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Identity and Securitization in the Democratic Peace: The United States and the Divergence of Response to India and Iran's Nuclear Programs

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While almost a decade old, Ted Hopf's observation that the democratic peace is an observation in search of a theory still holds validity. In particular, the mechanisms behind the democratic peace are poorly understood, making it difficult for scholars to provide a compelling explanation. Underappreciated in the existing work is the role of identity and the importance this has for driving the democratic peace. With a focus on developing a dyadic democratic peace mechanism and using a case study approach, this paper utilizes the Copenhagen School's securitization framework to examine how identity plays out in the US response to the Indian and Iranian nuclear programs. It finds that in fact identity does play an important role in how security policy is constructed. In policy terms, if the democratic peace does rely on identity to trigger the constraining norms that limit the escalation of conflict to violence, it is unlikely the democratic peace can be spread by force and it is possible that states nominally democratic can be excluded from the community of democracies if their behavior or significant other aspects of their perceived identity are at variance with the accepted democratic identity standard.

"The government of Iran claims that it had peaceful purposes for nuclear energy, but the world does not buy that claim. The solution to this problem is bringing an advanced democracy in Iran."—Iranian Nobel Laureate Shirin Ebadi (PBS 2006).

"Words matter. Words have consequences."—Robert Byrd, Senator from West Virginia (Senator Byrd [WV] February 13, 2002).

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In 2006, US President George W. Bush concluded negotiations with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh over a deal to share US nuclear technology and fuel with India's civilian nuclear energy program. The deal came despite long-standing Indian refusal to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and American opposition to the Indian nuclear weapons program. The deal might be interpreted as Washington balancing against a rising China threat by allying with India. However, there are significant reasons to doubt a power-balancing approach could succeed. India maintains a policy of improving relations with China and is a founding member of the Non-Aligned movement. Arising out of the tradition of non-alignment, significant political players within India oppose both the nuclear deal and the larger strategic relationship with the United States which the deal implies (*Chicago Sun Times* 2008). India has also expressed interest in joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and obtained observer status in the SCO on the strength of its relationship with Russia (Hiro 2006; Ramachandran 2006), suggesting that any US effort to utilize India as a counterbalance to China, Russia, or the SCO would be ill-fated. Finally, the strong economic ties between China and India, in light of India's longstanding primary policy focus on economic development, makes India an unlikely partner for strategic balancing.[1]

The deal also seems to run against US strategic interests. Critics charge that the US deal would fatally undermine the three-and-a-half decade old NPT (Mohammed 2008). Locked in what Bush referred to as a ''War on Terror,'' any deal to disseminate advanced nuclear technology seems inimical to US concerns over the international availability of nuclear technology and weapons. Delving further into the terrorism context, the US deal with India without a corresponding agreement with Pakistan has the potential to embarrass India's long-time rival. Given the critical role Pakistan plays in US military operations in Afghanistan as well as in the larger policy response to terrorism, an approach that undermines the US-Pakistan relationship or Pakistani leadership is curious.

At the same time, the US government has strengthened its efforts to censure Iranian—an original signatory of the NPT—nuclear efforts. Resolutions, sponsored by the United States, France, and Britain, have been passed by the UN Security Council condemning and sanctioning Iran (Charbonneau 2008). While representatives discussed the possibility of resolving the issues surrounding Iran's nuclear program peacefully and the resolutions have had some economic impact, the Bush administration claimed it kept the use of force as a viable option (Buzbee 2008; Fisher 2008). Again, there is a possible realpolitik interpretation. Iran is a rising power in a region critical to US economic and physical security. The American invasion of Iraq weakened a primary counterbalance to Iranian influence. The belligerence of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad justifies US concerns that the nuclear infrastructure masks efforts to develop nuclear weapons capabilities. Finally, the United States may oppose Iran's nuclear efforts in an effort to favor traditional allies like Saudi Arabia.

There are problems with this argument as well. Bush Administration complaints about the Iranian nuclear program began while reformist President Mohammed Khatami held office (*CNN International* 2003). Moreover, the US has been the beneficiary of Iranian cooperation in Afghanistan (Barker 2007). Given Iran's central location to US military efforts, policies that serve to antagonize Iran hold the potential to complicate US military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Additionally, efforts to confront Iran raise the probability that Iran will pursue membership options in the SCO, including becoming a full member, bol-

[1] In 2004, the latest data available from the OECD, US-India bilateral trade stood at ~$22.5 billion while India-China bilateral trade stood at $13.6 billion (*Asia Times* 2005; OECD 2006). In June, 2007, Sino-Indian trade, at $17.2 billion and was on track to surpass Indo-American trade by year's end (Aiyar 2007).

stering an IGO some argue poses a direct challenge to NATO and US security policy (Bhadrakumar 2006; Hiro 2006; Ramachandran 2006). Efforts to empower Saudi Arabia by proxy are also problematic, as US aggressive involvement is likely to accelerate Iranian nuclear efforts and grant the Iranian government a significant degree of legitimacy internally and regionally as it stands firm against an unpopular foreign power.

The contrast in American policy is striking. A state outside the NPT is rewarded with advanced nuclear technology while an original signatory of the treaty is portrayed as an active threat. This paper uses the contrast in US policy to explore the following questions: Why does the United States construct India benevolently, while constructing Iran as threatening? How have US policymakers justified their security policies to the public? The theoretical response offered here continues the development of the constructivist approach to the democratic peace with a distinct focus on mechanism. In particular, I introduce an analytical instrument new to the discussion on the democratic peace—Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde's securitization (1998).

The securitization framework has the potential to provide significant insight into the mechanisms of the democratic peace—a considerable weakness in the literature. Müller and Wolff (2004) argue that the dominant mechanisms in the literature—political structure and political norms—are monadic mechanisms attempting to explain a dyadic phenomenon. The mechanistic ambiguity of the democratic peace leaves the theory open to legitimate counterarguments based on critiques of correlation (Gartzke 2000; Green, Kim, and Yoon 2001; Ward, Siverson, and Cao 2007) or reverse causality (Midlarsky 1995; Thompson 1996; James, Solberg, and Wolfson 1999). The lack of clear mechanistic understanding also makes it difficult for scholars and policymakers to integrate the democratic peace into a coherent foreign policy to enable democracies to take advantage of the phenomenon.

Securitization also serves to reintegrate the democratic peace back into security studies more broadly. The democratic peace represents a regularity in how security threats are constructed, not an exception. Using securitization to trace that regularity and how it operates will improve our understanding of how democracies in general construct their threat environment. Securitization also reasserts the importance of politics in security policy. While the institutions and balance of power play a role in international security, understanding how threats and policy responses are identified and constructed by leaders both inside their heads and in public is critical for understanding international security dynamics. Constructivist work on the democratic peace primarily focuses on the individual level of this duality. Securitization gives us a theoretical basis for examining the second—public—aspect.

