not inevitable. For example, criticism of Japan's status quo-altering purchase of the islands in 2012 (the primary factor instigating the Chinese ADIZ declaration) was possible. Nowhere in the Indian discourse is there any criticism for Japan's instigation of tensions with the purchase[247], Japan's unilateral ADIZ extensions over the years, Japan's warning to shoot down Chinese UAVs[248], Japanese move to remilitarisation and the revision of Article 9 of its Constitution (Bhaskar Roy 2013). Instead, Japan is portrayed

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[246] This would enable better China-Pak engagement in Pak-occupied Kashmir and Aksai Chin.
[247] Instead Japan is portrayed as having "…demonstrated enormous gumption and fortitude during the Senkaku crisis" (Saran and Iyer-Mitra 2013).
[248] "September 2013 saw a Chinese UAV flying close to the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu islands. Chinese maritime patrol vessels regularly encroach into Japanese waters" (Gupta R 2014:4, Bronk 2013,Taylor Fravel quoted in Krishnan in The Hindu Nov 24, 2013; Muralidharan 2014:10; Paul 2014).

as the benign target at whom the Chinese ADIZ is aimed (Kalha 2013, Paul 2014, Hashmi 2013:3, Gupta R 2014:4). The Chinese ADIZ is termed as contributing "…to dragging Tokyo-Beijing relations to the current all-time low" (Shaheli Das 2016). Japan's purchase is sometimes referenced to but no criticism is targeted at Japan[249]. The discourse mostly criticises China.

The creation of a Japanese identity that is more sinned against that sinning should be viewed in the light of the warmth in Indo-Japan relations (and a spate of bilateral visits like, the Japanese emperor's in Dec 2013 and Prime Minister Abe's as the chief guest at January 2014 Indian Republic Day celebrations. Japan also became a Permanent member of the Malabar Exercises[250] in 2016). Japan's role as a key player for India (in India's Act East policy, initiatives like the Quadrilateral, Exercise Malabar, Japanese FDI in India, the bullet train project, the BIG-B project[251], Indo-Japanese partnership in Africa[252]) is important to consider. Such discursive constructions or interpretations could facilitate India's future partnership and policy practices with regard to Japan.

The discourse's conflicts between India's self-image and strategic interests is visible in the recommendations to the Indian government (mostly from Armed Forces analysts). There are recommendations for India to pursue its great power ambitions and counter Chinese influence. Some recommend bilateral negotiations with China (Singh Manjit 2014:30), even suggesting that "India should bind China to its assurance through a formal agreement" (WPS Sidhu 2013). This illustrates India's focus on working together with China for economic development, not just its own but of other Asian countries too. Others recommend aligning with the United States for the long term in a 'concert of democracies' and this is evaluated against "cooperate-engage Beijing in the medium term" (Anand V 2013). Shifting Asia Pacific partnerships and alignments (due to Chinese aggression and ambiguity), for example, the new Moscow-Japan security cooperation, Philippines-Japan (Roy 2013) and "ambivalent claimants and stakeholders in the region … (moving) closer to Washington" (Dinesh Yadav 2016:3, Roy 2013) are examined in the discourse. A preponderance towards strategic autonomy and an inclination for internal balancing, rather than external alliances, is claimed to be the Indian government's strategy (Anand 2013). Basu (2013) calls on the Indian government to reflect on the amount of discretion

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[249] Criticism for Japan is best visible in former diplomat Nalin Surie's quote (in Dikshit 2013), "The first stone in stoking the dispute was cast by Japan when it bought the islands back but China's "one-upmanship" in setting up the ADIZ a few days back "could prove tricky."
[250] Annual India-US bilateral naval field training exercise
[251] The Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt
[252] Asia-Africa Growth Corridor, claimed to be a counter to China's Belt Road Initiative.

required towards China. Saran and Iyer-Mitra (2013) recommend "India must urgently explore a variety of options to restore deterrence vis-a-vis China…"

Calls for the pursuit of varied responses create discursive spaces for varied policy practices like alignment with other Asian states, being a Swing power between China and the United States, balancing even containing Chinese influence through the Act East and other evolving Indo-Pacific architectures like the Quadrilateral. The pursuit of varied policy responses appears in line with India's foreign policy approach of multialignment (Hall 2016).

Conclusion

This chapter illustrates how the Indian strategic discourse interprets and represents the Chinese declaration of an Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) over parts of the East China Sea. This chapter arrives at two conclusions, or makes two arguments— First, the discursive interpretations of the Chinese ADIZ are linked to ideational elements underpinning its national identity concept, or the very 'idea of India'. For example, the discourse criticises China's lack of transparency and its secretiveness. Parallels are also drawn between the unexpected ADIZ action and other "unpredictable behaviour" like the Chinese incursions into Indian territory in May 2013, just a few days before Prime Minister Li Keqiang's visit to India. Most Indian analysts disregard Chinese assurances against ADIZ moves in Arunachal or on the disputed border. This is illustrative of India's long-standing distrust of China, often linked to its deceiving of India in the 1962 war. History and India's experiences at the hands of China in the 1962 war continue to influence mindsets and security interpretations. There are of course, isolated voices that credit China's efforts to work within the current global order and eschew revisionism (by engaging in lawfare and using international institutions to achieve its goals). Analysts who portray China as a rational actor[253], point to economic development as the key reason for Chinese actions, thus ensuring security and enforcing its claims of territorial sovereignty.

