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India's Approach to Asia

Strategy, Geopolitics and
Responsibility

Editor

Namrata Goswami

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Editor: Namrata Goswami

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Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>xi</i>
India's Strategic Approach to Asia <i>Namrata Goswami</i>	1
RISING POWERS AND THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM	
Rising Powers in the Emerging World Order: An Overview, with a Reflection on the Consequences for India <i>Barry Buzan</i>	21
ASIAN REGIONAL ORDER	
1. Panchsheel–Multilateralism and Competing Regionalism: The Indian Approach towards Regional Cooperation and the Regional Order in South Asia, the Indian Ocean, the Bay of Bengal, and the Mekong-Ganga <i>Arndt Michael</i>	35
2. India as the Norm-builder and Norm Contributor <i>Santishree Dhulipudi and Rimli Basu</i>	54
3. How India is Viewed as a Regional Actor <i>S.D. Muni</i>	76
INDIA AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS	
4. The Geo-strategic Context of the India-Russia Partnership <i>P. Stobdan</i>	85
5. Framing US-India Relations <i>Holli A. Semetko</i>	98

6. India's Strategic Partnership: A Perspective from Vietnam 115
Võ Xuân Vinh

7. The Japan-India Strategic Partnership: A New Hope for Asia 127
Satoru Nagao

ASIAN ECONOMIES AND RESOURCE COMPETITION

8. Looking East: Security through Greater Cross Border Connectivity 143
Rajat M. Nag

9. Debating Physical Connectivity between India and ASEAN:
Economics versus Security 164
Sinderpal Singh

10. The Impact of Terrorism and Organised Crime on Asian
Economies: Implications for India 183
Prem Mahadevan

THE RISE OF CHINA

11. India-China Relations: The Return of the Sub-Region 201
Madhu Bhalla

12. China-India Relations: Objectives and Future Priorities 222
Pang Zhongying and Rupak Sapkota

13. China's Military Modernisation and its Impact on India 237
Gordon G. Chang

14. China and its Territorial Disputes: An Increasing Security Dilemma 257
D.S. Rajan

MARITIME SECURITY IN ASIA

15. Indian Maritime Doctrine and Asian Security: Intentions and
Capabilities 273
Gurpreet S. Khurana

16. The Indo-Pacific and the Growing Strategic Importance of the
Bay of Bengal 290
David Brewster

17. The Indian Navy's Security Role in Littoral Asia 306
Abhijit Singh

18. Deciphering Oriental Mysteries of Silk, Pearls and Diamonds—Trios, Quartets and Quintets: Maritime Dimensions of India's Strategic Dilemmas in the Changing Asian Power Balance 320
Francis A. Kornegay, Jr.

CYBER, SPACE, BIOLOGICAL, CHEMICAL AND NUCLEAR SECURITY IN ASIA

19. Cybersecurity, Global Governance and New Risk 343
Sean S. Costigan
20. A Perspective on Space Security 362
Ranjana Kaul
21. Chemical and Biological Dimensions of Jihadi Terrorism 372
Animesh Roul
22. The Emerging Asian Nuclear Order and India 380
Rajiv Nayan

MAJOR STRATEGIC REGIONS OF ASIA

23. India's Regional Strategy: Balancing Geopolitics with Geoeconomics in South Asia 397
Smruti S. Pattanaik and Ashok K. Behuria
24. India's Central Asian Strategic Paradoxes: The Impact of Strategic Autonomy in the Emerging Asian Regional Architecture 418
Michael Tanchum
25. The Dynamics of Change in India-Southeast Asia Relations: Beyond Economics to Strategic Partnerships 434
Shankari Sundararaman

FUTURE TRENDS AND SCENARIOS

26. Strategic Trends in Asia: Future Directions 455
Boris Volkhonsky
27. Asian Security Contentions: Trends and Scenarios 464
S. Samuel C. Rajiv

28. Decoding India's Agenda: New Ideas and Emerging Trends in Asian Security <i>Shruti Pandalai</i>	488
<i>List of Contributors</i>	513
<i>Index</i>	517

Foreword

The book titled *India's Approach to Asia: Strategy, Geopolitics and Responsibility* is the outcome of the 17th Asian Security Conference on the theme “Asian Security: Comprehending the Indian Approach” held at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), in February 2015. With critical enquiries emerging on India’s own vision and role in shaping and managing regional and international security and how other countries view these, IDSA deemed it appropriate to utilize its flagship Asian Security Conference platform to deliberate on these issues with participants from India and many other countries. Issues that were discussed and debated included, but were not limited to, major power rivalries, tensions over disputed territories, freedom of Sea Lanes of Communications (SLOCs), security dilemmas and military preparedness, the robustness of regional institutional mechanisms, intra-state conflicts and last but not the least, the perspectives of major actors like Russia, China and India on Asian regional order: whether they view it as purely competitive or cooperative-competitive.

Certain key ideas that emerged during the conference and which now form a critical part of the book are: how a responsible power in international affairs should manage a peaceful system; what could lead to regional conflicts over territorial disputes; and the emerging strategic partnerships between India and the US, Russia, Vietnam as well as Japan. Several chapters in this book cover in depth the potential for conflict over resources in Asia, the importance of connectivity in Asia as well as the challenges faced by India in its neighbourhood towards fulfilling the expectations thrust upon it as a result of it being increasingly viewed as a power to reckon with in Asia and the world; being one of the most vibrant economies and possessing a significant military capability.

The issue of maritime security, both in the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal, are discussed by several authors in the book. Pertinent policy differences have been outlined by authors on intentions, capabilities and strategic goals when it comes to the Oceans. India is seen as a regional security provider which would then mean that it has to expand its capabilities and reach in the maritime sphere,

and manage tensions in the seas in a peaceful manner in partnership with like-minded countries.

India has always been at the forefront of the fight against terrorism. The book offers a perspective on India's approach to terrorism detailing not only its approach to this threat but also the limitations imposed by its geographic location given some of the terrorist threats it has faced have been externally driven. The danger of the rising terrorist threat in West Asia especially the ISIS is also discussed.

The importance of connectivity across Asia via the Asian Highway and Asian Railway in providing better livelihood and development for people in Asia is deliberated upon in the book. In this context, authors have offered their views on India's "Look East/Act East Policy" as well as identified ways and means to better implement the policy. Significantly, authors have also discussed India's role in South Asia, Southeast Asia as well as Central Asia informing readers about not only the level of engagement but also the challenges, as well as suggesting solutions to some of these challenges. The book also includes chapters on alternative strategic scenarios with regard to the future of Asian security and India's role in managing and contributing to a peaceful world order.

The key thematic questions that were covered during the conference and which forms the basis of the book are: What role can India play in shaping the structural and normative parameters for Asian security?; what are India's strategic preferences and choices for Asia's security future?; has India transcended its regional role as a South Asian power to the broader regional context of Asia?

It is hoped that the book adds to the existing literature on India's role in Asian Security and that readers will find the chapters interesting. Wish you a happy reading.

Brig. Rumel Dahiya (Retd)
Deputy Director General, IDSA

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I also take this opportunity to thank Admiral R.K. Dhowan, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, ADC, Chief of Naval Staff, for delivering an excellent inaugural address that set the stage for the conference. I thank Prof. Barry Buzan for delivering an insightful address at the conference.

The core of any such conference are the paper presenters. Excellent papers were presented during the several sessions, and what is even more fulfilling, with thought provoking ideas and excellent audience participation. In fact, I have been able to complete the book on time as the presenters sent in their papers well in advance, as well as offered excellent insights on the topic at hand. My heartfelt thanks goes out to them.

A conference of this nature cannot progress smoothly without help from colleagues and friends. I would take this opportunity to thank the IDSA Conference Cell, especially Aparna Krishna, Ameeta Narang and Jasleen Lonial for their efficient conduct of all administrative procedures. Mukesh, Rajkumar and Sabu for the technical support lent. The ASC conference team, especially Dr. Saurabh Mishra and Ms. Gunjan Singh, for their ever present helping hand in almost all details of the conference.

Last but not the least, I would take this opportunity to thank my family and close friends for supporting my effort towards conducting the conference smoothly and completing the publication of the book. Any fault found in the book, is my own.

New Delhi

Namrata Goswami

India's Strategic Approach to Asia

Namrata Goswami

India's approach to foreign policy and international relations has, evolved over the years, tracing its roots to ideas of non-alignment, strategic autonomy to strategic engagement, as we can observe from the 2015 'India-U.S. Delhi Declaration of Friendship' which has pledged that "India and the United States agree to elevate our long-standing strategic partnership, with a Declaration of Friendship that strengthens and expands the relationship between our two countries".¹ Yet, questions continue to remain on India's approach to international politics/relations and foreign policy primarily due to the lack of a written and widely disseminated "National Security Strategy" paper or "White paper" with regard to long term foreign policy goals. One can get glimpses of these in statements, including the joint *op-ed* by Barack Obama and Narendra Modi in *The Washington Post*,² outlining their vision for the world, or the, "U.S.-India Joint Strategic Vision for Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean Region",³ which clearly states that India is committed to promote peace and prosperity, economic development and connectivity, address poverty, the most eye catching perhaps of which are these lines:

We affirm the importance of safeguarding maritime security and ensuring freedom of navigation and over flight throughout the region, especially in the South China Sea. We call on all parties to avoid the threat or use of force and pursue resolution of territorial and maritime disputes through all peaceful means, in accordance with universally recognized principles of international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.⁴

Yet, many strategic analysts, both in India and abroad, accuse India of lacking a strategic culture or strategic thinking. This quest for clarity in Indian strategic thought while throughout present, was perhaps propelled to limelight by George Tanham's off cited essay on "Indian Strategic Thought: An Interpretative Essay" published by RAND in 1992.⁵ Tanham argued that Indians lacked a strategic sense. In fact he believed then that a coherent set of ideas and systemic thinking on Indian national strategy was remarkably hard to find.⁶ Published as it was in

1992, the quest of the essay was to investigate India's future strategic role and power potential. This assessment was based on examining India's history and culture; the existing security debate; the evolution of India's military power; and how India's role as a regional actor will impact the United States.⁷ Tanham argued that India's geography made it inward looking as the sub-continent's unity was itself a task of priority given several regional separatist tendencies, its size and its resources. This inward looking sagacity was based on history where India's past had little to show for political unity with several kingdoms competing with each other for influence and sometimes ending up helping foreign invaders against adversarial Indian kingdoms.⁸ Tanham argues that Indians discovered their history since the late 1850s motivated and influenced by a growing sense of Indian nationalism and thereby listed the Mauryan, Gupta and Mughal periods as the most unified political periods. Yet this assertion was not based on authoritative written records as the tradition of oral history was prevalent in India. Tanham however recognized that Indian culture represented by Hinduism and its ability to absorb and assimilate other religions provided the continuing thread through centuries. Tanham credits the British for creating a unified Indian political entity, with clear strategic policy of defence and offence, maritime security and land defence. Thereby, the British envisaged that securing the Indian Ocean from foreign powers was vital in order to limit their ability to challenge the British Empire in India. This insight was drawn of course by their own easy arrival in India by sea due to the complete absence of Mughal capability to defend India's maritime borders. The British developed strategic plans to safeguard the Northwest of India, and the Northeast, by establishing buffers to thwart foreign powers. There is a recurring belief that independent India adopted the British style of strategy and defence as and like Britain who was motivated to defend its colonies in India and maintain its status quo; similarly, India has a defensive orientation towards strategy.

Following in the tradition of Tanham, *The Economist*, in two lead articles in 2013 titled "India as a Great Power Know Your Own Strength" and "Can India become a Great Power?" severely faulted India for its striking lack of a strategic culture.⁹ Both articles strongly argued that India's aspirations towards becoming a "Great Power" are undermined by its sheer lack of strategic thinking and planning especially a deeply thought through process based on future goals and ambitions supported by capability. The articles caution that with Pakistan in a dangerous internal web of jihadist violence, radicalization of its military and possession of nuclear weapons; China, an ever increasing threat from across the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean, harboring covert plans of arming Pakistan with nukes, coupled with jihadi terrorism and Maoist insurgency, India has a rough road to walk. The biggest blind spot, the articles indicate, is India's lack of understanding on how

to utilize its hard power (read military) for power and political influence. India's military is one of the largest in the world, with an ever growing weapons import capability funded by billions of dollars, and a defence budget that rose by 12 percent in 2014-2015, with the military budget at 2.29 trillion Indian rupees (\$38.35 billion) for 2014-15, and Defence expenditure for 2013/14 kept at 2.04 trillion rupees.¹⁰ It possesses a nuclear stockpile of about 80 or more warheads. Yet, Indian leaders, the *Economist* allege "show little interest in military or strategic issues. Strategic defence reviews like those that take place in America, Britain and France, informed by serving officers and civil servants but led by politicians, are unknown in India. The armed forces regard the Ministry of Defence as woefully ignorant on military matters, with few of the skills needed to provide support in areas such as logistics and procurement (they also resent its control over senior promotions)".¹¹ The capacity of Ministries like those dealing with external affairs is limited. With two hotly disputed borders, India has much to lose by this lack of interest in matters strategic. Moreover, civil-military relationship is at best affected by lack of synchronicity and this undermines military effectiveness as well. The basic thrust of the article is that India should invest heavily in defence, buy exported weapons systems, and shore up its military even more but probably with diversified buyer profiles instead of a Russian overt dominance.

In the second article in *The Economist* titled "Can India Become a Great Power?", India has been defined as a power which is very near to greatness but simply cannot get its act together.¹² The article author views this as a pity as India has so much to offer to the world *via* its democratic institutions, rule of law, human rights, etc. It has a talented diaspora, imbibes certain Western values, is a victim of terrorism, and is an active member of the United Nations. However, the absence of a strategic culture to use its military power based on a well thought and crafted security policy limits India's potential. Its culture of caution reduces India's ability to take risks. With a dangerously unstable Pakistan and an ever growing aggressive China, India simply does not know how to cope with these threats. *The Economist* advises India to build a more professional Ministry of Defence, enlarge its foreign service, increase foreign funding in its defence, and upgrade its navy. Finally, India should and must sign western backed security alliances if it ever hopes to achieve true greatness.¹³

I will deal in detail with these ill-informed speculations later but a deep foray into Indian foreign policy behavior reveals that India does have a strategic culture where it closely monitors the external environment and debates on the efficacy of the use of military power in addressing external threats. That India tends to give priority to dialogue over the use of military power in foreign policy does not mean that it does not have a strategic culture; it just means that the strategic preferences are different from the normal understanding of how Great Powers

behave.¹⁴ Needless to say but critical to understand is the fact that when India emerged as an independent nation in 1947, its economy was weak and it did not possess the military capability (hard power) to influence world events like some other countries possessed at that time (Read the US, Soviet Union, etc). Hence, it was rather visionary for its founding leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru to use intellect and ideas to launch India onto the world stage based on the power of emancipatory visions of political life, normative power (which we now term as soft power), and empower India's entry into the world as a country to reckon with in regard to its size, population and civilization. And in this, Nehru succeeded. Even when one explores the idea of non-alignment which Nehru championed, it was perhaps novel of him to think of an alternate concept of existence for a new state besides locating oneself within the limiting structures of the cold war; the either/or syndrome: India could be with the US or the USSR dictated by their ideological moorings and interests instead of India's own. Nehru recognized that non-alignment in such a context would serve India well, by avoiding entangling alignments. Vital to realize that non-alignment was neither neutral nor passive, but had its own set of ideas and for Nehru it was an "India centric" strategy, at best. We see a continuation of that now with the "India first" policy of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi.