The central purpose of this paper is to integrate securitization into a coherent, constructivist theoretical approach to the democratic peace. The paper proceeds in two sections. The first section integrates securitization. Within this section, I first discuss literature on the democratic peace with a focus on mechanisms. Then I proceed to integrate the securitization framework, including commentary on why the approach has the potential to advance our understanding of the democratic peace. The second section provides the empirical test of the model using US nuclear foreign policy. Here I use a structured approach to look at the role of identity in the efforts of the Bush administration to desecuritize India and securitize Iran.

Mechanisms and the Democratic Peace

The concept of a special peace between democracies has been a potent idea in international relations since scholars in the late 1970s and early 1980s gave new

life to Immanuel Kant's 1795 philosophical speculation on perpetual peace (Rummel 1975; Small and Singer 1976; Doyle 1983a,b). The majority of the subsequent raft of large-N statistical studies have supported the proposition (Chan 1984; Bremer 1993; Maoz and Russett 1993; Rousseau, Gelpi, Reiter, and Huth 1996; Cederman and Rao 2001; Oneal, Russett, and Berbaum 2003; Danilovic and Clare 2007). Correlation, however, is not the same as causation, and the emphasis on empirical demonstration has imparted onto the field as a whole the inability of quantitative studies to directly access causal mechanisms (Müller and Wolff 2004). Despite the abundance of work on the democratic peace, the literature has a difficult time explaining how the democratic peace exists.

Inspired by Mario Bunge's (1996, 2000, 2004) work, this paper brings a particular focus on a possible mechanism—securitization. Bunge argues that the study of the social sciences is the study of social systems and thus requires a ''systemist'' approach over traditional approaches that compartmentalize social studies (holism, for example structural realism, versus individualism, for example rational choice). The central focus of the systemist approach is the human system: the interaction between individuals and society. Explanation links rather than separates the structural and individual levels. Systemism is in part an attempt by Bunge to restore the importance of mechanisms in understanding and explanation.

Bunge (2000) provides the example of the relationship between economic growth and population stagnation. From the holist perspective, the linkage is clear: Economic growth drives population stagnation. Unfortunately, why this might be remains a mystery. On the individualist level, old age security drives a decline in fertility. Problematically, what brings about old age security is exogenous to the linkage between age security and fertility rates. Systemism brings both levels of explanation together for a more satisfying and meaningful model. Economic growth facilitates old age security, drives down fertility and results in population stagnation. The causal mechanism depends on linking individual level dynamics (micro level) to structural level phenomena (macro level). A more explicit focus on the mechanisms of the democratic peace will resolve a great deal of ambiguity. In the process, if applied under the aegis of constructivism, emphasizing mechanisms should prove a boon to constructivists regardless of their particular subject.

Mechanistically, the constructivist and psychological approaches have been fruitful. The central concern here is with the dyadic mechanism over monadic or systemic approaches. A principle mechanism in the constructivist democratic peace literature is leadership perception. Barbara Farnham (2003) points to the role of perception in democratic leaders in her study of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Mark Schafer and Walker (2006) do the same in their study of the operational codes of Tony Blair and Bill Clinton. Leadership identity is the operative mechanism in Wesley Widmaier's (2005) study on the impact of different democratic identities (social versus liberal) on interdemocratic relations. In related research, Mark Peceny (1997) emphasizes state polity recognition more generally, and Lars-Eric Cederman (2001) and Cederman and Rao (2001) provide a valuable basis for understanding from whence leadership perception arises. John Owen's (1997), work—similar in many ways to the argument presented in this paper—also focuses on the perception of foreign policy elites, arguing that liberalism, rather than democracy, is the key causal force in the democratic peace. While not part of the democratic peace, Mark Haas (2005) further suggests that ideology structures threat perception. However, counter to my argument, Haas focuses on policymakers, and draws no distinctions regarding the content of ideology in threat perception. Haas focuses instead on ideological distance as the principle metric for evaluating threat. This literature suggests that the psychological mechanisms of democratic leaders emphasize the observation of norms by

foreign leaders rather than domestic political structure. While this mechanism is important, it is only partial. None of these studies include linkages regarding how the democratic leader converts his or her perception of threat into state action. Owen comes closest, suggesting a linkage between liberalism and the ability of domestic institutions to constrain foreign policymakers, but stays away from the interaction between policymakers and the public. These authors give us insight on the first step of securitization—the determination of threat by a leader—but not on how the threat is communicated to the public.

Rationalist efforts to explore the mechanisms of the democratic peace have largely focused on three possible mechanisms: audience costs, transparency, and the political effects of winning coalition size. All three monadic mechanisms generate the democratic peace through the interaction of effects. The audience costs argument claims that democratic political leaders—owing to a high political cost of failure that makes policy reversals difficult—will only threaten or use force in crises with a high possibility of a successful outcome. This leads to enhanced signaling of resolve by democracies, decreasing the possibility of war (Fearon 1994). The transparency argument emphasizes the role—support or resistance—of opposition political entities within the state to the chosen foreign policy. The ability of opposition parties to demonstrate support for or opposition to security policy makes it possible for international opponents to more easily determine the home state's willingness to wage war. Thus, democracies avoid war by avoiding misunderstandings (Schultz 1998). Finally, Bueno De Mesquita, Morrow, Siverson, and Smith (1999) argue that the democratic peace can be traced to the size of the winning coalition supporting the government and the ability of political leaders to distribute goods to their supporters. In war, while autocratic leaders can still provide private goods to his or her selectorate (by holding back resources destined for the war effort), providing public goods to the much larger selectorate in democracies in the event of loss is far more difficult. Consequently, democratic leaders are more careful in choosing the battles and work harder to win those they do choose. Because democracies make for difficult opponents, they do not target each other.

A critical gap in the literature lies at the junction of the domestic and the international. Constructivist literature focuses on the construction of shared identity—mostly at the theoretical level (Risse-Kappen 1995; Williams 2001)—or on the interface between democratic identity, including the norms that inform that identity, and the international system at the decision maker junction point. While these are exceedingly important areas of investigation, they neglect two important aspects. First is the role of domestic political structure—we are talking about democracies after all—in the norms and identity dynamic. As Kahl (1999:99) points out, norms and structure are complimentary. Second, and related to the nature of democratic political structure, is the importance of public social and corporate identity. Constructivism argues that leaders construct threats based on their interests which are in turn informed by their identity. The argument should be extended to the public in democracies because their perception of threat is an important factor in democratic security policy. The rationalist efforts to provide a mechanism for the democratic peace suffer from similar issues. Problematically, all are monadic explanations of what Müller and Wolff (2004) rightly point out is a dyadic phenomenon. Moreover, while the rationalist approaches purport to include the domestic dynamic, they assume the public universally and consistently accepts the security arguments of political leaders. The rationalist explanations also share the constructivist focus on leaders. Schultz's transparency argument does suggest that opposition political parties may reject security arguments, but does not expand on how or why. The rationalist mechanisms enter the security picture after the securitization

argument has been made and accepted, leaving as an assumption how and why this happens. The identity driven securitization approach proposed here begins to address these gaps. Figure 1 diagrams the securitization argument situated within a Bungeian systemist structure.

