Chapter 13
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Academic and governmental investigation into the complexity of conflict in human society has a long history but thus far many questions concerning the cause and the dynamics of conflict in human society have remained unanswered. There are of course serious repercussions of failure to understand the grounds for conflict in human society especially in the nuclear age. An in-depth analysis needs to be undertaken trying to link both the micro theories and macro theories in a manner that will make understanding of human conflict, especially at international level, easier and meaningful. The intensification of international conflicts and terrorism makes the endeavour for further research an unavoidable imperative.

Sadly, while many in the social sciences and in society are attempting to leave behind beliefs of primordial identity, and other scholars such as those espousing the civilisational perspective and those advocating the reality of political Islam argue that not just nations, but entire civilisations are defined by immutable characteristics, a true understanding of reality of human condition and of conflict in human society is being shunted out and actually trivialised. The clash of civilisations argument is at its roots, a structural explanation for the rise of conflict and is not only a simplistic but a shoddy endeavour. This situation calls for exploring other better ways of understanding rise of conflict in the world and among the nations. Theories such as Bargaining Theory of Conflict, Diversionary Theory of Conflict, Expected Utility Theory of Conflict, and similar other ones have been around for some time now. Many centres and institutes for conflict and peace studies are endeavouring to understand the reasons for rise of conflict. This effort needs to be taken further because the world, though desiring peace is afflicted by conflicts. While much research has been seen, based on the above mentioned theories on conflict, new or fresh lines of thinking and understanding,
through better theories is necessary. This study has proposed a theory called as Survival Through Dominance (STD) theory with its logical corollary called as Knowledge for Power Systems Theory, which is based on the fact of evolution and knowledge oriented for power through political construction of various knowledge systems. Such new theories need to be propounded and tested. Further research, therefore should be in this direction. It is essential to understand how conflict has been part of human evolutionary process and how it has been expressed in human society in overt and covert manner. It is essential to understand the subtle expression of conflict in human society especially in the various stages of human evolution and development such as biosic, gnosic and possibly in the futuristic psychic.

In view of the latest findings of the genetic research and animal behaviour studies there is a need to sift through some of the old ideas and theories of conflict which have been arbitrarily and arrogantly rejected as being deterministic. If conflict is deterministic and part of the evolutionary process, it must be faced squarely so that workable solutions for conflict resolution could be found. The questions of inherent disposition and free choice with regard to conflict in human society must be reconsidered and re-understood. Motivated and prejudiced attempts at understanding conflict need to be abandoned. Only then can superficial endeavours such as trying to explain conflict in Huntingtonian terms can be prevented in the future.

Michel Foucault had said ""We should admit rather that power produces knowledge that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. These power-knowledge relations are to be analysed, therefore, not on the basis of a subject of knowledge who is or is not free in relation to the power system, but, on the contrary, the subject who knows, the object to be known and
the modalities of knowledge may be regarded as so many effects of these fundamental implications of power-knowledge and their historical transformations, (1)

Much earlier Carl von Clausewitz had spoken about the role of power, or political object as he calls it, in the cause of wars. In the work *On War* he had said “Violence, that is to say physical force (for there is no moral force without the conception of states and law), is therefore the means; the compulsory submission of the enemy to our will is the ultimate object. In order to attain this object fully, the enemy must be disarmed; and this is, correctly speaking, the real aim of hostilities in theory. It takes the place of the final object, and puts it aside in a manner as something not properly belonging to war. The law of the extreme, the view to disarm the adversary, to overthrow him, has hitherto to a certain extent usurped the place of this end or object. Just as this law loses its force, the political object must again come forward. If the whole consideration is a calculation of probability based on definite persons and relations, then the political object, being the original motive, must be an essential factor in the product. Thus, therefore, the political object, as the original motive of the war, will be the standard for determining both the aim of the military force, and also the amount of effort to be made. This it cannot be in itself; but it is so in relation to both the belligerent states, because we are concerned with realities, not with mere abstractions. One and the same political object may produce totally different effects upon different people, or even upon the same people at different times; we can, therefore, only admit the political object as the measure, by considering it in its effects upon those masses which it is to move, and consequently the nature of those masses also comes into consideration. It is easy to see that thus the result may be very different according as these masses are animated with a spirit which will infuse vigour into the action or otherwise. It is quite possible for such a state of feeling to exist between two states that a very trifling political motive for war may produce an
effect quite disproportionate, in fact, a perfect explosion. The war of a community—of whole nations and particularly of civilised nations—always starts from a political condition, and is called forth by a political motive. It is therefore a political act.” (2)

Gramsci had focused on the political and critical role of the collectivity or the community. According to Gramsci, hegemony arises from the cultural values and institutions of the mass society, and functions like “a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks” and the state is merely the "outer ditch" (3). For Gramsci, the community far from being an autonomous arena of democratic representation, is a field for ideological and institutional competition and conflict. From Gramsci’s perspective the community has a major political role to play in the society and its construction and this applies to the issue of conflict as well.

