CHAPTER ONE
Makers of Foreign Policy

Here we focus upon how, where and by whom foreign policy is constructed in India. Our investigation begins with an exposition of how India's political system functions, and outlines the key governing structures (both legislative and executive) critical to the decision-making process. An analysis of the central features of India's parliamentary-style system is noted, as well as some of the major caveats concerning the functioning of Indian domestic politics. The chapter then discusses India's major foreign policy making bodies, especially the role of India's bureaucrats in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the National Security Council (NSC). In turn, it evaluates the growing and diversifying non-governmental influences upon foreign policy making, in particular of India's expanding security community (made up of former leading members of India's bureaucracy and armed services, think-tank heads, academics, journalists and others), as well as of India's myriad political parties and the military. Finally, critical domestic determinants – ranging from modernization and development pressures to internal instability and nationalism – are also highlighted to underscore the heightening complexity that is slowly becoming the hallmark of foreign policy making in contemporary India.

1.1 Generational differences in foreign policy style

India's foreign policy-making apparatus, and the governmental and non-governmental bodies, ministries and influences inherent to it, have developed and mimicked the broader evolution of India security as a whole in the modern period. Hence, in the decades following independence, Jawaharlal Nehru – India's first prime mnister but also her first minister of external affairs – resolutely dominated the conception and delivery of foreign policy. Through these positions, it was Nehru's vision of the international system (and his perception of India's place within it) that dictated many of the core principles underscoring the national approach to foreign policy. These principles primarily concerned notions of idealistic internationalism, self-reliance, non-alignment, *swadeshi* and non-dogmatic socialism. Critically, Nehru's dominance limited the role of other influences upon foreign policy making, both within and outside the ruling government, effectively delimiting broader bureaucratic voices. Nehru's centrality produced what many have regarded as

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Profile 1.1 Jawaharlal Nehru (1889–1964)

The dominant leader of the Indian independence movement, Jawaharlal Nehru was the key-architect of the modern Indian state that emerged in 1947. Educated at Harrow and the University of Cambridge, and trained as a barrister, Nehru led the anti-colonial struggle against British rule and crafted the principles of socialism, secularism and democracy upon which the Indian Constitution is based. A prodigious writer and intellectual, he wrote numerous volumes, most notably *The Discovery of India* (1946) which outlined India's history, culture and philosophy, as well as the panoramic *Glimpses of World History* (2004 [1934]), based upon letters he wrote to his daughter Indira while in various prisons protesting against colonialism. Upon taking office on 15 August 1947 as British rule ended, he famously noted India's 'tryst with destiny . . . [whereby] at the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom'.[1]

A much respected international statesmen who fought for a more equitable world order that represented the developing world as much as the developed, Nehru was a towering global figure in the 1940s and 1950s, most clearly personified by his leadership within the NAM. The limits of his idealism (seen by Nehru as 'global influence without military power'[2]) would be severely undermined by China's 1962 invasion, which at the time was considered to be an unlikely possibility. In retrospect, Nehru did not always act with the practical necessities of power as his central focus, and his romanticism and moralism – on occasion – led to India losing a range of critical strategic possibilities during his tenure. Despite these limitations, his dominance of foreign policy making in India 'created two generations of Indian politicians and bureaucrats committed to Nehruvianism',[3] a legacy that persists to this day.

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a unanimous 'Nehruvian consensus' within Indian foreign policy, although in recent years such notions have been compellingly questioned.[4] Nevertheless, Nehru undoubtedly remains Indian foreign policy's key founding father (see Profile 1.1).

In broad terms, Nehru's attitude towards both the principles and the implementation of foreign policy continued after his death in 1964. Thus, under both his daughter Indira Gandhi and grandson Rajiv Gandhi, key foreign policy decisions were largely formulated via small groups of trusted advisors and confidants. However, with a move towards greater realpolitik in the late 1970s and 1980s, as well as an emphasis that focused upon the trajectory and projection of Indian national interests rather than the make-up of the international system as a whole (as typified by the NAM), the foreign policy making process gradually came to include more disparate influences, in particular from the MEA. A greater emphasis upon heightening India's proactive, rather than reactive, engagement with the international system further underscored this broadening involvement. Critically though, the institution of the PMO (as initiated by Nehru's immediate successor, Lal Bahadur Shastri) enshrined the

dominant role of the ruling leader within the overall foreign policy making process – a situation which continues. As such, any new influential bodies continue to be subsumed under the prime minister's aegis.

This interplay between the role of individual leaders and the pursuit of national interests also began to be influenced by the nature of the international system. Thus, in the early 1990s, a trade and energy focus began to characterize India diplomacy as her leaders emphasized the need for economic growth. Such a focus necessitated a gradual embrace of the globalization forces that had begun to typify the international system, but which appeared to be largely inimical to the self-reliance and socialist principles that were the hallmark of the Cold War era. In reaction, Indian foreign policy making slowly became more joined up between different Indian ministries, and more inclusive of non-governmental voices and opinions, especially in the fields of business, academia and the military. A burgeoning middle class, courtesy of a rapidly expanding Indian economy, coupled with a commensurate blossoming of the Indian media in its print, visual and interactive forms, created new forums and interest groups concerned with the conduct and nature of international affairs.

India's global interaction continued to increase through the 2000s as her leaders focused upon restoring India's great-power status via economic growth. In order to fulfil this aim, MEA officials began to overcome India's regional fixation through a policy of 'total diplomacy'[5] with all states as a way to garner new trade relations, enhance India's energy security and project her influence within the international system. Continued defence growth and modernization, as well as a more assertive role in multilateral institutions, underpinned this interaction and further broadened the spectrum of India's international engagement. Official rhetoric concerning India's 'extended strategic neighbourhood' and her enlarging 'strategic footprint' bolstered these interactions, and again required (and inculcated) an increasingly complex and diversifying range of foreign policy making inputs. In this period, a new ranked hierarchy appeared in Indian diplomacy, with greater attention being given to the P5 powers (those with permanent vetoes in the UNSC) and second-tier powers such as Japan, Australia, France, Germany and the EU. Such pragmatism was a new form of Indian diplomacy and adhered to 'a trend that most of the great powers have adopted ... (and which has since become) a permanent imperative'.[6]

1.2 Central features of India's political system

A functional democratic process is crucial to India's political system and rests upon a first-past-the-post electoral regime that results in a parliamentary form of cabinet government. Centred upon secular principles (defined as being inclusive and tolerant of all religions rather than being non-religious[7]), India's major democratic institutions comprise an upper (Rajya Sabha) and a

lower house (Lok Sabha), currently with 245 and 545 members respectively. The Indian president nominates twelve members of the Rajya Sabha, with the remainder chosen by state and territorial legislatures. All members serve a six-year term. Members of the Lok Sabha are elected via national elections every five years (although these can be called earlier, such as in 2004). In addition, in both parts of India's bicameral national legislature, state representation is based upon relative size, and central government institutions are replicated at the state level. Reflective of India's gigantic and growing population, in the 2009 elections there was an electorate of 714 million, which represented the world's largest democratic election to date. In 2009, voter turnout was just under 60 per cent and was carried out entirely using electronic voting machines.

