

# **Regional Hegemony and Emerging Powers: Theorizing India's Neighborhood Policy**

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## Abstract

Why do emerging powers pursue regional hegemony as their foreign policy strategy? I address this question in the context of the post Cold War era, where countries like Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Indonesia and South Korea have emerged as economic, diplomatic and military powerhouses in international relations. Since the American case demonstrated that it is possible to achieve regional hegemony, many emerging powers are invariably tempted to emulate the United States and try to dominate their region of the world. In some instances, emerging powers were able to pursue regional hegemony, yet in others it failed. In this thesis I build a theory called the ‘Theory of Military Organizational Culture in Coalitions’ that draws upon the variables from minimum connected willing coalition theory and military organizational culture to explain a state’s pursuit of regional hegemony. I argue that if the military organization has an offensive doctrine and when there is a strong cabinet then a state would pursue a hegemonic strategy in its neighborhood. However, when the military organization has a defensive doctrine a state will not be able to pursue regional hegemony even when the cabinet has a shared policy orientation for exercising regional hegemony. I test this theory with an intensive case study of India’s neighborhood strategy, which provides the control and variation required for longitudinal analysis. Process tracing shows that in similar structural conditions, India pursued regional hegemony under the Indira Gandhi government because the Indian military had an offensive doctrine but was unable to pursue regional hegemony under Vajpayee government because the Indian military had a defensive doctrine that stymied India’s goal to exercise hegemony in South Asia. In broad terms I offer a contingent generalization that emerging powers can pursue regional hegemony only when a strong coalition and an offensive strategic culture in the military are dominant.

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## Introduction

After the end of the Cold War countries like China, India, Brazil, Russia, Argentina, Indonesia and South Korea, emerged as economic, diplomatic and military powerhouses in international relations (IR). These new and emerging powers from Latin America to Africa to the Pacific are shaping events around the world, which led the United States to enunciate a National Security Strategy (NSS) in 2010 outlining its deepening partnership with emerging powers:

Due to increased economic growth and political stability, individual nations are increasingly taking on powerful regional and global roles and changing the landscape of international cooperation. To achieve a just and sustainable order that advances our shared security and prosperity, we are, therefore deepening our partnership with emerging powers and encouraging them to play a greater role in strengthening international norms and advancing shared interests.<sup>1</sup>

The regional powers are assumed to play a more proactive role in international politics, shape the order of their distinct geographical areas and thereby contribute to the stability of global order.<sup>2</sup> The United States wants China to become a responsible stakeholder, sees Brazil as a natural partner and shares common values in India's democratic credentials. Britain emphasizes the global role of China and India and puts a premium on establishing a direct relationship with emerging powers.<sup>3</sup> Similarly all other developed countries recognize that the emerging powers in Asia and Latin America have acquired strategic importance in contemporary international politics.<sup>4</sup> However, not all rising powers choose a peaceful pathway for global engagement. The history of Napoleonic France, Wilhelmine Germany, Nazi Germany and imperial Japan was a bloody search for opportunities for aggression;

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<sup>1</sup> United States, National Security Strategy, May 2010  
[http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss\\_viewer/national\\_security\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf) accessed on 1 May, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> I use regional powers, emerging powers, rising powers interchangeably.

<sup>3</sup> A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy, October 2010.  
[http://www.direct.gov.uk/prod\\_consum\\_dg/groups/dg\\_digitalassets/@dg/@en/documents/digitalasset/dg\\_191639.pdf?CID=PDF&PLA=furl&CRE=nationalsecuritystrategy](http://www.direct.gov.uk/prod_consum_dg/groups/dg_digitalassets/@dg/@en/documents/digitalasset/dg_191639.pdf?CID=PDF&PLA=furl&CRE=nationalsecuritystrategy) accessed on 1 May, 2012

<sup>4</sup> See Parag Khanna, *The Second World: How Emerging Powers Are Redefining Global Competition in the Twenty-first Century*, Reprint. (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2009).

therefore, the behavior of new rising powers is an object case for investigation. Andrew Hurrell cogently states that countries such as China, Russia, India and Brazil possess a range of economic, military and political power with some capacity to contribute to the production of regional or global order and they share a belief in their entitlement to a more influential role in world affairs that justifies investigation of their foreign policy behavior.<sup>5</sup> Emerging powers “often oppose the political and economic ground rules of the inherited Western liberal order, seek to transform existing multilateral arrangements, and shy away from assuming significant global responsibilities.”<sup>6</sup> In other words rising powers have become ‘system challengers’ or new norm builders in world politics;<sup>7</sup> and they are keen on establishing their hegemonic position in their respective regions.

China, for instance, attempts to exercise regional hegemony in Asia “to secure energy, metals and strategic minerals in order to support the rising living standards of its immense population, which amounts to about one-fifth of the world’s total.”<sup>8</sup> Beijing’s hunger for natural resources has led its sturdy presence in Tibet, Macao, Myanmar and Mongolia and had secured port access throughout the Indian Ocean region in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Cambodia.<sup>9</sup> China is also keen on establishing its own *Monroe Doctrine for Asia’s seas*<sup>10</sup> and is already “embroiled in various disputes over parts of the energy-rich ocean beds of the East China Sea and the South China Sea. China’s Monroe Doctrine for Asia’s seas is also revealed in its capital purchases. It has modernized its destroyer fleet and has acquired

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<sup>5</sup> See Andrew Hurrell, “Hegemony, Liberalism and Global Order: What Space for Would-be Great Powers?,” *International Affairs* 82, no. 1 (January 24, 2006): 2–3.

<sup>6</sup> Stewart Patrick, “Irresponsible Stakeholders,” *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 6 (2010): 44.

<sup>7</sup> Sandra Destradi, “Regional Powers and Their Strategies: Empire, Hegemony, and Leadership,” *Review of International Studies* 36, no. 04 (2010): 903–930.

<sup>8</sup> Robert D. Kaplan, “The Geography of Chinese Power,” *Foreign Affairs*, May 1, 2010, 24.

<sup>9</sup> It is called China’s “String of Pearls” strategy, See Gurpreet S. Khurana, “China’s ‘String of Pearls’ in the Indian Ocean and Its Security Implications,” *Strategic Analysis* 32, no. 1 (2008): 1–39.

<sup>10</sup> Patrick Cronin and Paul Giarra, “China’s Dangerous Arrogance,” *The Diplomat*, July 23, 2010 <http://the-diplomat.com/2010/07/23/china%E2%80%99s-dangerous-arrogance/> accessed on 10 May 2012. My emphasis.

aircraft carriers to project power beyond the South China Sea,<sup>11</sup> and by 2020 wants a military that will be globally deployable.<sup>12</sup>

Brazil, on the other hand, attempts to exercise regional hegemony in South America “to extend its long-standing focus on sovereignty and autonomy to the continental level, wrapping it around core regional concerns.”<sup>13</sup> Its powerful foreign ministry, Itamaraty, is keen on pursuing “autonomy through diversification” of relations – combined with seeking autonomy from the United States.<sup>14</sup> In 2008 Brazil proposed the creation of a South American Defense Council (CSS) aiming at NATO like defense alliance and regional armament industry following the Colombian military incursion into Ecuadorian territory. The CSS is seen as a Brazilian strategy to exercise hegemonic power in South America. Burges calls it ‘consensual hegemony’ because “[t]he imperative was not to subsume other regional states to Brazilian will, but instead to cycle the region-forming process through Brazil and position the country’s propositions and prerogatives as the central unifying factor of a potential South American region.”<sup>15</sup> Brazil’s role in mediating territorial disputes between Ecuador and Peru from 1995 to 1998, its interest in solving the Colombian conflict, its leading role in troop commitment and funding when the UN Security Council mandated action in Haiti, and its role in preventing coup attempts against Paraguay and Venezuela shows Brazil’s interest in exercising its hegemonic influence in the South American region.

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<sup>11</sup> Robert S. Ross, “China’s Naval Nationalism,” *International Security* 34, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 46–81.

<sup>12</sup> “Aircraft Carrier Symbol of China’s Naval Ambitions,” *BBC*, June 8, 2011, sec. Asia-Pacific, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-13693495> accessed on 7 March 2012.

<sup>13</sup> Sean W. Burges, “Consensual Hegemony: Theorizing Brazilian Foreign Policy After the Cold War,” *International Relations* 22, no. 1 (March 1, 2008): 75.

<sup>14</sup> Gabriel Cepaluni and Tullo Vigevani, *Brazilian Foreign Policy in Changing Times: The Quest for Autonomy from Sarney to Lula*, trans. Leandro Moura, Reprint. (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> Burges, “Consensual Hegemony,” 75.

Similarly, Russia wants to solidify its regional control and advance a Russian Monroe Doctrine. “President Boris Yeltsin called upon the U.N. for an extraordinary grant of authority: make Russia the ‘guarantor of peace and stability in regions of the former U.S.S.R.’”<sup>16</sup> The 1992 political programme ‘Towards A United, Strong, and Democratic Russia’ of the Civic Union, one of the influential political groups in Russia after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, also argued that Moscow’s security is directly dependent on the situation of the contiguous regions of the former USSR.<sup>17</sup> It has strengthened its strategic foothold with Ukraine and Belarus and has increased its sphere of influence in Iran and the Caucasus.<sup>18</sup> Descalzi points out “Russia sought to (re)gain relative power in its post-Cold War circumstances. The newly independent states also had to find their bearings. Thus began a constant negotiation of regional hegemony.”<sup>19</sup> Thus Russia’s regional outreach shows its interest to rebuild its status as a regional superpower.

Last but not the least, India is also keen on strengthening its strategic foothold in the South Asian region. Historically, India has preferred ‘strategic autonomy’ as an important foreign policy strategy and has sought “not only to dissuade foreign powers from entering the region; the Indian state has also promoted a particular foreign policy and disposition among its neighboring states.”<sup>20</sup> India’s unilateral military engagements in Goa, Sikkim, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives; its diplomatic engagement in East Asia in response to

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<sup>16</sup> Leslie Gelb, “Foreign Affairs; Yeltsin as Monroe - New York Times,” *New York Times*, March 7, 1993, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/03/07/opinion/foreign-affairs-yeltsin-as-monroe.html> accessed on 12 May 2012.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Smith M, *Pax Russica: Russia’s Monroe Doctrine* (London: The Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies, 1993), 10.

<sup>18</sup> Andrew E. Kramer, “Russia Claims Its Sphere of Influence in the World,” *The New York Times*, September 1, 2008, sec. International / Europe, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/01/world/europe/01russia.html> accessed on 10 March 2012.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Carmen Amelia Gayoso Descalzi, “Russian hegemony in the CIS region: an examination of Russian influence and of variation in consent and dissent by CIS states to regional hierarchy” (PhD diss, London School of Economic, 2011): 11

<sup>20</sup> Vikash Yadav and Conrad Barwa, “Relational Control: India’s Grand Strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan,” *India Review* 10, no. 2 (April 2011): 95.



China's engagement in South Asia; its self-proclaimed role as a predominant regional power that requires deference from its smaller neighbors and New Delhi's status as the largest arms importer in the world shows India's interest in exercising its hegemony in its neighborhood.

Other regional powers also want to achieve a predominant position in their region and are reforming their defense structures and diplomatic engagements in order to enjoy the benefits of regional hegemony. South Korea's 2010 biennial white paper included a specific way of reforming its defense structure to consolidate its position in the neighborhood;<sup>21</sup> Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975 and played the role of regional hegemon in Southeast Asia; Vietnam, in response, imposed a relationship of dependency on Laos in 1975 and exercised hegemonic ambitions over Indochina. Other examples abound, all rising powers want to achieve regional hegemony: "Since the security benefits of hegemony are enormous, powerful states will invariably be tempted to emulate the United States and try to dominate their region of the world."<sup>22</sup> According to offensive realism, the United States is the only regional hegemon in modern history and it will seek to prevent the rise of peer competitors. This could trigger great power wars. Therefore understanding why and when rising powers pursue regional hegemony is both theoretically important for predicting the long term future of the international system and has high policy relevancy for discouraging any reckless pursuit of their hegemonic ambitions.

In order to analyze when rising powers pursue regional hegemony it is important to outline why rising powers should want to achieve regional hegemony in the first place. The bedrock assumptions of offensive realism guide the answer to this question. The anarchic

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<sup>21</sup> Mark McDonald, "N. Korea Boosts Tanks and Special Forces, South Says," *The New York Times*, December 30, 2010, sec. World / Asia Pacific, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/31/world/asia/31korea.html> accessed on 2 May 2012.

<sup>22</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003), 213.

character of the international system, military wherewithal of states to destroy each other, uncertainty of intentions, need to maintain territorial integrity and the rational nature of states create powerful incentives to exercise power and strive to achieve distinct military advantage over their rivals. Mearsheimer clearly states that “[g]iven the difficulty of determining how much power is enough for today and tomorrow, great powers recognize that the best way to ensure their security is to achieve hegemony now, thus eliminating any possibility of a challenge by another great power.”<sup>23</sup> Since the American case demonstrated that it is possible to achieve regional hegemony and it is not a quixotic ambition, the tremendous security benefits of achieving hegemony motivates rising powers to pursue regional hegemony sooner than later.<sup>24</sup>

Evaluating why and when rising powers pursue regional hegemonic foreign policy strategy is not simple, because the universe of potential cases is vast. Brazil, Russia, India and China see themselves as potential major powers.<sup>25</sup> To make the inquiry manageable, I attempted to find a case where instances of both hegemonic and non-hegemonic foreign policy strategies are well pronounced. Under similar structural conditions India pursued regional hegemony between 1971 and 1989 during the leadership of Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi but failed between 1998 and 2004 under Prime Minister Vajpayee. This provides the kind of control and variation required to investigate why rising powers pursue regional hegemony. The Indian case also highlights the analytical limitations of existing theoretical scholarships in understanding when a rising power pursues regional hegemonic strategies. The following review highlights the need for a new analytical lens to capture India’s regional foreign policy behavior.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 213.