Coming back to the assertions made in *The Economist* articles that India has no strategic culture to boast, to my mind, strategic culture is just how elites perceive threats and opportunities, and both *The Economist* authors more or less perceive what that fundamental Indian strategic culture is: they appear just not to like it—and hence the recommendation in one of the articles that India should join Western-backed security alliances in order to realize its Great Power ambitions. To be even more precise, what I understand by strategic culture is an ideational milieu by which the members of the national strategic community form their strategic preferences with regard to the use and efficacy of military power in response to the threat environment. Each country has its own way to interpret, analyse and react to external opportunities and challenges. India may lack a plan explicit enough to satisfy these observers ... or complain that its strategy is not what they want—the reality is that India has in fact already shed its non-alignment—but the new alignments are contingent and based on shared interests, and can never be total alignments of the cold war variety. What the authors of *The Economist* articles are more likely saying is not that India lacks a strategic culture, but rather that it lacks a culture of strategic planning ... of identifying desirable future goals, and plotting a series of sequential steps to reach them versus just pursuing an opportunistic policy of what appears preferable in the moment without a clearly defined end in mind. This interpretation may have been true in the past, but the authors should be aware of the evolution that is taking place in

the Indian strategic community today. In the past four years, India's External Affairs Ministry and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) have sponsored future-oriented strategic assessments in order to understand threats and opportunities, especially in India's immediate neighbourhood through studies like the DRDO 2050 project, the India Neighbourhood project.

As to what is Indian strategic culture, there are broadly two major interpretations. One is what I call "hardcore realism" for which the projection of military power beyond India's borders will improve India's international influence and secure its borders vis-a-vis China and Pakistan. Realists view the instability in Pakistan, the rising power of China and the unresolved border issue, as serious external threats mitigated by broadcasting efficient and effective military power at the border with Pakistan and China, and projecting Indian naval power in the Indian Ocean. Realists support increased defense spending, which by *The Economist's* own admission poises India to become the fourth largest military power in the world by 2020. The other ideational base of Indian strategic culture is the Nehruvian commitment to use military power only as a last resort, not until the last diplomatic note has been written. Nehruvians firmly believe that dialogue rather than military force is the best way to resolve conflicts with either Pakistan or China. They have faith in the ability of international organisations to mitigate international conflict and are wary of security alliances outside of the UN. Nehruvians are against India joining security alliances of any nature that could potentially create conflicts and undermine world peace. Military power projection, for them, is purely an act of self defense as under Article 51 of the UN Charter. Aligning with other states for the purpose of a common broadcasting of military strength is not supported by Nehruvians; hence their commitment to non-alignment and expressed aversion to militarized western security groupings. Given the overlap of these two ideational influences on India's strategic culture, a complex structure is thereby superimposed on Indian strategic preferences, influenced by realist aspirations for Great Power status based on military power projection but tempered by Nehruvian ethos of dialogue and international cooperation, with a growing inward looking focus on building the Indian economy. India could move closer to some of the other recommendations made in *The Economist* articles of what India should do to become a Great Power but on its way it will also disappoint as it will appropriately give preference to tackle internal poverty and development, a greater concern to Indian citizens and politicians, which will be the true springboard for its enduring greatness.

Some Current Foreign Policy Objectives

In the light of the above, given below are current pointers of foreign policy recommendations with countries India will be dealing with and which are discussed in this book in detail.

Afghanistan should benefit from increased Indian military and security assistance as well as private sector investment with government financial loans and guarantees. This would strengthen Afghanistan's economy, buttress its own military and police to ensure that the influence of armed groups like the Taliban on the day to day life of the Afghan people is limited, and offer hope for a peaceful stable future in a country which has been ravaged for decades by conflict.

India should ratify the water sharing agreement with Bangladesh. This would strengthen India's position in the South Asian neighborhood when negotiating an agreement with China. Also, India should cement a strong counter terrorism agreement with Bangladesh to curb cross border insurgencies from that country into the Northeast of India. The recently concluded 'land boundary agreement' between India and Bangladesh as well as settlement of dispute in the maritime sphere will help do this better.¹⁵ There should be clauses for coordinated patrolling of the sea lanes in the Bay of Bengal to prevent drugs and arms trafficking into India using Bangladesh's coast. These steps would minimize the ill effects of the flow of arms and drugs into India's northeast and establish mechanisms that will equip Bangladesh to deal with the negative effects generated by the presence of non-state armed groups within its own territory.

With **China**, progressive steps should be undertaken to demilitarize the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with the incentive of bulk cross border trade and building transportation infrastructure. India should facilitate Chinese investment in infrastructure in reciprocation to agreements which support balanced trade. Demilitarization of the LAC will lead to decrease in border tensions, which has regrettably increased in the last few years due to strong Chinese and Indian military presence near the LAC, restrain border intrusions, and limit aggressive territorial claims and counter claims. These have created serious obstacles for trust building, and have limited the scope and cooperative potential of China-India relations.

India should sign a defense co-operation agreement with the **Myanmar** government to secure the Indo-Myanmar border areas especially along the economic corridors from drugs and small arms networks. Also, an agreement to formalize the existing cross border informal trade is of priority. India's "act east" policy has all the ingredients to see this through based as it is on increasing connectivity across Myanmar to Southeast Asia for purposes of greater regional cooperation and trade.

India's engagements with **Nepal and Bhutan** have to focus on economic development with increasing strategic dialogue with the emerging importance of

both countries as buffer countries. Enabling better hydro-utilization of the water resources in both countries with investment in water management and infrastructure should be on India's to do list. Coming to **Pakistan**, complete border dominance should be achieved, especially along the Line of Control (LoC), plus full-proof infiltration surveillance and interdiction capabilities. Indian capabilities should include both defensive and offensive military assets to neutralize terrorist threats emanating from Pakistan. Rebooting former Prime Minister Vajpayee's offer of diplomatic overtures for dialogue with Pakistan would hold India in good stead.

With **Russia**, India must work towards building new energy business relationship while expanding traditional areas of defense and space and further strengthen India-Russia strategic partnership in Afghanistan in concert with Iran for bringing about stability and development in Afghanistan. **Sri Lanka** would require high level visits as gestures for bringing back diplomatic ties to an even keel. It is critical that India restarts stalled economic engagements with Sri Lanka.

Coming to the **US**, India should expand and strengthen the civil nuclear relationship for generating alternate sources of energy in the common geo-political ground scenario in Asia as well as boost the US-India defense relationship and military ties for greater inter-operability in counter-terrorism. Re-energizing the technology and innovation synergy between US and Indian private companies should be a priority. Being two of the largest democracies in the world, both the US and India will benefit from strengthening of bilateral ties and should act together to ensure the freedom of the Sea Lanes of Communication and a peaceful Asia; particularly a South Asia, free of the ill effects of underdevelopment, terrorism, and inter-state tensions. With **Iran**, India should establish strong strategic ties vindicated by a country rich in culture, civilization, and resources and encourage Iran to play a stabilizing role in the Middle East.

While identifying these countries do not mean that others don't matter—for instance building stronger economic ties with Europe, Africa, and Latin America should be of priority—it is pertinent that India should perhaps resist the temptation to be opaque and non-committal in matters of foreign policy. India must showcase its leadership role; broadcast its capabilities and ambitions; issue directions on what are its foreign policy priorities through the publication of policy 'white papers' on defense, economy, strategy, etc.; and take a stand on issues of global concern, including the health of the world's environment, conflicts in Africa and the Middle East, and transnational crime. This is in tune with its first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru who asserted India's presence and role in the world; as a champion of de-colonization and peaceful world order. The scripting of policy papers is critical for India so that countries are not left to second guess its foreign policy parameters as has been the case earlier but benefit

from a clear picture of what India's priorities are, and what are the means that it would adopt to establish a peaceful world order.

It is however not enough to react to world events and global ideas of another's making and agenda; the time has now come for India to take a lead in shaping world events, and work towards establishing an international order which is inclusive and representative of different values and cultures. Moreover, India should not shy away from utilizing opportune moments to strategically place its own agendas and interests on the world stage and identify countries that are willing to partner and support Indian foreign policy goals which are motivated to strengthen global peace. Taking thoughtless risk is not a good thing, but taking well planned out strategic risks is an art, much elaborated upon and discussed threadbare in the first Indian treatise on statecraft and strategy: Kautilya's *Arthashastra*.

Based on these ideas, the 17th Asian Security Conference 2015, focused on "Asian Security: Comprehending the Indian Approach". The shift of power to Asia in the 21st century with its imminent economic rise has amplified the security challenges that the continent faces within the larger rubric of international relations. Key concerns include major power rivalries, tensions over disputed territories, freedom of Sea Lanes of Communications (SLOCs), security dilemmas connected to military modernisation, the robustness of regional institutional mechanisms, intra-state conflicts and last but not the least, the perspectives of major actors like Russia, China and India on Asian regional order: whether they view it as purely competitive or cooperative-competitive. Historically, Asia has been an important geographical cusp in the pathway of civilisations. Arabia, the Ottoman Empire, the Mongols, the Chinese empires, India, Ceylon, etc, have played major roles in the fight for territory, resources and the spread of ideas and religion. Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, etc., have been major religious influences, while mathematics, science, astronomy, the printing press, gun powder, the wheel, etc., draws their origin to Asia. Asian cultures and civilizations have been instrumental in the conceptualization and operationalization of the strategic cultures and military modernisations of other civilizations. The extreme forms of competition that precluded the colonial period, and the meeting of Asia and the West led loose new forces of military modernisations, especially naval technologies with faster ships, and the idea of sea dominance. The colonial period was critical for the formation of an Asian idea of difference as most of the countries were either colonized or suffered from deep seated anxieties due to their contact with the West, memories that continue to shape ideas and foreign policies to this day.

India emerged from colonialism with a solid sense of national identity. The leaders of the Indian freedom movement expressed attractive visions of the kind

of state India should become. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was a firm believer in the universal principle of global interconnectedness, and saw India as deeply rooted in this sense of universalism, both ideationally and physically. Jawaharlal Nehru, while supportive of Gandhian universalism, chose to carve a path of non-alignment, as a direct response to the systemic distribution of power at that time, the US and the USSR, though ideationally, he was drawn to Soviet socialism rather than American capitalism. Nehru aspired to carve a unique foreign policy for India, where as a proponent of non-alignment, India would establish its own foreign policy priorities and agendas, devoid of super-power structural rivalry. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, India's first Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister, firmly advocated a strong Indian state duly based on defence of its own borders with a keen strategic sense of its neighbours, especially China.

India's approach to foreign policy and international relations has, over the years, been propelled by ideas drawn from the leaders of the Indian freedom movement, their aspirations for India, as well as its own experiences and engagements with the world since its independence. Over the years, some of the major developments in India's economic and foreign policy have been the 1991 economic reforms that opened up the Indian economy to globalization, the 1998 nuclear tests, its space program, and its growing role in Asian multilateralism. Areas that have emerged as of priority to India are its strategic partnerships with major powers, cyber, space and energy security, terrorism, nuclear safety and security, the Indian Ocean region, the US 'pivot' and the rise of China. In this backdrop, it is critical to discuss and assess whether India has reached a stage of power acquisition that equips it with system 'shaping capabilities and intentions'. This discussion emerges from the fact that India has showed the potential to shape and mould the international system, and it aspires to a larger system shaping role in the future.

The key thematic questions that were addressed in the multiple interactive sessions of the conference were:

1. What role can India play in shaping the structural and normative parameters for Asian security?
2. What are India's strategic preferences and choices for Asia's security future?
3. How do the major powers of Asia and the United States view India's role towards cementing Asian security?
4. Has India transcended its regional role as a South Asian power to the broader regional context of Asia?
5. What are the key scenarios that emerge from the 17th Asian security conference that India will have to respond to in the next 10 to 15 years?

Based on the conference theme, the book chapters addresses multiple ideas on strategic behaviour and planning, and offers recommendations for the better

pursuance of Indian foreign policy with positive effects on Asian Security. Barry Buzan, in his address, highlights the critical importance of the future Great Powers to take responsibility for managing the international system. He cautions that emerging powers like China and India display a tendency to be internally focused in their own growth thereby shirking responsibility of global management of international affairs. He calls upon India to introspect deeply on the kind of power it wants to become with this searing question: Is India going to be one amongst a group of ‘autistic great powers’ under managing the system, or is it going to be a responsible great power and part of a concert of capitalist powers? Arndt Michael’s chapter on “*Panchsheel-Multilateralism and Competing Regionalism—The Indian Approach towards Regional Cooperation and Regional Order in South Asia, the Indian Ocean, the Bay of Bengal, and the Mekong-Ganga*” takes a normative perspective and posits that Indian foreign policy has been instrumental in eventually determining the institutional design, functional scope and normative orientation of regional organizations like South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMST-EC).

Santishree Dhulipudi and Rimli Basu in their chapter on “India as a Norm Builder and Norm Contributor” addresses and identifies the norms of India in building International Relations, which have been all through a steady definer of Indian foreign policy, with special reference to the ‘Look East Policy’ and ‘Act East Policy’. S.D. Muni in his chapter on “How India is viewed as a Regional Actor” highlights four phases of evolution of India’s image as a regional actor. From being seen as an Asian leader in the late 1940s and 1950s, Muni argues that India suffered a serious setback during the second phase due to its defeat in the 1962 war with China as well as in its inability to defeat Pakistan decisively in 1965. During the third phase (1970s-1980s), Indian foreign policy suffered from three deficits; namely, the developmental deficit, the defence or security deficit, and finally the status deficit. It is only now during the fourth phase (1990s to present) that India has emerged as an advanced economy and has succeeded in dealing with its three deficits identified above.

P. Stobdan in his chapter on “Geo-strategic Context of India-Russia Strategic Partnership” dwells on the historicity of the India-Russia strategic partnership, during the Soviet days to how it has evolved over time. He argues that the current India-Russia strategic partnership has lost its sheen of the past, and requires reinvigoration given Russia’s reliability in terms of defence sales to India as well as the importance of the Eurasian region for India. Holli A. Semetko in her chapter titled, “Framing US-India Relations” indicates that US-India strategic partnership should be expanded beyond the news media to include a broader range of groups,

individuals and initiatives that may include business ties between the two countries including foreign direct investment (FDI); projects for sustainable development or corporate social responsibility (CSR); governmental agreements and their implementation; and common social and cultural preferences. Taking together all sources of influence, it is clear that a direction for future research would be to develop a set of multiple indicators that capture the changing breadth and depth of the relationship through these various channels over time. Vo Xuan Vinh in “India’s Strategic Partnership: A Perspective from Vietnam” focuses on the progress of India-Vietnam strategic partnership since 2007 in comparison with several other of Vietnam’s comprehensive strategic partnerships limited to political and defense. Satoru Nagao’s chapter on “Japan-India Strategic Partnership will be New Hope for Asia” advocates the need to re-evaluate the importance of Japan-India strategic partnership based on wider defence aspects including geostrategic location, military infrastructural development etc. with latest information. In this chapter, three important factors underlying this analysis are discussed i.e. “Current Security Situation in Asia”, “Role of Japan-India Defence Cooperation in Asia’s Security”, and “Why Japan trust India as a responsible great power”.

The significance of regional connectivity, India’s Act East policy, and some challenges it faced was pointed out by Rajat M. Nag in his chapter on “Looking East: Security through Greater Cross Border Connectivity”. He contrast two Asia; one shining and leaping forward exponentially in terms of growth and economic development, and another, where poverty is the order of the day. These contrasting worlds have created more inequality in Asia than ever before. This, Nag argues could be undone if greater connectivity could be established thereby connecting the two worlds and creating a climate for overall growth and development. He identifies India’s Act East policy as such a prop where its north-eastern region could prosper with greater connectivity with Southeast Asia. Sinderpal Singh’s chapter on “Debating Physical Connectivity between India and ASEAN: Economics versus Security” locates the Indian state’s approach to its northeast border via a brief discussion of the history of ‘anxiety’ amongst Indian political elites with respect to India’s territorial borders. The author demonstrates how India’s Northeast has been implicated in India’s relations with its three key neighbors, namely Myanmar, China and Bangladesh from 1947 till about 1990. The chapter examines developments since the early 1990’s and chart the position of India’s Northeast within the context of India’s attempts to build closer ties with the member states of the ASEAN as part of its “Act East/Look East” policy. Prem Mahadevan in his chapter on “The Impact of Terrorism and Organized Crime on Asian Economies: Implications for India” studies the relationship between terrorism, organized crime and the Indian economy. Focusing on the issue of cross-border terrorism, the chapter argues that the economic liberalization

of 1991 created both opportunities and incentives for Pakistani jihadists and their state patrons to conduct major attacks on Indian cities. As the Indian Republic continues on its path to prosperity, it needs to acquire punitive capabilities to deal with further such attacks.