The Indian Constitution promulgated in January 1950 declared India to be a sovereign democratic republic that was federal and non-monarchical, with an independent judiciary, a single electorate and guaranteed rights. While the president acts as the nominal head of state, executive power rests with the prime minister and his/her Cabinet who collectively undertake all decision making. After a general election, the president asks the leader of the majority party to form a government, and the prime minister can be an elected member of either the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha (such as Manmohan Singh). Thus, the prime minister becomes head of government via the legislature rather than via a direct (presidential) vote, and any government has to resign if it loses a vote on a major policy issue or if there is a vote of no confidence. In turn, the prime minister selects the Cabinet and can be in charge of other government ministries if he or she so wishes; for instance, all of India's rulers have been chairmen of the Planning Commission due to its critical responsibilities for determining national five-year plans. In terms of foreign policy making, the Cabinet was an influential grouping under Nehru but, from Shastri onwards, the PMO (and its secretariat) emerged as the most critical base of advice, influence and power concerning the delineation of security policy.

As a federal republic, India is currently split into twenty-nine states and seven union territories as listed in Table 1.1, three of which latter are offshore. The number, borders and areas of these states and territories have fluctuated since 1947 as a result of policy and electoral reform, and in July 2013 the

Table 1.1 Federal States in India (August 2013)	
States	**Union Territories**
Andhra Pradesh; Arunachal Pradesh; Assam; Bihar; Chhattisgarh; Goa; Gujarat; Haryana; Himachal Pradesh; Jammu and Kashmir; Jharkhand; Karnataka; Kerala; Madhya Pradesh; Maharashtra; Manipur; Meghalaya; Mizoram; Nagaland; Orissa; Punjab; Rajasthan; Sikkim; Tamil Nadu; Telangana; Tripura; Uttar Pradesh; Uttarakhand; West Bengal	Andaman and Nicobar Islands*; Chandigarh; Dadra and Nagar Haveli; Daman and Diu; Delhi; Lakshadweep*; Pondicherry

*offshore

new state of Telangana was carved out of southern Andhra Pradesh. Levels of development, life expectancy, literacy and economic performance vary significantly from state to state, as do their populations, the largest in 2012 being Uttar Pradesh with 200 million citizens and the smallest being Sikkim numbering just over 600,000.

As with her parliamentary system, India's federal system is largely a legacy of British imperial rule whereby 'India's sheer territorial size and diversity precluded a unitary state structure where all power resided in the central legislature'.[8] Power is thus divided by the Constitution between the centre and states. However, this division is underscored by a centralizing preference due to the negative experiences of Partition and ongoing territorial threats. As such, India's Constitution contains national security functions to reassert central control via the emergency powers of President's Rule whereby the prime minister can subordinate all state functions to direct rule (Articles 356 and 357). While Articles 356 and 357 protect against any threats to India's secular and unified political basis, their presence points to authoritarian possibilities in India. President's Rule has been invoked against individual states on more than 120 occasions (particularly in Kashmir), and rose in incidence from ten times between 1947 and 1966 to seventy times between 1967 and 1986. India has also witnessed the full evocation of President's Rule during critical foreign policy junctures, most notably amidst the 1962 war with China and the 1971 liberation of East Pakistan.

The extent of these powers was most infamously shown by the Emergency of 1975–7. The origins of the Emergency came from Indira Gandhi's conviction in 1975 for electoral fraud committed during her 1971 constituency campaign – a judgement that meant that she was barred from politics for six years. In response, she invoked Article 352 of the Constitution to declare a state of emergency, giving herself extraordinary powers whereby civil liberties, the legislature and the Constitution were suspended, press censorship was introduced, tens of thousands of politicians and protestors were jailed, laws were rewritten and various political groupings banned. The Emergency came to represent 'a twenty-two month eclipse'[9] of Indian democracy by state authoritarianism and was symptomatic of the corruption, paranoia and disharmony within Congress and government.

Despite having been amended more than ninety times since 1950, the Indian Constitution still rests upon the same basic features (as well as an underlying socialist preference). At its core, there is a search for 'unity in diversity' articulated through 'a multinational vision of nationhood – in which region, language, social status are combined',[10] and which is nominally non-religious, anti-elitist and based upon equality and social cohesion. Henceforth, the Constitution includes Article 15(1) – no state discrimination on the grounds of religion – and protects the customs, laws and practices of India's minority (religious) communities. Additionally, a proportion of government jobs and education are reserved for lower castes (those in the lower strata of

India's Hindu society) through positive discrimination under Articles 330(1) and 332(1), as are a set number of seats in the Lok Sabha. These principles are deemed necessary in a society where the vast majority of the population (80.5%) is Hindu. In turn, 13.4% of the population is Muslim, 2.3% Christian, and 1.9% Sikh, in addition to many other religious denominations and groupings.[11] The presence of at least thirty national and regional languages and more than 2,000 dialects further highlights the complex heterogeneity of Indian society. For these reasons, India's secular basis is itself a countermeasure against potential instability and divisiveness between different cultural and religious groupings, and enshrines the separation of state and religion. Accordingly, Article 25(1) of the Indian Constitution grants individual freedom of religion – reflecting *sarva dharma shambhava* (equal treatment of all religions). However, often-extreme levels of discrimination (and violence) still regularly occur against the lower castes and women.

Rulers of modern India

As shown by Table 1.2, the Indian National Congress (Congress) party resolutely dominated the governance of India since 1947 until the late 1980s. With the exception of the brief BJP government in 1996, as well as the 1998–2004 NDA, all prime ministers have been one-time Congress ministers or legislators.