And more recently John Mearsheimer, the leading proponent of ‘offensive realism’ has argued that states, in spite of their strong existing power, seek hegemony for security, an idea which comes close to the thesis proposed in this study and termed as ‘Survival through domination’ or put differently ‘Domination for survival’. Mearsheimer in his work *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* has stated “Given 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. Only a misguided state would pass up an opportunity to become hegemon in the system because it thought it already had sufficient power to survive.” (4) According to Mearsheimer there is really no such thing as a permanent power or status quo of power in the world, but a continuous power seeking and enhancement to remain dominant and in this process the hegemonic states will engage in conflict and wars to ensure their security through permanent
hegemony. The problem in Mearsheimer's view is that though it is exclusively political it is also exclusively statist and hence insufficient.

The close relation between the rise of terrorism and the political nature of humans is another area which has also been explored by some scholars like Khaled Abou El Fadl. He says "The extreme political violence we call terrorism is not a simple aberration unrelated to the political dynamics of a society. Generally, terrorism is the quintessential crime of those who feel powerless seeking to undermine the perceived power of a targeted group. Like many crimes of power, terrorism is also a hate crime, for it relies on a polarized rhetoric of belligerence toward a particular group that is demonized to the point of being denied any moral worth. To recruit and communicate effectively, this rhetoric of belligerence needs to tap into and exploit an already radicalized discourse with the expectation of resonating with the social and political frustrations of a people. If acts of terrorism find little resonance within a society, such acts and their ideological defenders are marginalized. But if these acts do find a degree of resonance, terrorism becomes incrementally more acute and severe, and its ideological justifications become progressively more radical." (5)

Khaled Abou El Fadl has also highlighted the link between religion and power quite well "It was just a remarkable high, an intoxicant in many ways, to be drunk on the power that comes from God," he told NRO in a phone interview from Los Angeles in 2005. With regard to the Islamists he says "You go around aggressively worshiping yourself, shoving the law down everybody's throat. It's a utopian world, with you at the centre of it. Every contradiction, every challenge becomes a serious problem to the utopian vision." He speaks about the "predominance of the theology of power in modern Islam, and it is this theology that is a direct contributor to the emergence of highly radicalised Islamic groups such as the Taliban or al-Qaeda." (6) His contention is that the dominance of the theology of power in contemporary Islam "Far from being authentic expressions
of inherited Islamic paradigms, or a natural outgrowth of the classical tradition, these are thoroughly a by-product of colonialism and modernity. Such groups ignore the Islamic civilisational experience, with all its richness and diversity, and reduce Islam to a single dynamic—that of power. They tend to define Islam as an ideology of nationalistic defiance of the other, a rather vulgar form of obstructionism vis-à-vis the hegemony of the Western world. Therefore, instead of Islam being a moral vision given to humanity, it becomes constructed into the antithesis of the West. In the world constructed by these groups, there is no Islam; there is only opposition to the West.” (7)

Thus the political has occupied an important place in the discussions about cause of wars and conflict. But due to the theses, such as the one expounded by Huntington, the focus has been unjustifiably changed to the cultural perspective. This has been a distraction and an aberration. The real truth about the world and conflict needs to be once again restated in power terms and the lost ground of power perspective needs to be reclaimed so that realist, as against 'astrayist' analysis goes on. Therefore, there is a need to undertake further research to understand conflict as an outcome of the fundamental implication of the underlying power relation. Research and theorising has to be refocused on power-knowledge relations as underlying conflict as also on the role of community, as being involved in the political construction of society and social reality in carrying forward the evolutionary process with the help of inherent predispositions as well as by exercising free will and free choice. In the present study, Huntington’s thesis has been subjected to analysis based on power-knowledge interplay (or knowledge for power system), constructionist enterprise (or communitarian worldview) and evolutionary politics (or survival through dominance). This syncretic and synthesised approach, though actually applied in analysing Huntington’s thesis, has not been systematically enunciated due to the different focus of this study, which was to present a political critique of Huntington’s clash of civilisations thesis. Therefore future research endeavour
must also focus on a systematic exposition of the tool of analysis employed in this study, which though political impinges on several contingent areas of human life and activity. Scholars like Clausewitz, Foucault, Gramsci, Mearsheimer and many other have already trod different paths in the same direction of understanding human reality and conflict. The time has now come for these paths to meet and form a confluence of evolutionary power realism.

