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International Studies 2009 46: 129

DOI: 10.1177/002088171004600209

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Integrating International Relations Studies in India to Global Scholarship

T.V. Paul

The article makes a case for an intense engagement of international relations (IR) scholars in India with the global IR community, especially those specializing in IR theory. While India has increasingly been integrating itself in global economic and political orders, its IR scholarship is yet to get international recognition. This article outlines the structural and domestic causes for the relative absence of theoretical works in IR in India while emphasizing the need for rigorous theory-driven and theory-informed scholarship. It concludes by making eight recommendations for linking IR in India with the global IR scholarship, and offers specific areas where Indian scholars can contribute to puzzle and paradigm-driven IR scholarship.

Keywords: International Relations, theory, India

The theme of this special issue of the journal raises a fundamental paradox about India. While India is searching for a major power status in the international system (and may well have made some progress in this regard), the study of International Relations (IR) remains somewhat rudimentary and the profession of IR scholarship is one of the least valued enterprises in Indian society. Very few books or articles written by IR scholars from India receive the attention of IR theorists or foreign policy analysts globally, except for those specifically dealing with issues such as India–Pakistan conflict, nuclear proliferation and deterrence (Basrur 2009). Expatriate Indian scholars, especially in North America, have fared better, although this potential has not been fully realized as native Indian scholars rarely cite or discuss their works. Unlike their compatriots in Natural Sciences or Economics, Indian IR scholars rarely publish abroad. In IR theory, both paradigm-driven and puzzle-driven works somehow elude Indian scholarship. Whereas India boasts of

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INTERNATIONAL STUDIES 46, 1&2 (2009): 129–45

SAGE Publications Los Angeles/London/New Delhi/Singapore/Washington DC

DOI: 10.1177/002088171004600209

a large number of universities and academic institutions devoted to Political Science and IR, the conditions of many of the social science departments and the scholarly works conducted in such institutions are rather poor, as visitors to such institutions often find out. This is quite different from India's premier science and technology research institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and other government and private Research & Development (R&D) facilities and technology parks.

What explains the discrepancy between India's global ambitions and achievements vis-à-vis the state of IR discipline in the country? I argue that a key reason for this situation is the low level of interaction of Indian IR scholars with their global counterparts, especially in the area of theory.¹ For any discipline, whether it is in the Social Sciences or Natural Sciences, the relevant scholarly debates are built around theory and theoretical approaches and paradigms. These debates also form the basis for empirical works, especially of the case study variety as hypotheses and propositions are often drawn from such theories. The main argument of this article is that Indian IR scholars need to develop theoretical and theory-informed scholarship by linking their works with leading theoretical scholarship in IR internationally. Such a transition is necessary for lifting up IR in India to global standards and for it to be commensurate with India's emerging position as a global power.

Why is Theory Important?

In any social science discipline, there are different values assigned to generic knowledge, largely developed in theories, as against pure policy-relevant ideas. Almost all disciplines have both applied and theoretical branches, with ideas developed in the latter having little immediate application. But one thing is clear: no discipline, be it in the Social Sciences or in Physical/Natural Sciences, can thrive without theories. Theories, and models built around them, are replicas of reality and no theory can and should explain everything. Just because our current theoretical knowledge of some phenomena is weak, it is not a good argument for abandoning the theoretical enterprise altogether. Theoretical ideas also take time

¹ Although I realize much of the global IR is dominated by American and British scholars, the mainstream approaches to the study of IR have changed dramatically over the past two decades or so. Today a number of scholars in North America and elsewhere devote their attention to non-traditional IR, and global engagement has increased thanks to the work of International Studies Association (ISA) and other national associations which organize conferences and bring out publications on themes that were not considered worthy of study in the past. Reasonably strong schools of thoughts are emerging in East Asia, Southeast Asia and Europe, mainly as a result of China's increased interest in IR scholarship. These works are not developing in isolation, but in tandem or in collaboration with existing IR scholarship.

to embed themselves, as abstract ideas need intermediaries to convert them into practical propositions. Theoretical works allow accumulation of knowledge and they offer a long shelf life to academic works. Publications based on pure policy analysis can become dated even before they appear in print. Moreover, good theories cannot be developed in isolation of each other. Often new theoretical paradigms are developed as criticisms of, or alternatives to, older ones. Any discipline tends to have core theoretical arguments that may reflect the time and socio-cultural milieu of its prominent scholars. However, the theories that last are those that can transcend time and space and have a broader international appeal.