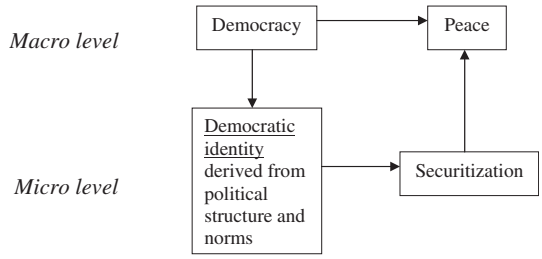

FIG 1. Framework proposed by this project

Securitizing the Democratic Peace

The term securitization refers to the act by state leaders of choosing what issues should be considered under the security rubric (Buzan et al. 1998). Crucially, the act of securitizing an issue involves both a securitizing actor(s), who makes the claim that a particular object of value (referent object) is facing an existential threat requiring the suspension of normal politics, and an audience, which must agree both that the referent object is a thing of value and that it is (existentially) threatened in the way that the securitizing agent claims. For example, preceding the 2003 invasion of Iraq, President George Bush argued that Iraq's weapons of mass destruction could be used directly against Americans or given to terrorists who would deploy them against Americans. Here, the securitizing actor is George Bush, the referent object is the physical safety of Americans, which was threatened by Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction. The audience, the US public, agreed with the assessment and accepted the movement of the issue out of normal politics (that is, the use of military force).

Applying securitization to the democratic peace gives us an avenue for studying the role of norms and identity in the formation of security policy in democratic states. It seats the locus of action at the domestic level, where decisions of war and peace are made. Securitization gives us a structured way for looking at the security process and focusing on the communicative action of leaders and their audiences. It also ties norms and structure together in explanation. To securitize successfully, leaders must use the language of security; they must appeal to certain norms and identities in order to communicate the idea of a threat and that the object threatened is valuable. The nature of the audience (general public, small group of oligarchs, military officers) as well as the norms and identity language the audience responds to are linked to the political structure. Securitizers in autocracies face a very different audience, requiring a very different language of securitization, than those in democracies.

This paper seeks to explore the role of identity language in the securitization process. I expect that political leaders use the language of democratic identity and norms to signal possible threats or the lack thereof to their securitizing audience. Consider the domestic identity of a democracy. The norms that inform democratic identity are agreed to include non-violent conflict resolution, rule of law, compromise, and transparency (Maoz and Russett 1993; Russett 1993; Dixon 1994; Owen 1994). In order for such an identity to work, there has to be flexibility in the other delimiters of identity. Differences in religion, cultural practices, economic perspective, gender, and race all have to be tolerated if a democracy is

to be successful. The criteria for recognition and respect in a democracy must be fairly open (Williams 2001). Were they not, the democracy would tear itself apart. A democracy can only operate if the population willingly buys into the program. If most people chose to identify with their religion at the expense of their democratic identity, the state would quickly turn into a theocracy. Democratic governance fundamentally rests on the democratic identity of its citizenry.

Democracy, like any other ideology, distinguishes between members of the self and the other.[2] If a state is to be democratic, then democratic identity must be a significant factor in the imagined community that binds the society under the state together (Anderson 1991). Policies involving negotiation and reconciliation—democratic political behavior—are justified by appealing to democratic norms and identity. Leaders emphasize that the external state warrants these approaches as a trustworthy member of the democratic community, that these behaviors are expected in return, and that the situation can be approached without significant concerns over violence. Weart notes that ''group boundaries are typically set in ways connected with political circumstances. In particular, democrats…normally define even foreign democrats…as in-group, 'people like us,' at least in terms of what kind of political relations they expect'' (1998:18). Policies involving aggression and violence—nondemocratic political behavior—are justified by demonstrating that the target state is beyond reason or trust, that their behavior could result in violence against the home state (an existential threat). Political leaders achieve this aim by emphasizing the undemocratic identity and unwillingness to reliably operate by democratic norms of the other. The securitized state poses an existential threat because it is dissimilar from the democratic self, a self defined by the exclusion of violence from conflict resolution.

The securitization dynamic is not unique to democracies. What is unique to democracies is the audience. In a democracy, the public plays a critical role in large foreign policy decisions like war. It is inherent to the nature of democratic governance: leaders are accountable to the public for their policy decisions. Consequently, it is to the dominant (democratic) identity of the public and the attendant set of norms that leaders in democracies must appeal if they wish to securitize an external state. Combining the work on the individual level with securitization produces a more complete picture of the mechanisms behind the democratic peace. Democratic norms and identity shape the security policy of democratic political leaders in two ways. First, leaders have internalized the democratic norms and identity, shaping their personal perception of threat. Second, democratic political structures bind leaders to the democratic norms and identity of the electorate. Leaders in autocracies face a very different identity and norms environment. Political structure, identity, and norms are far more personalistic, indicated by small selectorates and hierarchical political structures (diZerega 1995). The governing identity(s) and the interests of the state are grounded in the particulars of the ruling group.

This is not to say that relations between democracies are always cordial, or even friendly. Many times they may not be. Day-to-day relations between states are built on policies and interactions that never rise to the level of security and may escape public attention. At these sub-public levels of policy, a multitude of factors come into play, none of which are addressed here. Because these policy matters do not rise to the level of security, the framework proposed here does not speak to them. The mechanism proposed here only deals with issues, visible to the public, where leaders attempt to securitize or desecuritize the matter. It is not a comprehensive theory of democratic foreign policy.

[2] Democracy is an ideology because it requires the active maintenance and affirmation of a set of beliefs by the population at large (Weart 1998:61).

Theoretically, the temporal applicability of the framework proposed here is not limited. While it is true that definitions of the ''citizenry'' have varied with time, and that the variations may affect the definition of the self, the core precepts of democracy have remained stable. Additionally, the expansive nature of democracy by definition ties the citizenry to the state in a way not evidenced in autocratic regimes. As such, democratic identity, as a conditioner of intra and intersociety relations, is expected to play a primary role. It is also possible for other identities to play a role; the argument here is not exclusive. Alternative identities may be tied to culture (Western) or economic structure (communist, socialist, liberal). It is also possible that these identities may take precedence over democratic identity. However, these situations are likely to be highly limited. For example, during the Cold War the conflict ostensibly revolved around economic identities: communists versus capitalists. When it came to security, however, the threat posed by the Soviet Union to the United States was linked to endangered democracy and liberties, not the right to buy products at freely determined market prices. With respect to cultural identity markers, it is difficult to imagine a cultural identity within democracy relevant to security that does not rest implicitly or explicitly on democracy. Indeed, one of the principle underpinnings of the Western cultural identity is shared commitment to democracy. It may be that in the past the Western cultural identity and democratic identity diverged, but it is worth asking whether the Western cultural identity existed in the sense it does today.