The chapters examining the rise of China by Madhu Bhalla, Pang Zhongying and Rupak Sapkota, Gordon G. Chang, and D.S. Rajan offers excellent analyses on the various aspects of China-India relationship, the modernisation that China is undertaking for its military and the consequences for India, as well as the inherent security dilemma in China's territorial aggressions both in the South China Sea and the Indian border areas. Madhu Bhalla in her chapter on "India-China Relations: The Return of the Sub-Region" highlights the importance of regions in India-China relations especially the significant change in China's policy of viewing South-Asia from being a periphery to now being a neighbour. As a result, it has stepped up its bilateral relations with countries like Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, traditionally seen as falling within India's sphere of influence. The author raises a pertinent point when she argues that from China's strategic viewpoint, and as per its analysts, it does not make much strategic sense to forsake Pakistan, an ally for India, a strategic competitor. The author demonstrates the centrality of Tibet to the China-India relations, the paradox of China's Pakistan policy as well as its growing regional matrix. "China-India Relations: Objectives and Future Priorities" by Pang Zhongying and Rupak Sapkota analyses the existing challenges on bilateral aspects of China-India relations and then discusses the future China-India priorities on which the two countries can enhance their cooperation on the areas of core mutual interests. Further the authors explain the rational prospects on how China and India can engage on achieving regional stability, security, peace and prosperity. Gordon G. Chang's chapter on "China's Military Modernisation and Its Impact on India" highlights the growing assertiveness of China vis-à-vis India. This includes China's aggressive stance at the China-India land borders as well as its growing maritime presence in the Indian Ocean. He cautions that China would attempt to encircle India by building upon bilateral relationships with India's neighbours which will then be followed up with establishing military ties.

D.S. Rajan in his chapter on "China and its Territorial Disputes—Increasing Security Dilemma" argues that one should not miss China's tendency to put its modern borders in a psychological comparison with those that existed prior to the perceived 'historical losses' of territories. The chapter studies in detail the three land border disputes and one maritime dispute, namely; the Sino-Indian boundary problem; the unresolved China-Bhutan border; the unresolved border with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK); and the maritime dispute. Rajan argues that the unsolved maritime border issues are most serious

for China as against competing claims of several littoral nations and the emerging regional order. Conditions in this regard put China against 8 littoral parties—Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia, as well as Taiwan. This creates conditions for security dilemmas which implies that all sides are suspicious of the other's intentions.

Maritime security has emerged as an area of focus in Asia given the huge impact free flow of goods and services via the seas have for countries in the region. This aspect is discussed in detail by Gurpreet S. Khurana, David Brewster, Abhijit Singh and Francis A. Kornegay, Jr. Gurpreet S. Khurana in his chapter on “Indian Maritime Doctrine and Asian Security: Intentions and Capabilities” examines the genesis of India’s maritime-military doctrinal articulations and identify the applicability of their relevant provisions to India’s emerging role as a security provider in the region. In this regard, the author attempts to identify the capability constraints, and addresses the prospects for India’s maritime power projection in peace-time. David Brewster’s chapter on “The Indo-Pacific and the Growing Strategic Importance of the Bay of Bengal” highlights the considerable strategic significance of the Bay of Bengal from its role as the principal maritime connection between the Pacific and Indian Oceans. This chapter focuses on recent strategic developments in the Bay of Bengal and their implications for our understanding of the Indo-Pacific. The chapter contends that the Bay of Bengal is increasingly becoming central in the Indo-Pacific strategic dynamic as its economic significance grows and major powers compete to control connections with the region. Abhijit Singh in his chapter on “The Indian Navy’s Security Role in Littoral-Asia” evaluates the Indian Navy’s effectiveness in advancing India’s strategic interests in its near and extended neighbourhood. It principally argues that while the Indian Navy has performed commendably in providing regional security, it has been unable to secure national strategic interests in the wider Indo-Pacific region. The maritime dynamic has been further complicated by growing Chinese assertiveness that has resulted in greater Indian defensiveness vis-à-vis the Indian Ocean. Francis A. Kornegay, Jr.’s chapter on “Deciphering Oriental Mysteries of Silk, Pearls & Diamonds—Trios, Quartets & Quintets: Maritime Dimensions of India’s Strategic Dilemmas in the Changing Asian Power Balance” conceptualizes a continental-maritime security equation by exploring India’s approach to advancing its interests in the Indian Ocean—and, in so doing, influence an evolving Asian power balance toward equilibrium. The chapter examines the challenges facing India in leveraging its capacities and strategic imagination to influence this evolution amid, first and foremost, the rise of China and US rebalancing (as reflected in the Obama visit to India in January 2015), but also factoring in the regional roles and potential of Japan and Indonesia along with the growing ‘federalist’ importance of regional economic communities (RECs). The author suggests that a creatively assertive

Indian diplomacy is required in structuring a more clearly resolved and inclusive ‘Zone of Peace’ multilateralism in the Indian Ocean.

Sean S. Costigan’s chapter on “Cybersecurity, Global Governance and New Risk” argues that while very few computer attacks by states and non-state actors have actually occurred against critical infrastructure, nonetheless, the incessant drive to connect myriad aspects of our increasingly digital lives and infrastructure creates, as a by-product of perceived and real efficiencies, new vulnerabilities that allow for enterprising actors to potentially wreak havoc on a wide scale. Costigan’s chapter examine laws and governance relating to technological change, risks pertaining to cybersecurity and how states are simultaneously weakening and strengthening cyberspace. Ranjana Kaul in “A Perspective on Space Security” explores the concept of a ‘common Asian Space Code’ based on points of convergence and divergence among the Asian space powers. The chapter’s examines India’s approach on ensuring continued access and use of outer space, within the framework of the international space law regime, as much as the ability to leverage its indigenous capability to strengthen national and regional security within geopolitical constraints. Animesh Roul’s chapter on “Chemical and Biological Dimension of Jihadi Terrorism” investigates the threat of chemical and biological terrorism emanating from non-state actors, including the Islamic Jihadi organizations, which control large swathes of territories and resources. He raises a worrying concern that if such weapons are made available to Islamic Jihadi organizations, they may end up using these with devastating effects. Even though no terrorist group, including the *Al Qaeda*, so far has achieved success in employing these destructive and disruptive weapons systems or materials, in reality, various terrorist groups have been seeking to acquire WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction/Disruption) materials and its know-how. Rajiv Nayan’s chapter on “The Emerging Asian Nuclear Order and India” argues that with global attention shifting to Asia due to its economic growth, Asian international order which encompasses its nuclear order has also become a focus of attention. This is further vindicated by the fact that five of the new nuclear nations are in Asia, namely; China, Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea. The chapter posits that in the next decade, Asian nuclear order will be shaped by the presence of nuclear weapons countries engaged in a deterrent relationship seeking for stability. The author argues that India is increasingly playing a stabilizing and crisis mitigating role and needs to increase its constructive presence through different institutions and regimes.

Smruti S. Pattanaik and Ashok K. Behuria brings back the focus to India’s immediate neighbourhood, in their chapter on “India’s Regional Strategy: Balancing Geopolitics with Geoeconomics in South Asia”. The authors provide a broad overview of India’s regional strategy, interrogate the assumptions that

informed such strategy, highlight factors that brought about shifts in Indian approach and the underlying basis for such change. Given its geographical location, the chapter asserts that India can play a significant role in economic development, energy and market connectivity, and these imperatives of geo-economics built into its regional strategy will help India in retaining its pre-eminent position in the region. In his chapter on “India’s Central Asian Strategic Paradoxes: The Impact of Strategic Autonomy in the Emerging Asian Regional Architecture”, Micha’el Tanchum examines how India’s insistence on a policy of strategic autonomy, in conjunction with its inability to increase bilateral trade, has created a paradoxical policy orientation in Central Asia, negatively impacting policy outcomes for India’s energy, trade and security relations. The chapter analyses the causes of India’s original setback in Tajikistan in December 2010 and then suggest that New Delhi’s subsequent *Connect Central Asia Policy* has encountered similar economic and security setbacks in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan because of the paradoxes engendered by India’s policy of strategic autonomy under the Government of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The chapter sheds light on possible outcomes for Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s new diplomatic posture toward Central Asia. Shankari Sundararaman in her chapter on “Dynamics of Change in India-Southeast Asia Relations: Beyond Economics to Strategic Partnerships” locates the geo-political significance of Southeast Asia, within the context of India’s foreign policy and the implications this has on India’s economic, political and security level objectives in the larger framework of emerging regional dynamics. The chapter examines the impact of geo-politics on the Southeast Asian region itself and views the changes that have shaped the region for nearly two decades as a backdrop to understanding India’s foreign policy towards the region. The recognition that Southeast Asia lies at the core of India’s engagement with the wider region is critical.

The last three chapters by Boris Volkhonsky, S. Samuel C. Rajiv, and Shruti Pandalai offers us a projection into the future based on current trends in Asia’s security landscape. Boris Volkhonsky in his chapter on “Strategic Trends in Asia: Future Directions” identifies four factors, which in his view have significant impact on Asia’s future. These are: the rise of China; new institutional structures like the BRICS Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) that questions the financial monopoly of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB); the decline in US hegemony; and finally, the creation of new customs unions like Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). The author states that the principal significance of all four factors is that each in its way symbolizes the rise of an alternative center(s) of power presenting a real challenge to the unipolar world order the West has been trying to preserve since the collapse of the Soviet block in early 1990s. S. Samuel C. Rajiv’s chapter on “Asian Security

Contentions: Trends and Scenarios” identifies two key contentions that are representative of an animated security discourse pertaining to two critical sub-regions of Asia. These are maritime territorial disputes in the South China Sea (SCS) and the Iranian nuclear contentions in West Asia. The chapter highlights Indian interests and approaches vis-à-vis these contentions. It lays out possible policy options for India that best maximise its security preferences, vis-à-vis two alternative scenarios (apart from the extant strategic reality) that could unfold regarding each of the contentions over the course of the near-to-mid-term future. Shruti Pandalai’s chapter on “Decoding India’s Agenda: New Ideas and Emerging Trends in Asian Security” discusses the concepts of India’s approach, the external and internal determinants that affect its choices and finally draws out the Indian perspective on emerging trends in Asian Security. The author identifies India’s strategic approach as being rooted in three broad trends: revitalising India’s Strategic Partnerships with major powers and gaining recognition as a rising global player which can justifiably contribute to Asian security; reclaiming the South Asian neighbourhood as a strategic asset and reprioritizing relationships to boost India’s role as a regional power and a renewed thrust on economic diplomacy independent of strategic compulsions.

The book offers a great mix of essays on India’s approach to Asian Security. It is rather exhaustive, offering both conceptually and empirically rich arguments on India’s strategic behaviour, its sense of its role in Asia as well as the normative dimensions of Indian’s engagement with Asia and the world. The book chapters takes us through an interesting journey from South Asia, to India’s regional role, to the several strategic partnerships it has, especially with the US, Japan, Russia, Vietnam, China, etc. We dwell into the regional dynamics of connectivity, via land and sea routes, the anxieties India faces at some of its borders, as well as the competition over resources. Entering the maritime sphere, the book chapters highlights the critical importance of the sea lanes of communication, the urgent need to better police the Indian Ocean, as well as growing tensions over disputes in the South China Sea. India is urged to build upon its capability and ambition to play its role effectively as a regional security provider in the Indian Ocean. The strategic importance of the Bay of Bengal in the Indo-Pacific is brought to us starkly. We also realize the significance of having a neighbourhood policy from India towards South Asia, which is inclusive, to build bridges of connectivity and interactions with Southeast Asia, as well as an Asian nuclear order which is stable. The need for better mechanisms to deal with cyber, Outer Space, Biological and Chemical Weapons is well established in the book. With the entry of insurgent groups like the Islamic State, it becomes even more pertinent that states work to limit their capacity to acquire such deadly WMDs. Finally, the book *India’s Approach to Asia: Strategy, Geopolitics and Responsibility* offers exciting strategic

scenarios for consideration to better understand the Asian strategic landscape and India's role in it.

NOTES

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RISING POWERS AND THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

Rising Powers in the Emerging World Order: An Overview, with a Reflection on the Consequences for India*

Barry Buzan

Thank you to IDSA and particularly Namrata Goswami for organising my trip here.

As most of you know, I am not an expert on South Asian or Indian affairs and it would be very foolish of me to stand up here and pretend in this kind of company that I was that kind of expert. So, I am going to do something a little different from what other speakers have done here, although I hope to be able to set some of the discussion that we have already had, and maybe some of the discussion that we are going to have, into a slightly different context from that which it has taken so far.

If I have a regional expertise or an area expertise, it is the world as a whole. The world is my region and I am therefore going to take a rather top-down high level view of the international system and the international society and where I think it is going. I am going to begin by telling you a story about how I think this all started. That story relates to a book, which came out a few days ago that I have written with George Lawson called “The Global Transformation” which looks at the impact of the 19th century revolutions of modernity in making contemporary international society. The basic argument of that book is that we are living downstream from the revolutions of modernity in the 19th century and that international relations pays too little attention to this. If you do pay attention to it, it gives you a somewhat different feel and a different positioning for understanding where we are now and how other things being equal the international system is unfolding. From that point of view it looks as if we are at quite an important moment of transition. So, I am going to tell you the story,

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outline the consequences of this story, then look at regions and at the emerging great powers and some of the problems that I think the emerging system will have. I will then try to raise a few questions out of that for the position and role of India within it.

So, let me start with the 19th century story. This is the driving story, and it is a fairly simple story in some ways, but its consequences are large and we still live as I say downstream from this story. So, the basic story here is that almost anything you care to think about of consequence in relation to the global system of international relations changed very dramatically during the 19th century. There was a technological and industrial revolution and most of you will know about that. There was an ideational revolution in the sense that the principal organising ideas for human political life generally changed radically: dynasticism and religion were pushed to one side, and new ideologies of progress like liberalism and socialism and nationalism and 'scientific' racism came to the fore. We can discuss if you like why I think these were ideologies of progress, but these ideas became very powerful in the 19th century and no equivalent ideas have arisen since. We are still living in the framework of those 19th century ideational revolutions. If you try to imagine what the 20th century would look like without nationalism, socialism, liberalism and 'scientific' racism, there is not a hell of a lot left! Basically nothing happened in the 20th century if you take those four ideas out.

So, both materially in the sense of a shift to industrial economies, ideationally in terms of the ideas of progress I have just talked about, and also in terms of the construction of the system itself, the form of the modern national State came about during the 19th century. So, the Westphalian State about which we talk so much is not the State that was imposed upon the rest of the world by the Western powers. What was imposed was the modern national state that came into being during the 19th century, and along with that a very intense global economy. This being India, I am sure there are a few Marxists out there still, and one way of thinking about this story is a nice Marxist concept from Trotsky about uneven and combined development. That sounds complex but it is actually quite simple. It basically says that development is always combined, i.e. everybody's economy is somehow in some degree linked to and affected by everybody else's, and that this development is always uneven in the sense that some parts are more developed than others by the standard of the day. What happened in the 19th century was that some parts of the world became extremely strongly developed and in a new way, and that opened up a very large power gap and created the extremely uneven form of international relations that has been normal ever since. So, it does not strike any of us as puzzling that a very small handful of countries should have been dominating the planet for the last couple of hundred years. It is just normal because that is what we have lived inside. But if you think about it, it is a bit odd

that just a handful of countries should dominate the whole planet and the reason for that is because of this extremely uneven construction of power that came into being in the 19th century. So, the 19th century set up a world that was extremely combined in the sense that suddenly there was a very powerfully integrative global economy and extremely uneven, in the sense that a small handful of countries dominated this and set the rules and led the way and pretty much imposed their will on everybody else.