A frequent criticism made by those who argue against theory in IR is that they tend not to be policy-relevant. This may have some justification, but is not altogether well founded. Although IR is a fairly young discipline, it has produced a number of theoretical ideas and findings from which policy makers can benefit. Often policy makers draw on academic ideas from IR without realizing they were developed in the theoretical branch of the discipline to begin with. The democratic peace theory, deterrence theory and the concept of 'soft power', are three such examples. The latter is now part of the lexicon of policy analysis in many countries including India; while a former Canadian foreign minister, Lloyd Axworthy, made it part of his country's foreign policy approach. Alexander George (1993: xvii) has argued that the theory-policy divide is due to the conflict between the two cultures, in that academics have a relaxed time frame while policy makers have to act with imperfect information and often have to rely on intuitive judgment. He argues that,

good theories provide relevant and useful conceptual frameworks by means of which to understand the general requirements of strategy and the general logic associated with its effective employment. Such theoretical-conceptual knowledge is critical for policymaking. And as a matter of fact all policy makers make use of some such theory and conceptual frameworks, whether consciously or not.

Why is Theory-based IR Weak in India?

In this section, the causes for the weak state of IR in India have been outlined, followed by some remedies, especially on how to link up Indian IR scholarship with global IR while keeping some of its distinctiveness. The answers to the quandary of the weak state of the discipline in India lie in the multifaceted challenges the field of IR encounters in the country.

Constraints

1. *Global/Structural*: IR scholarship, especially IR theory, is not given importance in India because of a perception that IR is a Western or an American

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discipline. There is indeed a historical reason for this. The pioneers of IR studies in India did not pay much attention to, or were antipathetic towards IR theory developed in the West. Government support for high calibre social science research, except in economics, was missing (Baru 2009). The focus of the newly independent state was on how to develop a scientific and technological base as quickly as possible. Many of the premier science and technology institutions were established during the reign of India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, who held an avowed interest in making India a leading scientific nation and a global power (Nayar and Paul 2003). Yet this keen interest in the high frontiers of science and technology was not visible in the social sciences. For over seventeen years, Nehru himself conducted foreign policy largely on his own² with the help of selected officials, while ignoring the need to develop a scholarly community of international stature, partly because such a community was not easily available (Behera 2007: 4).³ This may also well be due to his antipathy to Realism, the dominant Western IR paradigm prevalent at that time, and the ideas underlying it such as geopolitics, alliances and balance of power which he vehemently attacked in his writings and speeches. To Nehru, Realism was akin to imperialism and colonialism, the two forces he fought throughout his life. He was indeed an ardent supporter of Idealism (even while pursuing a sort of realism in his foreign policy), a paradigm which after rising in stature during the interwar period had declined in the US following World War II. Successive Indian governments since the Nehru era followed this pattern. The result has been that for over sixty years of its independent existence, India has produced several distinguished diplomats, yet hardly any IR scholar who can claim a global standing.

The Indian skepticism of IR theory only grew during the Cold War era. Due to the increasingly conflicting relations between India and the US, especially during and after the Bangladesh war (1971) and the rift over nuclear non-proliferation, Indian scholars became increasingly disenchanted with American scholarship and cut themselves off from the larger IR scholarly world. However, the question arises as to why no substantial effort

² It should be noted that Nehru did draw academic ideas, especially from scholars like Mahalanobis, in crafting the mixed economy policy. His appointment of scholars like Sardar K.M. Panikkar to high diplomatic positions is also noteworthy, a policy his successors generally abandoned. Nehru's own writings showed a deep sense of history and an appreciation for social science knowledge despite his mostly scientific training in England. See for instance, Nehru (1989).

³ It is contended that Nehru supported the establishment of the Indian School of International Studies (ISIS) in 1955, which later became the School of International Studies (SIS) at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), and that he held the founder of the ISIS, A. Appadorai, in high esteem (Rajan 2005). However, both the ISIS and SIS have been more devoted to area studies rather than pursuing theoretical approaches. On this, see Rajan (1997).

was made to theorize non-alignment, unlike Latin American scholars who developed the dependency theory and successfully made it an important part of the comparative politics/international relations literature during the 1970s.