Most of the discursive interpretations are conflicted - some Indian analysts talk about the legal basis for China's ADIZ (Pratnashree Basu 2013, Singh Manjit 2014). Others like Mongia (2013) and Kalha (2013) term it as having no basis in international law and point to the international norm of countries not unilaterally declaring them (Muralidharan 2014:10). There is also much disagreement on whether the ADIZ actually gives China any sovereignty over the disputed territory. Such a debate illustrates that the Indian strategic elite continue to question China's

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[253] Identities are never fixed nor a given; they are unstable and are constantly reconstructed "in view of unfolding events and developing relationships" (Browning 2008:11).

intent behind the ADIZ. It points to the growing fear of the possibility of a future unilateral ADIZ declaration over the disputed Sino-Indian border and its implications on the sovereignty of Indian territory. There is often an ominous warning for India – using metaphors like the ADIZ's shadow over Himalayas. The construction of a Chinese 'Other' identity (enemy image) simultaneously constructs a binary opposite - an Indian identity of an adherent of international norms and the rules-based order, which respects the sovereignty of other states and pursues non-interventionist security strategies. The Indian government's preoccupation with economic and trade relations with China, its self-image as a norm-adhering member of the global liberal order and its inability to respond due to a lack of capabilities, all seem to pull it in conflicting directions in the discourse. A response in keeping with India's self-image is debated in the discourse. India's self-image as an Asian heavyweight and its normative standing as a non-aligned and non-interfering player, and its national interests (in economic development) are powerful ideational elements that influence Indian responses and foreign policy behaviour.

The Sino-Pak nexus is also exploited in the discourse to build up the China threat, alluding to a two-front threat. Indian analysts both within the Armed Forces and Think Tanks have yet to move away from their Pakistan-focused mindset, though they stress on de-hyphenation in relation to Pakistan. Discursive constructions illustrate that mindsets, perceptions and interactions remain predominantly driven by historical events, experiences, memories and fears.

The second contribution of this chapter is that, such representations or discursive constructions "make various courses of action possible" (Doty 1996: 5). Some of the discourse calls on India to overcome discriminatory systems and ententes of the past (US-China Cold war relations) and reclaim its rightful place on the world stage. Indian responses are still largely influenced by its non-aligned Cold War-era predispositions and distrust of the United States. Its reticence to join either camps is clear, and that in turn would influence the Indian government's actions, responses and lack of official statements on China's actions. The discourse recommends or calls on the Indian government to "back Japan", "reinvigorating its ties with Vietnam, Japan, Australia, Singapore and the littoral states", and "engage with Taiwan, actively, across the board and especially on security issues" (Saran and Iyer-Mitra 2013, Joshi M 2016, Chhatwal 2013, see Yadav 2016 and Gupta A 2013 on China's diplomatic isolation, Permal 2014:28). This seems to support the Indian government's preferred foreign policy approach of multialignment. The creation of a Japanese identity that is more sinned against that sinning, within the discourse, should also be viewed in the light of the warmth in Indo-Japan relations, facilitating a stronger

Indo-Japanese alignment to counter China's rising influence. Indo-Japanese initiatives and strategic efforts within the region have been briefly illustrated in the chapter.

Indian discourse's interpretations (of the Chinese ADIZ being primarily aimed at curbing US influence in the region) could aid in muting criticism against the Indian government's lack of response. With the Chinese ADIZ constructed as focused on the United States, Indian policymakers or strategic thinkers do not need to immediately state a position or frame a response. This enables the Indian government to continue monitoring the situation, weigh its options, and calculate its risks.

The discursive presence of ideational elements seem more prominent in this case study that highlights a fear of Chinese revisionist actions over the disputed border. Territoriality is a core element underlying the concept of national identity, as explained in Chapter One. It is critical to the preservation of the 'idea of India'. Chinese actions threatening the concept of territoriality in national security, seem to provoke much analysis by the strategic elite that clearly illustrates the link to powerful ideational elements of history and national memory. This was also clearly demonstrated in the case study on China's carrier programme, which threatened India's self-image as a naval power and its security imaginings of the IOR as its natural sphere of influence.

Conclusion

The primary goal of this thesis has been to examine the Indian strategic community's discursive interpretations of Chinese military actions between 2013 and 2017. By doing this, it has answered the primary research question (How are the three Chinese military actions being interpreted by the Indian strategic community?) and the research sub-questions below.

1) What is the 'China identity' being represented in the Indian discourse?
2) What is the 'Indian identity' being constructed in the Indian discourse?
3) How are these identities being constructed discursively?

This thesis has presented an analysis of the Indian strategic community's interpretations and representations of the three Chinese military actions. It demonstrates how powerful ideational elements underpin and influence their discursive interpretations.