<sup>25</sup> See Hurrell, “Hegemony, Liberalism and Global Order,” 19.

Firstly, broad theoretical lenses like structural realism, liberalism or constructivism cannot explain India's foreign policy behavior. India has not relentlessly pursued a hegemonic policy when structural conditions were more propitious for domination. For example, after a successful military victory against Pakistan in 1971, India engaged in diplomatic negotiations with Pakistan through the Simla Peace Agreement where trade, cooperation in economic field and cultural exchanges were agreed upon.<sup>26</sup> Maya Chadda correctly asks "How does one explain its repeated return of territory captured from Pakistan during their various wars?"<sup>27</sup> Similarly India's foreign policy behavior with other neighbors is striking. India withdrew from Sri Lanka in 1990 and it exited from the Maldives in 1989 without any plans for future consolidation of power. Neither, India is totally a defensive realist state. India militarily annexed Goa from Portugal in 1961, Sikkim became part of India in 1975, and India still hosts the Dalai Lama which is a serious issue of contention in Sino-Indian relations. Therefore India is neither an offensive state nor a defensive state and the structural realist theories cannot be a single unified motor force in explaining India's foreign and security policy behavior.

India's regional security behavior and its neighborhood strategy have also not followed any distinctive liberal ideology. It has not engaged in democracy promotion activity in its backyard. Pratap Banu Mehta points out that "[p]olicies that are too norm-driven will make problematic countries even harder to engage. Thus, despite India's own democratic example and sense of desirable regime forms, it is unlikely to sign on to democracy promotion as a 'big idea.'"<sup>28</sup> India's inability to guarantee liberty, peace and tranquility in states like Kashmir, Jharkhand or other North Eastern states dissuades it from actively

<sup>26</sup> See Stephen Philip Cohen, "India, Pakistan and Kashmir," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 25, no. 4 (2002): 32–60.

<sup>27</sup> Maya Chadda, *Ethnicity, Security, and Separatism in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 9.

<sup>28</sup> Pratap Bhanu Mehta, "Reluctant India," *Journal of Democracy* 22, no. 4 (October 2011): 109.

engaging in liberal activism in its neighborhood.<sup>29</sup> Also India is not active in multilateral trade promotion or institutional cooperation through South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). In fact economic integration in South Asia has been hindered because of India's reluctance to liberally engage with its neighbors.<sup>30</sup>

India's threat perceptions and response vis-à-vis Pakistan and China – two of India's foremost adversaries – has structural, ideational, domestic and unit level variables that cannot be straight-jacketed into Indian state identity or intersubjective constructivist understandings between India and its adversaries. Several other broad theoretical paradigms like bureaucratic politics and institutional theories have been eclectically used in the study of India's foreign policy behavior.<sup>31</sup> These theories have not been integrated within the grand strategic vision of India; they can explain incoherence and resistance to change rather than 'why' India pursued specific foreign policies during a specific period in its history. Therefore the existing theoretical scholarships on India's foreign and security policy strategies have not been helpful to make sense of the reasons for India's regional hegemonic strategy.

Secondly, atheoretical works on India's foreign policy are helpful but limited in providing a clear explanation on India's foreign policy behavior in the region. These literatures can be divided into two themes that touch upon India's grand strategic behavior: (1) historical account that deals with India's "new" foreign policy behavior; and (2) analytical literatures that deal with India's strategic relations with specific neighbors.

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> For India's role in the failure of SAARC see Muchkund Dubey, "SAARC and South Asian Economic Integration," *Economic and Political Weekly* 42, no. 14 (April 7, 2007): 1238–1240.

<sup>31</sup> Jeffrey Benner, *The Indian Foreign Policy Bureaucracy* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985).

On the first theme, Ganguly and Pardesi for example provide a detailed historical overview of the change in India's foreign policy and conclude by stating that "New Delhi needs to proactively shape its regional environment in tandem with its neighbors."<sup>32</sup> They do not offer a convincing explanation on why India's grand strategic vision during different historical phases was unable to bring a regional order of its choice. Surjit Mansingh states that serious socio-economic problems at home, inadequate staffing or coordination of national security institutions, and the continuing burden of Pakistan's enmity led to reduced efficiency in India's national objectives.<sup>33</sup> Yet it is puzzling why such similar conditions led to India's strategic relationship with countries in East Asia, Middle East and the United States but not in its immediate neighborhood. In an interesting exposition of contemporary regional security challenges in India's foreign policy, Rohan Mukherjee and David Malone point out subnational ethnic movements, secessionist movements and insurgencies, the prevalence of new ethnic groups such as "the migration of Tibetans escaping Chinese persecution, and the steady inflow of immigrants (legal and illegal) from Bangladesh" and religious conflicts as the important reasons for Delhi's problematic relationship with its neighbors.<sup>34</sup> Mukherjee and Malone's arguments are perhaps detailed historical explanations but they touch more on domestic law-and-order problems and fail to theoretically integrate it in explaining India's neighborhood strategy.

On the second theme on separate bilateral relations, all the existing literatures provide interesting insights on India's priority issues vis-à-vis individual countries in South Asia. Ollapally and Rajagopalan show that there are continuing commonalities and consensus on

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<sup>32</sup> Sumit Ganguly and Manjeet S. Pardesi, "Explaining Sixty Years of India's Foreign Policy," *India Review* 8, no. 1 (2009): 16.

<sup>33</sup> Surjit Mansingh, "Assessing Reorientation of India's Foreign Policy in a Globalized World," *International Studies* 47, no. 2-4 (April 1, 2010): 143-161.

<sup>34</sup> See Rohan Mukherjee and David M Malone, "Indian Foreign Policy and Contemporary Security Challenges," *International Affairs* 87, no. 1 (January 2011): 87-104.

India's foreign policy vis-à-vis China, Pakistan and Myanmar but do not extend their argument on India's problems with other neighbors in general and regional order in particular.<sup>35</sup> According to Raja Mohan, the partition of the subcontinent on religious lines, the Cold War, and the country's enduring romance with socialism prevented India from realizing its grand strategic ambitions.<sup>36</sup> Mazumdar's analysis of India's lack of coherent strategic doctrine and its hampered development of post Cold War grand strategy is based on a tripartite explanation: (1) emergence of coalition government at the national level; (2) weak foreign policy institutions; and (3) lack of a strategic culture. Although this explanation is well suited to explain the gap between India's grand strategic vision and reality, the author explicitly avoids theorizing the conditions under which India has or has not pursued hegemonic policies.<sup>37</sup> All the analytical explanations of India's foreign policy in the neighborhood leave a serious lacuna in providing a clear and concerted explanation on the success and failure of India's regional hegemonic policies. Idealism, moralism, domestic coalitions, institutional weakness, inefficiency of India's foreign policy bureaucracy, lack of military prowess, lack of a strategic culture, neighbors balancing and bandwagoning with China, disruptive force of religion and the problems of overlapping nationalities are among the different analytical lenses that are used to explain India's inability to shape its regional order. However a more concerted theoretical explanation on India's regional hegemonic foreign policy strategies, that this research attempts, will offer a better analytical guide to capture India's strategic behavior in South Asia.

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<sup>35</sup> Deepa Ollapally and Rajesh Rajagopalan, "The Pragmatic Challenge to Indian Foreign Policy," *Washington Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (Spring 2011).

<sup>36</sup> C. Raja Mohan, "Poised for Power: The Domestic Roots of India's Slow Rise," in *Domestic Political Change and Grand Strategy*, ed. J Ashley Tellis and Michael Wills (Washington D.C: The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2007), 179.

<sup>37</sup> Arijit Mazumdar, "India's Search for a Post-Cold War Foreign Policy," *India Quarterly* 67, no. 2 (June 2011): 165–182 See p.166 for his delimitation of the study.

A fundamental premise of this research is that foreign policy decision making in emerging powers is very fragmented with several politically autonomous actors. Coalition theory literature provides the analytical lens to identify the conditions that facilitate agreement among autonomous and contentious political actors. The size of the cabinet, shared policy orientation of actors, presence of a pivotal actor and willingness to bargain are the important variables of minimum willing coalition theory to explain outcomes ranging from agreement to deadlock in a government's foreign policy decision making. I add another variable – the military organizational culture – within the minimum willing coalition theory to explain a state's pursuit of regional hegemonic strategy. In the next chapter I theorize that the influence of military strategic culture on the cabinet determines a state's interest to pursue regional hegemony. If the military organization has an offensive doctrine and when there is a strong cabinet then a state would pursue a hegemonic strategy in its neighborhood. However, when the military organization has a defensive doctrine a state will not be able to pursue regional hegemony even when there is a shared policy orientation for exercising hegemony in the cabinet. I test this theory with an intensive case study of India's neighborhood strategy. Under similar structural conditions, India pursued regional hegemony under Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi but failed under Vajpayee. Process tracing of India's foreign and security policy decision making show that under Indira Gandhi the Indian military had an offensive doctrine that enabled the state to pursue its regional hegemonic ambitions. However during Vajpayee's leadership, the Indian military had a defensive doctrine that stymied India's goal to exercise hegemony in South Asia although the Hindu nationalistic government had a clear shared policy orientation towards regional hegemony. The crux of the theory therefore is that the emerging powers can pursue regional hegemony only when a strong government and an offense strategic culture in the military are dominant. This contingent generalization is based on the idea that the pursuit of hegemony is more than an important foreign policy decision of

the government that requires a minimum connected willing coalition. The organizational culture of the military plays a very important role in enabling a state to pursue regional hegemonic policies.

In the next chapter I elucidate the minimum connected willing coalition theory, explain its central features and add the influence of military organizational culture as an important variable to explain rising powers' pursuit of regional hegemony. In chapter three I use this theoretical model against Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi's government to account for why India pursued regional hegemonic policies. In chapter four again I use the theoretical model against A.B.Vajpayee's government to account for India's inability to pursue regional hegemonic policies. These two empirical chapters are systematized in such a way to capture the causal influence of the Indian military's organizational culture. I conclude the thesis providing a brief analysis and interpretation including the limitation and avenues for further research on emerging powers' regional hegemonic foreign policy strategy.



## Chapter I

# **Military Organizational Culture in Coalitions: A Theory of Regional Hegemonic Strategies of Rising Powers**

## **Introduction**

The introduction of the thesis established that emerging powers want to achieve regional hegemony because of the tremendous security benefits that this exalted position could deliver. Drawing upon the minimum connected willing coalition model I propose that the military organizational culture is the key causal variable that facilitates or inhibits a state's pursuit of regional hegemony. I argue that a strong coalition is required for the state to *conceive* regional hegemony but only a convergence of the offensive dominant organizational culture with the strong cabinet can enable a state to *pursue* regional hegemony. The minimum connected willing coalition theory is based upon a broader foreign policy decision making theory and the military organizational culture is based on intersubjective, cultural, and constructivist approach in the social sciences. The influence of military organizational culture on coalition decision making has not been hitherto theorized and this chapter establishes the model for subsequent empirical inquiry. A preliminary conceptual clarification on hegemony would establish the context for further theoretical inquiry.

This research relies on a parsimonious definition of regional hegemony offered by Mearsheimer in order to reduce the confusion inherent in the concept. A regional hegemon is a state that dominates distinct geographical areas and possibly controls another region that is nearby and accessible over land.<sup>38</sup> This definition allows clear model building and incorporation of an additional variable – military organizational culture – to the minimum

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<sup>38</sup> Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 40, 140–141.

willing connected coalition model to answer the question when rising powers pursue regional hegemonic foreign policy strategy. Governments in rising powers pursue a variety of regional strategies: isolationist, unilateral, leadership, consensual participation and hegemony. “A hegemon is a state that is so powerful that it dominates all the other states in the system. No other state has the military wherewithal to put up a serious fight against it.”<sup>39</sup> The pursuit of hegemony therefore is an extreme form of foreign policy strategy. I argue that if a state’s foreign policy strategy is placed in a continuum then isolationism and hegemony will be its two ends. However, there is no consensus in the existing scholarship on this type of classification. Destradi, for instance, analyzes regional powers’ strategies as being placed on a continuum reaching from unilateral, highly aggressive ‘imperial’ strategy to an extremely cooperative ‘leadership’ strategy. She places hegemonic strategies in the middle of this continuum and distinguishes between hard, intermediate and soft hegemonic strategies.<sup>40</sup> Such different definitions of hegemony create confusion rather than clarity on the concept. Further classifications like benevolent versus coercive hegemony that originated with the debate between neorealists and neoliberal institutionalists;<sup>41</sup> consensual or non-domineering hegemony based on Gramscian idea of the interplay between material and ideational power resources in the exercise of hegemonic power;<sup>42</sup> and soft hegemony that attempts to reshape norms and values of subordinate states through socialization makes it difficult for a clear empirical analysis.<sup>43</sup> In order to make the concept of hegemony suitable for empirical analysis I have relied on Mearsheimer’s parsimonious definition of regional hegemony as defined above. The rest of the section is organized as follows: first I explain coalition theory and its

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>40</sup> Destradi, “Regional Powers and Their Strategies.”

<sup>41</sup> See Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton University Press, 1984).

<sup>42</sup> R W Cox, “Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations□: An Essay in Method,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 12, no. 2 (1983): 162–175.

<sup>43</sup> G. John Ikenberry and Charles A. Kupchan, “Socialization and Hegemonic Power,” *International Organization* 44, no. 3 (July 1, 1990): 283–315.

role in enunciating a foreign policy strategy for the state. Second, I show that a minimum connected willing coalition is not a sufficient condition for a state to *pursue* regional hegemony therefore I detail the theoretical variables of the military organizational culture in holding offensive, defensive and deterrent military doctrines. Drawing upon minimum connected willing coalition and military organizational culture, I develop a theoretical model in the third section and argue that a state's pursuit of regional hegemony requires convergence of strong cabinet and offensive military organizational culture. Finally, I present the research design and method and conclude.