That transformation is the one that we are living downstream from and the key argument I want to make is that we are reaching a point now where the extreme unevenness that got put into place in the 19th century is beginning to level out. So, any of you who have seen Fareed Zakaria's book, *The Rise of the Rest*, if you think about what that phrase means, it means that the 'Rest' are beginning to catch up, finding their own ways of coming to terms with the revolutions of modernity. This means that the extreme unevenness that was put into place in the 19th century is beginning to level out and we are moving towards a world in which power is going to be more evenly distributed and in which people have the same kind of power. Less and less will there be a small group of states that command industrial technology and modern power, and a larger group that are less developed and don't have that kind of power. That scenario, it seems to me, is where we need to start from in thinking about the sort of international system that we are in and how that is going to unfold in the coming decades. I will set out a few basic principles for this scenario.

The system that we are going into is going to be less and less uneven. Power is going to be more diffused but it is going to be more combined. There is no sense in which the global economy is disappearing or the importance of shared fates diminishing, whether they be environmental fates or to do with the ups and downs of the global economy. This combinedness, and connectedness, is going to go on getting more intense. But the distribution of power within it is going to become more even. If you follow that logic, it leads you to a rather interesting proposition, something I have been arguing for the last few years, which is that we are heading for a world without superpowers. We used to have three superpowers, then we had two, then we had one and that one is looking pretty wobbly. As we sit here, people are paying less attention to it, it is doing less, it is intervening less, and it has less relative capability to control things. And that seems like a pretty powerful trend. But, much of the argument that you find in international relations and particularly in American international relations is arguing about...well, are we going to have two superpowers because China is going to become a superpower and the US is going to remain one; or are we going to have maybe three superpowers if India comes up as well? The future is still being talked about in terms of superpowers. What I am saying is, no, there

are not going to be any more superpowers. We are going to lose the one we have got, like it or not, and therefore we are going to be in a world which has great powers and regional powers but no superpowers.

Now, we have not been in a world like that ever. Since the industrial revolutions of the 19th century we have had superpowers and therefore we have got used to the idea that world order is going to be provided by a very small number of powers, whether one or two or three, that somehow manage the system because they are big enough that it is in their interest to do so. Maybe they will also compete over the control of the system as superpowers did during the Cold War. But a world which has no superpowers but only great powers isn't going to look like that. Nobody is going to either want, or be able to perform, the job of managing the world: that is basically the definition of a world without superpowers. The Americans, although it is now embedded in their political DNA to want to run the world, are ceasing to be able to do so and are losing the legitimacy to do so. The Chinese say they don't want to run the world and don't want to be a superpower and on this I believe them. I don't think they are arguing it for the same reasons that I am but they don't want this job either. India certainly does not want the job, the Russians aren't up to it, the EU isn't up to it. Nobody wants the job. In a world of great powers basically nobody is going to be responsible for running the world and that is the situation we need to think about. So, that is where I am going to head for.

This world has one or two other qualities about it if you follow the logic. One of them is that ideologically it will have a narrower bandwidth than we have seen for a long time. The catch phrase here basically is that 'we are all capitalists now'. We used to fight about capitalism or not, but now everybody is some version of capitalist. The Chinese don't want to admit it but you only have to spend five minutes in Shanghai to know that that is the sort of society that you are in. Maybe the Russians still haven't quite got capitalism and they maybe in some danger of dropping back into some form of statist economy, but everybody else has got it. If you want to have wealth and power, which most people do, capitalism is the way you get it and it outruns all of the other ways. If there is one single lesson from the Cold War it is that, and pretty much everybody has got that lesson and the Chinese got it good and early on. So, we have a narrower ideological bandwidth which is a possible resource for us to play with in thinking about a world order.

The other feature of this system, is that if you have a world without superpowers but only great and regional powers, then probably you are looking at a more decentered kind of world or to put it the other way round, a more regionalised kind of world. This may be for better or for worse, and I am not taking a normative position on this question. What I am saying is that this

decentred world is the one we are likely to be in like it or not. Regions are likely to be more prominent politically, possibly even economically than they have been, and the global level of international society will tend to be a bit weaker because there is no superpower up there managing it and trying to make the system work on a global scale. So, a world of great powers and regional powers is probably going to be more decentered and therefore, there are going to be more differentiated local, political and economic systems.

If we start to think about that, the nature of the regions, two things come to mind quite quickly. One is that of course regions are constructed, there is nothing natural about regions, think for example of the discussion of regionalism in Asia, there are all kinds of different possibilities for regions in Asia. You have got South Asia, South East Asia, North East Asia or do we think about a pan-Asian region, a kind of Sino-Centric super complex, do we think about the Indian Ocean, do we think about the various constructions of Pacific regions, which includes lots of Asia and that make the United States part of Asia? All of these are possibilities, not to mention the Australian question: are they part of Asia or not? There are all kinds of different constructions of regions, so there is nothing determined about them, and which kinds of regions will come into being is a bit hard to predict. It is not a geographical concept here.

Looking around the system it is clear that there is a great diversity of types of regions out there. This it seems to me is likely to remain the case. You can think about this diversity in different ways. Some regions have great powers in them and some don't. Take, North America for example, you could compare North America and South Asia as being regions with one very big power in them and then a variety of much smaller ones. Or you could look at Europe: if you think of the European Union as a power, then Europe has one big power which has kind of integrated most of the region. If you look at East Asia, it has two great powers; if you are thinking of all Asia then three great powers if you count India. So, some regions have one great power, some have more than one and some have none. The Middle East famously has no great power, Africa has no great power. So, there is a whole variety of potential relations between as it were the local great powers and the regions. These can take many forms. Some regions are consensual security communities, Europe and North America most obviously. Some are consensual security regimes, Latin America probably, and some are conflict formations, the Middle East most obviously. Some people would still think of South Asia as a conflict formation. Some regions are mixtures: East Asia is half way between the ideal types of security regime and a conflict formation. Conflict is certainly possible but there is a reasonable amount of security management and there have been relatively few conflicts in East Asia. So, the regions are very diverse and they relate to great powers in very diverse ways. But

if a great power has a region, then in a sense it is moving into a layered form of international relations in which it has a regional management issue level and also what kind of role it is going to play at the global level. Great powers need to start thinking about this because if the US declines as a superpower, there is a rather serious question as to who is going to do the global management. Local great powers will probably volunteer to do at least some degree of the local order maintenance but who is going to do it at the global level remains an interesting question. So, regions are probably going to be more important but it is very indeterminate as to exactly what the shape of that will be and it is going to take very different forms in very different places for the various reasons that I have given.

If we now look a bit at the nature of the rising great powers I am focusing here, there are some interesting features. This is good news for India, because demography is back. In the 19th century, a little country like mine (the UK) with just a few tens of millions of people could be a superpower because power was so unevenly distributed and if you did not have the modern mode of power you were hugely disadvantaged in relation to those who did. The population did not matter all that much. Even Denmark and Belgium could have empires, and medium sized countries like Britain and France could be global powers because of this differentiation. That differentiation is now disappearing. You can mark that with the proliferation of nuclear weapons or the spread of industrial economies and modernity in general. There are all kinds of markers for it but it is very clear that this is happening. This means the future great powers are all going to be big. This is what poses the problem for Europe: Europe cannot really be a great power unless it has some kind of institutional unification.

All of the great powers are capitalist at the moment, which is quite a useful thing. Whether you like capitalism or not, the mere fact of the homogeneity of this is a useful thing because we don't have these ideological contestations that we had in the 20th century about the basic form of the political economy. That issue seems to have been resolved. Most of the rising great powers are nationalist, and all of them are quite strongly sovereigntist. This rising crop of great powers therefore has a certain number of things in common. They also have some quite significant differences. They may all be capitalists but they are not the same kind of capitalists. There is a whole fascinating literature out there on the varieties of capitalism and it is pretty clear, classical liberal thinking notwithstanding, that capitalism can go along with a lot of different political forms. You could have an authoritarian capitalism like the Chinese have or the Saudis and others or you can have a liberal democratic capitalism like the US, or you can have social democratic capitalism like most of Europe and Japan, maybe India fits in there as well I am not sure. You can also have mixtures like Russia where it is not

entirely authoritarian but it is not exactly what you call democratic either or at least that democracy has played on an extremely uneven field in which you don't get fair outcomes. But nonetheless there is some semblance of democracy unlike say in China where democracy is simply not on the field at all. So, all capitalists but politically different and that is going to be an important consideration.

Do we want to emphasise the political differences amongst the great powers or do we want to emphasise the shared qualities in all being capitalist? There are of course cultural and other differences, that is a given and isn't going away at all. I think any of you who are still worried about modernisation equalling westernisation are wasting your time and energy, you should move on to something more productive to worry about because it is pretty clear that capitalism comes in lots of different varieties and as the rise of the rest gets rolling we can see that capitalism can be fitted into all kinds of different cultural and political forms. Each cultural and political form has to work out its own accommodation with capitalism and that is what is going on around us. Now, more and more people are finding ways of doing that and that is why the world is becoming less uneven.

Nonetheless it does raise an interesting issue which I think is going to become important and I am going to make this a bit of a theme in this talk. From the 19th century onwards, almost all of the great powers and superpowers have been what we would call developed states, industrial states, states at the leading edge of wherever the index of development is. So, there has been a correlation. You had to be that kind of a State in order to qualify as a great power. The world we are moving into now is going to contain a different mix. So, there are going to be countries that are both great powers and developing countries. The most obvious examples of this would be China and India and Brazil. I don't know quite so much about Brazil but I know a fair bit about China, and from what I have heard of the foreign policy rhetoric in India, although the form of words is different, the substance is the same: basically China and India talk a line that says we are developing countries still and we are great powers, and we want to have both kinds of status at the same time. We also have huge populations, so we are responsible for a big chunk of humankind, and therefore it is really as much as we can do to take responsibility for developing ourselves. Self-development is our contribution to global order, so don't ask us to do anything else. That is a line you get very clearly out of China and I think you get a similar line out of India but differently worded. We need to think very carefully about the implications of this combination of 'I want to be a great power, I want recognition of great power status but I also want to stay as a developing country'. Even the Chinese are still hanging on to developing country status. It is embarrassing but there are some political advantages in it and so they do, and India will do the same for sure. How rising great powers mix these two things is I think is going to be one

of the big problems going forward. I have a way of thinking about this which is slightly odd. Most of you know what autism is, the kind of developmental condition where an individual's behaviour is dominated much more by what goes on inside him or herself than in relating with other people. Autistic individuals tend to have problems developing a social life or a set of social relationships. I think this is a useful analogy for the kind of international system that we are moving into because most of the great powers are going to display quite strong autistic tendencies. In other words their behaviour is going to be much more driven by what is going on inside them than it is by the relationships with other countries. This is true for the developing country great powers for the reasons I just mentioned: they are self-obsessed with their development, which is perfectly legitimate, and don't want to take on wider responsibilities. But the existing set of developed country great powers is worn out, exhausted and introverted. The Americans are turning in, and the Europeans have already turned in, and have not yet worked out how to make a collective foreign policy of any great consequence. So, we are perhaps facing a situation in which as it were the community of great powers is going to be a bit autistic. All of its members are going to be more internally self obsessed than they are going to be outward looking and concerned about managing the system. That it seems to me is going to be a significant problem going forward. The danger of that kind of system is that international society ends up becoming very weak because nobody is taking on the managerial responsibilities of the system level. And the system level does need managing.

There are plenty of shared fate problems out there ranging from the environment through terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, to the management of the global economy which none of us are going to escape. So, we cannot escape the issue that the world needs a decent amount of management and if my argument is correct we cannot escape the issue that there is no longer going to be a superpower or superpowers to do that management. There is only going to be a coterie, a mixed bag of great powers, none of which wants the job of global management. So, the logic of this I think is fairly clear, if this group of great powers says we don't want to get involved in global management then the system will be seriously under managed and these collective problems will go unaddressed. If on the other hand they want to get together and form some kind of international society, then there are real possibilities for a concert of capitalist powers. This would be my ideal outcome, one in which the great powers would all recognize and accept the fact that they are indeed capitalist and that gives them a strong set of shared interest at the very minimum in managing the world economy. I can't think of any of the major powers that has any interest in disrupting the global economy at the moment. They are all dependent on it. If it goes down

then they all go down and their development projects all go down together. So, that would be the ideal outcome. But that requires what Hedley Bull referred to as responsible great powers, powers that are accepting of what Adam Watson called *raison de system*, the idea that it pays to make the system work. This is as it were the counterpoint to *raison de etat* where you judge your behaviour only by the particular immediate national interest that you have. So, one needs this counterpoint between *raison de etat* and *raison de system* and the question is whether we are going to get this or not.

There is obviously a need for institutional reform and we are beginning to see something of that in the sense that it looks like it is going to be impossible to reform the UN security council and the existing institutions, and that the American Congress is not going to allow meaningful reforms to the IMF and the World Bank and other such like, and therefore the BRICS and others are beginning to set up counterpoint institutions of their own and we are going to be in some kind of strange institutional flux where it is not clear that we have got functioning, legitimate, global level organisations. How this is going to pan out, I don't know. But it is part of the equation of this transformation point that we are looking at where the rise of the rest is evening out the global distribution of power and therefore bringing to an end the period of western dominance which hinged on the revolutions of the 19th century.

Let me conclude this by trying to make a few points about what the significance of this might be for India. If you take the broad picture that I am painting and then try to locate India in there, what do you get? This can be thought about on three levels. There are domestic things, there are regional things and then there are global things. On the domestic level, the autism question is one that India needs to think about hard because its natural tendency is to be to be one of those autistic powers that is more self obsessed and not wanting to take on a larger responsibility. Many people make the invidious comparison of the Indian diplomatic service with that of Singapore and the Singaporeans come out better. This is a commonplace remark and needs to be addressed. If India is going to play a great power role it needs to have a great power diplomatic service. I don't think there are any questions about the quality of the Indian diplomatic service but there are serious questions about the size of it and the kind of world into which we are moving needs to be one in which countries are very well diplomatically equipped because this is going to be, I hope and I think, a world in which diplomacy will be a lot more important than war. Great powers are not going to define themselves by beating other great powers in war; they are going to define themselves through their diplomatic activities in structuring international society and being responsible members of that society.

We had some discussion yesterday about ideas. Whether India has a kind of

grand scheme of things and grand strategy and there are clearly some things floating around but those need to be firmed up. Exactly the same remark could be made about China. What does China want? I don't know, nobody knows. It wants 15 different things most of which contradict the other 14. So, there isn't a great coherence in it and the same is true in the case of India. India has a particular problem because if I am right in thinking that the world we are moving towards is a more regionalised world, then the question is: what is India's region? That question has lots of different answers. Now, that suggests to me that some hard thinking needs to go on in India about the scope of the regions within which India wants to play a role. The South Asian region question has been around for a long time, India does not seem to be very interested in dominating its region or managing its region, so can it transcend its region or is its region going to be a drag on its aspirations to great power status? I think both are true. India can probably transcend its region but the region is still going to be a drag on its great power status because it is embarrassing to have a backyard as messy as the one that India has, and occasionally it can be problematic.

Does India want to follow the Curzon vision and make itself an Indian Ocean power, in a sense reconstructing the role it had when the British were running the place? The Look East-Act East Policy is clearly part of that vision, and there is quite a lot of that thinking going on which entails a more navalist view of the armed forces, and acting on a considerably wider scale. There is evidence that India is playing on that scale. Then there was the all-Asia scale that is generally thought of as being some kind of Sino-centered security complex in which North East Asia, South East Asia, South Asia and Central Asia are all in some sense being drawn into a China-centered system both strategically and economically. This is a very important dynamic to understand and India is clearly being drawn into this to some extent. But there is some oddities about this.

Within the larger Asian sphere there are countries that are wedded to older traditions of hierarchy if I can put it that way, so, for example, Confucian cultures are naturally inclined towards hierarchy. I think you could see the same in Russia, which is behaving like an old fashioned empire. Up to a point so is China, although China's behaviour is very mixed there is certainly an imperial element in there, that line of Chinese rhetoric that says we should have primacy in Asia is a kind of imperial line of rhetoric. The Chinese will deny this, they hate nothing more than being referred to as imperialist, but they are going to have to get used to it because in some respects their behaviour fits. On the other hand, Asia is also a place where there is an extremely strong commitment to sovereignty, non-intervention, and sovereign equality. These are contradictory principles in many ways and therefore the one clear thing you can say about Asia as a whole is that it has no shared principles of political legitimacy, and that is going to make life

a bit difficult when it comes to defining some kind of international society on regional scale or an all-Asian scale. It is going to have to be very pluralist and very tolerant of difference, more so than say has been the case in the western developments like the EU and the other such like. It is a different political game that has to be played here.