These Chinese military efforts, i.e. the launches of its aircraft carriers and their ventures into international waters, repeated tests of its hypersonic glide vehicle, and the declaration of an ADIZ, are essentially actions that are security-motivated. Conventional International Relations (IR) interpretations would construe such force structure enhancements and military build-up as efforts by states to maximise national security, within an anarchic system. It is also important to note that India and China are two nuclear neighbours engaged in a security dilemma (see Garver 2002:2-3). Conventional wisdom delineates that India's interpretations of these Chinese actions, and its foreign policy behaviour and responses could be best understood by examining it through the lens of its security imperatives. China's military actions would be expected to be perceived as threats to India's national security, and an aggressive and hostile intent immediately attributed to them. The Indian strategic elite's discursive interpretations, though security-driven, illustrates the working of non-security imperatives like ideational elements. Factors such as India's self-image (and its core elements and the contestations within it), its unique history, colonial experiences, national memory, its national interests (in economic development and seeking prestige), its unique interpretations of external threats i.e. the Sino-Pakistan nexus all play a powerful role (see Ogden 2017:98-99). These factors, together with India's security imperatives, help shape the discursive constructions by the Indian strategic elite, and the process of formulation of foreign policy behaviours and responses.

The presence of these ideational elements are clearly demonstrated in the case studies. The case study on China's carrier programme (Chapter Four) illustrated that the Chinese carrier actions are constructed as threatening and increasingly aggressive. The description of China as

a formidable threat and the juxtaposition of the binary opposite (Indian identity of a strong naval power versus its identity as a weaker state in comparison to Chinese technological advancements) illustrates the conflicted imaginings of India's identity as a major power. Indian identity constructed in the discourse is dichotomous. India's carrier-operating experience since 1961 is praised and China's carrier capabilities questioned. At the same time, India is represented as only being able to 'react' to Chinese maritime actions and PLAN presence in the Indian Ocean. Within the discourse, the Chinese carrier programme is portrayed as being focused on curbing US naval supremacy in the Pacific. This automatically constructs the Indian state identity as not figuring within Chinese strategic priorities and therefore, a weak and insignificant player, in spite of India's self-affirmed identity of a major Asian power.

The Indian self-image constructed fluctuates between strong (one that questions Chinese carrier capabilities) and weak, reactionary representations. There is a constant juxtaposition of China threat and the reassurance in Indian capabilities. These narratives highlight India's self-image as a naval power in its natural sphere of influence, the Indian Ocean, and its perceived threat from Chinese maritime power projection in the IOR. The narratives, however, also reveal the mindset, and the historical identity principles underpinning India's self-image. The themes discussed, metaphors used and how China's growing influence in the IOR is perceived, are all influenced by the still-surviving Curzonian mindset (the Indian Navy inheriting it from its colonial ties).

Discursive strategies employed (like leveraging the Pakistan threat) and particular China threat identity constructions within the Indian discourse illustrate the working of powerful ideational elements. Constituent parts of the narrative are also reconstituted and rearticulated using indicators like temporality and capability to construct the counter-narrative. Temporality of threat helps construct the accepted truth or reality of China's expansion in the IOR. The capability narrative, on the other hand, questions it, highlighting China's shortcomings (technological and experiential), and India's long carrier-operating experience. This does not mean that one is replaced by the other. These multiple narratives co-exist within the discourse.

Constructing an identity of a stealing and copying (disruptive) China, that has an undue advantage in timelines and R&D, creates the discursive space to rationalise the Indian government's slower pace of military technological acquisition and development (specifically, the continued delays in Indian carrier launches and decisions on crucial naval assets like the naval LCA and harriers). Such constructions of the Chinese identity predicates the 'idea' of India as a non-disruptive, norm-adherent, and constructs a sub-narrative of difference, where a

democracy like India cannot mobilise resources in the way China does, due to the government being constrained by popular mandate.

The case study on China's hypersonic glide vehicle tests (Chapter Five), again illustrated the presence of ideational elements. It highlighted that the HGV tests are constructed as a nuclear development by some constituents of the Indian strategic community. China has not yet specified future roles or operational doctrines for the HGV [such a nuclear threat is constructed, either by linking it to the omission of the NFU clause in the 2013 White Paper, or by using numerical comparisons of the growing Chinese nuclear arsenal or even by leaning on Chinese media representations].

India's path to nuclearization and its prolonged national nuclear debate have continued effects on the strategic elite's interpretations of this game-changing hypersonic technology. India has long viewed "the international non-proliferation regime as the epitome of a discriminatory order established by the (neo-)colonialists …" (normative hedging) and its own "…nuclear testing as a symbolic act of opposition against a colonialist world order manifested in the NPT, that denied India its merited status …" (Frey 2006:128). But the "…pragmatic quest for international status and prestige clashed with the moralist principles attached to India's nuclear policy" (Frey 2006:135). This explains India's nuclear ambiguity and hesitance to take a stance on nuclear matters until absolutely necessary. Indian strategic elite's interpretations within the hypersonic arena are influenced by India's self-image, normative values (of advocating global disarmament and non-alignment during the Cold War), its unique experience in its path to nuclearization and its national (security) interests in being a nuclear power flanked by two other powers engaged in covert nuclear partnership.

Construction of the China identity as a formidable nuclear adversary strengthens the Indian identity concept and justifies Indian actions at safeguarding national security. Construction of an unjustified nuclear threat serves to separate the 'us' from the enemy 'Other'. This, taken together with the silences or omissions of context within the discourse, reiterate the Indian self-image and national values of peace, global disarmament, non-coercion, democracy, and peaceful mediation[254]. At the same time, the representation of the HGV tests as aimed at the United States narrows the discursive space and precludes criticism and comparisons of Indian technology lags with China's technological and R&D prowess. The discursive space created, thus

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[254] "… the guiding essence of soft power is to bring other countries towards your world view" (Ogden 2017:114-15).

enables the Indian government to continue monitoring the Chinese tests, calculate its risks and not be pressured to state its official position.