Alternatively, Indian IR scholarship's weakness may well be an issue of supply and demand. IR has been largely dominated by American scholars, especially during and since the Cold War era, and the academic works produced in other parts of the world simply build upon one or another of the perspectives already developed in North America. The European variants have some global appeal, especially the English school. A general criticism is that IR in the US especially tends to be parochial and American scholars in general show a tendency to look down upon scholarship coming from abroad.⁴ North American editors of journals and major publishing houses are reluctant to read or send for review manuscripts that come from non-Western sources, due to prejudices that they may inadvertently carry. Manuscript reviewers also tend to act as gatekeepers of the discipline, often making sure that non-American perspectives are not given much attention. This tendency may also be market-driven, as American publishers tend to sell more books on US-concerned issues than on any other topics.

Much of the IR scholarship in the US, especially in the past, has been driven by policy or theoretical concerns that are seen as most pressing for the US and its position in the world (Acharya and Buzan 2007; Biersteker 2009; Holsti 1985; Wæver 1998). In fact, modern IR has largely developed in the US after World War II in response to the enormous challenges posed by the war and the need to create a post-war international order built around liberal ideals (Kahler 1997: 20–53). During the Cold War era, IR in the US/West showed distinct antipathy towards scholarship from countries that did not support Western positions on international issues. India's endorsement of non-alignment and its later somewhat pro-Soviet foreign policy positions were thus viewed with hostility by Western scholars from both the realist and the liberal schools, partially due to ideological/Cold War considerations. From an Indian perspective, many of the Western scholarly and policy positions ran contrary to India's national interests. Indian scholars and bureaucrats thus developed a somewhat adversarial approach towards IR in the West, partly because its dominant theoretical paradigms did not address

⁴ This parochialism is visible in IR syllabi taught at major US schools, which largely exclude outside writings in the field. The reasons include the sheer volume of American IR scholarship as well as the number of scholars compared to any other country in the world. More poignant is the tendency of some American scholars to cite only works written by Americans or, in some instances, close associates. For a recent analysis of the reasons for American parochialism in IR, see Biersteker (2009).

India's major concerns, be they related to security or development.⁵ The situation has slowly begun to change after the end of the Cold War and also with India's economic liberalization. India has emerged as a favourable destination for world business and media, but not yet for scholarship in the social sciences. IR in India is yet to make use of this window of opportunity produced by structural changes in the international system. It is still a puzzle as to why Indian scholars, unlike their counterparts in Europe and, to a limited extent, in Southeast Asia and China, have not yet offered a powerful challenge to the American IR theories, especially since the end of the Cold War. The answer may lie in the failure of Indian IR scholars to focus on key theoretical literature, even in areas where India has its own experience, such as democratic peace, nuclear deterrence, peaceful rise and civilizational IR.

2. *Cultural*: An alternative explanation would argue that lack of focus on IR and by extension on IR theory, is largely due to socio-cultural factors in India. Indians in general have a disparaging attitude towards social science disciplines, let alone theoretical research in these areas. The middle class Indian families desire their children to become doctors or engineers and, if that does not work, they would want them to join science programmes. Social sciences are accepted as a last option. Most of the younger generation with potential for scholarly work prefers to appear for the national competitive examinations in order to enter one of the myriad engineering and professional schools with the intent of gaining employment in the burgeoning private sector. Before India's economic liberalization began in 1991, the main goal of the middle/upper class youth was to enter the elite Indian bureaucratic institutions, like the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) or the Indian Foreign Service (IFS). There is no inherent advantage in studying the social sciences for these competitions as candidates have the option to take examinations in a variety of fields. Unlike in the West, social science disciplines such as Political Science and IR become the last bastion of those who do not get admission to professional courses or natural sciences programmes.⁶ Furthermore, in the globalized era, the academic world has lost

⁵ Bajpai (1997: 38, 39, 42) argues that resistance to theory arose in the 1950s as the dominant IR theories, deriving from 'systems' or 'integration' perspectives, were perceived as possessing a 'neo-colonial trap', as the latter privileged the status quo while the former was viewed with suspicion by a newly emerging independent state. IR theory, largely developed in the West, was thus viewed as 'elitist' and 'irrelevant' produced by 'armchair intellectuals'. It was seen as an 'evasion of social responsibility and to that extent as "anti-national."'

⁶ In most of the Western universities, IR and Political Science are very popular majors and many students enter the programmes due to their genuine interest in the fields. There are also careers available to them, be it in the government, non-governmental organizations or in the private sector.

much of its charm as a career path for many in India (Deshpande 2002: 3628). This means that the talent pool is somewhat limited and the calibre of most candidates entering the discipline of IR, along with the other social science disciplines, is relatively low. The dearth of good research programmes means lack of adequate number of good teachers and role models, and the vicious cycle continues.