On the global level, the key way to think about it perhaps from an Indian perspective is to pick on the term multipolarity. India is one of those countries that likes the term multipolarity and uses it frequently. India has plenty of company in this habit: the Chinese like it too, so do the Russians, and also the French and the Iranians, and a variety of others. The general rhetoric is: we want a more multipolar world. That can be read as shorthand for we don't want an American dominated world. But whether you like it or not you are not going to have an American dominated world for much longer because America is clearly losing the capability and the legitimacy to play that superpower global managing role. So, for all of those who wave the multipolar flag, your bluff is going to be called. You are going to get this world whether you like it or not and the question is what sort of world do you want that to be? I have not seen much in the way of discussion about what a multipolar world should look like from a Chinese or an Indian or a Russian or other perspective other than that the Americans should not be dominant. So, if the Americans are just even down to first amongst equals or just equals, what is this multipolar world going to look like? If it is a world of autistic great powers, it is not going to be very pretty. If it is a world of what the English school refers to as responsible great powers, then there is some hope for it because as I have said, all the great powers are capitalist and they all share the same set of fates about terrorism, about the global environment, about disease transmission, about management of the global economy, and suchlike. So, there are good reasons for them to cooperate and fewer political, ideological reasons for them not to. So, I think this is the choice really and this is the thing that needs to be talked about. Is India going to be one amongst a group of autistic great powers under managing the system, or is it going to be a responsible great power and part of a concert of capitalist powers? Thank you for listening.

ASIAN REGIONAL ORDER

1

Panchsheel–Multilateralism and Competing Regionalism: The Indian Approach towards Regional Cooperation and the Regional Order in South Asia, the Indian Ocean, the Bay of Bengal, and the Mekong-Ganga

Arndt Michael

The emergence of the independent nations in Asia naturally leads to what might be called vaguely an Asian way of looking at the world. I do not say there is one Asian way, because Asia is a big continent, offering different viewpoints. However, it is a new angle, and is a change from the Europe-centred or any other view of the world.

—Jawaharlal Nehru, 1958¹ (Nehru 2006, pp. 280-81)

At the eve of India's independence, Jawaharlal Nehru predicted that "in Asia it seems inevitable that two or three huge federations will develop. [...] India is going to be the centre of a very big federation."² Essentially, a federation for Nehru meant common cooperative activities between like-minded neighbours. Yet, while regional cooperation—either in the guise of economic or even politico-military multilateral frameworks—has been successfully initiated in practically all regions of the world, similar developments have not occurred in South Asia until today. The region remains "the least integrated region in the world",³ despite the existence of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) since 1985. The same holds true for the Indian Ocean region—a vast area where regional cooperation has been unsuccessfully attempted since 1997 with the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).⁴ And, if one looks at the Bay of Bengal with its Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMST-EC) since 1997, no tangible results have been achieved there either.

In terms of successful models of regional multilateralism or cooperation, the European Union (EU) has achieved the highest level of interaction, with a vertical and horizontal dimension of ongoing integration. Looking specifically at Asian regional cooperation, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a prominent example for a distinct Asian regional variation of inter-state cooperation. Since its inception in 1967, ASEAN has gradually evolved and expanded, following its special 'ASEAN way' of institutional-organisational minimalism and an informal non-legalistic method of cooperation.⁵ ASEAN's development has demonstrated that there are viable alternatives to the frequently cited EU blueprint for a well-functioning regional organisation. From a systemic point of view, in today's world of global governance—with international financial, regional or collective security institutions in part determining the behaviour of states—regional institutions such as the SAARC, IORA or BIMST-EC play no role whatsoever, and have no impact on the behaviour of states. The latter does not hold true for the EU or ASEAN which are international actors in their own right, and which have a marked impact on their member countries.

The success stories of regional cooperation in Europe or Southeast Asia raises two important questions. First: Why have comparable developments in terms of regional cooperation never taken place in South Asia and neighbouring regions such as the Indian Ocean or the Bay of Bengal? And second: Why are organisations such as SAARC and IORA completely irrelevant as international actors, and do not possess any influence on state behaviour?

This essay takes a normative perspective and posits that Indian foreign policy has been instrumental in eventually determining the institutional design, functional scope, and normative orientation of these four regional organisations. Also, there are recurring patterns in the processes leading to the founding of all four organisations and their respective evolution. These patterns display the special idiosyncrasies of Indian foreign policy, that is, India has left a specific normative imprint on all four organisations. This imprint is based upon a set of Indian foreign policy determinants and norms (termed *cognitive prior*) which show a contradictory approach towards regional multilateralism, torn between ideas and norms that favour cooperation and those that oppose it. The essay also argues the case for the existence of a special regional variation of multilateralism termed "*Panchsheel Multilateralism*". This is a principally an Indian version of multilateralism, compatible with the ideational orthodoxy of Indian foreign policy. As a consequence of this model incorporating a specific normative and ideational foreign policy orientation, there is virtually no room for any genuine multilateral cooperation. On the contrary, any tangible cooperative results are found in essence in the bilateral domain only.

Based upon the above, the essay is structured in four parts. The first section

summarizes the *cognitive prior*, that is, the ideational orthodoxy of Indian foreign policy. In the following section, the respective genesis of SAARC and the IORA are examined. The penultimate section then briefly looks at BIMST-EC and MGC. The final section examines common patterns of cooperation, and summarizes the findings of the analysis.

The Cognitive Prior of India's Foreign Policy: Ideational and Normative Determinants of India's Foreign Policy⁶

A *cognitive prior* is “an existing set of ideas, belief systems, and norms, which determine and condition an individual or social group’s receptivity to new norms.”⁷ For the present analysis, the term *cognitive prior* will be expanded to include major principles, norms and ideas that make up the core determinants of a state’s foreign policy. An analysis of historic speeches and documents from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) relating to India’s foreign policy history as well as a series of 62 expert interviews conducted between 2006 and 2014—including interviews with former Indian Prime Minister I.K. Gujral, several former MEA secretaries, and members of Indian foreign policy elite—confirm the existence of a set of fixed foreign policy principles and determinants. However, these principles consist of ideational and normative push and pull factors, that is, policies torn between idealist and realist parameters.⁸ The parameters of Indian foreign policy in the aftermath of Independence reflected India’s colonial experience of more than 200 years, but more importantly, its political culture and civilizational heritage as well. A duality can be discerned, especially in the field of political thought: India has two ancient conflicting lines of political thought and traditions, with the political realist Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* (especially the latter’s *mandala* strategy) representing one line of thought⁹, and the idealist strand, with Buddha, Ashoka and Gandhi representing the other.¹⁰ Accordingly, Nehru clarified with regard to the origins of India’s foreign policy that “it should not be supposed that we are starting on a clean slate. It is a policy which flowed from our recent history and from our national movement and its development and from various ideals we have proclaimed.”¹¹

From the very beginning of his time as Prime Minister, Nehru formulated a distinct Indian international relations policy which was, especially in its early years, determined in accordance with the ideals of the freedom struggle and Gandhian philosophy (that is, tolerance and *Satyagraha*). Time and again, Nehru expressed his belief that a nation’s self-interest requires cooperation with other nations. It was originally a policy where—in rhetoric at least—morality played a more prominent role than the use of force, and the peaceful settlement of disputes was the key instrument by which world peace could be achieved. While his belief especially in the principle of non-violence was constantly reiterated, Nehru himself

voiced the contradictions between foreign policy principles and action. On 15 February 1956, he declared in the Lok Sabha: "I am not aware of our government having ever said that they have adopted the doctrine of *Ahimsa* (non-violence) to our activities. They may respect it, they may honour the doctrine, but as a government it is patent that we do not consider ourselves capable of adopting the doctrine of *ahimsa*."¹²

Two central characteristics of India's foreign policy derived from Nehru are the *Panchsheel*-principles and the policy of Non-Alignment. The *Panchsheel*¹³—that is, the peaceful co-existence of nations of different ideologies and interests—were formally recognized when, on 29 April 1954, India and China signed the Declaration of Five Principles (Panchsheel) as the new basis of their relationship.¹⁴ The five principles enumerated in the preamble of the agreement are: (1) respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; (2) non-aggression; (3) non-interference in each other's internal affairs; (4) equality and cooperation for mutual benefit; and (5) peaceful coexistence. Nehru later outlined the important connection between Panchsheel and cooperation: "...this idea of Panchsheel lays down the very important truth that each nation must ultimately fend for itself."¹⁵ In other words: adherence to the Panchsheel for Nehru equalled the primacy of complete independence.

In addition, India's foreign policy rests firmly on the concept of Non-Alignment. This policy was initiated and pursued by Nehru between 1946 and 1954. Soon after assuming office as interim Prime Minister, Nehru announced in September 1946 the broad framework of the policy of Non-Alignment: "We propose, as far as possible, to keep away from the power politics of groups, aligned against one another, which have led in the past to world wars and which may again lead to disasters on an even vaster scale."¹⁶ Nehru's promotion of Non-Alignment has been adequately summarized as essentially a political "means of minimizing, if not totally excluding, political and military intervention by the great powers in regional affairs."¹⁷

In tandem with these two general principles of India's foreign policy, the specific Indian concept of multilateralism—especially its scope and limits—developed over the course of several decades, with the normative origins of regional multilateralism essentially stemming from India's experiences in regional Asian conferences in the 1950s onwards. Several important political conferences took place in the late 1940s and 1950s in which South Asian and Southeast Asian countries participated, though none of these led to the establishment of permanent institutions.¹⁸ The one major foreign policy principle that Nehru constantly aired during this time was his complete dislike of multilateral security cooperation.¹⁹ Nehru expressly highlighted the relationship between a defence alliance and a nation's independence:

I can understand a number of countries coming together for their own defence and thus making an alliance. [...] It means that any internal development in that area might also entitle these countries to intervene. Does this not affect the whole conception of integrity, sovereignty and independence of the countries of the area?²⁰

This particular stance towards multilateral security—and hence political—cooperation has become one of the mainstays of India's foreign policy. On the whole, during the early days of India's independence, there was an obvious contradiction between India's foreign policy rhetoric as outlined above, and its actions. While India publicly insisted on the principle of morality, on occasion it decided to use force and military action against the princely states of Junagadh (1948) and Hyderabad (1949), and later Goa (1961). After India's defeat in the Indo-China war in 1962, India began to arm, and heavily increased its military defence system. It tested its first nuclear device in 1974. In addition, the official state policy of Non-Alignment did not prevent Nehru from seeking military aid from the USA and Great Britain during the Sino-Indian border war of 1962; nor did it restrain India from concluding the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation in August 1971. The latter assured that both parties would come to each other's aid in the event of an attack by a third party. The treaty also ensured the transfer of a huge quantity of Soviet weapons, which helped India to successfully pursue its military intervention in East Pakistan (subsequently Bangladesh) in December 1971.

Besides the Panchsheel principles and the policy of Non-Alignment, there are the primacy of national interest and focus on complete autonomy as further determinants of India's foreign policy. On 11 January 2006, the then Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran confirmed the essence and continuity of India's general foreign policy orientation.

India has maintained a remarkable continuity in the fundamental tenets of its policy. The core of this continuity is to ensure autonomy in our decision making. It is to ensure independence of thought and action. This was and remains the essence of our adherence to the principle of Non-Alignment. It is also the basis of our commitment to the Panchsheel, or the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, which India and China jointly advocated in the early 1950s, and still believe to be relevant in contemporary international relations. There are other key elements of continuity as well. These include maintenance of friendly relations with all countries, resolution of conflicts through peaceful means and equity in the conduct of international relations.²¹

Finally, in the course of the interviews with experts conducted by the author, the paradigm of bilateralism was cited as another of the major tenets of India's foreign policy. Essentially, this significant foreign policy paradigm amounts to exclusive and direct dealings between India and other nation-states, without any kind of involvement of third parties.

In the final analysis, the Panchsheel principles are still India's core guideline with regard to the way it wants relations between nations to be governed, that is, without interference and at equidistance. In addition, the normative origins and roots of regional multilateralism still stem from the 1950s and Nehru's fervent opposition to multilateral security cooperation. The following Table 1 lists the eight major principles and normative orientations of India's foreign policy. The table shows that there are both idealist as well as realist features, but the realist features clearly predominate.

Table 1: The Cognitive Prior of India's Foreign Policy

1.	Tolerance (idealism)
2.	Non-violence (<i>ahimsa</i>) (idealism)
3.	<i>Mandala</i> Strategy (realism)
4.	<i>Panchsheel</i> Principles (idealist-realistic)
5.	Non-Alignment (idealist-realistic)
6.	Primacy of National Interest (realism)
7.	Primacy of Autonomy (realism)
8.	Principle of Bilateralism (realism)

Source: The Author.

As a preliminary conclusion, it becomes evident that India's *cognitive prior* has important traces of a collective memory. While it has incorporated an important benign idealist strand that has led to the rhetorical confirmation of idealism and cooperation, it actually follows, more often than not, political realism which can be traced back to India's colonial experience. The subsequent case studies will use this finding to establish how the relevant stakeholders of regional cooperation made cooperation eventually compatible with India's *cognitive prior*.

Case Study 1: The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

Against the backdrop of a lively academic debate in South Asia on the necessity and advantages of regional cooperation in South Asia in the late 1970s and a favourable politico-strategic environment between the countries of the region, a first tentative step towards implementing a general structure of regional cooperation was made by Zia-ur-Rahman, President of Bangladesh until 1981. He discussed the possibility of organising regional cooperation in South Asia during personal visits to Nepal, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in the late 1970s and in 1980.²² In a letter sent to the heads of state or government of several South Asian countries, he argued,

The contemporary experience in inter-state relations all over the world strongly emphasizes the need for regional cooperation with a view to maximizing either security or stability or accelerating economic and social development.²³

In November 1980, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh then drafted a proposal,²⁴ and circulated it among the countries of the region. The paper expressed the determination to uphold respect for the principles of sovereignty, national independence, territorial integrity, non-interference, non-use of force, and the peaceful settlement of disputes.²⁵ The fact that the proposal referred to “independence”, the Panchsheel principles and the Non-Aligned Movement confirms the significance of these principles; but it also shows that Nehru’s ideational legacy visibly influenced the process at this early stage.

The proposal expressed ideas that challenged Indian interests. The Indian government therefore accepted the proposal only “in principle.”²⁶ India made it clear that any strategic and security related aspects would have to be excluded from the proposal. India also feared that the initiative for South Asian regional cooperation might be an attempt to limit its actions in South Asia, which was not acceptable in view of historical experiences as a former British colony. The Indian reaction was, therefore, both a testament to the cooperative side of India’s foreign policy principles and the belief in the primacy of bilateralism and independence. In the same token, it is important to realize that the kind of proposed institutionalized regional multilateralism was actually a new element for India’s foreign policy. Accepting it meant, in principle, that India could also enhance its authority in the region.

In response to the proposal, the foreign secretaries of seven South Asian countries met in Colombo from 21-23 April 1981 in order to discuss the Bangladesh proposal. During this meeting, the then Indian Foreign Secretary R.K. Sathe outlined India’s approach, and insisted on following a slow, gradual course of action regarding regional cooperation, while opposing the creation of any institutional arrangement already at that early stage. Sathe restrained the enthusiasm of Bangladesh and smaller states, and insisted on confining regional cooperation to specific areas. He also voiced two important pre-conditions for regional cooperation in South Asia.

Here I would submit that the principle of avoiding discussions in regional framework of all bilateral and contentious issues and of unanimity as the principle on the basis of which decisions in regard to regional cooperation are taken should be followed scrupulously.²⁷

As a result of several exchanges of opinions at the Foreign Secretary level during a period of five years (until mid-1983), an already very limited model of South Asian regional multilateralism was discussed. The Indian position was characterized by restraint with regard to the speed of cooperation and the insistence on issues relating to trade. India had evolved to become the agenda setter right from the beginning, and had pushed through its normative agenda by excluding any issues relating to the political or strategic fields from the discussions.