## **1. Coalition Theory and Foreign Policy Strategies**

Coalition decision units have two features: (1) fragmentation of political authority within the decision units; and (2) influence of actor's constituency in member's decision making. Fragmentation of political decision making happens when there is no single actor in the decision unit to authoritatively resolve differences among the groups or reverse any collectively made decisions. Similarly, the influence of a member's constituency constrains the ability of an individual decision maker to commit to any decisions without having first negotiated with his or her constituency.<sup>44</sup> As Hagan et.al state that these two features of coalition decision units are quite prevalent in multiple party cabinets in parliamentary democracies, presidential democracies, authoritarian regimes and in decentralized interbureaucratic decision making processes. How do coalition decision units shape foreign policy strategies of the government? Coalition theory offers the size and space principle as the two core theoretical arguments that motivates political parties to join a multiparty cabinet. The size principle, also called the "minimum willing coalition," is a cost-benefit calculation of incorporating additional actors within the coalition decision unit. Only those supporters

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<sup>44</sup> Joe D. Hagan et al., "Foreign Policy by Coalition: Deadlock, Compromise, and Anarchy," *International Studies Review* 3, no. 2 (July 1, 2001): 170.

necessary for authorizing a particular decisional strategy will be included in the decision unit so as to avoid compromises, side payments or expending additional resources. The policy space principle, also called “minimum range” theory, on the other hand, is the shared ideological preferences of contending actors within the coalition decision unit. Shared policy orientation of members enables agreement on strategies with relatively proximate preferences. One additional variable – “pivotal actor” – that is added to the minimum willing connected coalition model to account for the operation of coalition decision units is relevant for this research.<sup>45</sup> A “pivotal actor” is the one “when the absolute difference between the combined votes of members on his right and of members on his left is not greater than his own weight.”<sup>46</sup> The presence or absence of pivotal actors, according to De Swaan, can decide the success or failure of a decision in the coalition unit. The preference of a pivotal actor will dominate the decision making pattern in the coalition unit and can be influential in overcoming deadlocks between groups. Therefore coalition decision units can arrive at ‘important’ foreign policy strategies if it has a minimum connected willing coalition with a pivotal actor in the unit.<sup>47</sup>

## 2. The Military Organizational Culture

Focusing exclusively on either minimum connection willing coalition units or on the influence of pivotal actors provides neither a necessary, nor a sufficient explanation of a rising power’s foreign policy decision to pursue hegemonic strategy in its region. Instead, a military’s organizational culture must react to the exogenous environment and establish an

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<sup>45</sup> Other variables like actors’ willingness to bargain; presence/absence of pivotal actors; level of information uncertainty; existence of consensus making norms among others are not considered for this research specifically focused on the state’s pursuit of hegemony.

<sup>46</sup> Abram de Swaan, *Coalition Theories and Cabinet Formations* (Elsevier Science Ltd, 1973), 89.

<sup>47</sup> The concept of minimum connected willing coalition is give by Robert M. Axelrod, *Conflict of Interest;: A Theory of Divergent Goals with Applications to Politics* (Chicago: Markham Pub. Co, 1970).

offensive doctrine in order to work within the minimum connected willing coalition to establish regional hegemony.

As an important component of a state's grand strategy, military doctrine refers to preferred mode of war fighting held by professional military officers. Military operations historically have been classified into three different categories: offensive, defensive and deterrent. "*Offensive* doctrine aims to *disarm* an adversary – to destroy his armed forces. *Defensive* doctrines aim to *deny* an adversary the objective that he seeks. *Deterrent* doctrines aim to *punish* an aggressor – to raise his costs without reference to reducing one's own."<sup>48</sup> Military doctrine is a prioritized category of war fighting held by professional military forces. As Kier points out military doctrine is the result of military organizational culture's response to domestic constraints. "Domestic politics set constraints; the military's culture interprets these constraints; the organizational culture is the intervening variable between civilian decisions and military doctrine."<sup>49</sup> Therefore, the choice between offensive, defensive or deterrent military doctrines is not the result of judgments based on structural or material factors but also due to the independent influence of military organizational culture.

Posen claims that military doctrine can be measured by studying the military balance and force structure of the armed forces.<sup>50</sup> However, such a material or interest-driven approach runs the risk of excluding culture's explanatory role in doctrinal development. How can a relatively static concept of culture explain change in military doctrines? Elizabeth Kier treats culture as a means not ends that provides the toolkit to organize behavior. The assumptions held dearly by the military works within the constraints set by domestic politics

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<sup>48</sup> Barry R. Posen, *Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain and Germany Between the World Wars* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1984), 14 Emphasis original.

<sup>49</sup> Elizabeth Kier, "Culture and Military Doctrine: France Between the Wars," *International Security* 19, no. 4 (April 1, 1995): 68.

<sup>50</sup> Posen, *Sources of Military Doctrine*, 14.

that produces change in outcomes but the means remain the same. Giving examples from the French and the British armies' change in doctrines from offensive prior to World War I to defensive prior to World War II, Kier showed that the culture stayed constant but the doctrine changed in response to exogenous factors. : "there must be some change in the external environment of the organization to which the organizational culture reacts."<sup>51</sup> In Kier's theory:

The change in French doctrine is straightforward. In 1913 the parliament increased the length of conscription to three years; in 1928 it reduced the conscription period to one year. After 1913 the French army had the type of conscript that its culture assumed capable of executing offensive operations. After 1928 and the reduction in the length of conscription, it could imagine only defensive operations.<sup>52</sup>

Therefore when constraints set by domestic politics or technology varies military organizations integrate these changes into its established way of doing things. The military organizational culture reacts to exogenous changes and determines the doctrines only by counting on the assumptions held dearly by the organization.

### **3. Theory of Military Organizational Culture in Coalitions**

In adapting ideas concerning coalition theory and culture of military doctrine a new model of government's foreign policy strategies can be designed. The fundamental assumptions of this model is that (1) foreign policy decision making is fragmented in rising powers; (2) coalitions are formed to deal with major foreign policy issues; and (3) the civil-military relations in the country privileges civilian supremacy subordinating the military organizations to the constraints set by civilians. Drawing upon minimum connected willing coalition model and military organizational culture, I argue that a rising power will be able to pursue regional hegemony only when there is a convergence between strong cabinet that privileges hegemonic strategies in the neighborhood and military organization culture that

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<sup>51</sup> Kier, "Culture and Military Doctrine," 81.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 80.

values offensive military doctrine. This theory of military organizational culture in coalitions argues that a rising power can pursue regional hegemonic foreign policy strategy only when there is a cultural convergence on hegemony between civilian policy makers and military organization.

The predictions of this model are straightforward. When foreign policy decision making is concentrated in a coalition decision unit and when shared policy orientation to exercise regional hegemony is present in the cabinet (or when a pivotal actor enforces the need to exercise regional hegemony in the cabinet) it triggers a set of exogenous constraints on the military organization. The assumptions held by the military organizations shaped by past experiences and by patterns of civil-military relations hold certain shared understandings of military doctrine needed for war operations in the neighborhood. When these shared understandings of the military organization privilege offensive doctrines and hold dear the assumption that going on the offensive is necessary for the organization, then, and ‘only then’, a rising power would pursue regional hegemony as a foreign policy strategy.

This model does not predict the success or failure of a regional hegemonic strategy. A state’s hegemonic foreign policy strategy may result in success or failure due to a number of exogenous and endogenous variables that this parsimonious model cannot capture. The only question the model seeks to answer is under what conditions a rising power would pursue regional hegemonic strategies. This model also does not discuss the details of other types of foreign policy strategies that would result due to variations in the settings of coalition decisional units or due to the cultural influence of defensive doctrine of the military organization. Envisaged as a building block model of theory development, the generalizations are more narrow and contingent.

#### 4. Research Design and Method

Figure 1 diagrams the pathways of the theoretical model. It begins by ascertaining whether foreign policy decision making is fragmented into coalition decision units, it is followed by ascertaining whether the coalition has a shared policy orientation or has a pivotal actor. The influence of offensive culture of military doctrines is then introduced as an important variable that produces hegemonic foreign policy strategy by the government. According to this model, the pathways from one step to the next must be '*answered in affirmative*' in order for a government to pursue regional hegemonic strategies. Any break in the pathways due to problems in coalition decision units or lack of shared policy orientation towards exercising leadership in the neighborhood cannot create constraints for the military organizational culture. Similarly, if the assumptions of the military organization are tuned to defensive or deterrent operations then its cultural influence on the coalition decision unit would not persuade the government to pursue hegemonic strategies. Therefore the presence of a strong cabinet and offensive military organizational culture is the causal variable that explains a state's pursuit of regional hegemony.

I have employed the congruence method to assess the ability of this theoretical model to explain the outcome in the Indian case. India pursued regional hegemony under the governments of Indira & Rajiv Gandhi but failed to pursue hegemony under the government of Vajpayee. Although propitious structural conditions, strong cabinet and shared policy orientation to exercise regional hegemony existed in both the governments the key variance is the military organizational culture. The principal historical evidence I have used for this research is the diplomatic and military history of India between 1971 and 2004. I begin my research on these two cases with structured focused questions on the composition of cabinet, pivotal role of Prime Ministers, their grand strategies and the nature of civil-military relations

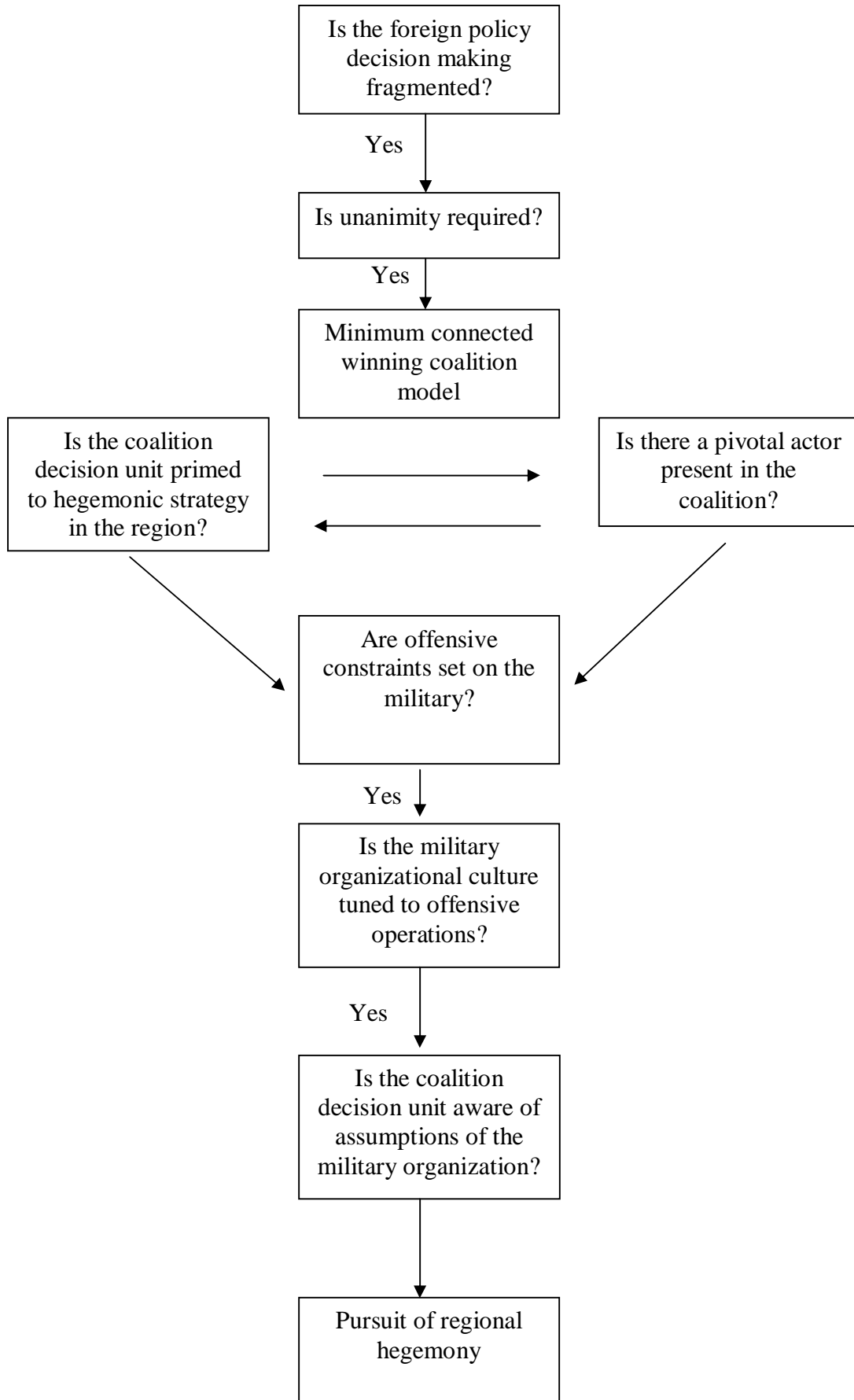


in the country to evaluate the nature of cultural convergence between cabinet and the military organization. I examine primary data for this research from the Annual Reports of the Ministry of Defense Government of India, Indian Army Doctrine, India's Nuclear Doctrine, Indian report of the Group of Ministers, Lok Sabha debates, including declassified US Government documents. This research is primarily an exercise in IR theory. I have not tried to provide a military history of India since 1971. Result of this study can provide "contingent generalization" on emerging powers that subsequent research must build upon using this theoretical model.