Once again, with India's rapid economic development, this situation is likely to change. Great powers (in earlier times, empires) have been the greatest promoters of academic research. IR is a foundational discipline for any established or emerging great power because it deals with, among other things, the acquisition, management and exercise of power. It also deals with issues relating to competition, conflict and cooperation, in addition to building order, institutions, norms and principles that are needed for a power to sustain its leadership role in the international system. India cannot be indifferent to IR scholarship if it is serious about its great power aspirations. A comprehensive national strength includes intellectual power, which encompasses theoretical knowledge in social science disciplines.

3. *Institutional*: The cultural milieu also affects the institutional support provided in India to social sciences, including IR. Most of the IR programmes are part of Political Science departments and those institutions which specialize in the discipline, such as Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in New Delhi, have large teaching programmes. Theory is not emphasized in the curricula of these programmes. For many students who enter premier institutions like JNU, the primary motive is to enter the IAS or IFS after completing their M.A. or M.Phil. programmes.

Research in general and theoretical research in particular is not adequately supported even at JNU, India's premier IR institution, comparable to what one finds in a small Western university. The lack of merit-based criteria for hiring, salary increases, promotion and retention, all create a certain kind of lethargic mindset among scholars early on when they enter the profession. In most institutions, they are promoted after some years of service even if they do not have good publication records. 'Publish or perish' is still not part of the vernacular of most Indian universities. Teaching is also not evaluated in most institutions as part of a candidate's promotion and merit dossier.

Lack of adequate library holdings is another major issue. Much of the library resources in IR tend to be concentrated in Delhi, which is also a prohibitively expensive place for an academic from distant cities in India to visit or live in. However, this is changing as most journals are now available in electronic formats online and this cannot be an excuse any longer.

4. *Governmental/Bureaucratic Approach*: The Indian government's neglect of the discipline starts with the Indian bureaucracy, especially members of the diplomatic corps, who tend to have a rather low interest in academic

wisdom. To diplomats, IR scholarship has little value in their day-to-day operations. To them, Indian IR scholarship is not valuable because Indian scholars often regurgitate what the diplomats themselves say. Very few Indian IR scholars are sought by diplomats for consultation, or to solicit opinions on crucial issues. The stratified and hierarchal (class/caste) nature of the Indian bureaucracy means that even the most reputed scholar is not given the same social status as a Joint Secretary in the Foreign Service or an Ambassador to a small country. Many people who enter the IFS come from disciplines other than Political Science, and without any IR background they are unlikely to find the IR scholarship useful at all. To them, intuition and common sense are better policy guides than academic wisdom. A 1997 speech by Indian Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), where young diplomats are trained, summarizes the prevailing attitude. He urged the new recruits: 'don't get confused with all this international relations theory that is thrown at you all the time and the big words that are used. If you stick to the basic rules about dealing with people, I think you will do very well as diplomats even in a world that is changing at a pace which is quite bewildering for people of my generation...'.⁷

The word 'theory' turns off practitioners even when many theoretical works can be policy-relevant. This attitude is very common in the diplomatic world, not only in India but in the West as well. The US is perhaps one place where diplomats and policy makers occasionally interact with academics and obtain ideas even if they do not often implement them. The pervasive belief among many diplomats is that IR should be a discipline that offers them capsule-type analysis to conduct day-to-day affairs. If the discipline has no answers to the daily problems they confront, it may as well be a 'useless' enterprise. The generic knowledge that the discipline produces is not valuable in the repertoire of assets that a diplomat can carry. The problem is that social sciences simply cannot offer daily policy advice, as the role of a good social scientist is to critically analyze prevailing axioms and policy perspectives while offering alternative paths which may or may not look politically feasible or appreciable at the time of writing and publication. A good scholar should also be above nationalistic or political/ideological biases and be willing to call a spade a spade in reference to established belief systems. Moreover, official and media reports offer much of the wisdom that busy bureaucrats need for day-to-day operations. One must recognize that over the years, the Indian media has done quite well as an arena for discourse on international relations and foreign policy issues. High quality media analysts, especially in the security and economic fields, have

⁷ Speech delivered by Shiv Shankar Menon, Foreign Secretary at the Foreign Service Institute Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, on 17 August 2007.

made major contributions in this regard. Any visitor to India today would be baffled by the array of newspapers and television channels that the country offers. However, the media does not pick up or review scholarly works, especially those published abroad, unless they are bestsellers in the commercial market.