The evolution of regional multilateralism in South Asia reached its first milestone when the ‘Meeting of South Asian Foreign Ministers’ took place for the first time in New Delhi on 1-2 August 1983.²⁸ The meeting was inaugurated by the then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi,²⁹ a symbolic gesture that was a public display of the importance attached to the general idea of inter-state cooperation that Nehru had already favoured. While she stressed South Asian common denominators such as a shared ancient civilization, geography, cultural experiences—all of which were in consonance with major strands of India’s foreign policy—she also repeated India’s strict policy of Non-Alignment and summed up her vision of the regional grouping:

Our policy is not to interfere in the affairs of others. The regional grouping that brings us together is not aimed against anyone else. Nor are we moved by any ideological or military considerations. Our cooperation in no way limits each country’s freedom of judgment. [...] We are all equals. We are against exploitation and domination. We want to be friends with all on a footing of equality. We should be ever vigilant against the attempts of external powers to influence our functioning.³⁰

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Foreign Ministers signed and adopted a declaration on South Asian Regional Cooperation (SAARC), also known as the ‘New Delhi Declaration’,³¹ which can be regarded as the second milestone in the evolution of regional multilateralism in South Asia. According to the document, any future association was to be inter-governmental, and not supra-national in nature. It did not involve a pooling of any common resources—military or otherwise—of the member countries.

After several preparatory meetings, SAARC finally came into existence on 8 December 1985. In his speech at the first SAARC Summit, Rajiv Gandhi repeated India’s ideational stance, and explained the Indian policy towards regional cooperation in South Asia.

We have not sought to melt our bilateral relationships into a common regional identity, but rather to fit South Asian cooperation into our respective foreign policies as an additional dimension. We have evolved modalities which do not allow bilateral stresses and strains to impinge on regional cooperation.³²

It was at this summit that the SAARC Charter was adopted. It listed the objectives, principles, and the institutional framework of SAARC, and repeated elements of the corresponding founding declarations, that is, the Bangladesh proposal and the New Delhi Charter. Most importantly, the Charter institutionalized the South Asian/Indian model of regional multilateralism. Two significant conditions reflecting the strict Indian position were incorporated as “General Provisions”: decisions at all levels would be taken on the basis of unanimity, and bilateral and contentious issues had to be excluded from the deliberations. The five principles of Panchsheel were reiterated. Most importantly,

it laid out the structure of the organisation: a pyramidal structure with summits at the apex, supported by the Council of Ministers meeting, and standing committees comprising foreign secretaries, as well as technical and action committees.

With regard to the question of a secretariat, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan wanted to give SAARC an institutional shape corresponding to ASEAN. It eventually took until 1987 to finally agree on the establishment of a secretariat with severely limited powers and resources in Kathmandu. This coordinates and monitors the execution of the various SAARC activities, and prepares meetings. The Secretary-General is assisted by a Professional and a General Services Staff. Each member country sends one country director to the secretariat who is assigned to one of eight Working Divisions. In all, the secretariat has a permanent staff of about 50, and the annual SAARC budget stood at about US\$ 3 million in 2015.

Between 1985 and 2015, there have been eighteen summit meetings, several hundred ministerial meetings and, as of 2015, there are seven conventions and thirteen agreements.³³ Membership today is composed of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The institutional and organisational design of SAARC has not changed since the first summit. A South Asian Free Trade Area has been agreed upon; but is not yet fully functional. All things considered, the process of regional multilateralism in the South Asian context has led to a distinct institutional shape that has incorporated important features of India's *cognitive prior*, and neither resembles the EU's nor ASEAN's institutional blueprint. SAARC also suffers from an institutional and normative paradox. It is an organisation expected to further cooperation in the region; however, it is explicitly forbidden to discuss bilateral (and contentious) issues, which has practically precluded any progress in areas of inter-state cooperation in a region where grave bilateral problems are ubiquitous.

Case Study 2: The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

Ten years after SAARC was founded, another attempt at regional multilateralism with Indian participation was made—this time with a view to finding common ground between the countries of the Indian Ocean Rim (IOR). Regional cooperation was promoted by two very different initiatives: one originating in Mauritius, another in Australia.³⁴

In March 1995, the government of Mauritius launched the Indian Ocean Rim Initiative (IORI)³⁵ in order to probe the possibility of intensified regional activities of the countries of the Indian Ocean Rim. As originally proposed by Mauritius in December 1994, the first Inter Government Meeting (IGM) of Experts of Indian Ocean Rim countries was held in Port Louis, from 29-31 March 1995. The seven participating states—Australia, Singapore, India, Oman, Kenya,

South Africa, and Mauritius—were supposed to represent seven sub-systems of the Indian Ocean region. However, the precise nature of the proposed framework was not substantiated. Sandy Gordon highlights that “the Mauritius process was developed by Mauritius under the guiding hand of India.”³⁶

The second initiative to forge the IOR countries into a wider political and economic forum originated from the Australian government. From 11-13 June 1995, the meeting of the International Forum on the Indian Ocean Region (IFIOR) was held in Perth. IFIOR followed a trans-national approach, bringing together 122 participants from business, academia and government in their personal capacity from 23 IOR countries. In contrast to the Mauritius meeting, the Perth meeting had a more comprehensive agenda that included economic and fiscal matters; social, political and strategic issues; as well as maritime issues dealing with the Indian Ocean per se—all of which the Mauritius group had virtually ignored. According to K.R. Singh, “some participants, particularly from India, successfully tried to restrict the debate to economic matters.”³⁷ Indian delegates were concerned that bilateral disputes might be raised if in a proposed multilateral association as envisaged by the Perth Forum the subject matter of “security” was placed on the agenda.

In view of the wide-ranging problems in the Indian Ocean, Australia on the other hand initially expressed its keen interest in including security issues.³⁸ An analyst summarized the state of affairs: “Canberra does not seem to be too keen on economic cooperation, since it is part of the APEC. It is more interested in roping in other countries as a possible bulwark against the rising power of China.”³⁹ The Indian perspective was expressed by the Indian delegate, Verinder Grover.

We want to concentrate on economic cooperation. It is our firm belief that economic cooperation and the resultant growth and development of our Indian Ocean world will itself have a beneficent leavening influence on the political and security climate of the region.⁴⁰

This once again confirms India’s *cognitive prior*, and the divergences in approach over the cooperation plans surfaced visibly at Perth. Australia preferred “security issues” to be included along with economic matters in the new type of forum. Similarly, Australia also preferred a broad-based representation of the rim countries. However, a majority of the delegates at the Perth Forum, influenced and led by India, insisted on excluding the security agenda and on a limited and graduated membership, in consonance with India’s traditional approach towards regional cooperation. Thus, it was at this forum that the blueprint for regional cooperation was framed. The Australian attempts of putting regional security onto the agenda proved futile, which led the Australian media to conclude that the “defeat of Australia’s proposal to establish a new organisation of the littoral

states of the Indian Ocean [...] is a major setback for the ‘Look West’ strategy.”⁴¹ Australia practically refrained from raising security issues again.⁴²

As a follow up to the inaugural IORI conference, the First Working Group Meeting of IORI was held in Port Louis, Mauritius from 15-17 August 1995. Based on the comments made and the written inputs to be received from other delegations, the working group mandated India to coordinate the preparation of a draft charter for the considerations of the next working group meeting. Thereby, India was able to draft the charter according to its own normative preferences, as had happened a decade earlier in the case of SAARC.

The Second Working Group Meeting of IORI was held in Port Louis on 14-16 May 1996. The Indian draft version of the “Indian Ocean Rim Initiative Charter” was discussed, revised, and then referred to governments of both member states and prospective member states. Thus, as an Indian observer concluded (in 1996) in *The Hindu*, “wittingly or unwittingly, India has taken over the leadership role in this regional cooperation programme.”⁴³

Comparable with the situation during the deliberations leading to the founding of SAARC, regional cooperation was institutionalized in the form of a charter. According to this charter, the Panchsheel principles are the guideline for any form of cooperation. Decisions are made by consensus. There are three bodies: the Council of Ministers (CoM); the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO); and the Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF); as well as six priority areas of cooperation. There was practically no debate about the exact institutional mechanisms for the proposed organisation; the consensus was a *de facto* adoption of the tripartite governance model of APEC with “open regionalism”—that is, the maximization of trade and investment opportunities through a flexible regulatory system and elastic rules of membership.

The inaugural Ministerial Meeting of the IOR-ARC was held on 5-7 March 1997 at Port Louis in Mauritius.⁴⁴ Between 1997 and 2015, fourteen Ministerial Meetings were held which were preceded or followed by track two meetings. IORA currently has twenty member states and six dialogue partners. An utterly understaffed secretariat with only six employees exists in Mauritius, and coordinates IORA meetings. The budget amounts to an annual contribution of US\$ 20,000 per country, plus voluntary contributions by member countries for select activities. No concrete collaborative achievements have occurred, and the most notable public event happened in 2013 when the name of the organisation was changed to Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). The state of affairs of regional cooperation in the Indian Ocean area was commented on in 2009 by then Indian Minister of State for External Affairs, Shashi Tharoor. He summarized that after 12 years of cooperation “[IOR-ARC has not] done enough to get beyond the declaratory phase that marks most new initiatives.”⁴⁵

Case Study 3 and 4: BIMST-EC and MGC

Looking at two other regional organisations/initiatives of which India is a member, comparable developments pertaining to the genesis, development, and low degree of cooperation can be found.

The “Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation” (BIMST-EC) was founded in 1997, with Thailand as its originator. It took seven years before the first official summit meeting between the members of the organisation was held in 2004, and another eight years before the necessity of a coordinating secretariat was finally acknowledged. Members today are Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan and Nepal. The beginnings of this organisation have to be viewed primarily through the prism of India’s ‘Look East’ policy.

Three major features can be discerned which constitute the core idea behind India’s involvement in BIMST-EC. They are the logical consequence of India’s *cognitive prior* vis-à-vis regional organisations, from a political and economic perspective. First, India has mainly supported those policies and programmes designed to promote economic development in the Bay of Bengal. In the furtherance of this objective, BIMST-EC took certain measures such as the enhancement of the level of interaction among the member countries to the level of a summit; an identification of the core areas of cooperation, each of which was entrusted to a member of the grouping designated as a lead country; and the initiation of the process of the establishment of a BIMST-EC FTA. Second, India assisted the individual members of BIMST-EC through bilateral cooperation in a wide range of areas, including trade, investment, industry, science and technology, transport and communication, energy, tourism, agriculture, fisheries, development of transport corridors, trilateral highway projects, and a focus on projects in the energy sector such as natural gas pipelines. And third, India has tried to forge a common front against terrorism and trans-national crimes; it has convened the meetings of this working group several times.

In theory, BIMST-EC could serve various purposes, including the promotion of cooperation to ensure the security of waterways, the fight against organised crime, piracy and drug trafficking, and the sharing of expertise in the fields of information technology, space technology, infrastructure development and tourism. BIMST-EC could also serve India’s trans-regional interests in South and Southeast Asia. Myanmar’s inclusion in the group as well as the latter’s membership in ASEAN could turn out to be to India’s advantage, as this inclusion can balance the growing Chinese role in Myanmar. In 2004, C. Raja Mohan predicted—perhaps prematurely—that

[BIMST-EC’s] geo-political significance cannot be underestimated. It allows India to break out of the constricting confines of the subcontinent that it had long chafed

at. In linking five South Asian countries with two Southeast Asian nations, it shatters the old notions of a South Asia separated from its eastern neighbours.⁴⁶

In addition, BIMST-EC could one day help India to counter China's growing influence in Myanmar.⁴⁷

Three summits have taken place until 2015, and there are fourteen priority sectors of cooperation, but no budget as of 2015. A secretariat is now located in Dhaka, with a staff number eventually smaller than that of SAARC. In reality, however, BIMST-EC is only an extension of national ministries of external affairs, with practically no room for independent institutional evolution. The envisaged BIMSTE-EC FTA also remains at large. Even though the different strategies and plans decided upon in BIMST-EC are important for the region, the truth remains that practically none of plans designed for BIMST-EC has led to tangible results. This is, in part, a consequence of a non-existent budget and the lack of a coordinating institution. The strong focus on bilateralism within BIMST-EC is, again, a clear sign of the impact of Indian foreign policy determinants and its *cognitive prior*, and essentially BIMST-EC has remained more of an (important) idea than an organisation.

The smallest regional framework is the Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC) forum/initiative which encompasses six riparian countries of the Mekong and the Ganga (Cambodia, India, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam). The original promoter was Thailand. In 2000, the countries met in Vientiane, and agreed to cooperate in the fields of tourism, education, human resource development, culture, communication, and transport. Though not conceived of as a genuine “organisation” but rather as a forum for cooperation, the MGC represents regional cooperation at its most basic. It was agreed to have “Annual Ministerial Meetings”, back to back with “ASEAN Ministerial Meetings” and regular “Senior Official’s Meeting”. The outcomes, after fourteen years of its existence, are six ministerial meetings, but no noticeable achievements. The then Minister for Foreign Affairs of Myanmar, Nyan Win, observed in 2007 that despite seven years of efforts, progress had been very slow. Within the frame of the MGC, India has again decided to cooperate with Thailand and Myanmar in a regional initiative, focusing on infrastructure and cultural aspects. The programmes and initiatives of the MGC also mainly take place in the bilateral sphere, and do not allow for any independent institutional evolution.

The Road Forward: ‘Pride & Prejudice’ versus ‘Sense & Sensibility’ in Regional Cooperation?

All in all, India’s involvement in regional multilateralism in South Asia and beyond between 1978 and 2015 has resulted in the existence of four regional organisations which overlap in membership, territorial scope, and areas of cooperation. This

process has led to a weakening of all organisations, rather than further strengthening integration in the regions. India weakens the organisations by alienating those countries that it successfully keeps out of the other organisations (for example, Pakistan in the IORA). How India wants to effectively work together with countries in one organisation while at the same time refusing them membership in another organisation on formal grounds remains a mystery, as does the question why India opts to mainly focus on bilateralism in a regional multilateral setting, as is the case with the BIMST-EC and the MGC.

These aspects apart, all four organisations display three recurring patterns. First, there is a tendency towards competing regionalism—meaning that membership as well as the sectors of cooperation overlap. BIMST-EC and its objectives, for example, are basically SAARC minus Pakistan, plus Thailand. The MGC has overlapping membership and objectives with BIMST-EC and SAARC, and several SAARC countries are members of the IORA. It is not unlikely that new regional organisations will be founded encompassing a similar set of nations which will again focus on similar, overlapping sectors of cooperation. Rather than focusing on strengthening one organisation, the existence of four organisations with comparable membership and sectors of cooperation has led to a weakening of all four.

Second, all four initiatives have originated from India's neighbors, and not from India itself. India subsequently activated its diplomacy, and influenced the respective founding documents and institutional set-up or frameworks of all four organisations. In short, these organisations function according to what this article calls the “Panchsheel Multilateralism” approach.

And third, one of the major principles of cooperation is non-institutionalization. While three of the organisations possess a very small secretariat, the lack of manpower and financial resources makes it impossible to advance cooperation even within the narrow confines of the respective charters. In short, these institutions suffer from institutional minimalism, a lack of financial and personnel capacity, and a strict binding of these institutions to the Indian Ministry of External affairs.

As a consequence of the cooperative features of India's *cognitive prior*, regional cooperation was begun in South Asia and the Indian Ocean with unquestionable Indian support. India's desire to increase its reputation in the region necessitated it to publicly display that it was willing to participate in regional forums. Cooperation per se has been an important feature of India's *cognitive prior* and, therefore, a general acceptance of regional multilateralism was fairly straightforward. However, so has been India's insistence on complete independence and autonomy—as Nehru put it: each country fending for itself. The aspect of legitimacy also needs special recognition: India's participation, *prima facie*, was a

gesture towards the smaller countries of the region. On the other hand, Panchsheel Multilateralism represents a ‘torso’ regionalism—that is, a regionalism whose normative features do not enable cooperation beyond an FTA (if at all), and regional cooperation only in sectors dealing with low politics such as culture and education.