The case study on China's declaration of an air defence zone (ADIZ) (Chapter Six) explained the Indian strategic elite's dichotomous identity constructions in the discourse – where India is portrayed as an adherent of international law and conventions, yet at the same time criticised for its passive diplomacy. India's self-image as an Asian heavyweight, its normative standing as a non-aligned and non-interfering player, together with its national interests (in continued trade and commerce with China) seem to pull it in conflicting directions and India is portrayed in the discourse, as searching for an appropriate response to China's strategic moves.

The Sino-Pakistan nexus has remained an abiding (and historical) threat to India. Although the calls for de-hyphenation have gained strength over the years, discursive constructions illustrate that mindsets, perceptions and interactions remain predominantly driven by historical events, negative experiences, memories and fears. The ADIZ case study illustrated that the identity attributed to Pakistan (as a nuclear proliferator) clubbed with an 'untrustworthy, calculative' China, reinforces India's perceived threats in disputed areas (fear of a future Chinese ADIZ in such areas). The case study illustrates use of discursive strategies, for example, the linking of constructions of a nuclear Pakistan with narratives on the implications of the Chinese ADIZ. Such discursive strategies (and others like juxtaposition of identities, use of a temporal threat, and silences on certain themes or frames of reference) highlight the working of ideational elements.

These examples (of ideational elements within the discourse) highlight that the Indian strategic elite's interpretations (of Chinese actions) and their recommendations cannot be fully understood using the lens of security imperatives alone. This thesis considers a range of interrelated ideational factors, at work with the security motive, within the Indian interpretations and discursive constructions of Chinese military actions. Ogden (2017:118) terms this "the interconnected nature of national security, whereby ideational/ material factors coalesce and values notify real-world policymaking". Ogden explains the 'essences' of history, identity, culture, perception and interaction, which influence "state behaviour or practices…" and are the "temporal repository from which a country's identity is constructed and crafted". "… such engrained essence shapes the relatively constant core of national security" (Ogden 2017:3).

These case studies helped to draw out and highlight key themes within the Indian strategic elites' interpretations of these Chinese military actions. In the absence of official assessment from the Indian government, this thesis provides insight into how these Chinese military actions

are being interpreted and represented by the Indian foreign policy/ strategic commentators. Understanding such constructions and attributions would provide a better understanding of India's foreign policy and national security preferences and behaviours. "As India's weight in global politics continues to increase, understanding the foreign policy dynamics and drivers of South Asia's largest country becomes considerably more important" (Vittorini 2015:224-45).

This thesis makes two central and important contributions to our understanding of Indian security strategy and foreign policy behaviours – First, it contributes a systematic explanation on how a State's strategic elite interprets and represents actions from another State, which threaten its security interests, even its very existence and sovereignty. Second, this thesis provides a nuanced analysis of the impact of non-security-driven ideational elements (i.e. factors like self-image, history, national memory, colonial experiences, normative predispositions, etc.) on the Indian strategic community's discursive interpretations. By doing this the thesis bridges the gap in the Indian foreign policy literature, which lacks state and individual level analysis, and the literature criticising India's lack of a coherent and unified China policy, which seems focused predominantly on security imperatives.

Existing Indian foreign policy literature primarily focuses on systemic influences on India's foreign policy behaviours – examining Asian power balances, India as a rising power within current structural architectures of polarity, etc. It examines the influence of external factors, which decisively shape the formulation of Indian policies and responses. The literature rarely examines state and individual level influences on policy (Perkovich 1999:454) – for example, it rarely examines discursive interpretations or constructions by key individuals and groups. This thesis fills that gap by examining how the Indian strategic elite interpret and construct Chinese military actions. It uses discursive constructions at the domestic level (strategic community) to shed light on Indian government's foreign policy responses.

Indian foreign policy literature, especially since 2010, criticises the Indian government's lack of strategic thinking, and a coherent, unified China policy (Chatterjee Miller 2013-a: 14, Mukherjee and Malone 2011, Pant 2009, Pant 2010:120-153, Samanta 2018, Chellaney 2017, Kainikara 2016). Its China policy is often termed reactive (Pant 2009-a:250-52; Mehta 2009) and feebly muddling through. Calls for immediate responses to Chinese actions or a 'coherent' or bold China policy is driven by a focus exclusively on security imperatives, where responses are shaped within a system driven by relative power gains and self-help. Ideational factors influencing India's foreign policy are not considered [for example, self-image (and its identity contestations), ambitions for great power status, national interests (i.e. the national interest in

seeking prestige or working with China for economic development), unique history, colonial experiences, normative predispositions, India's unique interpretations of external threats i.e. the Sino-Pakistan nexus, etc.]. Such a focus on security-imperatives alone, and a failure to consider ideational factors, provides a short-sighted approach to understand India's foreign policy behaviours.

Problematically, in all these calls for a unified, coherent China response/ policy, India is treated as a unitary actor [on the lines of Wendt's anthropomorphic state possessing a single identity (1992:397)], with a single, unified interpretation of any event, situation or threat, and concurring on a single representation of the Chinese identity. The three Chinese military actions examined in this thesis, however, highlight the varied interpretations of these Chinese military actions within the Indian strategic community, their varied representations of the China identity and their varied recommendations for responses. India's nature as a highly diverse, democratic state, that must negotiate and bargain with varied constituents and stakeholders before achieving consensus on any matter, further complicates the achievement of such unified and 'coherent' China responses.