A key possible counterargument centers on Oren's (1995) exposition. Oren argues that the true nature of the democratic peace phenomenon focuses not on democracies but instead on states that are ''America-like.'' US political leaders reconstruct allies and enemies in line with calculations of interest.[3] American political leaders redefine the image of the self to remain consistent with the attributes of friends and in contrast to the attributes of enemies. Drawing on Oren, a Realist rejoinder to my argument would argue that the United States is defining India as a democracy and Iran as a nondemocracy to support power-based calculations of interests.

Space constraints prevent a full treatment of Oren's argument. There is undoubtedly some accuracy to Oren's argument, particularly when leaders confront states on the margins of the community of democracies—those that have recently or are in the process of transitioning to democracy or states whose democratic systems harbor enough shortcomings to bring their democratic identities into doubt. However, for the purpose of this paper, Oren makes the problematic assumption that public images of itself and external states are tentatively held and easily malleable. Oren seems to see the public as a foreign and security policy *tabula rasa*. The significant literature on the role of the independent influence of domestic politics in foreign policymaking indicates that the manipulation of identity Oren details is not as easy as he suggests (Levy 1988; Putnam 1988; Morrow 1991). The enfranchisement of the majority of the population and the spread of information access—both through education and the availability of information, also makes the *tabula rasa* assumption increasingly difficult to justify. Coverage of foreign elections and democratic debates, as well as the intersubjective agreement on which states are, and are not, democracies, in the media and society makes it very difficult for political leaders to redefine the self and other in the way Oren argues. In the present study, the characterizations of India and Iran are not manipulations of the public image of these countries. India really is a fully fledged democracy, and Iran, despite democratic aspects, is not. Even those that sought to counter

[3] Similar concerns regarding the manipulation of norms and identity are expressed by Kowert and Legro (1996:492).

Bush's securitization of Iran—typified below by Joseph Biden's efforts to desecuritize Iran—did not claim Iran was truly democratic, only that it was not completely undemocratic. Finally, it is significant that in Oren's (1995) argument, Wilson shifted to characterizing Germany as an autocracy, suggesting support for the framework proposed here.

Cases: India and Iran

Background

Empirically, this paper focuses on the discourse of United States leaders toward Iran and India. A careful look at the securitization comments made by US decision makers should reveal patterns of identification and the relationship between this identification and US policy. Methodologically, this means focusing on the public argument, transmitted by presidential and congressional political leaders both directly to the public and through the media. In the United States, the primary political figure in terms of foreign policy formation is the president. Consequently, presidential discourse figures centrally in the subsequent analysis. Although Congress does not have a strong formal role in foreign and security policy, it does serve as a politically important forum for discussion where counterarguments can be voiced with significant political weight. Finally, securitization is successful only if the audience accepts the securitization argument. While this acceptance is difficult to measure, public opinion polling does offer important empirical insight.

India and Iran provide a good test of the role of identity in securitization because many of the variables that might confound a study are controlled. Both states are in the developing world and located in areas sensitive to the development and deployment of nuclear weapons. In South Asia, India and Pakistan have been locked in militarized rivalry since the formation of the two states in 1947. In the Middle East, terrorism, the US invasion of Iraq, and widespread popular discontent with current forms of governance make the region unstable. Both states have also endured strained relations with the United States. During the Cold War, India was seen as a ''friend'' of the Soviet Union (Widmaier 2005). Iran has been under American economic and political embargo since the 1979 Islamic revolution. Most importantly for the purposes of this paper, both states are developing nuclear weapons capabilities in contravention to international norms and US policy. The United States is a principle signatory of the 1968 NPT, binding the US to an international regime designed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. Article one of the treaty explicitly states that the nuclear states must do nothing to assist non-nuclear states in the development of nuclear weapons (United Nations 1968).

From a legal point of view, the United States is bound to oppose efforts on the part of India and Iran to develop or advance nuclear weapons programs. In this context, we should expect that, given the similarities outlined above between India and Iran, US policy toward these two states would be similar. As is clear from the introduction, US treatment of Indian and Iranian nuclear programs diverges dramatically. What is driving this policy divergence? The theory outlined above suggests that the identity of India as a democracy and Iran as a nondemocratic theocracy holds the key for understanding US policy. We should expect US language with respect to India to reference their shared democratic governance and values as well as the trust that arises out of that shared governance. US language with respect to Iran should focus on the nondemocratic nature of Iran's government and the threats and lack of trust that arise out of that governance structure.

The Rhetoric

India

Securitization is a process, not an event. In the case of India, the modern nuclear issue dates to 1998 when India performed its first official nuclear weapons tests.[4] Then President Bill Clinton's reaction indicates the strength of the democratic lens for constructing the security environment. In the aftermath, Clinton highlighted India's democratic credentials:

> But, I can tell you that my view is we need,…what we really need to think of is you know Pakistan has been a good ally of ours, India has been arguably the *most successful democracy in history* in the last 50 years because they have preserved the democracy in the face of absolutely overwhelming diversity and difficulty and pressures internal and external, and they can't get along over Kashmir and they have some other tensions, and then their neighbors sometimes turn up the tensions a little bit. We have got to find a way out of this (emphasis mine) (Office of the Prime Minister 1998).

The reaction is clearly one of dialog and understanding rather than concern for security. Of central importance in characterizing India is its democratic nature. Clinton furthers these sentiments a month later when he claims:

> India is a very great nation, soon to be not only the world's most populous democracy…it is home to the world's largest middle class already and a remarkable culture that taught the modern world the power of nonviolence. For 50 years Pakistan has been a vibrant Islamic state, and is today a robust democracy. It is important for the world to recognize the remarkable contributions both these countries have made and will continue to make to the community of nations if they can proceed along the path of peace (Clinton 1998).

Remarkably, despite the fact that India had detonated a nuclear weapon in a region well known for tension and instability, setting off a nuclear response by Pakistan, Clinton's focus is on highlighting the democratic nature of both states. Clinton was not alone in his focus on Indian democracy. A month after the nuclear tests, Senator Connie Mack (R-FL) criticized what he perceived as Sino-centric US foreign policy, arguing, ''the United States is helping the largest single-party authoritarian government in the world [China] suppress the development of the largest democracy in the world [India].'' The India-US relationship should be the focus of US foreign policy according to Mack: ''We have a common bond with the Indian people based on a commitment to democracy, freedom, and the rule of law.'' Mack went on to defend India's nuclear tests, arguing that India had broken no international laws and that ''India's 50-year history demonstrates peaceful intent exercised within a democratic society.'' Mack carefully contrasts peaceful, democratic India against expansive, oppressive, and aggressive China. The real threat to the United States for Mack was ''internally oppressive and undemocratic'' China (Senator Mack [FL] June 16, 1998).