Also, the respective genesis of SAARC and IOR-ARC bear a striking resemblance. In the case of SAARC, the original vision of South Asian regional cooperation included cooperation in the field of politics, security, economics, and a host of other sectors. The beginnings of SAARC especially show how ingrained the idea of complete independence was in India’s dealings with its neighbours, and that SAARC became the legitimate off-spring of the Nehruvian ideals that he promoted time and again during the Asian conferences. In the case of IORA, Indian Ocean Rim regional cooperation envisioned working together in matters of security. However, the eventual outcome has been a very lose structure with no tangible results.

In theory, India as the regional hegemon could make use of a regional organisation to discipline states of the region (SAARC), or to bind states that are located farther away (IORA), or bring members that are in other regional organisations (for example, BIMST-EC) closer to it. However, India’s insistence on this particular ‘minimal’ regional multilateralism in no way furthers this goal. On the contrary, the institutional set-up of the organisations does not allow any room for political manoeuvrings or strategic visions. As a consequence, the current state of affairs of regional multilateralism in South Asia and neighbouring regions is that each country fends for itself, and cooperation takes place in the bilateral, but not in the multilateral field.

All things considered, Indian foreign policy determinants have served Indian foreign policy well since 1947, and are still a result of the classic Nehruvian orientation, geared towards safeguarding India’s national interests and sovereignty in international politics. One of the immediate consequences of following these orientations is a clear rejection of political cooperation and, for example, of joining a collective security framework in the (South) Asian region. Nonetheless, in the present era of global governance, with ever growing dimensions of horizontal and vertical task and scope expansion, these determinants now actually pose a hindrance for furthering Indian objectives of increasing economic and/or technical cooperation by means of regional institutions. Due to the insistence on the institutional implementation of the Panchsheel principles as one of the classic pillars of Indian foreign policy, these four organisations have very little to no chance of independent acting. Moreover, progress in agreed-upon sectors of cooperation, especially when compared with other regional institutions such as the EU or ASEAN, has been minimal.

In the final analysis, it is actually only the idea of multilateralism rather than 'hard' multilateralism that is the common denominator of all these organisations until today. While the 'ASEAN way' is internationally accepted today, no 'SAARC way' or 'IORA way' has emerged; nor will it in the foreseeable future. In truth, these organisations are mere extensions of departments/desks within the ministries of external affairs of the respective countries. Genuine regional multilateralism cannot be detected in South Asia, the Indian Ocean Rim, the Bay of Bengal, or the Mekong-Ganga area. The performance of regional multilateralism remains in a state of stasis—a fact that has been recognized time and again in speeches and political commentaries, but has not been addressed in practical terms. Panchsheel Multilateralism, in the final analysis, is a South Asian variation of a Western model of cooperation, providing a somewhat uncompromising, culturally and historically based reaction to the attempt of introducing an essentially European norm into South Asia.

With the newly elected Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi rejuvenating Indian politics and foreign policy, the time for a re-discovery of regional cooperation in South Asia and beyond might be at the doorstep. However, despite the grand gesture of inviting the heads of state or government of all SAARC countries to this official swearing-in ceremony on 26 May 2014, the Modi government subsequently did not use the 18th SAARC Summit (26-27 November 2014) to make major changes to India's general strategy towards regional multilateralism. Rather than presenting a new grand vision for genuine regional cooperation, the summit resulted in declarations of intent and promises of more integration, with very little of the concrete on display.⁴⁸ Again, regional bilateralism proved to be more important to Modi than regional multilateralism.

Taking everything into account, one wonders why so little in the realm of regional cooperation has been achieved, despite so many attempts over so many years. Clearly, with India as the hegemon in all four organisations, progress eventually depends upon Indian foreign policy behavior. The time seems ripe for India's new leadership to give an honest answer to the question: how serious is interstate cooperation in its vision of the future? The EU has implemented supranational structures, with independent institutions such as the European Commission or the European Court of Justice. Leaving aside such a completely utopian notion of cooperation between countries of South Asia or the Indian Ocean Rim, it might serve the purpose of cooperation if SAARC, BIMST-EC, and IORA are conceived of from scratch, and receive new charters that permit a certain degree of independent cooperation in the economic and social sectors. SAFTA or a BIMST-EC Free Trade Area will stand much better chances of success if all countries agree upon serious and realistic rules of multilateral engagement worthy of that name, in addition to a drastic increase in manpower of the respective

secretariats. This requires departing from the strict confines of Indian foreign policy determinants, allow for a greater degree of institutional flexibility, and thereby transcend the current institutional stasis that all four organisations have in common.

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2

India as the Norm-builder and Norm Contributor

Santishree Dhulipudi and Rimli Basu

The nature of international relations has changed dramatically in the decades following the end of the Cold War. Does one call it Post-Cold-War or the Post-Soviet-Era? From an Indo-centric view, the latter will be more apt. Manifestation of these changes consists of not only new economic, social and political dependencies—commonly subsumed under the heading of “globalisation”, but also the rise of the so-called new regional powers (such as Brazil, China and India), the strengthening of non-state actors, and the greater influence of international and regional institutions such as the United Nations. One of the most impressive trends observed is the growing importance of regions in global politics, where traditional norms of International Relations are getting more played than in the global field.

Incidentally, thus, if norm building is a political concept, having political implications, then norms and order ought to be investigated from a value-based perspective. That makes the fact clear that at every stage of development of human political history, some aspects of state relations were highlighted while the others were deliberately kept at a low. In all probability, it is just to suit the political situation, and to support a particular political group with a specified interest. Thus, while the essence of norm is essentially political, it transcends regions in order to prove its hypothesis. From this perspective, norms are not build by one specific nation, or a political philosopher, but it is the expression of a group of political philosophers, essentially making a central argument valid through justifications or justifiable experiences.

In this context, borrowing from critical theory,¹ [which states that it stands apart from the prevailing order of the world and asks how that order came about], it can be argued that India never has been a norm-builder; rather it has been a

norm-setter. Critical theory, incidentally does not take institutions and social power relations for granted but calls them into question by concerning itself with their origins and how and whether they might be in the process of changing. Going by this hypothesis, it can be argued that India always questioned the institutions, or was never in favour of a rigid system, strictly in terms of a western model. Universal norms always existed in the Indian sub-continent, which in fact, demonstrates that India was always a norm-builder. While Indian norms were always based on the higher philosophy, it can be validly argued that it always argued in favour of a ‘world-centric paradigm’ rather than a ‘state-centric paradigm’;² can be altered or argued in terms of the traditional Sanskrit verse *Vasudhaiva-Kutumbakam* (The world is one family)³. The Indian spiritual argument, thus, ordain an individual to attain his highest self by searching the truth, which may have many forms, but is incidentally having a unique and identifiable one. Thus, through this philosophical entourage, it can be argued that India has always been considered as the norm builder, with universal appeal.

While dealing with norms, the argument of domestic and international norms always makes its presence. The concept of pluralism and multiculturalism as a norm in nation and state building is today much explored. That brings us to the Indian *Upanishadic* concept of “*Ekam Sat Vipraha Bahuda Vadantiagnimyamammatariswanamahuh*”⁴ [Meaning—Truth is one though there are several paths to it [agnimyamammatariswanamahuh]]. It is thus an Indian philosophy, and is indeed a norm that has been part of Indian foreign policy too. Another norm that this chapter deals with, is the Buddhist conception of the ‘middle path and non-attachment’ in India’s non-aligned foreign policy. In the context of the onset of the strict domain of foreign policy regimen, these traditional norms have continued with the same argument, where India has displayed a standard of appropriate behavior for itself and for the other ‘actors-units’ with the same given identity, to follow. NAM [Non-alignment Movement], LEP [Look East Policy], and the current AEP [Act East Policy], thus all basically follow that same original Indian philosophical thrust.

With this background, this chapter addresses and identifies the norms of India in building International Relations through Indian Foreign Policy, which have been all through a steady definer of Indian foreign policy, with special reference to the ‘Look East Policy’ and ‘Act East Policy’. The notional concept of norms varies from time to time in congruence to the nature of world politics and its variant actors. However, it can be stated that most of the time, the role of one heightened hyper-connotation has always played the dominant role pertaining to norms in International Relations. While the works of various scholars have been hailed in this context, it has always been the dominant theme of the world, which in fact, proved to become the norm setter, and thereby established as the norms

of International Relations. It is, however, worth nothing that either the states or the individual have always acted as the pivot in norm building in International Relations, making it worthy to comprehend that norms were always ascertained in order to create a peaceful world for both the individual to habit peacefully within the state boundary and beyond.

The basic identifiable variable in this arena is certainly the state-actor, and its complimentary-corollary actors—the individual. Added to these variables are factors, which affect both the aforesaid variables in a uniform manner. Some of them are: rising environmental degradation, increasing population density, etc. By all means thus, norms were generated to be followed in order to create international order⁵, to be followed by international justice⁶. The notion of transgression of political boundaries thus, makes the norms builder argue in terms of *state-craft, individual freedom, tolerance and peaceful co-existence*. With its philosophically rich tradition, India has always transgressed political boundaries, since the notion of nation, and individual has always been the core unit of its ideology. The transformation of the philosophy into hardcore norms with binding reference, however, has never been attempted. Thus, although most of the South East, and East Asian countries owes their tradition, philosophy to India [for example, the reference of the five elements in human life-cycle, viz., earth, fire, air, water, and vacuum (*shunya*)], admittedly it was never coined, and much research is required in this field. However, it is to be admitted unequivocally that some of the ancient Indian wisdom passed through the oft-quoted Sanskrit hymns, does exhibit consistency of norm building in terms of building international order and international justice.

It is a fact that the nature of international relations has changed dramatically in the decades following the end of the East-West confrontation, or Cold War. Manifestation of these changes consists of not only new economic, social and political dependencies, commonly consumed and subsumed under the heading of “globalisation”, but also the rise of the so-called new regional powers, such as Brazil, China and India; the strengthening of non-state actors; and the greater influence of international and regional institutions such as the United Nations. In this context the traditional norms builder of Asia such as, India and China will certainly have an added advantage in understanding and assisting the transformation of the world order to the benefit of the individuals. Certainly, codification and assertion will be the hall mark in this theme.

In terms of definition, norms in itself often invites confusion. Ideally speaking, the definition of a ‘norm’ is generally stated as “a standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity.” Often, the use of the word institution is used interchangeably with norm. This practice is confusing and obscure, which is actually being applied by the states. An institution is a collection of norms and

rules about a particular subject such as sovereignty and slavery. When these examples are mislabeled as a single norm one can miss the different elements of the social institution which are also important. There are also several different types of norms that exist. Regulatory norms define what behaviors, states can or cannot do. Constitutive norms set up new actors, behaviors, or interests. Prescriptive norms prescribe actions or non-actions that are to be taken in certain situations. This last type of norm is usually overlooked for various reasons.

That implies that norms are ever-changing and they assume a sort of labeling, which gets projected through theoretical metaphors in order to suit the necessities of the specific actors, at a specific given time frame of political history. Having said so, it is certainly true that some countries project norm building ideas through their institutions, in simple terms, called the think-tanks, and the others just allow it to flow within the field of academic rhetoric. India unfortunately, falls under the second group. That does not mean that India is having any dearth in norm-building ideas or capacity; it simply implies that India has been taking active role without even projecting or propagating its norm building and norm setting ideas. The rupture between the academia and India's civilizational past has to a large extent dwarfed and stunted this process.

The trajectory of Indian foreign policy in terms of norm building cannot be simply analysed going strictly by the post-1947 foreign policy developments. The great Indian ancient civilization, in this case will have to be taken into consideration. The five thousand years old Indian civilization did create a plethora of flourishing norms extending from good governance [through the civic amenities; drainage system of the Indus valley civilization]; civilizational expansion through trade and war, the maritime and the trading state [e.g., Rajendra Chola's expedition to South East Asia; various trade relations] to the extension of cultural exuberance, [as exhibited by Angkor Wat, Preah Vihear] by South Indian dynasties who are marginalized in any narrative of Indian history. The symbol of Shiva, the creator and destroyer as the reigning God of the Cholas brings forth the norms of ancient India which was in total variance with that of the modern times. The maritime empire of the Cholas was a great success and has been marginalized by mainstream historical Indian writings, both Leftist and the so called Nationalists. The main empires that have been given importance are those that were the land based ones around North India. This has created huge gaps in our understanding of India as a civilizational state with its cultural heritage. One reason for most writers being critical of Indian civilization as a historical source is the lack of written history, since most of it is oral history based on *shruti* (direct experience) and *smriti* (memory) methodology. The exclusive pursuit of knowledge by one caste (Brahmin) further worsened the case of a holistic approach to history. Even today there are strong proponents on either side. The seminal notional codification of

Indian norms came only after Kautilya's much researched publication, *Arthashastra*, which is often compared with Niccolo Machiavelli's *Prince*, and is identified as a Realist norm builder. Following which, the great social reformers of India did contribute to universal norms which guided Indian foreign policy till date. Some of the renowned thinkers and reformers, but not limited to, included, Swami Vivekananda, Rishi Aurobindo Ghosh, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, etc. Incidentally, all of the social reformers did in retrospect emphasize the two sets of mainstream norms of India, viz., *tolerance, celebration of cultural pluralism, universalism, and the connectivity of an individual with the cosmic*. Among them Swami Vivekananda, in fact, influenced and emphasized the norm-building in a special way.

Theoretical Framework

While dealing with norms, the argument of domestic and international norms always makes its presence. Domestic norm entrepreneurs use international norms to vindicate the strength for their argument to incorporate the norm domestically. Constructivist scholar, Martha Finnemore⁷ exemplifies this effect with her example of Women's suffrage. This domestic change in the US became big during the early 1900s. Specifically speaking, in her 1998 writing, along with Sikkink, she stressed three main identifiable approaches; Ideational concerns have been a traditional concern of political science, though they were largely absent during the behavioral revolution and the subsequent infatuation with microeconomics; they have been brought back in with an increased scientific rigor (due to insights from behavioral and microeconomic research); the central difficulty of ideational theories is how to explain change (not stability). Thus the authors in fact outlined a "life cycle" of norms, coined simply as "...the processes of social construction and strategic bargaining are deeply intertwined."⁸

The life cycle of norms has been further declassified as "*Norm emergence*", where norm entrepreneurs arise (randomly) with a conviction that something must be changed.⁹ It is however worth noting that these norms actually use existing organisations and norms as the basic platform from which to proselytize (e.g. UN declarations), framing their issue to reach a broader audience. Thus, it follows roughly three distinct stages of formation. In the first stage, states adopt norms for domestic political reasons. If enough states adopt the new norm, a "*tipping point*" is reached, and hence the arena turns mature to move to the second stage, which is identified as "*Norm cascade*".¹⁰ In the second stage, states adopt norms in response to international pressure, even if there is no domestic coalition pressing for adoption of the norm. They do this to enhance domestic legitimacy, conformity, and esteem needs. Apparently, there has been less psychological research pertaining to how exactly it works. In the third stage, which is identified

as "*Norm internalization*",¹¹ it is argued that over time, the norms get internalized, and there have been pressures from the professionals for the codification and universal adherence of the apparently accepted norms. Eventually, conformity becomes so natural that it ceases to even notice the presence of a norm. From the above hypothesis, it can be argued that India has always been a postulate of a universal norm, with special emphasis on Asia. The presence of India in the Asian landmass has always made it a responsible actor, with norms like upholding unique culture of different parts of Asia as its hallmark—clear case of social constructivist approach to International Relations.

Social constructivists, in stark contrast to the 'neo-utilitarian' scholars who almost exclusively highlight the causal force of material interests and power, argue that shared ideas and knowledge are very important 'building blocks of international reality'.¹² Substantial attention, both theoretical and empirical, has appropriately been focused by constructivists on the development of international norms, structures which by definition are 'collective expectations about proper behavior for a given identity'.¹³ Norms, in other words, constitute a community's shared understandings and intentions; they are 'social facts' and reflect 'legitimate social purpose'.¹⁴ From the above hypothesis it can be argued that India has always been a norm builder in Asia in conformity with constructivism's idea of "community's shared understanding and intention".