Consequences of India's Neglect of IR

The neglect of IR, especially IR theory, in India has generated serious problems as India's power and position at the global level grows and it is called upon to make substantive decisions at the global level. The ongoing economic globalization also poses fundamental challenges to Indian diplomacy and foreign policy. Proper understanding of the causes and effects of these phenomena needs rigorous theoretical and puzzle-driven research relying on comparative case studies. The absence of deep thinking and analysis often generate reactive and *ad hoc* policies, some of which seemed to have worked, but in the long run, a country with India's stature in the international system could be adversely affected if it does not develop a proper 'grand strategy' based on theoretical foundations to face different challenges. A country, especially a rising power, without a grand strategy is somewhat like a multinational corporation without a business plan, even though the former may not go out of business. It would just pursue reactive policies, thereby leaving the initiatives to be taken by others.

At the broader global level, some of the challenges that India faces today are: (1) How to gain ascendancy without causing conflict with existing powers, i.e., 'peaceful rise'?; (2) How to confront the security and power balancing challenges posed by China and Pakistan?; (3) How to obtain deterrence with the two nuclear neighbours, especially in the nuclear arena, without escalating conflict, especially in recurring crisis situations caused by terrorist attacks from within and from neighbouring countries?; (4) How to safeguard the country's internal and regional security interests?; (5) How to help construct an internal order that is equitable and peaceful?; (6) How to achieve institutional reforms in the global arena?; (7) How to obtain a modicum of peace with Pakistan, a failing state, which poses perhaps the most direct challenge to the regional and global orders?; and (8) How to offer ideas to those other developing countries which look up to India for some level of leadership, especially on global trade and economic issues.

IR and Comparative Politics, especially some of the theory-informed and theory-grounded empirical works, may have answers to some of these long-term issues, even if they cannot offer foolproof solutions. Regions such as Europe, Southeast Asia and Mercosur have indeed benefited from many ideas prevalent in the IR literature, especially those relating to international institutions, regional integration and democratic peace theory. India shows a dearth of constructive ideas when it comes to its own security and peace in its regional theatre, South Asia, or in terms

of its peaceful rise in the international system. Selected ideas that IR scholars, especially IR theorists with an interest in case study research, have produced must be brought to the regional context of South Asia in order to be relevant to both the policy makers and the IR scholars.

Developing Theory-Driven and Theory-Informed Scholarship

Much of IR theory today is centred on the dominant research paradigms of Realism (multiple variants), Liberalism and Constructivism. Others include the English School, Feminism and Post-modernism. In the past, Idealism, Marxism and World Systems theory, especially dependency theory, attracted many scholars. There are also meta-theoretical perspectives deriving from rational choice and large-n statistical analysis on conflict, war, etc. Many eclectic approaches have also been developed that draw variables from comparative politics and IR, as is the case with the literature on state capacity. In the theoretical areas, Indian scholars could try to develop alternative paradigms like non-alignment or dependency theories. The problem is that the issue of India's rise as a major power and its role in global institutions is explained in terms of realism and liberalism. Other paradigms simply have not yet developed viable propositions on these issues, although opportunities do exist.

Theory-informed works on regional cooperation are what Indian IR scholars could offer, emulating what scholars of Southeast Asia have accomplished.⁸ Here again Indian IR scholars could develop ideas on how to make the South Asian region a secure place from the vagaries of multitudes of challenges it faces. Many Chinese scholars and officials have discussed the idea of peaceful rise in recent years (Guo 2006). What is absent in India is a similar discourse, i.e., what is India's theory of power transition or international order in general? In the summer of 2000, Baldev Nayar and I made a presentation at the Beijing University where a young Chinese scholar asked: 'Why does India want to become a major power?' We had little to say other than asking him a counter question: 'What does China want to achieve as a global power?' We all realized there were no good answers from either side. But why not develop arguments about the kind of normative order that India would support other than simply being critical of the existing order? India has much to offer for a peaceful global order. The Indian models of democracy, secularism, federalism, linguistic policy and integrated market (however weak they may be) for a population larger than the whole of Africa and Middle East (West Asia) combined, are unique and can be imitated by other emerging

⁸ Notably, scholars of Indian origin like Amitav Acharya and Muthiah Alagappa, among others, have helped to raise the profile of IR in Southeast Asia. They have done this largely by linking their works with global IR scholarship.

states. This would mean developing theories based on these empirical realities and connecting them to existing perspectives as alternatives or parallels, using both deductive and inductive methodologies.