Figure 1

(Improved upon Joe D. Hagan et.al model)

**Theory of military organizational culture in coalitions**



## Summary

This chapter improved the coalition theory by adding another variable – the culture of military doctrine – in order to build a theoretical model to explain rising powers’ pursuit regional hegemony. The minimum connected willing coalition model is a suitable theory to understand how fragmented members can make important foreign policy decisions. The size of the cabinet, shared policy orientation of actors, presence of a pivotal actor and willingness to bargain have been the important variables of minimum willing coalition theory to explain outcomes ranging from agreement to deadlock in a government’s foreign policy decision making. However, even when structural conditions are propitious for pursuing hegemony or even when minimum connected willing coalition envisages regional hegemonic strategy the military organizational culture is the crucial variable to explain a state’s pursuit of regional hegemony. The preference to dominate the neighborhood and emerge as a regional hegemon requires the full involvement of the military organization. Therefore a crucial variable – military organizational culture - is added to the minimum willing connected coalition model in order to account for a rising power’s decision to pursue regional hegemony. This chapter also addressed the assumptions, predictions and limitations of the model. In the subsequent chapter, this theoretical model will be tested against India’s neighborhood strategy.

## Chapter II

### **Indira Doctrine and India's Ability to Pursue Regional Hegemonic Strategy 1971-1989**

#### **Introduction**

The theory of 'military organizational culture in coalitions' established in the previous chapter provides the foundation for empirical research. Regional hegemonic doctrines enunciated by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and followed by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is a test case to evaluate the explanatory potential of the theory.<sup>53</sup>

Indira Gandhi's foreign and security policies in the neighborhood are characterized by rigid adherence to real-politik, aggrandizement of power, assertion of hegemonic status and aggressive pursuit of self-interest with open defiance to established norms of global order. Understanding the composition of Indira's cabinet, her pivotal role in foreign policy decision making along with her grand strategy for South Asia and the nature of civil-military relations in the country will provide a clear understanding of the nature of cultural convergence between cabinet and the military organization. Drawing upon the theory of 'military organizational culture in coalitions' developed earlier, this chapter attempts to evaluate why India was able to pursue regional hegemony between 1971 and 1989. A few preliminary words about the Indira Doctrine set the context for this chapter. Indira enunciated a regional hegemonic foreign policy strategy called the Indira Doctrine after 1971. She followed the doctrine till 1979 and due to her parochial domestic political strategies lost the subsequent election. She again came to power and followed her doctrine between 1980 and 1984. After Indira's assassination her son Rajiv Gandhi as the next Prime Minister followed the tenets of

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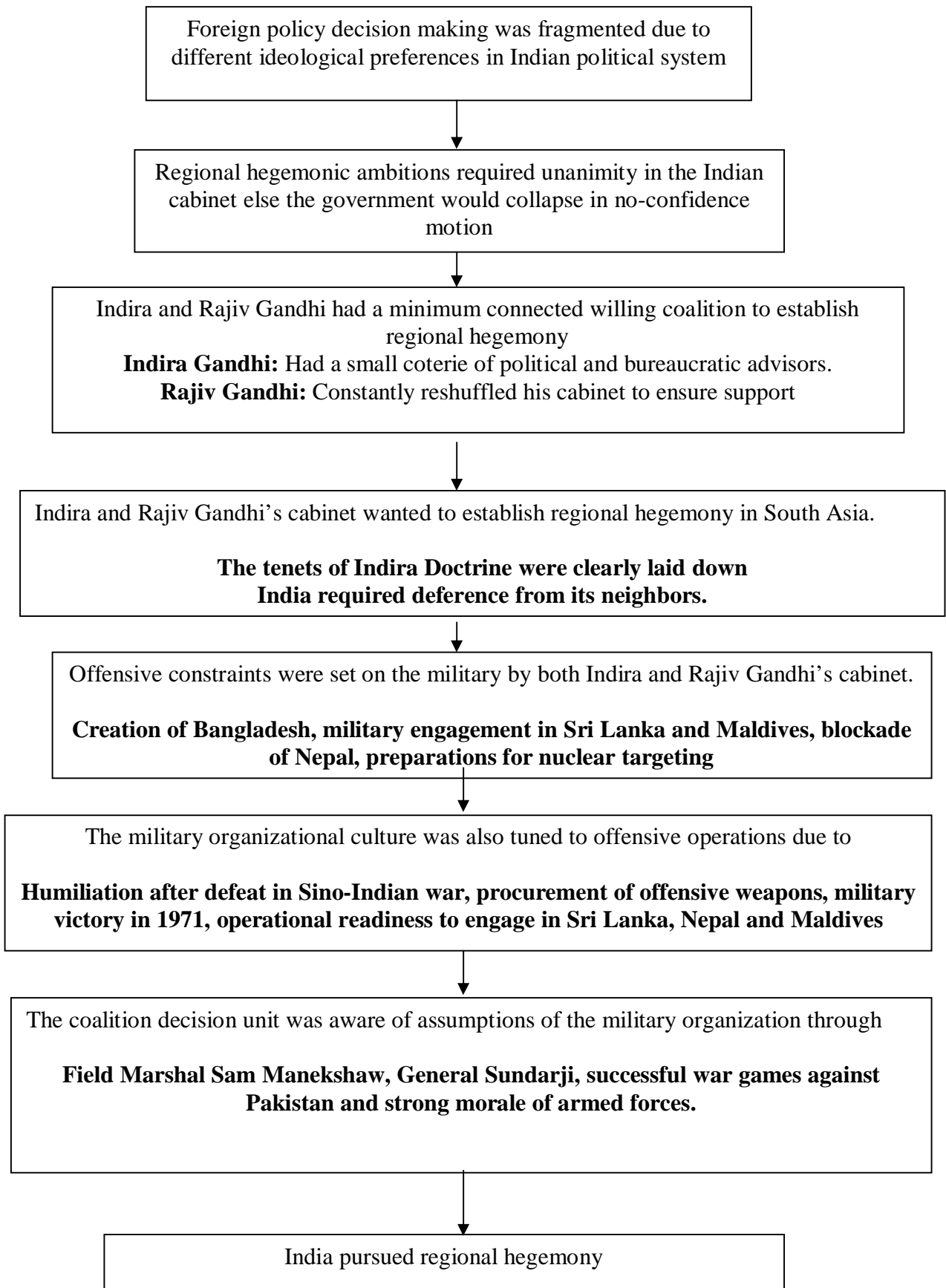
<sup>53</sup> I use the first names of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi to avoid confusions in the second name.

the Indira Doctrine from 1984 to 1990. In between the tenure of these two Prime Ministers two fragile coalition governments headed by Prime Ministers Morarji Desai (1977-79) and Charan Singh (1979-80) came to power. However these governments lacked a strong cabinet or a shared policy orientation to advocate a hegemonic foreign policy strategy and they collapsed in a year or two.

I argue that India envisaged regional hegemony because of minimum connected willing coalition in the foreign policy cabinet of Indira and Rajiv Gandhi's government. The Indian military's organizational culture that was primed for the offensive ultimately enabled India to pursue regional hegemonic policies. The convergence of hegemonic assumptions of the minimum willing connected coalition and Indian military's offensive doctrine led India to pursue a regional hegemonic strategy. The rest of the chapter is organized as follows: Firstly I provide an overview of Indira's grand strategy in South Asia along with India's threat perceptions and response. This provides the background for understanding the rationale for the Indira Doctrine. Secondly I explain the features of Indira Doctrine. In the third section, I provide details of Indira Gandhi's cabinet and the patterns of exogenous constraints that the doctrine created for the Indian military. Since Rajiv Gandhi also followed the Indira Doctrine, in this section I also provide details of Rajiv's cabinet and the ideological preferences of his cabinet members. In the fourth section, I elucidate the organizational culture of the Indian military and the cultural convergence with the minimum connected willing coalition of Indira and Rajiv Gandhi's cabinet. I conclude the chapter with a brief analysis, interpretation and limitations. The theory of military organizational culture in coalitions established earlier will guide the parameters of this chapter. Figure 2 provides a theoretical road map of the entire chapter.

Figure 2

**Theory of military organizational culture in coalitions under Indira Doctrine**



## 1. Indira Gandhi's Grand Strategy in South Asia

Indira dominated the Indian political scene from 1966 to 1984; as Barbara Crossette points out “her negative impact on other countries in South Asia – where no electorate could vote her out of power – has been longer lasting. In fact, effects on regional stability are still being felt.”<sup>54</sup> Analyses of India's threat perceptions and response, diplomatic policies and military policies show that India's grand strategy in the neighborhood changed from one of non-entanglement of Nehruvian period to establishing preponderance in South Asia. India's 1971 War with Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh, its refusal to sign the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its subsequent 1974 nuclear weapons tests, the induction of Sikkim as an Indian state in 1975, India's intervention in Bangladesh in 1975 following Mujibur Rahman's assassination to install a pro-Indian regime and Indira Gandhi's assent to start the Integrated Guided Missile Development Program (IGDMP) supports the argument that India's grand strategy was one of establishing preponderance in the South Asian region.<sup>55</sup>

India perceived threats in its neighborhood strategy from three different quarters. Firstly, China and the US were seen as extra-regional powers vying for power in the South Asian region. Memories of India's defeat in the Sino-Indian War of 1962, the US' military alliance with Pakistan and Kissinger's 1971 secret visit to Beijing created a threat of strategic encirclement. Indira stated that “the US was trying a pincer hold on Asia – Vietnam and Israel – India would be encircled...it is better that we die than to give in to constant pressure from Washington.”<sup>56</sup> The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the dogged superpower conflict in India's backyard further reduced India's previous commitment towards non-entanglement.

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<sup>54</sup> Barbara Crossette, “Indira Gandhi's Legacy Vying for Mastery in South Asia,” *World Policy Journal* 25, no. 1 (March 1, 2008): 36.

<sup>55</sup> Bharat Wariawalla, “Personality, Domestic Political Institutions and Foreign Policy,” in *Congress in Indian Politics: A Centenary Perspective*, ed. Ram Joshi and R.K.Hebsur (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1987), 253.

<sup>56</sup> Pupul Jayakar, *Indira Gandhi: An Intimate Biography* (New Delhi: Pantheon, 1993), 203.

Secondly, Sri Lanka's civil war led to a mass exodus of Tamil refugees into India in 1983 and Colombo appealed for military help from the US, the UK, Pakistan, China and Bangladesh but specifically excluded India.<sup>57</sup> Indira feared that extraneous involvement of other countries in the region would complicate relations between India and Sri Lanka.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, the King of Nepal attempted to disengage from India and develop closer ties with China. Therefore India perceived its neighborhood to be fluid and prone to disintegration.

Indira responded to these threats and insecurities with strong military and diplomatic policies. In 1971 she signed a treaty of friendship with Moscow, persuaded Soviet Union to increase the shipment of Soviet weaponry and diplomatically prevailed upon Moscow to exercise a veto till India's victory in Bangladesh was complete.<sup>59</sup> Soviet military assurance when the US dispatched its battleship USS *Enterprise* to deter India was a substantial diplomatic accomplishment for Indira Gandhi. "Soviet leaders exulted that for "the first time in history the United States and China have been defeated together," but the true winner was [Indira] Gandhi."<sup>60</sup> On the other hand Indira's diplomatic overtures with Sri Lanka did not yield promising results. The growing international involvement in Sri Lanka exacerbated India's apprehensions in the South Asian region. "The Israeli Mossad, the British SAS (Special Air Service), China and Pakistan with their military equipment [assistance], the reactivation of Anglo-Saxon defence agreement, the modernization of the Voice of America's transmitter on Sri Lankan soil..." further worsened India's fears.<sup>61</sup> Similar credibility problems surfaced in Nepal. The government and the monarchs perceived India's heavy handed influence in their internal affairs and showed preference to establish military

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<sup>57</sup> Harish Kapur, *Foreign Policies of Prime Ministers of India* (New Delhi: Lancer Publishers, 2009), 204.

<sup>58</sup> "Lok Sabha Debates", vol. 30, No.10, 1983, Column 518.

<sup>59</sup> Vojtech Mastny, "The Soviet Union's Partnership with India," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 12, no. 3 (2010): 68.

<sup>60</sup> Soviet diplomat at UN quoted in *The Hindu*, 13 December 1971.

<sup>61</sup> Kapur, *Foreign Policies of Prime Ministers of India*, 204.



relationship with China. The geostrategic fluidity of the South Asian region led Indira pronounce her doctrine, a form of ‘Monroe Doctrine’ to establish strategic primacy in the region.

## 2. The Indira Doctrine

The Indira Doctrine was an implicit foreign and security policy response to the new the regional security environment in South Asia. The essence of the Indira Doctrine was India’s claim for hegemonic status in the region and “represented a tough, uncompromising attitude toward neighbors, large and small.”<sup>62</sup> Two principles of Indira Doctrine were (1) no foreign power should be involved in the South Asian region; and (2) the involvement of any foreign power that does not recognize India’s predominance in the region would be treated an inimical to India’s interest. According to Devin Hagerty, the Indira Doctrine’s emphasized that “no South Asian government should ask for outside assistance from any country; if a South Asian nation genuinely needs external assistance, it should seek it from India. A failure to do so will be considered anti-Indian.”<sup>63</sup> Jean-Alphonse Bernard called it India’s *doctrine de Monroe* where its strategic predominance in the region is asserted by denying external powers a regional foothold.<sup>64</sup> Indira Gandhi’s enunciation of this doctrine is a direct reflection of the systemic, domestic and individual level influences in her foreign policy strategies. A more structured focused investigation of Indira Doctrine – based on theory of military organizational culture in coalitions developed earlier can shed light on its sources and its place in India grand strategic behavior. This requires understanding of the composition of Indira’s and Rajiv’s cabinet and the pivotal role they played in espousing a regional hegemonic strategy.

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<sup>62</sup> Stephen Philip Cohen, *India: Emerging Power* (Washington D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 2002), 137.

<sup>63</sup> Devin T. Hagerty, “India’s Regional Security Doctrine,” *Asian Survey* 31, no. 4 (April 1, 1991): 352.

<sup>64</sup> Cited in Devin T. Hagerty, “India’s Regional Security Doctrine,” *Asian Survey* 31, no. 4 (April 1, 1991): 352.