Some policymakers did attempt to securitize India's 1998 nuclear tests. In the House of Representatives, Dan Burton (R-IN), quoting newspaper reports of health effects in villages near the nuclear testing, argued that government indifference to suffering was an indicator of India's ''real warring intentions.'' The area, Burton argued, could ''become the epicenter of a World War-III type nuclear conflict.'' The key to India's intentions for Burton is the undemocratic behavior of the government, ignoring the harmful effects of policy on the public. Indeed, the impression Burton gives is that, through testing, the Indian government willingly imposed such harm in the pursuit of a military luxury

[4] The Indian government announced its 1974 test as a ''peaceful nuclear explosion.''

(Representative Burton [IN] June 11, 1998). Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) responded forcefully to the India test, calling for the US government to ''be prepared to exercise the full range and depth of sanctions available under law.'' Harkin drew a parallel between the India nuclear test and the Japanese attack on the US navel station at Pearl Harbor in 1941, purposely paraphrasing Roosevelt in calling the day of India's first tests ''a day that will live in infamy, for the Nation of India.'' Harkin also referenced the weaponization of India's nuclear capabilities twice in an 1,800 word speech (Senator Harkin [IA] May 12, 1998). The references to Pearl Harbor and weaponization are an effort by Harkin to construct the Indian nuclear tests as a threat to US security.

History serves as testimony to which argument was successful. The public and policymakers did not accept the efforts to securitize India. Indeed, an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 offered by Senators Brownback (R-KS), Feinstein (D-CA), Warner (R-VA), and Levin (D-MI) just over a month after the initial nuclear tests exemplifies the lack of securitization.[5] In the amendment, the senators focused on diplomatic approaches to resolving the regional tensions and looked forward to eventually removing the sanctions. The senators kept the nuclear tests and the US response to them firmly within the structure of normal politics and away from security (Senator Brownback [KS] June 23, 1998:S6864). In a further demonstration that securitization of the India nuclear tests had failed, the US Senate voted in July 1998, only 3 months after India's first test, to lift agricultural sanctions on India and Pakistan, the heaviest of the sanctions imposed after the nuclear tests. In November of that year, the US eased the ban on access to credit and military training programs. In October 1999, the United States lifted most of the sanctions imposed in 1998 on India, but kept them in place for recently autocratic Pakistan. A US spokesperson at the time indicated that the military coup overthrowing the government of Nawaz Sharif was the primary reason that sanctions against Pakistan remained in place (*BBC* 1999).

Bush Administration policy follows on from the Clinton precedent. In February of 2006, National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley answered press questions regarding the Bush Administration's proposed nuclear deal with India. India, the president had argued was,

> a country with whom we not only had common interests, but common values—committed democracy—and that he [Bush] saw India playing a role on a global stage, and a potential ally and partner for the United States in dealing with global issues…on a whole range of issues, global in significance, we are now a partner with India. It has moved beyond just narrow bilateral issues, moved beyond even regional issues to India and the United States seeing how they can cooperate together on a global range of issues (United States Office of the President 2006).

Clearly, President Bush and his administration felt that the democratic nature of India was an important characteristic for explaining the US drive to cooperate. India seeks the same objectives as the United States because it is democratic like the United States. The implicit message is that the US *trusts* India. The concepts of cooperation and partnership both depend heavily on trust. The target audience knows from their own lives that these concepts require trust. The message is clear: arising from shared democracy, the United States trusts India and shares India's interests and values. Interestingly, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice noted that autocratic Pakistan did not warrant the same treatment as India because ''Pakistan is not in the same place as India'' (United States Office of the President 2006).

[5] The amendment was titled ''a Sense of the Senate on Nuclear Tests in South Asia.''

The message of shared democratic identity is a constant refrain in comments made by the Bush Administration about India. In March 2006, Undersecretary Nicholas Burns referred to India as ''peaceful democratic India'' (Burns 2006). President Bush, during a state visit by Indian Prime Minister Singh, emphasized India's democratic governance:

> I'm proud to stand here today with Prime Minister Singh, the leader of one of the world's great democracies…India and the United States share a commitment to freedom and a belief that democracy provides the best path to a more hopeful future for all people. We also believe that the spread of liberty is the best alternative to hatred and violence. Because of our shared values, the relationship between our two countries has never been stronger. We're working together to make our nations more secure, deliver a better life to our citizens and advance the cause of peace and freedom throughout the world (Bush 2005b).

In a February 2006 interview, Bush again referenced India as a ''great democracy,'' before affirming that US-India cooperation is ''reaching new heights'' (Bush 2006a). In April 2006, Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher addressing a meeting of Indian business leaders, emphasized cooperation and Indian democracy:

> Perhaps most importantly, we believe that one of India's greatest contributions in the coming decades can be in its stand for democracy. Many countries around the world are deciding to act on their democratic aspirations, while some others are wary. We know that India will stand beside us and the world community in assisting those who choose freedom. We hope that India will work with others on education, judicial training, free media, technology, independent elections commissions, rule of law, and other foundations of democratic societies (Boucher 2006).

The emphasis on Indian democracy linked to cooperation, trust, and shared interests and values is a consistent point of emphasis for the Bush administration. The desecuritization of India's nuclear program is clearly predicated on the argument that, as a fellow democracy, the United States need have no fear of India's nuclear capabilities. Consistent with this point is the observation that the Bush Administration does not call for India to observe international law. Indeed, often officials praise India for observing the ''spirit'' of the NPT by keeping tight control of nuclear technologies (*BBC* 2006). Even when India clearly does not observe international law, it is portrayed as doing so in democratic tradition. The message here is that the relationship between the two countries is predicated on the trust, values, and interest that arise out of their mutual democratic governance.

The emphasis on India's democratic governance extends into the halls of Congress. In late 2006, Senator Joseph Biden, while discussing the committee bill authorizing the Indo-American nuclear deal, commented on the basis for US-India relations:

> It has become cliché to speak of the US-India relationship as a bond between the world's oldest democracy and the world's largest democracy—but this cliché is also a fact. Shared political values are the foundation for our relationship, a firm belief in the dignity of man and the consent of the governed (Senator Biden [DE] December 8, 2006:S11823)

For Biden the relationship between the two states is something more than traditional interstate relations—he describes it as a ''bond''— and democracy is the source of the deep and trusting nature of the relationship. President Bush echoed these sentiments 2 weeks later when he signed the bill of which Biden

spoke in support. India and the US, Bush claimed, were ''natural partners …united by deeply held values'' (Baker 2006).

In early 2007, Senator Arlen Specter, commenting on a recent trip to India, made a balance of power assessment of India's role as a counterbalance to China:

> I think it is especially important to see the Nation of India develop with its 1.1 billion people as a counterbalance, so to speak, to China with 1.3 billion people. We have in India a democracy, contrasted with the authoritarian government which prevails in China and, in the long run, the incentives and the productivity of free people in a democracy should be quite a counterbalance (Senator Specter [PA] January 16, 2007:S537).