Civilizational IR is another area where Indian scholars can contribute immensely. The greater Indic civilization's ideas on IR, contributions by different religious traditions and Gandhian and Nehruvian world views offer powerful counterpoints to Western approaches. One is wonderstruck at the tolerance and eclecticism shown by some of India's Islamic rulers, especially Akbar the Great, who had great appreciation for ideas drawn from other religions (Sen 2005). The Sufi branch of Islam could be resurrected to offer powerful counterpoints to current international discourses in and on Islam. But Indian IR scholars are yet to pick up these themes effectively. Gandhi's non-violent resistance has received more attention outside than inside India as an approach to peaceful change. The need of the hour is for comparative theorizing of the logical bases of Gandhian and other non-violent approaches, and about the conditions under which peaceful transitions take place.

India's position on global disarmament is another area which demands thorough scholarly analysis. It is a kind of hypocrisy when Indian officialdom says it is all for global nuclear disarmament, but at the same time engages in building a nuclear triad, drawing on strategic theories of deterrence developed elsewhere. There are some new elements even within this policy area that India can offer, such as a no-first use convention, non-deployment of fully assembled nuclear weapons and minimum deterrence as a first step towards a global approach to eventual nuclear disarmament. Supporting the proposed Fissile Material Control Treaty (FMCT) and an amended Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), if the latter includes India as a nuclear state, should be considered as a serious policy option as these treaties may have utility for India's own security interests and they are somewhat consistent with India's moral positions on global nuclear disarmament, despite some inequities being built into them. India can no longer act and talk like a subaltern when it comes to nuclear proliferation. Nuclear proliferation in its extended neighbourhood (Middle East and East Asia) is bad for India, as it upsets India's rise as a global power, reduces India's power projection capabilities, especially in the Indian Ocean region and beyond, and kills opportunities to build coalitions with other major powers. India's challenge is quite similar to the one faced by the established nuclear powers in this regard. In some respects, India's challenge may be even bigger as it is the most likely target of terrorist groups which want to acquire and use weapons of mass destruction.

Can Indian IR scholarship offer key insights in these and other areas? I present a few areas now, where theory has great policy relevance, especially for India:

1. *Strategic theories developed by classical realists as well as neoclassical realists in recent years:* One fundamental dictum of classical realism is

about prudence and the need for maintaining means-end balance in foreign policy behaviour. Further, realist notions of system and structure are also important up to a point. The Indian elite often attempted to ignore systemic constraints and opportunities, especially during the Cold war era, other than, of course, relying on the non-alignment strategy. The non-alignment movement was indeed a systemic response of newly emerging nations to avoid entangling themselves in the Cold War rivalry. Yet, they could not fully adhere to its principles as the super powers developed particular relationships with the movement's member states due to their overwhelming material power and propaganda efforts. The war with China in 1962 and the Bangladesh conflict in 1971 forced India to pay more attention to systemic factors, but the absence of clear thinking was evident in the haphazard attempts to acquire nuclear weapons while preaching global disarmament. A fence-sitting India became the target of global powers as they imposed sanctions on it, deeply affecting India's economic development, especially in the power sector, and also its position in the international system. India managed to get out of the nuclear noose thanks to the deft policy approach of President George Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.⁹

2. *Balance of power theory and its different variants:* Nehru and his successors rejected the balance of power theory and policy as inappropriate for India. However, India ended up making balancing coalitions in response to counter-threats from Pakistan, China and the US. Here again, the Indian elite showed limited appreciation of the workings of the international system. Often, they had to react to balancing coalitions others had formed: US–Pakistan, US–China, etc. Today, India is playing a more careful balancing game, especially vis-à-vis China, but it could again benefit from more calibrated thinking and awareness of the forces at work in the emerging international system. New thinking on balance of power—such as ‘soft balancing,’ ‘economic balancing’ and ‘institutional balancing’—could be developed further by Indian scholars.
3. *Security Dilemma and Arms Races:* Policy makers who are unfamiliar with these pathologies tend to make wrong choices. IR literature could illuminate what kinds of policies are necessary to avoid the security dilemma trap.
4. *Literature on Perceptions and Misperceptions:* The need to avoid some of the psychological pathologies in foreign policy decisions, especially in the

⁹ The Marxists in India mistakenly attacked the deal, and their lack of strategic thinking was poignant throughout the debate on this issue. If only the Marxist leadership had better training in IR and strategic theory and were willing to be pragmatists as their Chinese counterparts are, they would not have raised such silly arguments against the deal. The failure of its conclusion would have kept India a target of the non-proliferation regime for several decades to come.

security domain, has been quite clear in our times. One wishes President George Bush and his officials had been familiar with elementary works on psychological pathologies in decision-making, including groupthink, so that they might have avoided the disastrous Iraq war in 2003. The burgeoning literature on deterrence that Indian scholars write about could also benefit from theories of cognitive psychology.