### 3. Minimum Willing Connected Coalition in Indira and Rajiv Gandhi's Government

#### 3.1 Indira Gandhi's Cabinet

Indira's decision making in domestic and foreign policy were confined to discussions with a select coterie of politicians and bureaucrats. Termed the "kitchen cabinet" of Indira Gandhi, the decision making powers were highly centralized and ad-hoc. Although these categories of advisors were assisting Indira in her domestic and foreign policy issues the Prime Minister did not trust the advice of any one group. Gradually she acquired tremendous power and influence, convinced the cabinet of her indispensability and overruled persons, party or any institutions. Referring to her cabinet colleagues, she said in an interview in 1972: "What do you expect me to do? I am surrounded by a bunch of idiots."<sup>65</sup> Thus Indira selectively chose her coalition to espouse and implement her regional strategic doctrine. This small coterie was the minimum connected willing coalition in Indira's government. Firstly her political companions like Bansi Lal, S.S.Ray, D.K. Barooah among others were chosen specifically to unconditionally accept all her decisions. On this situation one prominent journalist wrote that "So much mediocrity, so much grossness and insignificance of character would have been hard to find even in the minor courts of the Italian Renaissance."<sup>66</sup> She also frequently changed her foreign ministers in order to create a winning coalition for her decisions. The second category of officials were trained bureaucrats like L.K. Jha, P.N.Haskar, T.N. Kaul, G. Parthasarathy, B.K. Nehru, D.P. Dhar and H.Y. Sharada Prasad who had specialized expertise on foreign and security policies issues. "Haksar expanded the secretariat and made it into the most powerful decision making agency in the country thus

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<sup>65</sup> Quoted in Balraj Puri, "Era of Indira Gandhi," *Economic and Political Weekly* 20, no. 4 (January 26, 1985): 148.

<sup>66</sup> Janardan Thakur, *All the Prime Minister's Men*, 1st ed. (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 1977).

enabling Indira Gandhi ‘to concentrate all the powers in her hand.’<sup>67</sup> All these members, with Indira being the pivot, belonged to a minimum connected willing coalition and envisaged a hegemonic role for India in South Asia.

Two important cases of coalition decision making will be examined here. (1) Indira’s regional grand strategic doctrine revealed in India’s 1971 war with Pakistan; and (2) India’s decision to test nuclear weapons in 1974. The 1971 and 1974 case illustrates Indira’s involvement in the regional neighborhood and also the strength of the minimum connected willing coalition. The 1971 military engagement for the dismemberment of Pakistan was spearheaded by Indira and her small committee, which included the Army chief Sam Manekshaw, the foreign and defense secretaries. This committee functioned outside the supervision of the cabinet and had Indira as the pivotal actor. She held the Home Ministry portfolio herself in 1971 with K.C. Pant and R.N. Mirdha as ministers of state. The formal Political Affairs Committee (PAC) and the interministerial committee headed by important bureaucrats like V.W. Swaminathan (Cabinet Secretary); P.N. Haksar and later P.N. Dhar (Prime Minister’s secretary); and K.B. Lal (Defence Secretary) means that a shared policy orientation in the enunciation of India’s hegemonic status existed without any need for side payments or bargaining among groups.<sup>68</sup> This minimum willing coalition enabled Indira to take steps that were decisive in India’s military victory. Indira’s utter contempt for Pakistan-America alliance boosted the officer’s morale, her diplomatic tact in keeping the Chinese out of the war and her military alliance with Soviet Union enabled the committee to concentrate on military strategy that were more pertinent to achieve immediate victory.<sup>69</sup> The strong and supportive coalition and less domestic pressure ensured that “the government of India firmly

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<sup>67</sup> Kapur, *Foreign Policies of Prime Ministers of India*, 128 Emphasis original.

<sup>68</sup> Myron Weiner, “India’s New Political Institutions,” *Asian Survey* 16, no. 9 (1976): 900.

<sup>69</sup> See Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *War and Secession: Pakistan, India, and the Creation of Bangladesh* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

headed by Mrs. Gandhi, could proceed at a pace and in directions carefully selected to meet India's basic objectives at the lowest possible price;" moreover the anti-Gandhi political opposition group "had little influence in the immediate post-election period in 1971."<sup>70</sup> Therefore all coalition members were within the minimum range of the policy/ideological preference to supplant Indira's hard-line approach to the crisis.

Indira's 1974 nuclear explosions and her implicit communication that India could guarantee security in its neighborhood without the influence of external powers also rested upon the minimum willing coalition of politicians, scientists and expert bureaucrats. India's scientific community headed by Vikram Sarabhai in 1970 showed interest in the civilian nuclear energy research and space programme however Dr. Ramanna who was the physics director at Bhabha Atomic Research Center (BARC) developed close contacts with Indira and, along with another eminent scientist Dr. Chidambaram, began research on nuclear weapons. Coordination among members from the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) like B.G. Nag Chaudhuri and N. S. Venkatesan with scientists from BARC was the first line of scientific coalition that preferred the bomb.<sup>71</sup> The only political decision to proceed to test was controlled by Indira. "In an effort to bolster India's newfound political status in South Asia after its victory in the 1971 war, Indira authorized a nuclear test."<sup>72</sup> A strong coalition of the willing led Indira not intimate her decision to test nuclear weapons to the immediate members of her cabinet or even to her Defence Minister. Her popularity reached its peak after the 1974 tests and the euphoria that surrounded India's nuclear tests implicitly asserted India's hegemonic position in South Asia. Stephen Cohen notes that "The detonation of a nuclear device, ostensibly a "peaceful nuclear explosion," in

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 138.

<sup>71</sup> See George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation Updated Edition with a New Afterword*, 1st ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

<sup>72</sup> Sumit Ganguly, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II: The Prospects and Sources of New Delhi's Nuclear Weapons Program," *International Security* 23, no. 4 (April 1, 1999): 159–160.

1974 appeared to confirm Delhi's premier regional position, since it demonstrated that India could become a nuclear weapons state if it wished to."<sup>73</sup> Therefore, the Indira Doctrine and all subsequent foreign policy decision making on India's neighborhood policy was the result of minimum connected willing coalition of members primed to establish regional hegemony in South Asia. Indira's son Rajiv Gandhi also pursued the Indira Doctrine and the next section shows the minimum connected willing coalition in Rajiv's cabinet.

### **3.2 Rajiv Gandhi's Grand Strategy and his Cabinet**

Rajiv came to power in 1984 and formulated a grand strategy following Indira Doctrine. He inherited a restive domestic and neighborhood region and the threat perceptions emanated from several quarters. India and Pakistan had fought two full-scale wars – first in 1965 and then in 1971 when Pakistan lost its eastern territory, Sino-Pakistan friendship began in an upward swing after India's nuclear tests in 1974, the problem of Sikh separatism led to the assassination of Indira, the ethnic Tamil factor in India-Sri Lanka relations troubled India's military engagement with Sri Lanka, the threat of Islamic fundamentalists coming to power in Afghanistan as soon as Soviet forces withdraw and Nepal's decision to procure arms from China in 1988 aggravated India's security concerns.

Rajiv responded to these threats and insecurities with strong military and diplomatic policies. Mitchell contextualized the leadership styles of Indian prime ministers and he showed that "Rajiv Gandhi's task orientation scores remain at the mean, which means that he can vary between an incremental and charismatic leadership styles but overall he is strategic like Indira."<sup>74</sup> His bilateral policies towards Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka and his grand strategic framework in the neighborhood remained in tune with Indira Doctrine. In

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<sup>73</sup> Cohen, *India*, 138.

<sup>74</sup> David Mitchell, "Determining Indian Foreign Policy: An Examination of Prime Ministerial Leadership Styles," *India Review* 6, no. 4 (2007): 260.

1986 the Indian Army began a military exercise in Rajasthan near the border of Pakistan codenamed “Exercise Brasstacks” that brought the South Asian rivals to the brink of war. “Brasstacks was supposed to ‘game’ India’s use of its superior armor and air assets in seeking major operational gains across Rajasthan into Pakistan.”<sup>75</sup> Rajiv supported Indian military’s plan and completely personalized his decision making in handling the crisis.<sup>76</sup> Similarly he flexed India’s hegemonic muscle against Nepal when it was determined to seek an independent path from India. “New Delhi was angered by Kathmandu’s arms purchases from China in 1988-89, including anti-aircraft weapons. It saw the arms acquisitions as a signal that Nepal viewed India as a hostile neighbor, and argued that Nepal had violated a 1965 agreement between the two countries.”<sup>77</sup> India imposed an economic blockade on Nepal that resulted in serious economic distress and shortage of vital goods in Nepal. Rajiv’s security policies against Sri Lanka were as pronounced as Indira Gandhi’s policies. The Indo-Sri Lankan “peace accord” was signed in June 1987 and the Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) was sent to Sri Lanka for guaranteeing and enforcing cessation of hostilities in Sri Lanka. Last but not the least, India’s engagement in Maldives was one of the success stories of India’s military missions in the neighborhood. An attempt to overthrow Maldivian President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom in November 1988 was organized by a wealthy Maldivian businessman Abdullah Lufthufi. Rajiv sent 1,600 paratroopers to the Maldives supported by three warships under India’s Southern Naval Command. Such extensive military engagements in the neighborhood underscored India’s desire to establish regional supremacy.

Rajiv Gandhi pursued his ideas of regional hegemony with the support of a small but strong cabinet. He created a strong cabinet by force and constant reshuffling that ensured a

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<sup>75</sup> P. R. Chari, Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, and Stephen P. Cohen, *Four Crises and a Peace Process: American Engagement in South Asia* (Washington D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 2007), 47.

<sup>76</sup> See Scott D. Sagan, “The Perils of Proliferation in South Asia,” *Asian Survey* 41, no. 6 (December 1, 2001): 1064–1086.

<sup>77</sup> Hagerty, “India’s Regional Security Doctrine,” 360.

minimum willing coalition each time he made important foreign policy decisions. Rajiv Gandhi had a 40 member council of ministers first sworn in on December 31, 1984. However during the entire period of his leadership Rajiv Gandhi was known for his making and unmaking of his council of ministers. Kapur notes that “During the first two years of his mandate, he had, for example, sent off forty-seven of his Ministers ‘to the guillotine’ of which five were Foreign Ministers, and as many as seven were Ministers of State-indeed a record in the annals of the post-independent history.”<sup>78</sup> Bhabani Sen Gupta remarked that “Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi probably deserves an entry in the *Guinness Book of Records* for ministerial reshuffles – 17 times in three years, including seven major shakeups.”<sup>79</sup> Since most of his cabinet ministers lived in a constant state of professional insecurity, all of Rajiv Gandhi’s regional hegemonic grand strategy was executed without any constant opposition. His coterie included several senior leaders of the Congress party *who also advised Indira Gandhi* like K. C. Pant, Ashok Send, Bansi Lal and Abdul Gafoor; and, his peripheral circle had bureaucrats like T.N. Kaul, G. Parthasarathy, Natwar Singh, V.P.Singh, Gopi Arora and B.G. Deshmukh who shared his hegemonic foreign policy orientation. Therefore, both Indira and Rajiv Gandhi had a minimum connected willing coalition in foreign policy decision making and they envisaged a hegemonic role for India in South Asia. The next section details the organizational culture of Indian military during Indira and Rajiv Gandhi’s period to explain India’s ability to pursue its hegemonic ambitions.

#### **4. The Organizational Culture of the Indian Military 1971-1989**

The Indian military’s organizational culture during the tenure of Indira and Rajiv Gandhi i.e. between 1971 and 1989 shared a set of basic assumptions that converged with the idea of regional hegemony envisioned by the Indian civilian policy makers. This convergence

<sup>78</sup> Kapur, *Foreign Policies of Prime Ministers of India*, 239.

<sup>79</sup> Bhabani Sen Gupta, “Cabinet-Making and Unmaking,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 23, no. 6 (February 6, 1988): 230.

led to India's pursuit of regional hegemony. According to Kier, the constraints set by civilian policy makers do not immediately translate into offensive or defensive military doctrines. "Instead, it is how a military's organizational culture responds to these constraints that determines doctrine."<sup>80</sup> Understanding the assumptions held by the Indian military during this period and the nature of the Indian military's powerful assimilation process can shed light on the organizational culture and the military's unique way of response.

After India's independence, the Indian military was not valued by dominant political leaders. India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru abhorred the military and saw it as an unnecessary financial burden. However, India's humiliating defeat in the Sino-Indian War of 1962 led to a large scale re-hauling of the armed forces. The defeat was largely seen as the result of Jawaharlal Nehru's disdain for the armed forces. The cultural diffusion for a stronger military originated after this debacle when defense ministers like Y.B. Chavan, Swaran Singh and Jagjivan Ram played more proactive role in strengthening the armed forces, meeting the needs of the military and redeeming its morale. According to Thomas, "the Chiefs-of-Staff of the Armed Services were given a greater voice in defense policy-making and better access to the higher levels of the political decision-making machinery."<sup>81</sup> India's defense budget increased from 2% to 4.5% after the Sino-Indian war and averaged about 3.6% of GNP until 1973.<sup>82</sup> The Indian public and the parliamentarians began to glorify the Indian Army and its importance for the defense of India.<sup>83</sup> Such increased attention to the armed forces led the Indian military to search for pathways to prove its mettle. For example when Indira decided to militarily intervene in East Pakistan, the Indian military had no hesitation to engage in offensive operations. Cohen and Dasgupta notes that "In early 1971,

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<sup>80</sup> Kier, "Culture and Military Doctrine," 68.

<sup>81</sup> Raju G. C. Thomas, "The Armed Services and the Indian Defense Budget," *Asian Survey* 20, no. 3 (March 1, 1980): 281.

<sup>82</sup> See *ibid.*, 282.