What is remarkable about this quote is Specter's assessment of threat. China poses a potential threat to the United States not because it has nuclear weapons or the largest military in the world. Instead, the Chinese threat arises from its authoritarian government. Conversely, India serves as a counterbalance against the Chinese threat simply because it is a democracy. The implicit argument is that India's democratic governance naturally allies it with the democratic United States. Tellingly, after Specter links threat assessment (or lack thereof) to Indian democracy he goes on to discuss his change of heart on the US-India nuclear deal. While Specter claims to have been swayed by India's argument that the NPT is discriminatory, it is unlikely that he would have found these arguments compelling were they coming from nondemocratic Iran.

It is difficult to measure public acceptance of the desecuritized construction of India and its nuclear program presented by policymakers. To a certain extent, the focus on the policymaker in securitization accepts the assumption that, as politicians, these actors are intimately aware of what policies and justifications they can, or cannot, 'sell' to the public. Public opinion polling should offer some insight on the issue, but as will become clear shortly, polling data requires at least as much interpretation as political speech and is critically dependent on both the content and the manner in which questions are asked (Moore 2004).

The Gallup organization has a long-running series of polls examining Americans' perceptions of other states. While not directly commenting on the perception of threat to the United States posed (or not) by India, Gallup did run a poll in the immediate aftermath of the May 1998 nuclear tests. In it, 61% of the public felt the development of nuclear weapons in general was a ''bad thing.'' Of these respondents, however, only 47% indicated that India's development of a nuclear weapon would be a threat to world peace. This contrasts sharply against the 66% of respondents who felt Pakistan's possession of nuclear weapons posed a serious threat to world peace, and the more than 80% of respondents who felt that nuclear weapons development by Iran and Iraq posed a serious threat to world peace (Moore 1998). The Gallup data gives no indication as to why the threat perception of India is so far below the threat perception of Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, and nuclear weapons in general, and without other polling data on the perception of India at the time, these conclusions mean little. These caveats aside, the significantly lower level of perceived threat with respect to India seems to support the argument presented in this paper that India's democratic governance inhibits threat perception in the public.

Long-term trends in general perception of India also seem to support this argument. Clearly, India enjoys a generally favorable perception in the public. In 2000, 76% of Americans viewed India in a positive light–15% felt India was a US ally, while 61% saw India as a friendly non-ally (Saad 2000). Differences in the question do produce significant variation in the numbers. A short year after the 2000 poll with no international incidents of note, India's 'favorability' in the eyes

of the public stood at only 58% (Moore 2001). By 2005, 75% of respondents saw India favorably, possibly reflecting the consequences of the December 2004 tsunami (Moore 2005). A year later India's favorability rating had fallen back to 66%, roughly consistent with its rating of 69% as of March 2008 (Jones 2006; Saad 2008a). Despite the variation in poll ratings, India clearly maintains a broadly favorable position in the eyes of the public; the country consistently ranks among the top ten nations in terms of favorability. It is not clear what factors drive positive public perception of India, but it is telling that democracies dominate the top of the favorability rankings. If democracy does play an important role in structuring public threat assessment, India's high rankings are consistent with what we would expect of public opinion.

Iran

Unlike the Indian case, the Bush Administration's nuclear policy with respect to Iran has largely been developed without a Clintonian context. It was only at the end of the Clinton Administration that the CIA determined that Iran may be able to manufacture a nuclear weapon (Risen and Miller 2000). There is no doubt that the Bush Administration sought to securitize Iran. In a 2003 press conference, Bush argued that ''Iran would be very dangerous with nuclear weapons'' (Bush 2003b). In 2006, Bush claimed that ''the most destablizing [*sic*] thing that can happen is for Iran to have a nuclear weapon'' (Bush 2006e). Two months later, in a press conference with the new German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Bush linked denying Iran nuclear weapons to world peace (Bush 2006d).

In line with Bush's effort to securitize Iran, the Administration has focused heavily on the nondemocratic nature of Iran's regime. Shortly before the current problems over Iran's nuclear program developed, President Bush listed Iran as part of an ''axis of evil.'' Iran's characterization in that speech included a reference to the ''unelected few [that] repress the Iranian people's hope for freedom'' (Bush 2002). The portrayal of Iran's government as undemocratic would become a central theme in constructing the Iranian threat. In the 2003 State of the Union Address, Bush (2003a) noted again that ''In Iran, we continue to see a government that represses its people, pursues weapons of mass destruction, and supports terror.'' In his 2006 State of the Union Address, President Bush ties the autocratic regime in Tehran to the threat posed to the US:

> Iran [is] a nation now held hostage by a small clerical elite that is isolating and repressing its people. The regime in that country sponsors terrorists in the Palestinian territories and in Lebanon…The Iranian government is defying the world with its nuclear ambitions, and the nations of the world must not permit the Iranian regime to gain nuclear weapons. America will continue to rally the world to confront these threats (Bush 2006b).

Evidenced by the 2003 and 2006 State of the Union Addresses, the description of Iran begins with Bush's claim that it is not a democracy; this is the first strike against Iran and to which all the other problems and threats are by implication linked. In a 2006 press conference, Bush explicitly indicated why Iran was a threat:

> And the good news is most of the world recognizes that Iran, being the nontransparent society that it is, a government that had violated IAEA rules, is one that cannot be trusted with technology that could enable it to develop a nuclear weapon (Bush 2006c).

Iran's nondemocratic regime lies at the heart of Bush's securitization effort. Iran is not a transparent society (that is, democracy) like the United States, and

therefore cannot be trusted. Five months later the connection between Iran as a security threat and its regime was made again, this time by Phillip Zelikow, Counselor of the United States Department of State:

> Here then is a broad basis for concern: A revolutionary dictatorship, oppressive at home and with an agenda of aggression and subversion beyond its borders. A regime that proudly takes the most extreme positions toward Israel or the country it calls ''the Great Satan''—the United States of America (Zelikow 2006).

Once again, the Administration argument clearly links undemocratic governance leading to aggression and subversion beyond Iran's borders. The nature of the country's government fundamentally makes it aggressive, untrustworthy, and a threat to the democratic United States. The lack of trust again appears in the Administration's dismissal of Iran's need for nuclear energy:

> Iran's attempts to explain why it needs an indigenous nuclear fuel cycle are simply not credible. We are being asked to believe that Iran needs to have the ability to mine, process, and enrich uranium for reactors that do not yet exist and that it is necessary to support its domestic power needs. Yet Iran does not have enough indigenous uranium resources to fuel even one reactor over its lifetime. Moreover, it burns off enough gas at its wellheads to generate electricity equivalent to the output of four Bushehr-type reactors. Finally, and most importantly, if there were truly ''peaceful and transparent'' reasons for Iran's acquisition of these technologies, why would Iran hide these activities from the IAEA? (DeSutter 2003).