Table 1.2 Prime Ministers: Affiliation and Tenure in Office (1947–present)		
Prime Minister	Political Party / Grouping	Tenure in Office
Jawaharlal Nehru	Indian National Congress	15.08.47–27.05.64
G. L. Nanda*	Indian National Congress	27.05.64–09.06.64
Lal B. Shastri	Indian National Congress	09.06.64–11.01.66
G. L. Nanda*	Indian National Congress	11.01.66–24.01.66
Indira Gandhi	Indian National Congress	24.01.66–24.03.77
Morarji Desai	Janata Party (coalition)	24.03.77–28.07.79
Charan Singh	Janata Party (coalition)	28.07.79–14.01.80
Indira Gandhi	Indian National Congress	14.01.80–31.10.84
Rajiv Gandhi	Indian National Congress	31.10.84–02.12.89
V. P. Singh	National Front (coalition)	02.12.89–10.11.90
Chandra Shekhar	National Front (coalition)	10.11.90–21.06.91
P. V. Narasimha Rao	Indian National Congress	21.06.91–16.05.96
Atal B. Vajpayee	Bharatiya Janata Party	16.05.96–01.12.96
H. D. Deve Gowda	United Front (coalition)	01.12.96–21.04.97
I. K. Gujral	United Front (coalition)	21.04.97–18.03.98
Atal B Vajpayee	National Democratic Alliance (coalition)	18.03.98–22.05.04
Manmohan Singh	United Progressive Alliance (coalition)	22.05.04–present

* interim prime minister

Furthermore, and again with the exception of the 1996 BJP government, all non-Congress governments have been coalitions.

The elections of 1989, 1991 and 1996 saw an increase in communal (religious or ethnically based) politics. This increase had much to do with the emergence of lower-caste political parties, aided by the 1990 Mandal Commission's recommendations to reserve 27 per cent of government jobs for the lower castes. Such phenomena, in conjunction with the rise of coalition governance, for example the Janata Dal who won the 1989 election, appeared to threaten the Congress-inspired secular conceptualization of the Indian state. The right-wing Hindu nationalist BJP typified this trend, as did the emergence of smaller regional, state and caste-based parties, such as Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party that largely politically mobilizes lower-caste Dalits. The long-standing presence of various Communist parties continues to complement this proliferation. Although they elected a female prime minister in 1966, both houses of the Indian parliament are predominantly male, with only 10.7 per cent of those elected to the Lok Sabha in 2009 being female (the highest-ever percentage, which has risen each election from a low of 3.8 per cent in 1977).

Major caveats

There are some major caveats to bear in mind with regard to Indian politics, which often appear contradictory to the desired worldview of the national Constitution. Primarily, ascriptive and hereditary criteria in Indian society (such as caste and upbringing) can encourage a hierarchical, stratified and nepotistic system based upon kinship and inherited positions of influence. In Indian politics, these entrenched factors often translate as inter-generational political dynasties. The most prominent of these dynasties is the Nehru-Gandhi family, which has produced Indian prime ministers over successive familial generations – first Jawaharlal Nehru, followed by his daughter Indira Gandhi and then her son Rajiv Gandhi. Rajiv's wife Sonia is currently president of the Indian Congress Party, and her son Rahul Gandhi is tipped to be a future Congress leader (and thus potential future prime minister; see Profile 8.1). Various other Nehru-Gandhis have also assumed leading political roles in the last century. As Case Study 1.1 shows, this phenomenon extends across the landscape of Indian politics, resulting in something akin to semi-feudal patronage.

Issues also revolve around the structure of Indian governance and Indian bureaucracy. Critical to these structures is the frequently personalized nature of Indian politics, based upon unquestioning loyalty and the willingness to subordinate ministry interests to those of an individual political leader.[12] Such a system can foster both corruption and nepotism,[13] especially in an atmosphere of rapid economic growth. Focusing upon core sets of advisors can also make them reliant upon a politician's patronage – something that deforms objectivity in policy making. Such negative impacts can be apparent

Case Study 1.1 Inter-Generational Political Dynasties

In some ways harking back to monarchic and imperial rule, dynastic politics are a commonplace occurrence in Indian politics. Resting upon national, regional, caste and religious domains, India has multiple political families handing down positions of influence from generation to generation via widespread 'political inheritance'. A growing trend, and often centred upon powerful dynastic patriarchs, the most prominent of these families (besides the pre-eminent Nehru-Gandhis) are the Abdullahs of Kashmir, the Thackerays in Maharashtra, the Pawars of Baramati, the Gowdas in Karnataka, the Badals of Punjab and the Chautalas in Haryana. In Bihar, when Laloo Prasad Yadav was barred from politics due to charges of corruption and sent to prison, his wife Rabri took over control.

According to Patrick French,[14] in 2011 28.6% of all Indian members of parliament (MPs) come from a family with a political background. In turn, all MPs aged below thirty have inherited their seats from a family member, as have 65% of those aged below forty, and 36.8% of those aged below fifty. Of MPs in Congress, a total of 37.5% come from a political family, with 86.4% of those aged below forty having hereditary ties to the previous incumbent. Congress's heir apparent, Rahul Gandhi, is frequently referred to as *yuvraj* ('son of the king'), as were his father Rajiv and uncle Sanjay. Members of both the BJP and the Communist parties are exceptions to this rule, with the former often renowned for their celibacy. Other political dynasties exist across South Asia, such as Nepal's Koiralas and Pakistan's Bhuttos.

in foreign policy, which in the post-Nehru era largely rests upon a trusted inner circle in the PMO rather than the Cabinet (as detailed below). Paul Brass has pertinently noted how 'the mechanisms, ties and attachments that make the system work are based upon personal and social obligations to patrons and clients, kin and caste fellows, in informal connections and on illegal fee-for-service cash arrangements'.[15] The presence of vote-banks (a loyal bloc of voters from a single community), as well as assertions that a third of Indian politicians face criminal charges ranging from electoral fraud to murder,[16] only serves to underscore the severity of these problems and their societal implications.

Indian politics also experiences high levels of volatility as exemplified by communal violence and political assassination. This volatility adds an element of uncertainty within the political process, impacting upon policy making and its implementation. Most clearly personified by the Hindu–Muslim violence that accompanied Partition in 1947, such tensions have continued to regularly punctuate Indian politics. In December 1992, the BJP's ethno-religious mobilizations at Ayodhya and their destruction of the Babri Masjid sparked Hindu–Muslim riots that left 1,200 dead across India. In 2002, while governing the state of Gujarat, the BJP was further complicit in violence that led to around 2,000 deaths.[17] The dangers of ethno-nationalism (and its external linkages) are also shown by Indira Gandhi's assassination by her Sikh

bodyguards on 31 October 1984 after she ordered troops to storm the Golden Temple in Amritsar to flush out Sikh militants pressing for self-rule. In turn, Indian attempts to balance Tamil and Sinhalese demands in Sri Lanka led to Rajiv Gandhi's assassination by a suicide bomber on 21 May 1991. Communal violence accompanied both cases (often aided by official complicity), with at least 3,000 deaths in the former during which Rajiv Gandhi stated that 'once a mighty tree falls, it is only natural that the earth around it shakes'.[18]