<sup>83</sup> See Frank Anthony in the *Lok Sabha Debates*, Third Series, XVI:36 (April 6, 1963), Col.83333



the Indian Army chief, General Sam Manekshaw, told Indira Gandhi that he needed nine months to prepare for war; she accepted this advice... And in the subsequent war in December 1971, “Indian military brought India its most spectacular military victory.”<sup>84</sup> In that intermediate nine months the Indian military’s belief about external security environment, its ability to engage in an offensive and assimilation of hegemonic strategies laid down by the civilian policy makers led to India’s pursuit of regional hegemony.

India’s 1971 military victory therefore marks a watershed in shaping the organizational cultural of Indian armed forces. The military started relentlessly pursuing supremacy by consolidating its arms procurements, defense contracts and increasing its fighting divisions. In 1979 a Pakistani foreign office spokesman pointed out that “acquisition by India of as many as 200 Jaguar aircraft introduced with it a highly sophisticated and an entirely new offensive weapons system into South Asia...heightened the security concerns of India’s small neighbours”<sup>85</sup> Therefore the military’s organizational culture was primed for the offensive and held dearly the assumption that it could ensure another victory with any country in the South Asian region. Towards the end of the 1971 War, the US ordered the USS *Enterprise* battle group into the Bay of Bengal. The repercussion of this gunboat diplomacy led to increase in Soviet naval sales to India and development of Indian Navy’s submarines and anti-submarine frigates.<sup>86</sup> The increase in the inventory of offensive weapons together with a clear hegemonic goal enunciated by the Indira and Rajiv Gandhi’s coalition led to further strengthening of the preference for offense dominance in Indian military organization. The cultural convergence between civilian policy makers and military organization on

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<sup>84</sup> Stephen Philip Cohen and Sunil Dasgupta, *Arming Without Aiming: India’s Military Modernization* (Washington D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 2010), 8–9.

<sup>85</sup> “Pakistan Criticizes India’s ‘Relentless Pursuit’ of Military Supremacy,” *BBC* (Karachi Home Service, March 2, 1979), LexisNexis Academic, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts.

<sup>86</sup> Thomas, “The Armed Services and the Indian Defense Budget.”

establishing regional hegemony was also effected due to strong military leaders like Manekshaw and Sundarji.

Leaders like Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, who was responsible for India's decisive victory in 1971 and General K. Sundarji, who headed the Army between 1986 and 1988 enabled the military organization to maintain its preferences for the offensive and established convergence with the civilian cabinet. Manekshaw directly made the Indira Gandhi's cabinet aware of the armed forces ability to engage in offensive military operations. He forcefully communicated India's ability to defeat Pakistan after the monsoon and personally engaged with the cabinet on his offensive doctrines in the 1971 war.<sup>87</sup> Similarly, General Sundarji created a mobile strike corps of armor and mechanized infantry capable of deep penetration into Pakistan. These were called as Reorganized Plains Infantry Divisions (RAPIDS) and as Cohen and Dasgupta points out "Technological modernization and reorganization contributed to and benefited from doctrines notable for their offensive spirit."<sup>88</sup> Under General Sundarji's leadership, Indian military planned for a massive offensive military maneuver and took Rajiv Gandhi under full confidence. It was called the Brasstacks exercise and it had its offense plans like the German Schlieffen Plan.<sup>89</sup> Nearly 400,000 troops were organized in a strike formation that triggered serious security concerns in Pakistan. Rajiv Gandhi's support for this exercise, which is the biggest land army maneuver by any country since World War II, shows the cultural diffusion between the civilian and military organization towards exercising regional hegemony.

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<sup>87</sup> See Leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Sam Manekshaw's lecture.  
<http://www.indiandefencereview.com/interview/Leadership-in-the-21st-Century-Sam-Manekshaw-MC.html> accessed on 20 April, 2012.

<sup>88</sup> Cohen and Dasgupta, *Arming Without Aiming*, 55.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

Rajiv was not only aware of Sundarji's offensive assumptions but also supported the armed forces to prepare for offensive nuclear operations. While simultaneously advocating universal nuclear disarmament, Rajiv took some measures to improve the Indian bomb system under the code name "New Armament Breaking Ammunition and Project (NABAP)" and planned Mirage-27 as appropriate aircraft for delivery purposes; "once this decision was taken, the plane was used to routinely practice loft bombing techniques for nuclear bomb delivery."<sup>90</sup> Therefore the Indian military organization during this period also became increasingly aware of the need to maintain a credible minimum nuclear deterrent. General Sundarji, along with India's leading strategic analyst K. Subrahmanyam vociferously advocated that India's nuclear weapons could ensure India's security in the region and the existential deterrence led to preference for the offensive in the armed forces. Indian military organization's cultural preference for the offensive is demonstrated in its regional interventions. India's military intervention in Sri Lanka purported as the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) with a commitment of over 50,000 troops in 1988-89; India's military intervention in Maldives in 1989 with 1,600 paratroopers and three warships under India's Southern Naval Command; and India's economic blockade of Nepal by forcefully closing two of the 17 land transit routes between the two countries show that the organization was prepared for hegemonic ambitions enunciated by the civilian policy makers. Between 1971 and 1989 Indian military engaged in one major war and three major regional interventions that stands as the highest track record of military offensive culture in Indian history. This convergence between civilian hegemonic strategy and military organizational culture for the offensive created a fertile ground for India's pursuit of regional hegemony.

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<sup>90</sup> Kapur, *Foreign Policies of Prime Ministers of India*, 220.

## Summary

In this chapter I provided a detailed analysis of regional hegemonic doctrine enunciated by two Prime Ministers, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. The minimum connected willing coalition enabled these Prime Ministers to envisage a leadership role for India in South Asia. However the mere presence of minimum connected willing coalition did not immediately translate into India's pursuit of regional hegemony. The organizational culture of the Indian armed forces between 1971 and 1989 held strong assumptions to undertake offensive operations in the region. The military victory against Pakistan, military engagement with Sri Lanka, Nepal and Maldives and its routine nuclear targeting and bombing practice primed the armed forces for offensive operations. The convergence of constraints set by civilian policy makers and the offensive organizational culture of the armed forces effected through military leaders like Manekshaw and Sundarji enabled India to pursue regional hegemony. In all its regional hegemonic operations, India was successful only twice in 1971 and 1989 against Pakistan and Maldives respectively. The reason for the success or failure of India's regional hegemonic operations is an entirely different research study. This empirical analysis only attempted to evaluate the conditions under which India pursued regional hegemony as a foreign policy strategy.

After the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in 1989 two fragile coalitions headed by Prime Ministers V.P.Singh and Chandra Shekhar lasted only for two years; the subsequent Congress government headed by Prime Minister P.V. Narashima Rao lasted a full five years from June 1991 to May 1996. However a minimum connected willing coalition required to envision a regional hegemony was either not present or highly concentrated on the exigencies of domestic politics. The government of I.K. Gujral came to power with a clear hegemonic

foreign policy strategy called the Gujral Doctrine.<sup>91</sup> However, I.K. Gujral's government lasted for less than one year between 1997 and 1998. The causal influence of military organizational culture on a state's pursuit of regional hegemony cannot be tested in such cases when governments fail to rule for the full five years' period. Military organizational culture has a causal explanatory potential when a research can show that (1) individuals and groups under similar structural conditions reach different conclusions; and (2) culturally derived preferences are not used instrumentally to achieve other goals. Therefore the next case study will analyze the pursuit of regional hegemony by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) which had a clear mandate for regional leadership and pursuit of hegemony. BJP government ruled from 1998 to 2004 but failed to pursue its hegemonic ambitions because the Indian military's organizational culture was primed for the defensive.

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<sup>91</sup> It is beyond the scope of this paper to detail Gujral Doctrine. See his I.K Gujral, *A Foreign Policy for India* (New Delhi: External Publicity Division, Ministry of External Affairs, 1998).

## Chapter III

### **The BJP Government and India's Inability to Pursue Regional Hegemonic Strategy**

#### **Introduction**

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won the 1998 elections based on the philosophical mooring of Hindu nationalism or *Hindutva*. “Simply stated, *Hindutva* is a quest for rediscovering India's Hindu genius and restoring the nation to its superior ancient Hindu glory.”<sup>92</sup> Hindu masculinity and martial spirits were the primary images in BJP's dream of gaining India a global recognition. This led to their rejection of Nehruvian idealism and Gandhian non-violence and asserting a rightful place for India among the leading powers. BJP's 1998 election manifesto highlighted ‘protecting India's national interest’ as a fundamental goal of India's foreign policy. On regional foreign policy strategy the BJP's election manifesto stated that its goals and principles would be:

To promote greater regional and civilizational relationship and strive for Asian solidarity in general and the development of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation in particular. Integral to this would be renewed efforts to improve bilateral relationships with all neighboring countries without any third party mediation or interference.<sup>93</sup>

Therefore Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee's foreign and security policies in the neighborhood are characterized by the assertion of India's cultural superiority, civilizational strength, militant Hinduism and pursuit of national self-interest. His vision for the South Asian region began with a criticism on India's inability to have tenacious policies towards China and Pakistan.<sup>94</sup> Understanding the composition of Vajpayee's cabinet, his pivotal role in foreign

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<sup>92</sup> S. Sreeram Chaulia, “BJP, India's Foreign Policy and the ‘Realist Alternative’ to the Nehruvian Tradition,” *International Politics* 39, no. 2 (June 2002): 220.

<sup>93</sup> BJP Election Manifesto, 1998, Chapter 7-Our Foreign Policy.

[http://www.bjp.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=411:chapter-7&catid=75&Itemid=501](http://www.bjp.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=411:chapter-7&catid=75&Itemid=501) accessed on 02 May 2012.

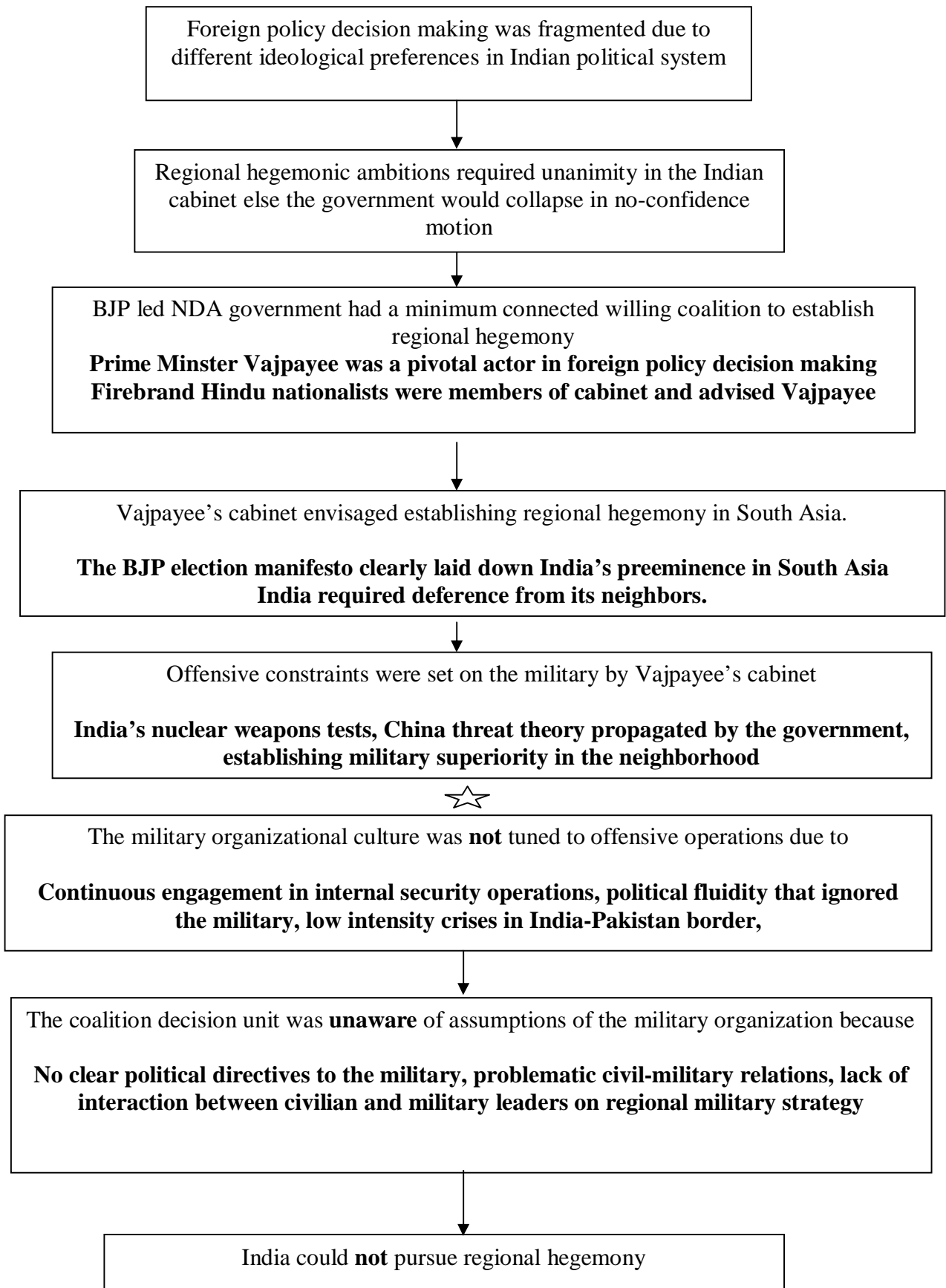
<sup>94</sup> Kapur, *Foreign Policies of Prime Ministers of India*, 368.

policy decision making along with his grand strategy for South Asia and the nature of civil-military relations in the country will provide a clear understanding of the nature of cultural convergence between cabinet and the military organization. Drawing upon the ‘theory of military organizational culture in coalitions’ this chapter attempts to answer why the militant Hindu nationalist BJP government was unable to pursue regional hegemony even though they envisaged it and structural conditions were more propitious for offensive operations.