For the Bush Administration the solution to the problem of Iranian nuclear weapons calls for more than simply forcing Iran to comply by international law:

> In Iran, the free world shares a common goal: For the sake of peace, the Iranian regime must end its support for terrorism, and must not develop nuclear weapons. In safeguarding the security of free nations, no option can be taken permanently off the table…We're working closely with Britain, France and Germany as they oppose Iran's nuclear ambitions, and as they insist that Tehran comply with international law. The results of this approach now depend largely on Iran. We also look for Iran to finally deliver on promised reform. The time has arrived for the Iranian regime to listen to the Iranian people, and respect their rights, and join in the movement toward liberty that is taking place all around them (Bush 2005a).

Consistently, the political character of Iran is the central referent point in the threat discussion. The undemocratic characteristics of Iranian governance were tied to, and juxtaposed against, the threat to all ''free'' countries. This argument only makes sense if there is an implicit appeal to the public to accept the securitization on the basis that the nature of Iran's regime is fundamentally threatening to democracy. The argument is not a strategic one (for example, Iran having a nuclear weapon is bad for US oil supply security), it is an argument based on democratic identity. This assessment is reinforced by the call for Iran's government to change in order to eliminate the threat to the democracies of the world. If democratic identity did not matter to the public in terms of securitizing threats, there would be no need to call for democratization as a means to resolve the threat facing it.

Within the US Congress, some senators and representatives contested the securitization of Iran. Bush's 2002 ''axis of evil'' State of the Union speech provides a useful focal point for looking at securitization rhetoric within the Congress. Two months after the State of the Union speech, Senators Joseph

Biden (D-DE) and Charles Hagel (R-NE) made an argument for keeping relations with Iran within the realm of normal politics and out of the security framework. Hagel, in introducing a speech by Biden to the American-Iranian Council into the Congressional Record, argued that differences between the US and Iran should not ''close off opportunities to influence Iranian behavior and work together constructively when we may share common interests'' (Senator Hagel [NE] March 21, 2002).

Biden's speech pays particular attention to the democratic aspects of Iran's unusual divided governance, noting the reformist message of Iranian elections. For Biden, the democratic aspects of Iran moderate the potential threat from the country. The reformist will of the public, according to Biden, has created a ''divided government…[a]n elected branch consisting of the parliament and the presidency'' aligned against an unelected ''hardcore clique'' from which all the policies threatening to US interests arise: ''they direct the policies that pose a threat to our interests.'' Biden's recognition of the democratic aspects of Iranian governance forms the basis and justification for his desecuritized approach. It precedes his assessment of the threat Iran poses to US interests (not to the United States itself) as well as his policy prescriptions. When Biden discusses threatening Iranian policies, he categorically condemns all but Iran's nuclear and missile programs, which enjoy significant levels of popular support within Iran. On these points, Biden concludes, ''we cannot simply dismiss Iran's security concerns.'' His policy prescriptions reflect Biden's unaggressive, desecuritizing approach: permit American NGOs to support civil society organizations within Iran, cooperate with Iran on issues of mutual interest, accept Iran's bid to initiate WTO accession talks, indirectly assist Iran on issues of refugees and narcotics, and continue citizen exchanges. In his discussion of Iran, Biden, and by extension Hagel, clearly attempt to position Iran and its relationship with the US within the realm of normal politics and outside a security framework (Senator Hagel [NE] March 21, 2002).

A counter narrative, more in line with the securitizing approach of President Bush, vied with that of Hagel and Biden. A ''sense of the Senate'' resolution contested Biden's partial democratization of Iran. According to the sponsoring senators, while Iran's ''people aspire to democracy, civil, political, and religious rights, and the rule of law,'' the ''ideological dictatorship presided over by an unelected Supreme Leader…an unelected Expediency Council and Council of Guardians'' represses the people's will. The senators dismiss the democratic elements of Iran's government, pointing to ''increasingly frequent anti-Khatami demonstrations'' and claiming that Khatami ''clearly lacks the ability and inclination to change the behavior of the State of Iran…political repression, newspaper censorship, corruption, vigilante intimidation, arbitrary imprisonment of students, and public executions have increased since President Khatami's inauguration'' (Senator Brownback [KS], Senator Wyden [OR], Senator Collins [ME], Senator Dorgan [ND], Senator Grassley [IO], Senator Conrad [ND], Senator Smith [NH], and Senator Boxer [CA] July 25, 2002).

As in Bush's rhetoric, the antidemocratic characterization of Iran's government precedes, and hence is the source of, Iran's threat to the United States. The sponsoring senators first argue that Iran is wholly undemocratic and then outline the activities that threaten the United States.[6] While the resolution and its sponsors argue that the US should focus its efforts on ''the people, and their

[6] Including shipping ''50-tons of sophisticated weaponry to the Palestinian Authority …consistently seek[ing] to undermine the Middle East peace process, provid[ing] safe-haven to al-Qa'ida and Taliban terrorists, allow[ing] transit of arms for guerrillas seeking to undermine our ally Turkey, provid[ing] transit of terrorists seeking to destabilize the United States-protected safe-haven in Iraq, and develop[ing] weapons of mass destruction'' (Senator Brownback [KS] et al.

hopes for a free and democratic nation'' rather than use military force, the authors are clearly constructing Iran as a security threat in the context of Iran's undemocratic governance (Senator Wyden [OR] July 25, 2002).

Representative Brad Sherman (D-CA) also dismissed the appearance of democracy in Iran and linked the state's undemocratic nature to threatening activities:

> I was not surprised to hear our President indicate that the government of Iran is on the side of the terrorists. Yes, it is true that there is a *nominal*, though *impotent*, figurehead reformist *posing* as President of Iran, but, of course, the real power is exercised by *unelected* officials who take the most extreme proterrorist views (emphasis mine) (Representative Sherman [CA] May 21, 2002).