1.3 Key foreign policy making bodies and influences

Prior to 1947, Indians staffed half of the British Raj's Indian civil service. These bureaucrats were able to influence fiscal programmes (including the defence budget), as well as the introduction of policy. Through the 1935 Government of India Act, the External Affairs Department was set up under the auspices of the Governor-General, while the newly formed Legislative Assembly became a forum for foreign policy discussion, and included Nehru and Mohammed Jinnah among its contributors. In September 1946, the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) was created to carry out diplomatic and commercial representations abroad. After British rule ended, the External Affairs Department was renamed the Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, and became the Ministry of External Affairs in 1949. It remains the major bureaucratic foreign policy body, and is staffed by the IFS. Thus, upon independence India had 'an experienced community of civil servants, soldiers and politicians to implement its policies',[19] although with a limited international presence. The long-standing Department of Defence similarly became the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in August 1947. India also inherited an internal intelligence agency, the Intelligence Bureau, but did not create an external intelligence agency, the Research & Analysis Wing (R&AW), until September 1968.

Governmental

As already highlighted, foreign policy making in India has remained highly prime minister-centric. Nehru began this tradition, and was 'a one-man policy planning staff and coordinator, as well as the source of major initiatives that put India on the world's diplomatic map'.[20] Often relying on relatives and close friends (such as K. M. Panikkar in Beijing, Krishna Menon in New York and Mrs Pandit in Moscow), Nehru's personal dominance, expertise and power stultified the development (and confidence) of India's foreign policy institutions. It also created a certain myopia whereby policy areas not of major interest to Nehru (such as South-East Asia, Latin America and Africa) were widely ignored.[21] These factors variously led to a very impromptu and spontaneous style that was often skewed ('Panditji Knows Best'), and prejudiced, and encouraged groupthink within an (albeit well-informed) Cabinet sustained by Nehru's personal patronage. Only after the debacle of the 1962 war against

China did Nehru's near-monopoly begin to fracture as realism began slowly to replace idealism in India's foreign policy thinking. From 1962 to 4, weak political leadership allowed the MEA space to develop more fully – a situation replicated under the Janata regime of 1977–9.

The Prime Minister's Office and the National Security Council After Nehru's death, greater emphasis was put on the PMO as the fulcrum of foreign policy making, leading to the further centralization of power away from parliament. Institutionalized under Shastri, the PMO has gradually assumed many functions previously undertaken by other ministries, giving any Indian prime minister greater control over both foreign and domestic policy. As the coordinating body of all India's ministries, the PMO enshrines the position of prime minister as head of the Indian executive and not just their Cabinet. In contrast to the Nehru era, this arrangement allows for a more hands-off approach to administration, and foments greater bureaucratic complexity, creativity and relative independence. The PMO is currently staffed via a secretariat of more than 300 senior civil servants, along with appointed policy advisors. The major ministerial and institutional influences upon foreign policy making in the PMO can be seen in Figure 1.1, and are more fully explicated in the sections below.

The prime minister and the Cabinet are in charge of foreign policy, courtesy of electoral majority, and do not need to consult parliament on decisions, treaties or even the conduct of war. In practice, however, the wider Cabinet is not central to foreign policy making, which instead rests upon a small group centred on the prime minister, the external affairs minister, the home minister and the finance minister. As such, Indira Gandhi was noted for her 'kitchen cabinet' of trusted advisors, Rajiv Gandhi for a 'policy of secrecy and nondisclosure'[22] – especially concerning the Bofors defence scandal (see Case Study 2.1) – and Vajpayee for only informing a handful of confidants of the 1998 nuclear tests. Importantly, however, from Indira Gandhi onwards, Indian prime ministers have regarded the bureaucracy as a 'partner rather than a
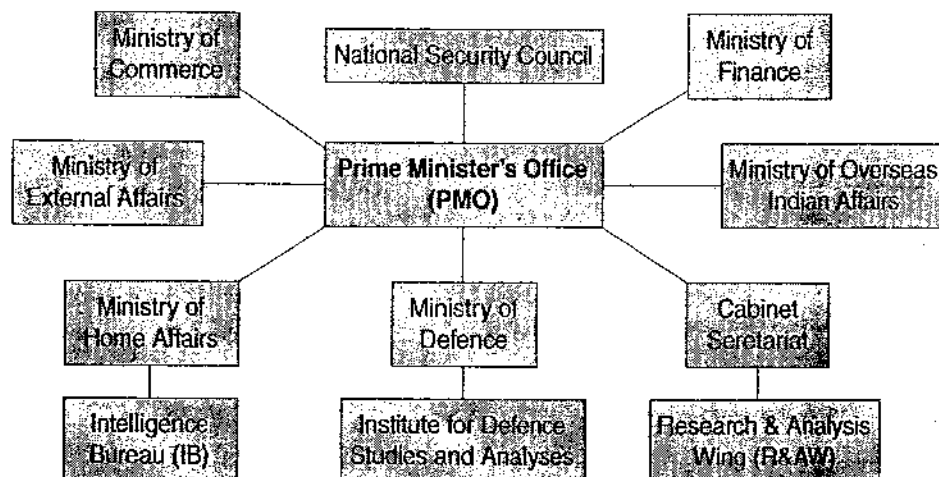

Figure 1.1 *Ministerial and Institutional Foreign Policy Influences upon the PMO*

servant',[23] especially in light of its increasingly significant knowledge base. Regardless, decision-making power resting in such a limited domain does underscore an often incremental, case-by-case approach to issues, rather than an overarching, all-inclusive foreign policy framework. In the last decade, though, a concerted effort has been made to introduce a greater degree of _synchronization between different ministries, especially through heightened economic diplomacy.