I argue that the BJP ‘envisaged’ regional hegemony because of the minimum connected willing coalition in the foreign policy cabinet of Prime Minister Vajpayee. However, the Indian military’s organizational culture was primed for the defensive that stymied India’s ability to ‘pursue’ regional hegemonic policies. The incongruence between the hegemonic assumptions of BJP’s cabinet and Indian military’s defensive organizational culture led to India’s inability to pursue a regional hegemonic strategy. The rest of the chapter is organized as follows: Firstly I provide an overview of Vajpayee’s grand strategy in South Asia along with India’s threat perceptions and response. This provides the background for understanding the rationale for BJP’s regional doctrine. Secondly I explain the features of BJP’s regional doctrine. In the third and fourth section, I provide details of Vajpayee’s cabinet, the shared policy orientation of members towards a regional hegemonic strategy, the organizational culture of the Indian military and change in its assumptions since the end of Rajiv Gandhi’s leadership. This enables testing the ‘theory of military organizational culture in coalitions’ against empirical evidence. I conclude the chapter with a brief analysis, interpretation and limitations. The theory of military organizational culture in coalitions established in chapter one will guide the parameters of this chapter. Figure 3 provides a theoretical road map of the entire chapter.

Figure 3

**Theory of military organizational culture in coalitions under BJP Government**





## 1. Vajpayee's Grand Strategy in South Asia

Prime Minister Vajpayee came to power with a clear grand strategic goal of conducting nuclear tests and his entire attitude towards external powers and immediate neighbors hinged on India's nuclear status. The 1998 election manifesto stated that:

The BJP rejects the notion of nuclear apartheid and will actively oppose attempts to impose a hegemonistic nuclear regime by means of CTBT, FMCR and MTCR. We will not be dictated by anybody in matters of security requirements and in the exercise of the nuclear option we will pursue our national goals and principles steadfastly.<sup>95</sup>

The BJP-led coalition government conducted nuclear tests on 11 and 13 May 1998 within eight weeks of assuming power. On 27 May 1998 Pakistan followed suit and conducted nuclear weapons test at the Chagai Hills. Following India's nuclear tests Vajpayee wrote to US President Bill Clinton in a letter that was leaked by Washington:

We have an overt nuclear weapon state on our borders [China], a state which committed armed aggression against India in 1962. Although our relations with that country have improved in the last decade or so, an atmosphere of distress persists mainly due to the unresolved border problem. To add to the distress that country has materially helped another neighbour of ours [Pakistan] to become a covert nuclear weapons state.<sup>96</sup>

Therefore immediately after assuming power Vajpayee government antagonized the US by opposing the nuclear regime, it strategically confronted Pakistan with nuclear tests and propagated the China threat idea. Vajpayee's grand strategy in South Asia was to manage these exigencies, build strategic partnerships with developed countries based on pragmatic rather than ideological policies and derive maximum mileage with its military capabilities and nuclear weapons.<sup>97</sup> Analyses of India's threat perceptions and response, diplomatic policies and military policies show that India's grand strategy in the neighborhood attempted

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<sup>95</sup> BJP Election Manifesto, 1998, Chapter 7-Our Foreign Policy.  
[http://www.bjp.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=411:chapter-7&catid=75&Itemid=501](http://www.bjp.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=411:chapter-7&catid=75&Itemid=501) accessed on 02 May 2012.

<sup>96</sup> Quoted in David M. Malone, *Does the Elephant Dance?: Contemporary Indian Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 138.

<sup>97</sup> See Chaulia, "BJP, India's Foreign Policy and the 'Realist Alternative' to the Nehruvian Tradition."

preponderance. India's nuclear tests, its military success against Pakistan during the 1999 Kargil Crisis, the Indian government's decision to mobilize large military troops against Pakistan after the December 2001 terror attacks on the Indian Parliament, Vajpayee's proposal for an Asian Economic Community in 2003 and its rapprochement with the US with the signing of the Next Step in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) support the argument that Indian policy makers attempted to control the external security environment and strengthen its regional foothold in South Asia. In grand strategic terms, Vajpayee wanted to ensure primacy of India in South Asia, he offered unilateral economic concession to the neighbors, approved border infrastructure modernization programmes and attempted to increase regional integration. The BJP's regional hegemonic doctrine can be inferred from the vision statement, election manifesto and pragmatic policies to establish strategic primacy in the region.

## 2. BJP's Regional Hegemonic Doctrine

The BJP's regional hegemonic doctrine was a response to the 'threatening' regional security environment in South Asia. The essence of BJP's regional doctrine was asserting India's primacy in the region by implicitly forcing deference from all its neighbors. BJP had the concept of *Akhand Bharat*, or United India, which would comprise the whole of South Asia. In 2001, Advani floated the idea himself in public.<sup>98</sup> A declassified CIA document that analyzed BJP's optic of the world stated that:

Hindu nationalists publicly insist that India's regional primacy be asserted vigorously, and they bitterly oppose attempts by external powers – the US and China in particular – to alter the Delhi-centric balance of power in the subcontinent. The BJP probably calculates that demonstrating its nuclear prowess and bending its neighbors to its will should earn India world power status and a permanent UN Security Council seat.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Quoted in Strobe Talbott, *Engaging India: Diplomacy, Democracy, and the Bomb* (Washington D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), fn.5, Ch.5.

<sup>99</sup> Director of Central Intelligence, *National Intelligence Daily*, 21 May, 1998, Top Secret PASS NID 98-119CX approved for release March 2001  
[http://www.foia.cia.gov/docs/DOC\\_0000534076/DOC\\_0000534076.pdf](http://www.foia.cia.gov/docs/DOC_0000534076/DOC_0000534076.pdf) accessed on 9th May, 2012.

To establish strategic primacy in the region the BJP government set up a Group of Ministers (GoM) to recommend a strategic doctrine for India. The GoM had prominent members like L.K. Advani (Chairman and Minister of Home Affairs), George Fernandes (Minister of Defence), Singh (Minister of External Affairs) and Yashwant Sinha (Minister of Finance) and they submitted a report, *Reforming the National Security System: Recommendations of the Group of Ministers*, to Vajpayee on February 26, 2001. The GOM report specifically recommended a complete overhaul of India's national security structure and had recommendations in the four areas of intelligence, internal security, border management and the management of defense.<sup>100</sup> China, Pakistan, problems of non-state actors and security problems of porous borders figured prominently in the report thereby establishing a principle of hegemonic consolidation of India's position in the South Asian region. Therefore the essence of BJP's regional security doctrine was (1) establishing the primacy of India in the South Asian region both through hard and soft power; (2) maintaining a strong and modernized military to meet any challenges from China and Pakistan; (3) initiating pragmatic policies without ideological preferences for non-alignment. BJP's obsession with China and Pakistan reduced any grand strategic calculations with other smaller neighbors however a more structured focused investigation of BJP's Doctrine – based on the theoretical framework developed in chapter one – can shed light on its sources and its place in India's grand strategic behavior. This requires understanding the strength of Vajpayee's cabinet and the organizational culture of the Indian military.

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<sup>100</sup> Group of Ministers, *Reforming the National Security System - Recommendations of the Group of Ministers* (New Delhi: Government of India, 2001).

### 3. Minimum Willing Connected Coalition in Vajpayee's Government

#### 3.1 A.B. Vajpayee's Cabinet

As a leading member of a coalition led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government Vajpayee had complete authority in determining India's foreign policy strategies when he came to power in 1998. His experience as Minister for External Affairs in Morarji Desai's cabinet for two years between 1977 and 1979 gave him a lead advantage in foreign policy decision making in his government. Kapur clearly notes that "the real epicenter of his conceptualised thinking on foreign policy was nationalism: firmness towards its adversarial neighbours, obtainment of a great power status through nuclear weapons, continuous identification and pursuit of India's national interest in a changing multi-polar world, and the steadfast protection of India's economy in an increasingly globalised world."<sup>101</sup> This clear and explicit vision required working with only a few trustworthy members in a highly personalized environment and two of Vajpayee's close confidants Jaswant Singh and Brajesh Mishra, became undisputed leaders of his inner core. Vajpayee used all his authority "to neutralize the normal democratic institutions of decision making in foreign policy, including the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), National Security Council (NSC), Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA), and the Cabinet itself," and discussed his foreign policy strategies with Jaswant Singh and Brajesh Mishra.<sup>102</sup> Vajpayee, Jaswant Singh and Brajesh Mishra were also assisted by other members in the cabinet who shared an ideological preference to exercise regional hegemony in South Asia.

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<sup>101</sup> Kapur, *Foreign Policies of Prime Ministers of India*, 369.

<sup>102</sup> J. Bandyopadhyaya, *The Making of India's Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 2003), 290.

Many members in Vajpayee's cabinet were hardcore Indian nationalists who did not want to compromise on national security and sovereignty. Vajpayee's first political companions in the cabinet like L.K. Advani, Jag Mohan, Murali Manohar Joshi among others, were firebrand Hindu nationalists who worked to revive India's lost militant glory. The second category of officials were members like Arun Singh who was the Minister of State for Defense in the Rajiv Gandhi government and advised him on exercising regional hegemony in South Asia and B.K. Agnihotri, who was appointed as the Adviser in the Indian Embassy in Washington with the personal rank of Ambassador to the USA. Arun Singh in particular, who worked with Rajiv Gandhi in espousing a regional hegemonic strategy for India subsequently offered his loyalty to the BJP. "He was reported to be the "Big Boss without constitutional sanction but with limitless brief and access to state secrets" in the MEA."<sup>103</sup> BJP's regional doctrine was enunciated with the support of this coterie of militant Hindu nationalist members. But the role of Jaswant Singh and Brajesh Mishra in assisting the Prime Minister and consolidating a shared policy orientation towards the neighborhood demands more attention.

Jaswant Singh believed that "India's size and growth prospects will depend on its ability to influence its own neighborhood for the better."<sup>104</sup> He was a former cavalry officer in the Indian army and gained his position in the government through his specialized knowledge in defense and security issues. Before he became Minister for External Affairs in the BJP dominated NDA government in 1999, Jaswant Singh served as Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission. Vajpayee assigned the mission to mend the diplomatic relationship with the US after India's nuclear tests in 1998 because Jaswant was one of the architects of

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 294.

<sup>104</sup> "'India's Neighborhood Watch' by Jaswant Singh | Project Syndicate," *Project Syndicate*, 17 August, 2011 <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/india-s-neighborhood-watch> accessed on 05 May 2012.

India's security and nuclear strategy.<sup>105</sup> Brajesh Mishra, on the other hand was personally appointed by the Prime Minister as his Principal Secretary and National Security Adviser. Mishra dominated the formulation and implementation of India's foreign and security policies sharing the hegemonic policy orientation of the BJP government. Therefore the BJP dominated NDA government established a shared policy orientation on regional hegemonic foreign policy strategy with the help of a small inner circle of decision makers with Vajpayee being a pivotal actor who controlled a disproportionate amount of key political resources on foreign policy making.

Two cases will be briefly examined here to establish that Vajpayee's cabinet had a minimum connected willing coalition: (1) India's decision to test nuclear weapons in 1998; and (2) India's decision to mobilize large troops on the Pakistan border in response to the December 2001 terror attacks on the Indian parliament. Vajpayee invested a huge amount of political capital to test nuclear weapons and avoided any consultations with members beyond the minimum coalition. His closest advisors Brajesh Mishra, L.K.Advani, Professor Rajendra Singh of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Jaswant Singh and a few other senior BJP leaders made the decision to test nuclear weapons in 1998.<sup>106</sup> Perkovich claims that no one but Vajpayee, Jaswant Singh, Brajesh Mishra and perhaps L.K.Advani decided on India's nuclear tests.<sup>107</sup> Similar to Indira Gandhi's decision to test nuclear weapons, the BJP's decision depended on a strong coalition of the willing led by Vajpayee without any consultation with defense or finance ministers. The grand political calculation of Vajpayee and his small foreign policy circle in testing nuclear weapons was to reshape the external environment and achieve great power status. The same team of coalition members was later

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<sup>105</sup> Talbott, *Engaging India*, 74.

<sup>106</sup> Kanti Bajpai, "The BJP and the Bomb," in *Inside Nuclear South Asia*, ed. Scott Sagan (Stanford Security Studies, 2009), 25–67.

<sup>107</sup> Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, 408–409.

responsible for enunciating a regional hegemonic foreign policy strategy against Pakistan and China and recommending an overhaul of India's defense and security apparatus.

Secondly, India's decision to mobilize troops for Operation Parakram was also due to the strength of minimum connected willing coalition. The 2001-2002 military standoff in response to the terror attacks on the Indian Parliament was the largest military mobilization since World War II. After the terror attacks, the Indian Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) headed by Vajpayee assembled to decide the appropriate course of action. The CCS 'unanimously' decided that India should mobilize its troops and 'teach Pakistan a lesson.' The CCS consisted of the same coterie of loyalists to Vajpayee - L. K. Advani, Jaswant Singh, Brajesh Mishra who advised the Prime Minister on the key decision to mobilize the troops. The one explanation for such a high concentration of decision making power in foreign policy strategies with the Prime Minister and his two closest confidants Jaswant Singh and Brajesh Mishra is that the Hindu nationalist ideology of having a militant foreign policy made them unwilling to bargain or engage in situational pressures at home or abroad on issues of foreign policy strategies. Therefore, Brajesh Mishra, L.K. Advani, Jaswant Singh, Arun Singh and Agnihotri along with Vajpayee formed a minimum connected willing coalition in the BJP government and envisaged regional hegemony of India in South Asia; Vajpayee played the role of pivotal actor, the cabinet shared a policy orientation on exercising regional hegemonic foreign and security policy in the neighborhood and the tight knit coalition did not allow bargaining or side payments on foreign policy strategies; yet India was unable to pursue regional hegemony. The next section analyzes the organizational culture of the armed forces, which sheds light on India's inability to pursue regional hegemonic policies even under a strong cabinet.