Sherman's argument dismisses Iranian democracy as an illusion that should not preclude the United States from taking extraordinary measures to oppose the Iranian threat. While not arguing for military action, Sherman certainly sought to move US policy beyond normal politics by targeting World Bank funding of Iranian projects. The avenues for policy change in the World Bank were insufficient for Sherman; ''we need to do more than weakly protest and get outvoted.'' Sherman's solution was to withdraw funding from the World Bank (at the time over $800 million) if the Bank proceeded with funding projects in Iran.[7]

Public opinion polling data suggests that Bush and like-minded policymakers in Congress have been partially successful in securitizing Iran. To be certain, the American public generally holds a poor opinion of Iran outside of efforts of policymakers to securitize it. In April, 2001, before the Bush Administration singled Iran out as a member of the ''axis of evil,'' the vast majority of Americans (83%) held an unfavorable opinion of Iran (Moore 2001). By 2006 the number of Americans viewing Iran unfavorably had risen to 86% while the number viewing Iran favorably had dropped to 7% (as compared to 12% in 2001), placing Iran at the bottom of the 22 country list Gallup queried Americans about that year (Jones 2006).[8] These numbers remained stable (88% and 8% respectively) through 2008 (Saad 2008a). While public favorability perception of Iran remained roughly constant, Americans' perception of Iran as a threat has changed dramatically. Before Bush's 2002 ''axis of evil'' State of the Union speech, only 8% of Americans believed Iran to be the United States' greatest enemy. By 2006, that number had risen to 31%, dropping to 25% in 2008 (Saad 2008b). While the perception of Iranian threat by the public has increased dramatically since policymakers began to seriously attempt to securitize it, there is reason to believe that the securitization argument has only been partially successful. The first is the decline in the number of people recognizing Iran as the greatest enemy of the United States. The second is the overwhelming unwillingness of the American public to countenance the use of military force against Iran. In a November, 2007 poll only 18% of respondents felt the US should use military force to end Iran's nuclear efforts; the vast majority (73%) favored the use of economic and diplomatic means. It is unclear from the polling data why the securitization argument has been only partially successful, although it seems likely that the circumstances surrounding the securitization of Iraq and the consequences of the ensuing war play a significant role.

[7] There are numerous smaller examples throughout the Congressional Record, such as when Representative Mark Udall (D-CO) accepted Bush's linkage between Iran's lack of democracy and its threat to the United States: ''President George W. Bush rightly emphasized that 'Iran aggressively pursues weapons [of mass destruction] and exports terror, while an unelected few repress the Iranian people's hope for freedom''' (Representative Udall [CO] May 21, 2002).

[8] Below Iraq, Cuba, the Palestinian Authority, and North Korea.

Conclusions

This paper has sought to introduce the analytical concept of securitization into the research on the democratic peace and, in doing so, emphasize the importance of mechanisms in understanding and explaining the democratic peace. Specifically, the focus is on the role of democratic identity in securitization discourse. The theoretical framework of the paper indicates that identity plays a crucial role in the securitization process, signaling to the public policymakers' expectations regarding the trustworthiness, potential for cooperation, and willingness to resort to violence of the external state. Shared democratic identity marks the 'other' as like the 'self', justifying the extension of democratic (read non-violent) treatment to the external state. For nondemocratic states, democratic norms are not applicable. The combination of securitization and identity leads us to expect an emphasis on the type of regime in the rhetoric regarding each regime. We do in fact see that is the case with both India and Iran. India is described as a democracy often and usually before any other characterization. Arising out of this shared democracy is a sense of partnership and trust. That trust endures despite Indian actions, like the 1998 test, that betrayed US wishes.

As with India, Iran is often and primarily characterized by its regime. Unlike India, Iran is presented as undemocratic. Flowing from this characterization is the US perception that Iranian nuclear weapons pose a threat to itself and the larger free world. The US-Iranian relationship is one of mistrust. It is telling that the solution proposed by the United States for resolving the threat posed by Iran's nuclear program is for Iran to democratize. The evidence here indicates that democratic identity does structure how policy leaders communicate security threats to the public. Given the constraints democratic structure places on the security policy of democracies, identity seems to have a real and significant impact on the decisions of war and peace that lie behind the democratic peace. Figures 2 and 3 sum up my mechanistic argument with respect to American nuclear policy.

As with all studies, qualitative or quantitative, this study cannot address all the possible research design or empirical weaknesses. Of particular note in this respect is the role of ideational 'contamination' as an impediment to the temporal generalizability of the study. There is no doubt that the Bush Administration adheres to some version of democratic peace theory.[9] While the idea of a democratic peace of some sort is not a new one (Howard 1978), the measure of legitimacy granted by the formalization of the idea in the social science literature makes for the possibility of socio-political contamination. This contamination makes it difficult, if not impossible, to determine whether democratic identity plays a role in the democratic peace independent of beliefs influenced by a theory that has bled into the public consciousness. While a constructivist approach does not necessarily see this as a problem, it does mean that the findings here are temporally limited. To better demonstrate the role of democratic identity, research should pursue cases predating Michael Doyle's influential 1983 article. This particular weakness aside, the evidence here is significant. In the case of India, shared democratic identity facilitated the desecuritization of the Indian nuclear program. With respect to Iran, the reverse dynamic is observed as Iran's status as a nondemocracy is used by political leaders in their effort to securitize Iran's nuclear program. In both cases, political leaders who sought to oppose the eventual security approach attempted to highlight the undemocratic and democratic aspects of India and Iran respectively. These findings suggest that identity does indeed play an important role in how the public assesses securitization arguments put to them by their elected leaders. Linking together three

[9] Evident in its claim that a democratic Iraq will be peaceful (*CNN* 2007; Kessler 2007).

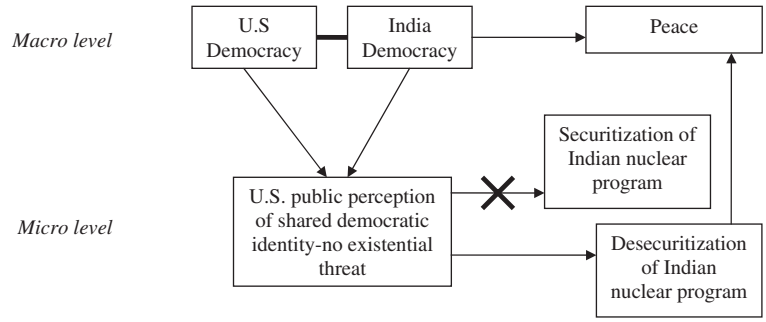

FIG 2. US-India nuclear policy dynamic

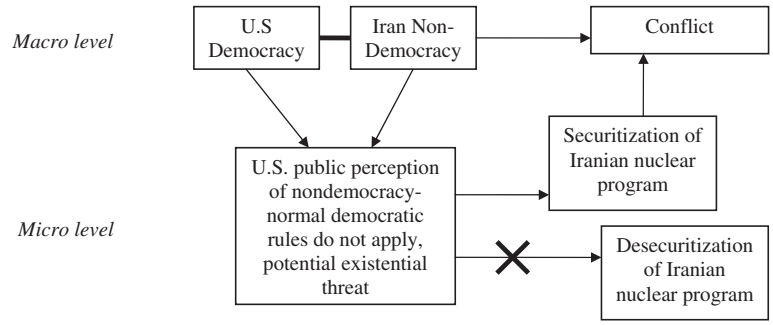

FIG 3. US-Iran nuclear policy dynamic

important academic discourses—constructivism, securitization, and the democratic peace—the argument in this paper and the supporting empirical evidence highlight a promising approach for furthering our understandings of the mechanisms within constructivism, securitization, and the democratic peace.

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