5. *Liberal Literature on Institutions, Interdependence and Democracy*: These elements in the Kantian tripod of peace (democratic governance, international institutions and international commerce) are especially valuable for the South Asian region which has a dearth of all the three. Liberal/Constructivist notions about pluralistic security communities could assist policy makers in their effort to transform South Asia into a peaceful region rather than the theatre of intense conflict that it is today. The earlier security community literature has been influential in the creation and sustenance of the European Union and other regional integration efforts. India's leadership in regional institution building has been tepid and wanting, and the theories on integration could be applied in the South Asian context with appropriate modifications.
6. *The micro-level theories including deterrence, compellence and coercive diplomacy*: India often struggles with the dynamics of these security concepts in application and the literature can be developed further for the Indian context.
7. *Literature on Asymmetric Conflicts*: How has a much weaker challenger, Pakistan, been manoeuvring to neutralize India's power using asymmetric means? Works on this issue could help the Pakistani elite in moving away from a highly self-destructive path of *realpolitik* that they have often chosen in conjunction with the US and China since the state's formation. The hybrid political system of Pakistan has serious consequences for regional and international order, a theme that needs careful analysis.

Linking Indian IR with Global IR

In order to make the discipline a significant scholarly enterprise in India, it is argued that Indian IR has to integrate in a major way into global IR, especially relating to IR theory. Here are a few steps that could be suggested:

1. *Indian scholars must consciously train themselves in theory, methodology, and empirical research, especially of comparative orientation*. Blind ideological opposition to Western theories and scientific methods will not help IR in India. As discussed, this opposition has historical causes, but times are changing for India. India is a rising power and as such it has a major interest in scholarship in IR, particularly relating to its links with other major powers. In order to improve theory and theory-informed works in

- India, Indian universities should hold regular workshops and training programmes in theory and research involving speakers from India and abroad. Indian graduate programmes must insist on rigour and sophistication in theses, dissertations and scholarly publications. Anonymous peer-review must become a standard procedure for publications, be it books or articles.
2. *Encouraging Indian scholars to build on existing paradigms and developing new critical ones.* This would mean engaging mainstream and non-mainstream ideas in IR critically. Much of the current Indian scholarship on security produced by the ex-military/diplomatic community is based on a kind of simple realism or national interest-based approach and it needs to go beyond that.
 3. *Developing networks between Indian IR scholars and scholars around the world.* This would mean removing many of the archaic restrictions on research in India imposed by the Indian government. India follows a somewhat Soviet model when it comes to academic interactions with the rest of the world. There are major visa/exit restrictions in place for Indian scholars to go abroad and overseas scholars to visit India, especially if the topics they study are related to security or foreign policy. The fear of the Indian government in this regard shows a deep-seated paranoia about foreigners and their ideas polluting Indian minds. It is not what one would expect from a confident, rising power that needs ideas and interaction with experts and scholars that are beneficial to Indians and foreigners alike. The restrictions were initially imposed by Indira Gandhi's government in response to the deteriorating relations between India and the US, especially following the 1971 Bangladesh war. Successive Indian governments followed this policy and under the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government of A.B. Vajpayee, the restrictions were increased even when it was liberalizing the economy. These restrictions have basically quelled the interest of the growing number of Western developmental scholars who used to flock to India in the 1960s. Moreover, India has a 30-year rule for the release of archival materials and even in this case, much of the materials is still kept under wraps and access is usually provided to a few with proper 'connections'. This hampers historically-grounded research, especially on foreign policy decisions which are crucial for the IR discipline.

One concrete suggestion here is that scholars of Indian origin from major world universities could be invited to come to India and develop teaching and research programmes jointly with Indian scholars. Recently Prime Minister Manmohan Singh announced an initiative to allow technically qualified non-resident Indians to work in India. Many expatriate Indian scholars in social sciences would be willing to go back to India for shorter or longer periods to set up programmes and help train Indian students and scholars in specialized areas. Establishing visiting chairs and other scholarships, and

recruiting on the basis of merit would make it attractive for established scholars from leading universities to spend some time in India. The Indian diaspora must be viewed as an asset to India's scholarly development. There is reluctance even among the leading Indian IR scholars to appreciate the works of diaspora IR scholars, while the former should try to link up with the latter's works and engage in collaborative enterprises as Chinese and other East Asian scholars do.