As an adjunct to the PMO, and as the apex national security body, the NSC represents a condensed version of the key governmental (and some non-governmental) influences central to foreign policy making. Resuscitating a process introduced by V. P. Singh, the BJP instituted the NSC to centralize and oversee the running of India's security policy. As shown in Figure 1.2, it consists of a small group of central ministers (and a national security advisor, the prime minister's key security confidant) reported to by the Strategic Policy Group, the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) and a secretariat represented by the Joint Intelligence Committee. Broadly, the Strategic Policy Group undertakes periodic Strategic Defence Reviews of short- and long-term security threats, and the secretariat analyses intelligence data from the IB, the R&AW and all of India's armed forces. Meeting once a month, the NSAB consists of non-government experts (hand-picked by the prime minister on a two-year rotation, with obvious caveats) and provides long-term prognosis and analysis. The first National Security Advisor was Brajesh Mishra, a highly renowned career diplomat, as was his successor J. N. Dixit, and the present
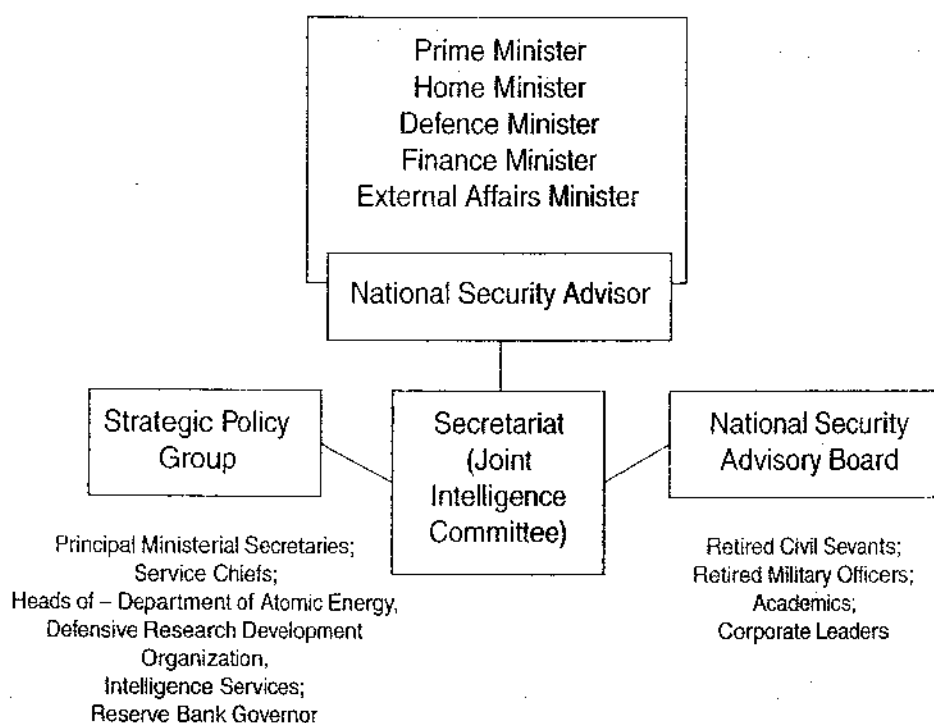

Figure 1.2 *India's National Security Council*
With reference to Tellis, 'India's Emerging Nuclear Doctrine', 11.

since gone some way to ameliorating these issues. Policy re-evaluations have periodically led to its overhaul and rearrangement, while political control over it has fluctuated in light of wider foreign policy successes and failures. Many of these overhauls have proved difficult to carry out, with the MEA at times displaying entrenched ideological baggage and traditions (especially at the end of the Cold War), often to the frustration of India's leaders. It is, however, increasingly coordinating across, and is consulted by, many ministries (including Finance; Commerce and Industry; Petroleum and Natural Gas; and Defence), and now 'has considerable blocking power[26] on policy. Notably, IFS rivalry with the wider Indian Administrative Service at times undercuts such synergies and coordination. The MEA's structure and organization can be seen in Figure 1.3.

External Affairs Minister

Foreign Secretary (Head of Ambassadors & various Regional / Additional Secretaries)

Minister of State for External Affairs (x2) (Junior Ministers)

DIVISIONS (REGIONS):

Americas	Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives	Central Europe	East Asia & South Africa	Eurasia	Europe West	
Gulf	Latin America & Caribbean	Nepal Bhutan	Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan	Southern	West Africa	West Asia & North Africa

DIVISIONS (MULTILATERAL):

ASEAN	SAARC	MER (multilateral economic relations)	UN (economic, social)	UN (political)

DIVISIONS (MAJOR ISSUES):

Cypher, NGO & Vigilance	Disarmament & International Security	Energy Security	Investment, Technology Promotion	Legal & Treaties	Public Diplomacy

CELLS:

Boundary	Haj	Counter-Terrorism	Special Kuwait

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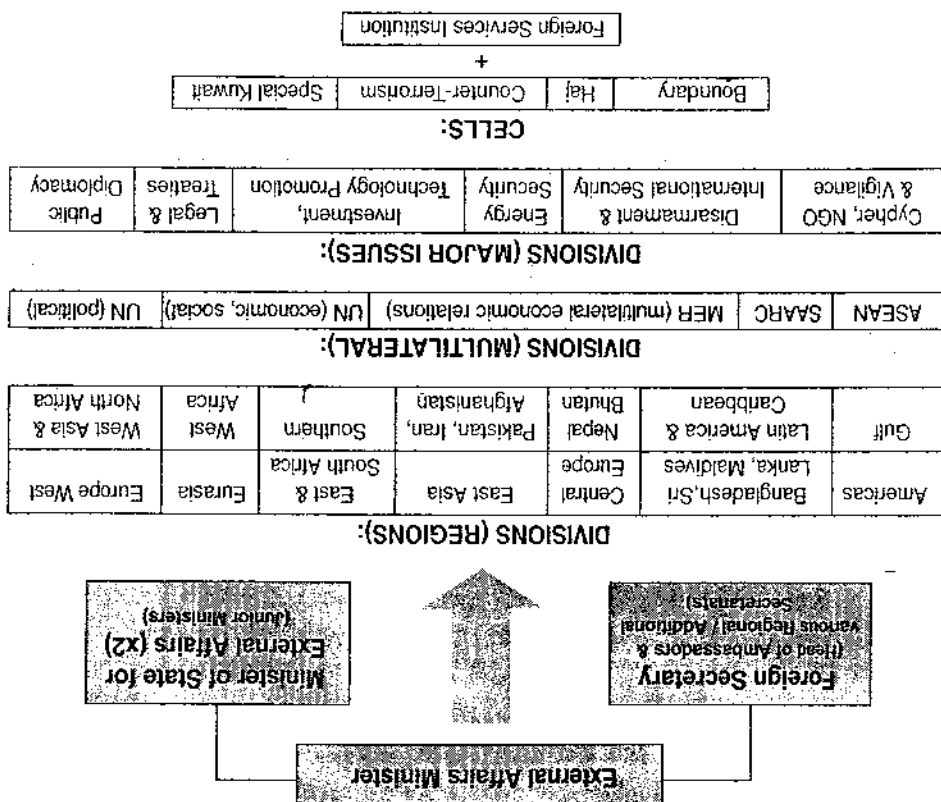
Foreign Services Institution

Figure 1.3 Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Structure

Regarded as a highly competent, capable and professional body, the MEA is largely staffed by civilian bureaucrats and functions in a manner similar to its British and French counterparts. Its key functions are data collection, policy formulation and policy implementation carried out through various divisions (focused upon different regions, multilateral organizations and major issues), complemented by the MEA cells that act as research bodies set up to review special issues. Over time, the MEA has become more active by not just conducting but also planning research, and thus provides policy alternatives rather than simply raw data to the PMO, in addition to its speech-writing functions. It can thus now be regarded as more independent, more trusted by politicians

incumbent in 2013 (and previous foreign secretary) is Shiv Shankar Menon, the grandson of K. P. S. Menon, who was India's first foreign secretary between 1948 and 1952.