The key argument of this thesis is that ideational elements are far more influential in shaping or constructing discursive interpretations (of the Indian strategic community) than previously acknowledged. There are two ways to making sense of the puzzle of ideational elements (or identifying its influence). Firstly, through examining identity constructions or attributions to China. Secondly, through interpreting discursive recommendations to the Indian government (for responses or future actions).

The thesis (and the case studies) illustrated that identity constructions are shifting. China identity constructions in the discourse are shifting and contradictory, varying between a revisionist actor and a norm-adherent, and between an aggressive, calculative actor and a rational one. There is a juxtaposition of building up the China threat identity and questioning Chinese capabilities (playing down the China threat) within the Indian discourse. These shifting identity constructions emanate from variously-placed constituents. Varied actors create various narratives, shaped in part by their positions within the strategic community. Agent positions within government departments and bureaucracies, and their interests and agendas influence discourse constructions. Discourses are sites of struggle for power, and various themes are in dominance or non-dominance at various points of time. Discursive interpretations and the construction of meaning is thus "a process that is power-imbued, that is, discourses are sites of

struggle and negotiation, between different knowledge claims and power relations" (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:9, Louw 2001: 5-35).

The case studies (chapters Four, Five and Six) highlight this discursive struggle of constructed identities – i.e. they highlight the contested nature of China identity constructions, where different groups build up and play down different themes perceived to be national security interests[255]. Think Tank analysts, in their representation of the China threat, examine it in the context of *structural factors* - like India's regional security environment, the currently existing Asia Pacific order with United States as the security-providing hegemon and its network of Asian allies and treaty partners, and China's regional security threats, its modernisation of its force structures instigating a security spiral and regional security imbalances, etc. The Armed Forces narratives are more focused on *unit-level factors* like military capabilities, India's chequered history with China, lack of governmental will and shoddy planning, governmental and institutional resistance to military-technological acquisition and development, domestic debates (for example, the need for carriers, nuclear second strike, two front war), the omnipresent Pakistan threat, etc. Armed Forces' constructions of the attributes of China identity are essentially co-located with Indian self-identity, the self-image of an Asian power questioning Chinese capabilities. Indian state identity or Indian capability is, thus, constructed as the indirect referent. China identity is subordinated to this referent object (i.e. Indian capabilities and resultantly, Indian major power identity) within the Armed Forces narratives.

From such discursive struggles of constructed identities emanate the second argument of this thesis, i.e. such discursive constructions serve to further India's chosen foreign policy practices – for example, India's pursuit of deliberate strategic ambiguity (in its nuclear policy and responses) or multialignment. Varied identity constructions create discursive space for varied policy recommendations to the Indian government (on how to respond to China). As discussed in Chapter One, Hall (2016: 277-78) calls such a pursuit of varied policy responses, multi-directional engagement or 'multialignment'. It involves three aspects or "interlinked FP practices" — first, an "accelerated push for membership of - and greater engagement in - emerging global and regional multi- and mini-lateral institutions and forums"; second, "forging a series of 'strategic partnerships' and deepening … existing partnerships"; and third, normative hedging.

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[255] This is in a sense also comparative as it enables the comparison of themes or discourses that compete for discursive hegemony.

The case studies demonstrate the presence of the three FP practices or prongs of multialignment. The case study on China's carrier programme shows that the discursive recommendations reiterate strategic partnerships with the United States and Asian powers, normative hedging (by developing operational compatibility among navies and creating codes of conduct for international encounters) and working with multilateral groupings like the ASEAN. The case study on Chinese HGV tests explained that the discursive constructions serve to further India's use of deliberate strategic ambiguity. Discursive space is created through the predominant narrative of a US-focused Chinese hypersonic programme, which facilitated the Indian government's silence on China's tests and India's pursuit of ambiguity related to its hypersonic programme, enabling its quiet entry into its desired proliferation regimes. Such membership of multilateral institutions and forums helps increase India's leverage on the global stage, supporting its great power ambitions and national interest of status-seeking, and further facilitating the pursuit of its foreign policy approach of multialignment (the discourse's conflicts between self-image of a normative power and strategic interests is visible in the recommendations to the Indian government).

The Indian government has, as discussed in the hypersonics case study acceded to non-proliferation regimes like the MTCR (in 2016), the Wassenaar Arrangement (in 2017), and the Australia Group (on 19 January 2018) (Economic Times 19 Jan 2018). It has also joined the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) led by China, joined the BRICS bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), since Prime Minister Modi assumed office in May 2014. In June 2016, the United States had recognised India as a 'major defence partner'. India has strengthened its strategic partnership with the United States via initiatives like the September 2018 bilateral summit called the 2+2 dialogue, the signing of the LEMOA[256] (Logistics Exchange MoA) and the COMCASA (Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement) giving India access to advanced defence systems. The strategic partnership with Japan has progressed, most recently with Modi's visit to Japan for the 13th India-Japan Annual Summit (28-29 October 2018)[257]. This was Modi's twelfth meeting with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe since May 2014, when Modi assumed office. The strategic partnership with China[258] has seen multiple visits by Modi and President Xi, latest being the Wuhan summit (April 26-28, 2018), and regular meetings on the sidelines of the SCO and BRICS summits in 2016 and 2017. As part of the Look East policy