#### 4. The Organizational Culture of the Indian Military 1990-2004

The Indian military's organizational culture determines the nature of military doctrine and its defensive posture led to India's inability to pursue regional hegemony. During the tenure of Vajpayee between 1998 and 2004 the Indian military's organizational culture was primed for the defensive due to its extensive involvement in internal security operations and low intensity conflicts against non-state actors; and it did not share the basic set of assumptions of regional hegemony held dearly by civilian policy makers due to unstable civil-military relations in the country. This lack of convergence between the ideals of civilian policy makers and the culture of the armed forces led to India's inability to pursue regional hegemony in South Asia. Understanding the assumptions held by the Indian military during this period and the nature of the Indian military's assimilation can shed light on the organizational culture and the military's defensive response to the hegemonic constraints set by civilian policy makers.

After the assassination of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1989 the next stable government was established by Congress party headed by P.V. Narashima Rao between 21 June 1991 and 16 May 1996. Rao's emergence as a Prime Minister was an accident and he followed a political principle that 'not to decide was a decision' – in other words an atmosphere of indecisiveness surrounded his personality.<sup>108</sup> J.N. Dixit described Rao as “an unlikely and unexpected figure on the stage of foreign and security policies because for the first forty years of his political career he was not a known figure in Congress party discussions.”<sup>109</sup> I argue that Rao's personality factor and the subsequent domestic and

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<sup>108</sup> Kapur, *Foreign Policies of Prime Ministers of India*, 297.

<sup>109</sup> Jyotindra Nath Dixit, *Makers of India's Foreign Policy: Raja Ram Mohun Roy to Yashwant Sinha* (HarperCollins Publishers India a joint venture with India Today Group, 2004), 227.



international crises led to strained civil-military relations in the country that contributed to a basic set of defensive assumptions in the culture of the Indian armed forces.

The deterioration of offensive potential of the Indian armed forces was aggravated by a series of domestic political crises in India from the 1990s. By 1989 when Islamic militants in the Vale of Kashmir agitated for secession against the Indian state violence in the Indian-held Kashmir reached higher proportions. V.P. Singh who was the then Prime Minister of India lacked a political authority to set offensive missions to the Indian armed forces and naturally the organizational culture of the military tuned itself to meet the challenges from terrorists and non-state actors. “The Indian Army’s chief concern, according to the then – Chief of Army Staff (COAS) V. N. Sharma was to stem the infiltration of Pakistan-backed Sikh and Kashmiri “terrorists,” who threatened to overwhelm local Indian police forces.”<sup>110</sup> The Indian military’s engagement in internal security policing operations were not new, according to Dasgupta, “[i]n the period 1982-89, the army was deployed in ‘aid to civil power’ 721 times. In the twenty years from 1951-70, the army had been called out 476 times.”<sup>111</sup> Such an extensive internal role of the army led to an institutional decay and the inability of armed forces to engage in “hot pursuits” against external adversaries. Dasgupta states that:

The pressure of internal security duties takes its toll when a tired, sleep-deprived soldier sitting in a bunker loses control by firing into a hostile crowd of protesters, some of whom might be carrying guns...In 1993-1994, army chief Bipin Chandra Joshi felt compelled to issue his “ten commandments” – a list of dos and don’ts [on internal security] that soldiers were ordered to carry in their pocket at all times.<sup>112</sup>

Such diversification of the priorities of armed forces since the 1990s led to a dilution of their offensive potential to engage in regional hegemonic pursuits. Prime Minister

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<sup>110</sup> Devin T. Hagerty, “Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia: The 1990 Indo-Pakistani Crisis,” *International Security* 20, no. 3 (December 1, 1995): 97.

<sup>111</sup> Sunil Dasgupta, “India: The New Militaries,” in *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia*, ed. Muthiah Alagappa (California: Stanford University Press, 2001), 96.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

Narashima Rao's leadership was also beset with myriad domestic crises in quick succession like the demolition of Babri Masjid Mosque and the large scale Hindu-Muslim riots, Kashmir insurgency and Bombay bomb blasts that led the government to increasingly deploy the armed forces for internal security operations. Rao's decision to postpone the scheduled Prithivi missile tests in 1994 and ceding to American pressure to abandon a plan to conduct nuclear weapons tests in 1995 was different from Indira Gandhi's assertive decision making and prioritizing offense dominance in the region.<sup>113</sup> The Indian army's organizational culture therefore naturally adapted to the internal security crises and problems from non-state actors that diluted its offensive potential. After Narashima Rao's Prime Ministership the Indian polity witnessed the worst 'musical chair' political coalition governments. Three governments headed by Prime Ministers A.B. Vajpayee, H.D. Deva Gowda and I.K. Gujral came to power in quick succession and collapsed immediately in less than two years. The political fluidity in the 1990s failed to offer clarity of missions to the Indian armed forces.

Between 1990 and 1998 the Indian military did not engage in any "wars" in its neighborhood but was deployed for managing internal crises. The demolition of Babji Masjid – a 16<sup>th</sup> century mosque – by Hindu fundamentalists, created large scale inter-communal rioting between India's Hindu and Muslim communities and marked a watershed in internal security operations of the armed forces. Therefore when Prime Minister Vajpayee came to power in 1998 the organizational culture of the Indian military was already primed for the defensive resulting in lack of convergence in the visions between the civilians and the military. The problems in civil-military relations in the BJP government reached its culminating point when Defense Minister Fernandes dismissed Navy Chief Admiral Vishnu Bhagwat from his post on the grounds of insubordination. Vishnu Bhagwat demanded

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<sup>113</sup> Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, 146.

autonomy in appointing his subordinate naval commanders but the BJP led civil authorities were not ready to trust military autonomy. This was the first time a serving chief had ever been fired by the government and that subsequently led to BJP government losing a vote of confidence on 17 April 1999. Although the BJP government came to power once again through fresh elections the strained civil-military relations did not create a cultural convergence to establish regional hegemony in South Asia. Added to this the rampant corruption in defense procurements did not encourage the armed forces to engage in offensive operations because of its lack of confidence in the military machines. For instance Rajiv's coterie and the Prime Minister were accused of having received 50 million dollars in front-end commissions from a Swedish armament firm, Bofors, in 1986, for the purchase of heavy artillery guns amounting to 1.12 billion dollars; further accusations about the purchase of T-90 battle tanks and Sukhoi Su-30 fighter aircrafts were made against several governments since 1990s.<sup>114</sup> When arms procurement remains the major source of corruption in India, the culture of the armed forces cannot favor an offensive doctrine that might be detrimental to its own survival. The discontentment of the armed forces on corruption was brought to light by Naval Chief Vishnu Bhagwat after he was dismissed and subsequent investigations on corruption in defense deals by journalists led to the resignation of George Fernandes, the Minister of Defense who fired Vishnu Bhagwat.<sup>115</sup> This problematic push and pull in the civil-military relations in India led the military organization to privilege the defensive doctrine because it lacked the confidence in the arms procured for military operations. The armed forces also lost confidence in the missions given by civilian policy makers. This led Vajpayee to state that the government's concern are "that the country's security apparatus remains strong as ever; *that our soldiers retain the fullest confidence in it;*

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<sup>114</sup> See Dinesh Kumar, "The Officer Crisis in the Indian Military," *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 33, no. 3 (2010): 442–467.

<sup>115</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot, "Indian Democracy: The Rule of Law on Trial," *India Review* 1, no. 1 (2002): 86–89.

that institutions of governance and our political system regain their health; that our people's trust and faith in them are fortified."<sup>116</sup> The inability of the civilian policy makers to set logical missions for the armed forces, the fluid domestic situation, armed forces' involvement in internal security operations and corruption in arms procurement led to strained civil-military relations in the country. Therefore, when the BJP led NDA government assumed power in 1998, the Indian armed forces held a defensive doctrine because it lacked the confidence in the ability of the civilian policy makers to efficiently meet the organizational requirements of the armed forces.

## Summary

In this chapter I provided a detailed analysis of regional hegemonic doctrine enunciated by the BJP government led by the Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee. The minimum connected willing coalition in the cabinet and the pivotal role played by Vajpayee enabled the BJP to envisage a regional hegemony role for India. However the Indian military organizational culture between 1990 and 1998 held strong assumptions to implement defensive operations in the region. A series of domestic politics crises and internal security situations created a defensive doctrine in the Indian armed forces since the end of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's leadership. This lack of convergence between the hegemonic constraints set by civilian policy makers and the defensive organizational culture of the armed forces stymied India's ability to pursue regional hegemony. In the fourteen year period between 1990 and 2004 the Indian army successfully thwarted just one crisis with Pakistan and in the remaining period engaged in internal security operations. The empirical analysis offered in this chapter shows that the defensive organizational culture of the Indian military failed to propel India to pursue the hegemonic ambitions held by policy makers.

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 88 My Emphasis.

## Conclusion

This thesis established that the influence of offensive military organizational culture on a strong cabinet is an important causal variable for an emerging powers' pursuit of regional hegemony. A state's enunciation of an important foreign policy strategy requires the support of a minimum connected willing coalition. However, the pursuit of hegemony is an extreme form of foreign policy strategy that requires both the minimum willing connected coalition and the willingness of the armed forces to respond to the constraints set by civilian policy makers. Therefore the organizational culture of the military and its cultural diffusion in the strong cabinet can explain a state's pursuit of regional hegemony. This contingent theoretical generalization is based on a single case study of India between 1971 and 2004. This research empirically showed India 'envisaged' regional hegemony under the Prime Ministership of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi because of the shared policy orientation of their strong cabinet. The organizational culture of the Indian armed forces during their tenure enabled their government to 'pursue' regional hegemonic policies. Similarly, this research also showed that in 1998 Prime Minister Vajpayee came to power with a strong cabinet and shared policy orientation to establish India as a regional hegemon in South Asia. However, the organizational culture of the Indian military was primed for the defensive that stymied the government's vision to pursue hegemonic ambitions in the region. The result and generalizations based on the Indian case are more narrow and contingent but more precise and clear. In other words, the congruence method applied in this research shows consistency in the predictions of the "theory of military organizational culture in coalitions" established in this research.

The theory of military organizational culture in coalition offers a better analytical explanation compared to other competing alternatives. Both Indira Gandhi and Vajpayee had

a strong autocratic control on their cabinet therefore leadership theories that emphasize the role of personalities in IR cannot explain all of the variance between Indira Gandhi's government and Vajpayee's government. Similarly, the institutional weakness of the Indian foreign bureaucracy argument begs the question of why the same bureaucracy is successful in implementing India's 'Look East policy' in East Asia. Finally, neoclassical realism is a closest competitor that states that "the link between power and policy requires close examination of the context within which foreign policies are formulated and implemented."<sup>117</sup> Neoclassical realism is inadequate to explain how cultural factors influence political actors' perceptions. The theory offered in this thesis offers a better explanation using cultural indicators.

However, this is not a call for an entire adoption of cultural analyses. Structural analyses are useful for understanding international politics and they offer some serious challenge to the empirics offered in this thesis. For instance, in 1993, Narashimha Rao went to Beijing and signed an important agreement on the "maintenance of peace and tranquility" along the line of actual control (LAC) as a confidence building measure. The influence of this structural transformation on Indian military organization is not clear. Similarly the collapse of the Soviet Union led to a new treaty of "friendship and cooperation" between India and Russia that lacked the *military* protection clauses of its predecessor that could have reduced the offense preference of the military. The introduction of nuclear weapons further created a stability-instability paradox at the structural level between India and Pakistan.<sup>118</sup> According to the stability-instability paradox, the purported stability offered by nuclear weapons by not letting two nations engage in large scale conventional war due to fears of mutually assured

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<sup>117</sup> Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (1998): 147.

<sup>118</sup> See Sumit Ganguly, "Indo-Pakistani Nuclear Issues and the Stability/instability Paradox," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 18, no. 4 (1995): 325–334.

destruction creates instability at the sub-conventional level, triggering a ‘high level’ of low intensity conflicts by non state actors and armed insurgents. Any offensive doctrine of the Indian army had the inherent problem of triggering nuclear crises that largely changed the army’s organizational culture to the defensive. The challenges offered by structural analyses can only be resolved after the Indian government declassifies its foreign policy decision making documents.

This research is envisaged as a “building block” study where the pursuit of hegemonic foreign policy strategies by other emerging powers such as Brazil, Russia, China, South Korea, Indonesia, among others fills a “space” in the overall theory on emerging powers and regional hegemony.<sup>119</sup> The “theory of military organizational culture in coalitions” provides the bedrock foundation for all subsequent building block research on emerging powers. Based on the evidence from the foreign policy strategies of other emerging powers this theory can be modified and improved upon.

Finally, this study offers three lessons to policymakers in emerging powers interested in pursuing hegemony in their region. First, a minimum connected willing coalition is necessary to establish legitimate constraints on the armed forces to follow the directives of policy makers. Fragile coalitions and lack of shared policy orientation in the cabinet only allow the military organization to reinforce their shared assumptions and belief systems without regard for civilian directives. Such developments could lead to strained civil-military relations in the country. Second, policy makers must recognize that it is not possible to immediately reengineer the armed forces immediately upon assuming power. The military organization has a culture of its own that would be a powerful barrier to the aims and

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<sup>119</sup> Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2005), 76.

ambitions of civilian policy makers. Kier rightly said that “the military’s culture limits what they [civilian policy makers] imagine is possible. Changing military doctrine is hard, but it is harder still if we neglect culture’s role.”<sup>120</sup> Finally, the influence of nuclear weapons hinders a state’s ability to pursue regional hegemony. Defensive defense military doctrines due to nuclear deterrence have limited all possible hegemonic pursuit even by the most powerful state on earth.

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<sup>120</sup> Kier, “Culture and Military Doctrine,” 93.



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