Because of such a concentrated power base, the importance of such individual actors cannot be overstated with regard to foreign policy making in India. Major policy initiatives have frequently come from a leader's political capital and rhetoric – such as Gujral's 1990's redefinition of India's relations with her neighbours, Rajiv Gandhi's 1988 reversal of India's position on her border with China, and Manmohan Singh's emphasis on a balanced 'multi-polar Asia' and India being a 'responsible' great power. Equally, we can point to similar critical agency concerning Indira Gandhi's development of close relations with the USSR, Narasimha Rao's strategic weapons programme, and Vajpayee's emphasis upon economic liberalization and globalization. We must, however, caution against seeing unanimous harmonies concerning the delineation of foreign policy, and as K. Subrahmanyam has noted: 'Indian foreign policy [i]s always a leadership function and more often than not d[oes] not command a consensus.'[24] Furthermore, any such personal ini-tiatives only become policy if they are successful, and if they suitably marry together India's underlying security interests with the overriding geopolitical environment.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)   While the PMO is concerned with the formulation of foreign policy, it is the MEA that is responsible for its imple-mentation. Though dominated by Nehru as minister of external affairs during the 1940s and 1950s, the MEA has consistently enjoyed a strong influence – primarily because of the interest of virtually all Indian prime ministers in foreign policy. Roundly criticized during the Nehru era for its scarcity of personnel and financial resources, inadequately developed language training and skills ... [and] the lack of a foreign policy planning body',[25] the MEA has

think tanks (largely through a strong Official Secrets Act) are all seen to be factors that will significantly hinder India's great-power ambitions.[31]

Political and military

Outside of the ruling government and key bureaucratic bodies, there are additional, although rather limited, political and military influences. Parliament can in theory (as per the Constitution) have an influence upon foreign policy making, and indeed votes on annual defence and foreign affairs budgets, but has 'little voice in the routine conduct of foreign policy'.[32] There are, though, parliamentary debates on major issues, especially concerning issues with neighbouring states such as Pakistan and China, as well as any significant international matter or fundamental change in foreign policy direction. Even so, some issues (such as the Indo-US nuclear deal: see Section 7.3) can be blocked from scrutiny by the Indian parliament, just as Prime Minister Manmohan Singh did in July 2008 after surviving a vote of no confidence. Parliamentary votes on foreign policy are exceedingly rare. Efforts have, however, been made by India's leaders to inject greater levels of scrutiny and accountability into the decision-making process, and to allow non-government voices to emerge. In 1992, Narasimha Rao instituted multi-party parliamentary standing committees, as well as parliamentary consultative committees. The most critical of these is the Standing Committee on External Affairs, which can scrutinize annual reports and budgets and summon and cross-examine MEA officials. Its efficacy is, however, questioned.[33]

Underscoring the limited range of political voices outside the ruling party, there is limited interest from many of India's political parties in foreign affairs. This disconnect is primarily due to the overwhelming regional focus of the majority of India's political groupings, who are more concerned with local domestic politics in terms of development and governance than inter-national interactions. Language barriers (a lack of proficiency in either Hindi or English) also reduce these parties' involvement. As such, only the national parties (Congress, the BJP and the communist entities) have dedicated foreign policy cells, which are normally staffed by ex-MEA officials and diplomats and date back to the 1920s. That stated, parties active in states bordering India's neighbours do have a cross-border ethnic focus, such as those in Tamil Nadu concerned with India's policy towards Sri Lanka, those in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar towards Nepal, and those in West Bengal towards Bangladesh. In light of these linkages, foreign leaders and diplomats are beginning regularly to visit the chief ministers of such states.[34] Some of India's richer states (such as Gujarat and Maharashtra) are also independently increasing their interaction with external states and corporations as they look for more foreign direct investment (FDI).

In turn, the military plays a minimal role in the political decision-making process, remaining detached and marginalized from politics. This detachment

and freer, and can – to some extent – manipulate the style and substance of policy information. Through its various foreign policy research bodies (such as the Historical Division and the Policy Planning and Review Division which merged in 1980), it has also instigated many regional cooperation initiatives, such as the IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa) grouping and the IOR-ARC (Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation).

India's fluctuating political system, in conjunction with a diversifying range of policy influences, however, continues to frequently produce incoherent, and incoherent policy – an occurrence less apparent during the Nehru and Gandhi eras. Furthermore, Indian prime ministers continue to desire control of the MEA, primarily through recourse to a Nehruvian legacy of control. Currently holding the position of minister of external affairs, as Manmohan Singh most recently did from November 2005 to October 2006. Holding both these posts together allows the PMO to maintain its dominant position concerning foreign policy making and effectively undercuts the MEA's autonomy, despite its more proactive planning and research. The negative extent of this influence is however dependent upon the aims of the leader involved – thus, in the 1990s Narasimha Rao instituted new concentrations (concerning the Asia-Pacific and Central Asia) in the MEA's remit in order to reflect new directions in Indian foreign policy which were regarded as positive developments. Similarly, under the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), the Public Diplomacy Division (PDD) was created in 2006. This division was introduced to better engage the Indian public in international affairs, to explain foreign policy decisions and rationales, to increase India's 'digital diplomacy' online and to more fully interact with the various ethnic groupings straddling India's borders with her immediate neighbours.