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[256] "…gives access, to both countries, to designated military facilities on either side for the purpose of refuelling and replenishment" (Peri 2016)
[257] Details on the summit as an MEA e-book.
[258] See details on India- China bilateral relations here

(renamed Act East under Prime Minister Modi), India has proactively pursued closer ties with countries of South East and East Asia like Vietnam, Singapore, Philippines, Myanmar, Taiwan and other ASEAN countries. The Indian government under Modi has continued to energetically engage in the first two prongs of the foreign policy approach of multialignment, i.e. membership of multilateral organisations/ regimes and building strategic partnerships, especially with the United States. Thus, the discourse's calls for the pursuit of varied responses, creates discursive spaces for varied policy practices like alignment with other Asian states, being a Swing power between China and the United States, balancing even containing Chinese influence through the Act East and other evolving Indo-Pacific architectures.

Of course, as discussed in the case study on the ADIZ, there are voices within the Indian strategic elite that debate the strategic partnership with the United States, in the light of America's declining influence and its ambiguity in countering the Chinese threat. There are those that are sceptic about a dependence on US hegemony in shaping the future power structures (and defining the 'China threat') in the Indian Ocean and the wider Indo-Pacific. The Armed Forces narratives hinge on India's superiority in countering the China threat in the Indo-Pacific, constructing the Indian identity (and Indian Navy) as a 'net security provider' in the region (see Chinese carrier case study for details). India's objection to joining or using alliances to further security in the region is also visible within the narratives on Chinese ADIZ and Chinese claims in South China Sea. The narratives discuss US ambiguity and its failure towards treaty allies like Japan, Philippines and South Korea. This is illustrative of India's normative hedging (the third prong), that causes it to still consider its past normative stances of non-alignment and strategic autonomy.

The second central argument of this thesis therefore, is that the Indian strategic elite's discursive constructions support and facilitate the Indian government's policy choices – for example, deliberate strategic ambiguity (especially in nuclear policy) and multialignment (i.e. the discourse creates space for the pursuit of multiple policy practices).

A secondary, but related finding emanating from the three case studies is that the discursive presence of ideational elements is more prominent in areas where India's power ambitions lie. They are more visible in the case studies on China's carrier programme and the ADIZ declaration. These case studies are linked to India's vision of its centrality in the IOR and its perceptions of its territorial claims in the regions disputed with China. In the other hand, in the case study of the tests of the HGV, i.e. in the case of advanced technology space weapons where much research is still emerging, the discourse by the Indian strategic elite especially the Armed

Forces analysts takes the form of an examination of technical details. Very little analysis on security implications for India or for the Asian power balance exists. There are also very few counter-narratives [like the Karnad (2015) or Bhat (in Aroor 2017) analyses] available in the open domain (all open-source discursive material available for the time period were examined for the study). In the case studies on China's carrier programme and the ADIZ declaration, Indian discourse clearly analyses security implications for India and the wider region. Counter-narratives consolidate the discourse, incorporating diverse narratives. Ideational elements predominate in these case studies, as these are arenas where India's power ambitions lie, and any threat to them threatens the very 'idea of India' (Ogden 2017:12). India's ambitions as a naval power and its perception of the IOR as its natural sphere of influence (in the carrier case study), and its threat perceptions and security imaginings about its disputed border with China (in the ADIZ case study) are both critical to the preservation of the 'idea of India' and therefore, the discursive presence of ideational elements are more prominent here.

The thesis illustrates how discursive constructions work in three different empirical contexts related to a State's security interests – i.e. naval power projection, high-technology space and nuclear weapons, and projection of force outside territorial land and sea space. The case studies are also three different kinds of action – the 'launch' of aircraft carriers, the 'tests' of HGV and the 'declaration' of an ADIZ. Using these three unique case studies, allowed the researcher to examine Indian discursive constructions in three different empirical contexts. In all these three case studies, one would expect that security considerations would alone define and predominate the State's (or the strategic community's) thinking and discursive interpretations. This thesis, however, clearly demonstrates the role and influence of non-security imperatives. It demonstrates the influence of ideational factors like self-image, unique history, colonial experiences, national memory, normative predispositions, etc. on India's strategic discourse. Ideational factors influence how India pursues its national security, its economic development goals and achieves influence on the global stage. This thesis thus provides a non-security-centred account of Indian (strategic elite's discursive) interpretations of China's military actions.

The use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as an analytical framework provided a robust method to investigate how the Indian strategic community was attributing 'meaning' to the Chinese military actions, and how their particular discursive constructions was constructing the China and Indian identities. To better understand foreign policy behaviours or actions of a State, it is important to analyse how an event, situation or threat in its strategic environment is interpreted and represented, and how 'meaning' is created through intersubjective interpretations (Weldes 1999: 57-59, Weldes et al (ed.) 1999a:13). This thesis brings together

discursive identity conceptualisations (and contestations) and India's China policy responses, situating it within the empirical cases of Chinese military actions.