Bold and sincere efforts are needed to understand conflict in a fresh manner in the light of differing understandings and new findings by different disciplines. A fresh look at the conflict from a holistic and broader point of view is essential. And certainly a re-look at conflict from a political power perspective with a broader canvas extending to evolutionary, constructionist and knowledge perspective is imperative.

It is a fact that the politics within nations is based on the hierarchical principle and that among nations on anarchic principle. While one is orderly, being controlled by the state, the other is chaotic, having no superintending agency but characterised by interest-based cooperation. Atleast this is the belief of the realist thinkers. But the naked truth is that politics among nations is directly connected to the political arrangements among human beings residing within those nations. Realists, have often ignored or played down the internal politics of the nations while analysing their power plays between nations. In the post 9/11 era the realist have continued to follow in the footsteps of Carr and Morgenthau and struggled to develop a better realist understanding of the international scenario albeit with little success. Kenneth Waltz, John Mearsheimer and others have continued to labour but have been unable to make much headway in providing a better understanding from the realist or power perspective These scholars have been expounding "offensive realism", as an explanation for international politics and conflict. Kenneth Waltz and John Mearsheimer, who are the leading proponents of the realist school at present, continue to focus on the roots of power politics among nations.
They have continued to examine European, American and Asian history and provide a political power perspective. War and conflict continue to hold their attention but deeply penetrative insights are slow in coming. Much of the focus of the realists is on understanding the dynamics between the great powers and the smaller nations and the resultant security and insecurity scenarios. The realist study is more directed towards understanding the threat assessments of individual nations and outbreaks of conflicts. Kenneth Waltz and other structural realists following 'defensive realism' focus on balance of power while John Mearsheimer and others following the 'offensive realism' approach; focus on pre-emption and hegemonic tendencies. A deeper insight into the power discourse is glaringly lacking. The analysis barely goes beyond the balance of power equations on one hand and maximising the share of world power by big powers through hegemony on the other.

Power is not only the capacity to influence the behaviour of others, it is also latently and militarily hegemonic. Demographic transformation, group cohesion, resource crunch, economic imperatives, and technological sophistication have a strong bearing on hegemonic design and expansionist wars. The strategies groups and nations follow in an offensive realist universe and how those interact with the structure of the system, both intra-national and international, to produce war or maintain peace need to be better studied and understood. Attempts to link the realist hegemonic theory with the democratic peace theory have also not been very successful. The Indian experiment and experience of multi-ethnic integration which has a lot to teach in this direction has not been studied by realist scholars with the seriousness it deserves.

For example the creation of an aggregated Indian identity through a balance of power and peace merits attention from the realist scholars. The Indian experiment and experience can serve as a dynamic laboratory for the realists to study the questions of conflict and conflict resolution. India effectively functions as a truly realist state, which, on one hand maximises its economic power and
military power in relation to the outside world, and on the other hand resolves the difficult problem of balancing the complex ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious diversity of its people internally. A theory of the state, with a balance of power and balance of rationality can be built on Indian experiment and experience. Such a theory would be simultaneously realist and pacifist with very positive implications for the world embroiled/steeped in chaos, confusion and conflict. Indian experiment is an example of both the offensive realist behaviour within the community of nations and of democratic pacific balance between its many intra-national communities. The best example of simultaneous hegemonic and the pacifist behaviour among large heterodox countries is India. A real example of how a harmonious confluence of the two opposites can be achieved in a world characterised by nation-state system. It has important lessons for the questions of conflict and peace, both internally and externally. The pursuit of national hegemony by the Indian state, particularly in the context of the subcontinent and Asia, while successfully, and more importantly, democratically, holding to a large measure, the diverse Indian masses together, is an experiment worthy of thorough study by scholars, particularly those trying to bridge the chasm between realism and pacifism.

The not-so-subtle way of hegemonic conflicts and muscle-flexing with the neighbouring nations of the subcontinent such as Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bangladesh, and the subtle manner of pacifist balancing with China, and the USA, by being simultaneously an important player in the India-China-Russia nexus (neighbourhood allies and multipolarist proponents) as well as India-Israel-America nexus (natural allies and anti-terrorist proponents) India as a common denominator, stands out as an extraordinary practitioner of the realist-pacifist theory shattering the Huntingtonian myth of clash of civilisations at least in India's case. The chaotic ambiguity externally, in dealing with some nations and internally, in dealing with certain communities, is the vast 'dark matter' between the two extremes of power and balance, and conflict and peace. This needs to be explored in depth as well.