Overall, the MEA is substantially underdeveloped, especially in comparison with other major international powers, issues detailed at length in the internally commissioned Lambah Report of 2002. With only 845 diplomats in 2012–13,[27] the MEA's active personnel are about half those of China or Brazil, and a fifth of either the United Kingdom or Germany. In turn, the US Foreign Service's total diplomatic personnel is around twenty to thirty times larger than India's.[28] The MEA's annual budget similarly mimics this relative disparity and as such it is an underfunded and overstretched body. This understaffing leads to few key foci in terms of issues (currently mainly on disarmament and arms control) and a downplaying of military and strategic matters in favour of economic and social issues – although training in these areas has also been criticized as being 'woefully inadequate'.[29] Such shortcomings often pinpoint a lack of regional knowledge and expertise, and are seen by critics as 'bound to hobble the country's efforts to effect changes in the global system'.[30] In turn, the MEA's selection process (there is no specific IFS examination and only twenty new entrants are admitted each year), its rigid vertical promotion hierarchies (which are guaranteed and provide no lateral entry for academics or military voices) and the lack of outside consultation with universities and

underscores a historical fear amongst India's leaders that the military may be inspired by the several coups carried out in Pakistan since independence. It also reflects the non-politicized nature of India's bureaucracy and police services as a whole, whereby officers are taught to be a neutral arm of the state. Although the president is the nominal commander-in-chief, given their overriding dominance of the foreign policy making process, this role has ultimately become that of the prime minister. As such, all three military branches are subordinated to the civilian defence minister, and the chiefs of the armed services are not routinely consulted about foreign policy. Among major powers this is an anomaly, with Cohen noting that 'probably no military of equivalent importance or size has less influence'.[35] In recent years, the military is exerting greater influence as the armed forces modernize as part of India's rise to international prominence, resulting in growing budget demands (for costly weapons purchases and increased wages). The emergence of new assertive think tanks manned by retired military officials has provided a further voice.

Other influences

As India modernizes and begins to assert itself on the international stage, a range of other influences can also be identified which signal a growing complexity in foreign policy making. Along with the political and bureaucratic voices detailed above, these groupings represent a nascent security community, which transcends different political generations and represents compounded knowledge as per India's security practice. Consisting of the heads and staff of think tanks, members of leading national universities, business leaders, journalists and the Indian diaspora, these influences can be collectively regarded as a challenge to India's 'traditional foreign policy bubble'.[36] This network is informal and shifting,[37] yet it is regarded as one of the world's 'best-informed and most active unofficial security communities'.[38] Slowly diversifying and expanding, the groupings detailed below indicate the emergent plurality of thought concerning India's foreign policy interests, behaviour and future direction.

Think tanks and academics Initially funded by the central government and the Indian Council of Social Science Research, several informal groupings make up the basis of India's contemporary think tanks and institutes dedicated to the study of foreign policy. In the 1950s, non-governmental debate took place through the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) in New Delhi, while in 1955 the School of International Studies (SIS) was established which merged with the pre-eminent Jawaharlal Nehru University in 1970. The SIS would remain the leading place of international scholarship over the next few decades. In 1965, the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) was instituted and co-located in the ICWA and SIS. Funded by the MoD, the IDSA

Profile 1.2 K. Subrahmanyam (1929–2011)

Regarded as one of India's most experienced and influe....
contemporary voices, K. Subrahmanyam was a promi...
international strategic affairs analyst, journalist and fo..
civil servant. Twice director of the Institute of Defence St...
and Analyses (IDSA) (from 1968 to 1975, and 1980 to 1...,
he challenged Congress's intellectual dominance of fr..
policy thinking in India. In particular, he led the wri..
foreign policy speeches for the government and the op...
tion, instituted the idea of briefing and commentin::
external affairs in the Indian media, and introduced the notion of explaini...
government's diplomatic decisions to the Indian public. A proponent of real...
and an advocate of India's nuclear deterrent (and the Indo-US civilian...
agreement), as well as of heightening India's role in the IOR, Subrahmanya...
a key founder of India's foreign policy establishment and security commu...,
died on 2 February 2011.

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remains India's leading think tank and became highly influential u..
stewardship of K. Subrahmanyam, the doyen of Indian strategic tho..
Profile 1.2). The India International Centre's 'Saturday Club' and Fore...
Group have also provided forums for discussion since the 1970s. Howe..
institution, reputation and foreign ties of think tanks suffered dur...
War after it was revealed that the United States' Central Intelligen...
(CIA) had funded the Indian branch of the Asia Foundation up unti]]...

The MEA continues to outsource many analytical and speech-w...
to the IDSA, although interaction is limited, due to India's stro...
Secrets Act and a high sensitivity to potential leaks. This issue is a...
concern, and 'India's think-tanks lack sufficient access to the informa...
resources required to conduct high-quality, policy-relevant scho...
Limited resources and lack of corporate sponsorship also make it d...
India's new generation of think tanks to attract the best gradua...
such many are underdeveloped in comparison to their (western a..
counterparts. According to McGann's exhaustive ranking of think tan...
upon reputation and standing in the field, although India had t...
third-largest number of think tanks in 2011 (292 compared with 1...
United States and 425 in China), only five of these featured in the...
in Asia and none in the top fifty worldwide for security and int...
affairs.[40] Nonetheless, the influence of think tanks and institutes ...
growing domestically, as they produce research briefs with whic..
ingly to influence government and opposition parties in New Delhi...
India's leading think tanks can be found in this volume's Research A...

A similar lack of funding, in the form of state investment, is al...
afflict India's universities, which have a limited focus regarding...

study and research of India's international affairs. Only once such financial constraints are eased through increased investment will the role of academics increase. Considering India's relative stage of development (especially compared with developed states), this shortfall is only to be expected, with her continued economic growth providing a viable long-term solution. Moreover, the intellectual dominance of Nehru immediately post-independence – as much a thinker as a politician – also 'shaped the mentality of several generations of political scientists'[41] and has traditionally overshadowed the potential input of academics to the formation of foreign policy. Again, few universities in India can currently be considered as world-leading (especially in international relations), but this should not detract from their expanding influence and impact upon foreign policy making in India. Academics now participate in the NSAB (including the drafting of India's nuclear doctrine at the end of the 1990s), as well as Track Two diplomacy (informal dialogue between states) on behalf of India, and some have an increasingly visible role as public intellectuals.

Business, media and the diaspora   In the context of India's global economic rise and gradual embrace of globalization, the influence of business groupings, the media and the Indian diaspora have all become important stimuli for how foreign policy is conceived and delivered. As her diplomats engage in multilateral negotiations and regional trade blocs, economic links and investment (both internal and external) have become the lodestone of India's international interaction, requiring improved interaction between the various national ministries and India's business community.[42] These relationships are a continuation of close links forged in the 1970s and of the personal diplomacy of prestigious business figures such as the Hindujas, Mittals, Tatas and Ambanis. The Hindujas in particular negotiated in the 1970s on behalf of Indira Gandhi with the Shah of Iran, and with British Prime Minister Tony Blair in the aftermath of the May 1998 nuclear tests. Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries is also the main funder of the Observer Research Foundation think tank.