This thesis provides the first in-depth, empirically-detailed account of the Indian strategic community's discursive constructions, by analysing how the three Chinese military actions are interpreted, and identities constructed and meaning attributed. It examined open-source and publicly available data sources and used interviews with China experts and policymakers within the Indian strategic community. It has moved the research forward from abstract conceptualisations of identity to a pragmatic analysis, using case studies of military force enhancements. This also ties in closely with policy-oriented approaches, illustrating the value of grounding foreign policy or response constructions within discursive interpretations at the state or individual levels.

Appendices

Appendix One – Interviews

1. **Shivshankar Menon**, Former National Security Advisor and Foreign Secretary, Government of India. Interviewed in New Delhi, 8 March 2016

2. **Dr Ajey Lele**, Group Captain (Retd.) Indian Navy, Senior Fellow at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) and Head of Centre on Strategic Technologies. Interviewed in New Delhi, 24 March 2016

3. **Commodore Uday Bhaskar** (Retd.) Indian Navy. Interviewed in New Delhi, 21 March 2016

4. **Rear Admiral K Raja Menon** (Retd.) Indian Navy. Interviewed in New Delhi, 11 March 2016

5. **Vice Admiral RN Ganesh** (Retd.) Director General, Indian Coast Guard. Interviewed in Bangalore, 29 March 2016

6. **Captain Gurpreet Khurana**, Indian Navy and Executive Director, National Maritime Foundation Delhi. Interviewed in New Delhi, 22 March 2016

7. **Captain Raghavendra Mishra**, Indian Navy and National Maritime Foundation Delhi. Interviewed in New Delhi, 17 March 2016

8. **Ambassador N Ravi**, Retired diplomat, Govt of India. Interviewed in Bangalore, 12 April 2016

9. **Ambassador TP Sreenivasan**, former Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, Vienna and Governor for India of the IAEA, Govt of India. Interviewed in Trivandrum, 6 May 2016

10. **Dr. Srikanth Kondapalli**, Professor, Chinese Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Interviewed in New Delhi, 15 March 2016

11. **Dr Jabin Jacob**, Assistant Director and Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS). Interviewed in New Delhi, 22 March 2016

12. **Professor Alka Acharya**, Centre for East Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. Deputy Director of the Institute of Chinese Studies at time of interview. Interviewed in New Delhi, 18 March 2016

13. **Professor Rajaram Nagappa**, Dean, Missile and Space programme, National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS). Interviewed in Bangalore, 4 March 2016

14. **Professor Chandrasekhar**, Visiting Chair, Missile and Space programme, National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS). Interviewed in Bangalore, 29 Feb 2016

15. **Dr. Arun Viswanathan**, Former Assistant Director in the National Security Council Secretariat, Prime Minister's Office (2008-2011). Interviewed in Bangalore, 4 March 2016

16. **Dr. M. Mayilvaganan**, Associate Professor, National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS). Interviewed in Bangalore, 29 Feb 2016

17. **Dr. Prakash Panneerselvam**, Assistant Professor, National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS). Interviewed in Bangalore, 29 Feb 2016

18. **Dr. Pankaj Jha**, Director of Research, Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) Delhi and Deputy Director of the National Security Council Secretariat (2012-2013). Interviewed in New Delhi, 9 March 2016

19. **Prof. K. V. Kesavan**, Distinguished Fellow, Japan Studies programme, Observor Research Foundation. Interviewed in New Delhi, 15 March 2016

20. **Dr P K Ghosh**, Senior Fellow, Observor Research Foundation and retired from Indian Navy. Interviewed in New Delhi, 10 March 2016

21. **Dr Priya Suresh**, Research Scholar, The Takshashila Institution and Professor at Christ University, Bangalore. Interviewed in Bangalore, 15 April 2016

22. **Dr Harsh Pant**, Professor of International Relations, King's India Institute. Telephone interview, New Delhi, 13 August 2016

23. **Guru Aiyar**, ex-naval officer and Research Fellow, Geo-strategy Programme at The Takshashila Institution. Interviewed in Bangalore, 14 April 2016

24. **Pranay Kotasthane** , Head of the Geo-strategy programme at The Takshashila Institution. Interviewed in Bangalore, 14 April 2016

25. **Confidential interview**, New Delhi, January 2018

Appendix Two – Ethics Review

University Ethics Sub-Committee for Sociology; Politics and IR; Lifelong Learning; Criminology; Economics and the School of Education

19/01/2016

Ethics Reference: 4949-amg45-politics&intrelations

TO:

Name of Researcher Applicant: Ann George

Department: Politics

Research Project Title: China's military rise since 2013 and India's responses

Dear Ann George,

RE: Ethics review of Research Study application

The University Ethics Sub-Committee for Sociology; Politics and IR; Lifelong Learning; Criminology; Economics and the School of Education has reviewed and discussed the above application.

1.   Ethical opinion

The Sub-Committee grants ethical approval to the above research project on the basis described in the application form and supporting documentation, subject to the conditions specified below.

2.   Summary of ethics review discussion

The Committee noted the following issues:

The reviewers noted that some of the proposed participants had been interviewed before as part of your MA project. This may be something to discuss with your supervisors, but we don't see any ethical issues arising.

3.   General conditions of the ethical approval

The ethics approval is subject to the following general conditions being met prior to the start of the project:

As the Principal Investigator, you are expected to deliver the research project in accordance with the University's policies and procedures, which includes the University's Research Code of Conduct and the University's Research Ethics Policy.

If relevant, management permission or approval (gate keeper role) must be obtained from host organisation prior to the start of the study at the site concerned.