4. *Joining major international associations such as the International Studies Association (ISA), and regularly participating in important international conferences*, such as the annual ISA conference. Once committed, the scholars must attend these conferences as lack of professionalism by a few can harm the reputation of India and Indian scholars. Many Indian scholars (even prominent ones) tend to over-commit themselves and then do not deliver or show up at the last minute. The conference papers they write must be vetted for theoretical and empirical rigour as poorly presented papers can reduce Indian scholars' appeal in this regard. In fact, establishing a section for India and South Asia under ISA would be a very useful initiative given the fact that over one fifth of humanity lives in South Asia.¹⁰
5. *Encouraging Indian scholars to publish theoretically-oriented works in major journals and by major publishing houses*. Indian universities can offer financial and other rewards to those who publish through the most reputed outlets. Indian scholars could work with established scholars as co-authors more frequently. Major works published by leading academic presses should be made available in a timely fashion in India. Indian publishing houses could attempt to purchase reprint rights of key theoretically-driven works and market them in India. Similarly, Western presses could be encouraged to market Indian books more effectively, especially those relating to broader theoretical themes that might appeal to the larger scholarly community.
6. *Creating a strong institutional base for IR scholarly research including theoretical works*. Development of a consortium of IR similar to national associations like the British International Studies Association (BISA) and holding an annual conference in different parts of India may be vital for this. The BISA has been in the vanguard of developing and debating the English school approach in IR. A similar effort could be made in India as well. Also needed are foundations and other funding agencies to offer fellowship to

¹⁰ According to Tom Volgy, Executive Director of ISA, on a per capita basis, India has the lowest count of members among all countries in the world in this flagship association, which now has 45 per cent non-North American membership (Based on Volgy's comments at the workshop on 'International Studies in India', at National University of Singapore, 25–26 March 2009). This also calls for adequate funding for Indian scholars to attend international conferences where major theoretical and policy-oriented works are presented and debated.

theoretically rigorous scholars. Funds could also be made available for exchanges and other scholarly activities with universities abroad where serious IR research is conducted. Many wealthy expatriate Indians living in North America have contributed to scholarly chairs in American universities, but there is hardly any such chair on IR, although many of them show interest in India-related issues and actively lobby the US government on policies that affect India.

7. *Regular meetings between academics and policy makers* on key international issues, especially at the Track II level. IR works, especially policy-relevant ideas arising from theoretical and empirical findings, could be presented in such meetings. Some examples include literatures on international and regional institutions, democracy, interdependence and deterrence. Allowing IFS officers to spend some time at major universities abroad where IR is taught could be one such initiative. Tailor-made programmes can be organized through workshops dealing with core issues in IR theory and policy, and analyzing what scholars can offer policy makers and vice versa. Foreign scholars could also be invited to offer such training programmes for Indian diplomats, a practice which seems currently forbidden.
8. *Development of scholarly journals and academic presses of international standards.* Most leading academic presses and journals generally publish theory-driven or theory-informed works based on stringent standards and peer evaluations. This would mean setting up of editorial boards comprising internationally reputed scholars and strictly following the anonymous peer-review process akin to world standards. Existing journals like *International Studies* could be improved for their content and review process and brought to world standards by making sure that theoretical and theory-informed works are given prominence in their publication agenda. They could also select theoretical and empirical topics ahead and publish special issues where leading scholars could engage in intellectual debates.

Conclusions

The neglect of IR in India, especially theory-driven works, has been caused by a number of factors including global/structural, cultural, institutional and bureaucratic constraints. However, there are changes taking place in several of these variables, especially those relating to the global/structural. The IR community in India is yet to make use of these changes and become a globally relevant disciplinary component which would be consistent with India's potential emergence as a global power.

IR in India deserves much more attention from both the scholarly community and the government. As India's material power and position advance in the international system, it will be called upon to make a number of decisions both for its

own interests and in the collective interests of the world. Good scholarly works developed by academia can provide foundational ideas for new thinking, be it in policy or theory. The integration of IR in India with the world is urgently called for. This integration can take place only if IR in India becomes theory-based, where rigour and sophistication are keys to the advancement of knowledge.

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