India's business community has been active representing India, with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) lobbying abroad, conducting trade missions, signing Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), opening seven international offices (by July 2013) and running Track Two diplomacy. Since the Doha Development Round commenced in 2001, both the CII and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry have been crafting their own trade policies outside of government. In May 2005, the government set up the Trade and Economic Relations Committee to pull these groupings into the policy-making process and collectively to run India's economic diplomacy, often usurping MEA influence. Reflecting these closer ties, in 2005 Manmohan Singh observed how 'the relationship between governments is increasingly mediated through and influenced by the relationship between civil society and the business community.'[43] Business groups are thus ably

contributing to India's international profile and soft-power depositories
ticularly through the IT, software and entertainment sectors: see Case
5.1). Some observers are critical of this influence, however, with one stating
that 'if present trends hold, India's worldview will be parochial, reac
and increasingly dominated by business interests rather than by strategic or
political concerns.'[44] –

From the late 1980s onwards, an electronic media revolution has grip
India and provided a critical public space within which to further distr
and circulate foreign policy perspectives. Through a proliferation of tele
channels, daily newspapers and the internet, India's nascent middle
(courtesy of India's rapidly increasing economic growth) has emerged
major consumer of mass media and increasing 'infotainment'. To this
ful blend can be added the intellectual influence of English-language med
when used by political analysts and elites. Such a proliferation gives the
a different role to that of the Cold War era typified by Congress's po
dominance, when the media were regarded as a marginal influence tha
intrinsically an instrument of the government. In contrast, the contemp
emergence of privately owned newspapers and television channels
than just the state-owned Doordoshan) has propagated new, indepe
autonomous and assertive voices within Indian politics. Mitigating
influence, India currently has, however, only a small number of pri
television foreign correspondents, which limits the depth and scope of
coverage of international affairs. Significantly, the number of phones
culation in India rose from 5 million in 1999 to 672 million in 2010,
the proliferation of mobile technology linking greater sections of the
population to media sources.

With the 'persistence' of the media via 24-hour news cycles and the
the need to control information flow is paramount, with informati
being the 'central commodity of international relations'.[46] Influencing
media has thus become vitally important for all governments in order t
(and manipulate) information concerning policy and the national i
(including patriotic and nationalist sentiments). The MEA's PDD and
Publicity Division (XP Division) are critical in this regard for the manag
of what has been variously referred to as India's 'media diplomacy', 'soun
diplomacy', 'instant diplomacy' and 'real-time diplomacy'.[47] Overall
bodies are integral to the handling of any domestic political conser
disagreement on foreign policy issues, as well as to general relations wit
media. They are also crucial in framing foreign policy decisions (from
aid) to the public (as in the practice in the United States), magnifying/bra
achievements and communicating the government's 'message'.

The influence of the media continues to be apparent when it comes
deliberation of international affairs in India. This impact dates from the
Chinese rhetoric that surrounded the April 1960 Zhou Enlai–Nehru m
(which effectively prevented any Indian compromise on their shared

issues), to India's rejection of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in the 1990s, and the Indo-US nuclear agreement in 2008. Such an effect can, however, be negative, biased as it is towards certain constituents (the middle class or advertiser profits) and can 'escalate rhetoric regardless of the international repercussions'.[48] One case in point is that of Defence Minister George Fernandes in 1998 being misquoted as naming China 'enemy No. 1' when he had in fact stated 'potential enemy No. 1'. Such an example shows how 'the global media ... can trigger uncalled for international misunderstandings, which can have grave consequences'.[49] As India's media sector expands and proliferates, we can expect such pressures and eventualities to increase. In India, there can also be 'the almost religious belief that every foreign visit of the PM ... is a resounding success',[50] adding a degree of nationalistic bias and subjectivity to reports. The Indian media also provide an important forum with which to interact with India's large diaspora (see Case Study 7.2), which is an important source of remittances, lobbying and representative power, with successive Indian governments attempting to harness its influence in host states.

1.4 Conclusions: select but broadening

Foreign policy in India is currently made by a select few through the dominant power base of the PMO and the prevailing influence of the prime minister (especially over institutions such as the MEA). At the same time, the scope of foreign policy making influences is undoubtedly broadening, as India's expanding international interaction demands the involvement of more disparate voices and opinions. Therefore, while the process may not be fully transparent, we can no longer consider the formation of foreign policy to be dominated by any one individual leader or indeed any single political party, as the range of foreign policy making stimuli has multiplied in recent decades. A globalizing geopolitical environment crucially plays into this expansion, particularly concerning the growing impact of India's business community, media and diaspora. This greater complexity also underlines the importance of analysing different political stances and persuasions within international relations, as well as the critical role played by policy and historical precedents. Moreover, the making of foreign policy (in India) shows how the process is often actor-specific and leadership-driven, with personality and charisma continuing to play a central, deliberative role.

As critics have highlighted, however, more is needed across the spectrum of India's foreign policy making bodies for them to achieve parity with other major powers, and for India to become truly a great power in the international system. Notable intelligence failures (such as Pakistan's Kargil invasion in 1999 and the Mumbai terrorist attacks of 2008) underscore these weaknesses.[51] Improvements primarily rest upon increasing India's indigenous capacities in terms of expanding her diplomatic abilities, as well as investing

more to modernize her think tanks and universities in order to increase their (and thus India's overall) global impact and influence. Such enhancements would result in 'a world-class international relations infrastructure'[52] but India's capabilities will need to be more joined up than they currently are to fully realize their potential. Only by being more multifaceted and multi-dimensional in terms of national interests (bureaucratic, economic, diplomatic and academic) will India be able to mobilize a strong, prepared and efficient foreign policy network with which to better structure, anticipate and maximize its engagement with the world. As such, a great power needs 'the ability to actively shape its environment, not just respond to it',[53] and it is India's foreign policy making apparatus that is central to fulfilling such an ability. Certainly a larger and better-funded MEA will allow India to truly possess omni-directional (and non-myopic) diplomatic capabilities and to increase the bandwidth of her international interaction. Increased investment, primarily via the fruits of India's mounting economic growth, will be an essential part of any improvement over the next decades.

Questions for discussion

1 How do different political parties inform foreign policy making in India?
2 Which ministries are important sources of information, expertise and implementation concerning foreign policy? In what ways?
3 What is the influence of non-governmental actors on Indian foreign policy?
4 Is nationalism a factor in how foreign policy is made in India?
5 What issues do New Delhi's relatively weak diplomatic capabilities pose?

Suggestions for further reading

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