4.   Reporting requirements after ethical approval

You are expected to notify the Sub-Committee about:

- Significant amendments to the project
- Serious breaches of the protocol
- Annual progress reports
- Notifying the end of the study

5.   Use of application information

Details from your ethics application will be stored on the University Ethics Online System. With your permission, the Sub-Committee may wish to use parts of the application in an anonymised format for training or sharing best practice. Please let me know if you do not want the application details to be used in this manner.

Best wishes for the success of this research project.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Laura Brace

Chair

Appendix Three – Figures: China's air-defence identification zone (ADIZ)
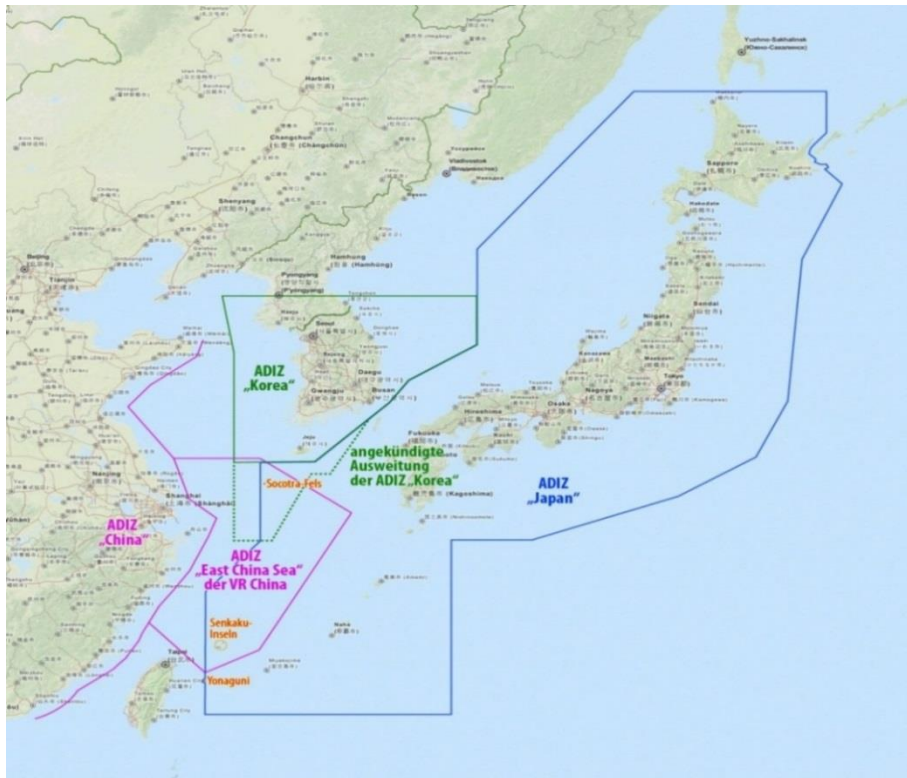
Fig 1: The overlapping Japanese, Korean and Chinese ADIZs in the ECS. The green dotted line is South Korea's extended KADIZ, created as a reaction to China's ECS ADIZ declaration. Source: wikimedia.org
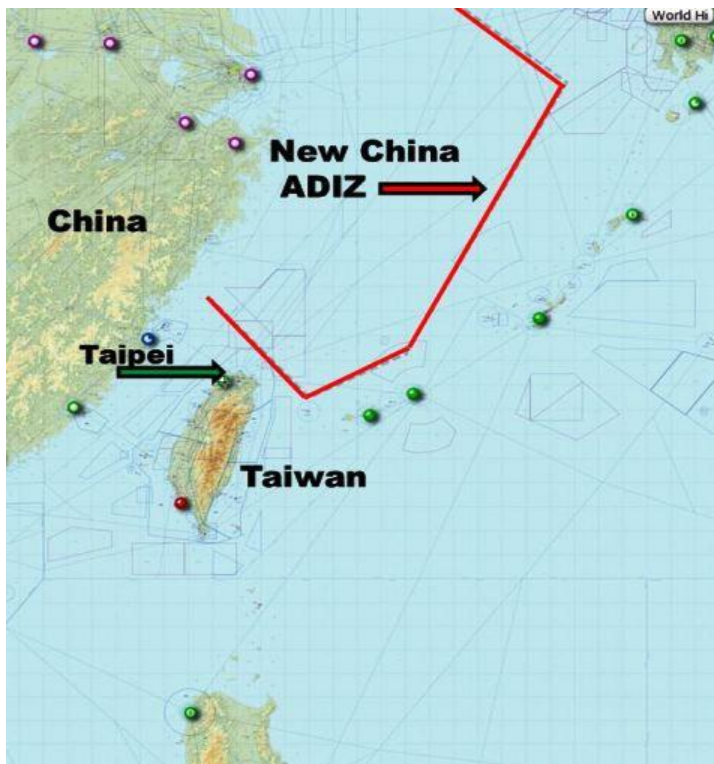

Fig 2: The landing vectors or air routes of commercial aircraft coming into Taipei - Image Source: davidfday.com

Fig 3: The landing vectors or air routes of commercial aircraft – Image Source: defence.pk

Fig 4: The coercive squeeze effect on Taiwan's sovereign airspace - Taiwan, East China Sea, and notional South China Sea ADIZ - Image Source: Project 2049 Institute

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