It is an evident reality that the world that we are in today is essentially the world of standing and statecraft, which survived more or less intact, despite great changes in the world of events because of its relation to yet another world, which is conceptually speaking the world of states. Paradoxically, this world is a large world spatially but much smaller socially. Membership in it is restricted to states, which are large worlds in their own right, but few in number. On the one hand, states are the product of long histories of arduous social construction, on the other hand they exist only in formal relation to each other. The ways in which they conduct their relations are also formally limited. Given this hypothesis, there ought to be a general norm or minimum standard norm in maintaining the relation among them.

From this point of view, India has been a definitive norm builder of Asia since it emerged as a civilization nation almost 3000 years ago, and always advocated the minimum standard norm for Asia and the world. Largely, to be recognized as a state, other states must recognize them as such, it must be sovereign in principle, and their rights and duties make them equal and apart. Furthermore, states are subject to general, formal rules, conventionally known as international law. These rules classify relations of states in categories as confining as they are familiar (starting with peace and war), and they give rise to a large number of voluntarily incurred obligations (treaties) and institutions (international

organisations), all in the same general form. From this perspective, India has always been the norm builder with the clear understanding of codifying and upholding the international laws and institutions.

Norms, in other words, thus, constitute a community's shared understandings and intentions; they are 'social facts' and reflect 'legitimate social purpose'.¹⁵ Agents, of course, translate ideas into normative structures. Constructivists are therefore especially interested in how political actors produce the inter-subjective understandings that undergird norms.¹⁶ Great attention has been directed at communication, especially at persuasive messages, which attempt, by definition, to change actor preferences and to challenge current or create new collective meaning. Indeed, persuasion is considered the centrally important mechanism for constructing and reconstructing social facts. According to Finnemore,¹⁷ 'normative claims become powerful and prevail by being persuasive'. More broadly, persuasion is 'the process by which agent action becomes social structure, ideas become norms, and the subjective becomes the inter-subjective'.¹⁸

Persuasive messages, however, are not transmitted in an ideational vacuum. All advocates of normative change confront 'highly contested' contexts where their ideas 'must compete with other norms and perceptions of interest'.¹⁹ In fact, a very wide variety and large number of normative claims are advanced in political debates worldwide. Scholars working in International Relations unfortunately lack a good theory to explain the persuasiveness of any particular normative claim over others.²⁰ As Risse-Kappen²¹ has argued, 'decision makers are always exposed to several and often contradictory policy concepts'.

Yet, research mostly fails 'to specify the conditions under which specific ideas are selected and influence policies while others fall by the wayside'. Weber,²² who is skeptical of the constructivist approach, challenges it to explain 'why one set of knowledge claims "wins" and why others are left behind'. It seems that there has been a race of knowledge projection in the realm of International Relations, where a set of norms has been deliberately projected in order to set some given rules to be followed by the units [read states] of International politics. That certainly makes it obvious that norms building is not enough in itself, projection of norms through various forums is equally important, if not more. From this perspective, India did set the norms, but it did not project those norms in the International arena. That is one area of grey research, which needs to be focused by the researchers and the stalwarts of International Relations.

It has been observed all through the history of International Relations that phases of conflict and peace situation has given rise to international norms, like Cold War, collective security, military security versus human security, etc. It has enshrined thus, hard core political concepts like anarchy, imagined community, balance of power, etc. All these conceptual frames took into consideration the

fact that state is the only actor and the source of power-executioner. That in fact undermines today the responsibility of the international norm builders, viz., state and the personals, as to why we at all need a norm?—is it just to be followed, or is it to be believed, and then executed?—or is it simply for the sake of projecting the knowledge-power of a particular state? Can it really prevent outbreak of violence? Or can it reduce the effect of fundamentalism of all sorts?

Be that as it may, speaking in terms of India, it can be argued that India has always set International norms, with its clear basic unit of ‘individual’. It did not emphasise the consolidation of state supremacy, and thereby never strengthened rules for institution building. That also brings in the debate as to whether India has ever had or always had the constructivist approach in dealing with International Relations. Starting from Nicholas Onuf,²³ Richard K. Ashley,²⁴ Friedrich Kratochwil,²⁵ and John Ruggie²⁶ and later applauded by the much coveted writers like, Alexander Wendt, whose 1992 article,²⁷ “Anarchy is what state Makes of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics”, published in *International Organisation*, did lay the theoretical groundwork for challenging what Wendt considered to be a flaw shared by both the neo-realists and the neo-liberal institutionalists, loosely argued as, a commitment to a crude form of materialism. From this argument, it is evident that norms addressing only the material advancement of state and statecraft cannot serve humanity. Thus the assimilation of materialism, and spiritualism, [not strictly in any religious sense of the term] ought to be achieved, in order to experience the complete and the whole. From this perspective, India is an original contributor of norm building in Asia and the world.

Arguments

The two most significant factors in International politics have been the two World Wars. The extent and the magnitude of destruction and human suffering has indeed shook the International theorists to such an extent that it has given rise to defensive norms building, in order to save the world population from getting engulfed in the wildfire. Although a common external threat and the conscious endeavour to overcome the national enmities in Europe, which resulted in two world wars, were undoubtedly important factors, a deeper structural principle seems to be necessary to account for this difference in the role of military force. Among the factors that may be part of the explanation are:

- a shared value system which includes the acceptance of international norms.
- the existence of institutional mechanisms for the resolution of conflicts.
- the more diffuse nature of political power in liberal democracies making it difficult to sustain military conflicts, unless they are relatively limited in time and their objectives are widely accepted by the population. This

generally rules out the acquisition of territory by force owing to the difficulties of absorbing hostile populations in the political system and the violation of political norms involved.²⁸

- In the Hindu cycle of rebirth, death precludes and includes life. The Chola symbol of imperialism was its presiding deity Lord Shiva in the form Nataraja, who symbolizes the act of destruction and the act of creation. A norm that you destroy to rebuild like today's post conflict building in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Indian contribution—multiculturalism—celebration of cultural pluralism—*"Ekam Sat Vipraha Bahuda Vadantiagnimiyamammatariswanamahuh"*. Religion is one thing, people do it in various ways. Religion of essential principles, discovered in direct experience, which can be discovered by anyone, independent of culture, race or country. A mythology can never be universal, a ritual can never be universal, nor can a creed or culture or a particular people's history. Principles can be universal like the law of gravity.
- 'World-centric paradigm' rather than a 'state-centric paradigm';²⁹ can be altered or argued in terms of the traditional Sanskrit verse '*Vasudhaiva-Kutumbakam*'. From anthropocentric to a nature centric paradigm. From the nation state to the civilizational state.³⁰
- We get a philosophy of religion that is ready not only to accept all, but to embrace all. It makes room for all as they are; it does not demand that they all first conform to a list of imposed rules before they can be accepted.
- Buddhist conception of the '*middle path and non-attachment*' in India's non-aligned foreign policy. "Middle" means neutral, upright, and centered. It means to investigate and penetrate the core of life and all things with an upright, unbiased attitude. In order to solve a problem, we should position ourselves on neutral, upright and unbiased ground. We investigate the problem from various angles, analyze the findings, understand the truth thoroughly, and find a reasonable conclusion.
- At one point around 2,000 years ago, Tamil was the lingua franca of traders across the South East Asian seas. They were not Indian colonies but proto-states that took on the Hindu apparatus of religion and concepts of kingship to enhance their position and status. While communities of Indian traders settled in important ports along South East Asia, they never crossed the line into becoming colonisers. What happened instead was that local rulers imbibed Indian traditions. The idea of the maritime and trading state.
- Most of India's empires have been primarily land-based powers, the Chola Empire is unique in that it was a naval empire. The historian John Keay noted "the idea that the sea could be political, a strategic commodity in

its own right dominated by a state rather than by commercial competition, was a relatively new concept for Indians.”³¹

Due to geographic and topographic reasons, the projection of military power *out of* South Asia has always been difficult, the Tamils especially Cholas showed way by projecting power through the Indian Ocean, especially the Indo-Pacific region. The Cholas knew this, as did the British later. The Cholas were famous for their maritime expeditions that gave them control over the Maldives, Sri Lanka, and the Malaysian-Indonesian archipelago by 1025 C.E. Large portions of northern India and Southeast Asia’s coasts were tributary. After a period of decline, the Cholas were overthrown by a vassal in 1279 C.E.³² this accounted for a good 150 years of maritime power of trade and cultural relations. In 2009, one of the leading foreign affairs analysts of India, C. Raja Mohan wrote a piece on the 100th anniversary of the publication of Kautilya’s *Arthashastra*, where he noted that even though the ‘Mandala theory of international politics was referred to in many of India’s *Dharmashastras*, it was Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* that codified it’.³³ He stressed the need for ‘a rising India to create a strategic vocabulary all of its own’.³⁴ Further, he added: ‘That India’s strategic lexicon must be rooted in its own political traditions has not always been self-evident’.³⁵ The analyst stressed that as India and China emerge as great powers in the twenty-first century, as they begin to end the Western political dominance, ‘strategic thought from Asia’s past is likely to return to the centre stage’. Thus, according to him, because Kautilya made his arguments about power, governance and statecraft without invoking religion or divinity, Kautilya was ‘a true founder of what we now call political science’.³⁶ He concluded : ‘As it becomes more consequential for world politics in the twenty-first century, India would do well to revisit its own realist tradition so solidly reflected in the *Mahabharata*, *Panchatantra*, *Arthashastra*, *Kamandakaneeti*, and *Shukra-neeti*’.³⁷

In, 2012, Amitabh Mattoo’s proposal of ‘an Indian grammar for International Studies’³⁸ suggested of having emulated the western ways of studying international relations, which Mattoo attested as being the high time for the Indians to ‘use the vocabulary of our past as a guide to the future’.³⁹ Claiming that thinking on international relations in ‘great civilizations’ like India and China went back ‘to well before the West even began to think of the world outside their living space’,⁴⁰ he suggested that “if all the books on war and peace were to suddenly disappear from the world, and only the *Mahabharata* remained, it would be good enough to capture almost all the possible debates on order, justice, force and the moral dilemmas associated with choices that are made on these issues within the realm of international politics”.⁴¹ Mattoo conceded that the claim was ‘astounding’ and clarified that his proposals were not advocating ‘revivalism’ or Indian exceptionalism. Yet, he argued that given the rising influence of India and the

self-confidence of Indian IR intellectuals, recovery of ideas from the Indian past will be essential to guiding its future.⁴²

The Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), New Delhi houses a project on 'ancient indigenous historical knowledge' since 2012. The project aims to build a conceptual language on strategic and security issues and reinterpret texts and traditions relevant to them during the contemporary period. Its objectives as specified in the opening event are: (a) to promote scholarship on Kautilya (and, presumably, other similar resources from early India); (b) to 'establish that India has a long tradition of strategic thinking, which needs to be brought to light'.

As rightly argued, it is necessary because, western scholars have held and many Indians agree too, that India has no culture of strategic thought. That is indeed not the truth. India's strategic thought, buried in the thoughts of various philosophers, needs to be codified and re-discovered. It is an absolute fact that it has not been propagated properly and (c) to provide impetus to the study of regional thinkers on strategy and to 'rediscover the Panchatantra, the Mahabharata and Tamil Sangam literature to better appreciate Indian strategic thought'.⁴³ In 2013, a monograph,⁴⁴ written as part of the project by P.K. Gautam, on the positions of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* as 'indigenous political theory',⁴⁵ makes a case for engaging the text for directions on policy studies, and argues that it is relevant to strategic and academic international studies too. The author identifies the 'undue weight of foreign academic hegemony' on Indian academics.

There are other evident revival work on Indian ancient wisdom, as viewed in the several downloadable pages of *inp.sagepub.com*. The University of Melbourne Libraries showcase Indigenism in Contemporary IR Discourses in India too.⁴⁶ The reasons for the neglect of Kautilya's 'classical wisdom', which could provide an alternative to western theory and thought is envisaged by Gautam.⁴⁷ These prominent examples illustrates thus, only, some of the innumerable political intellectuals of India. There has been a rupture in the pursuit of these norms, where within India the epistemic community after independence has ignored all Indian roots to history and been dominated by the leftist interpretation . These ancient roots have been ruptured and this has given the impression of a lack of continuity with the past. The basic norm thus derived from this derivative is that state is the basic unit of International Politics [as was argued long back by the Realists], and that territoriality is a stark reality till today. With the different levels of political development of the world, this stark reality is becoming more obvious in Asia, where the political discourse is at a 'developing stage'. From this argument it can be stated that India has always been much ahead in norm building in Asia, where it showed its civilizational responsibility by projecting itself in a sublime manner, without any force or coercion. In fact, it is a proven fact that all

the countries of South East Asia has always been looking towards India for their cultural stimulation.

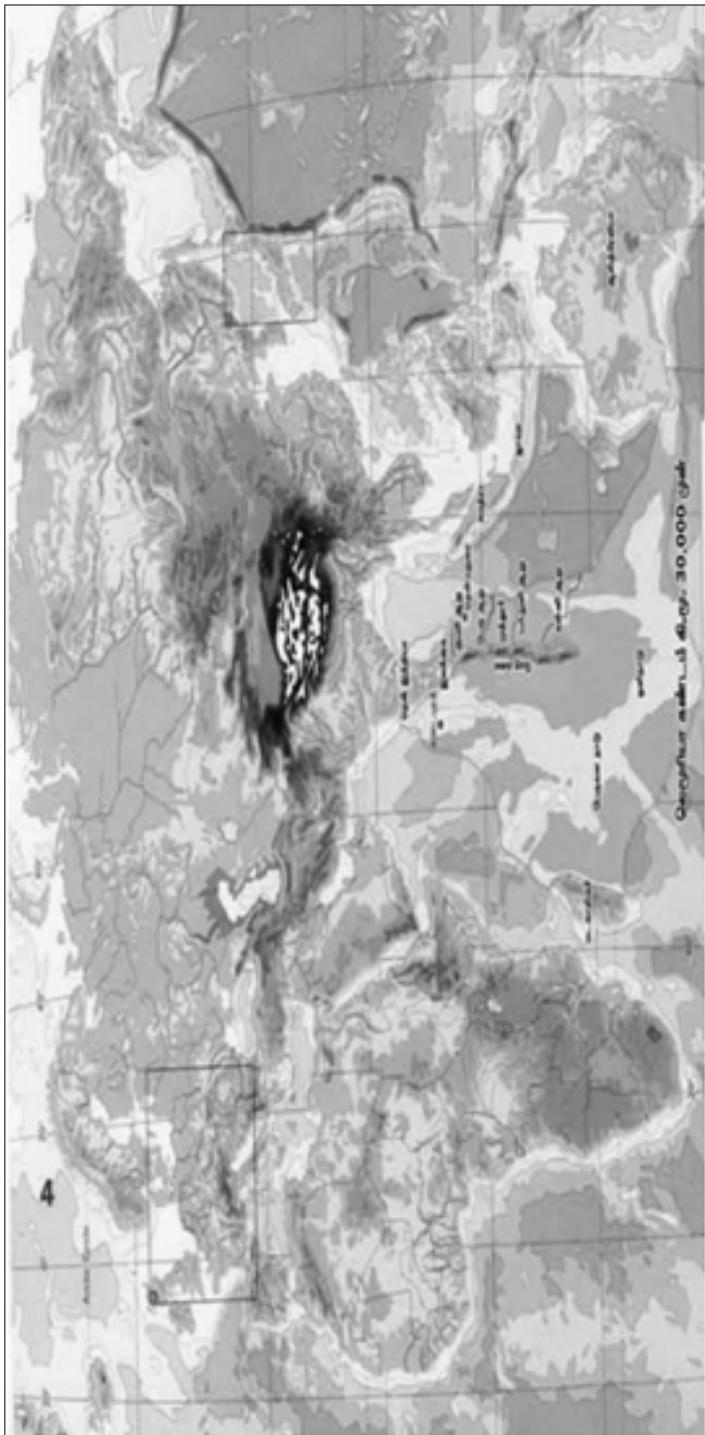
The Tamils—the Cholas—Trade, Commerce, Culture and Diplomacy

This is the alternate discourse from a marginalized perspective of Indian History—South Indian history is indeed marginalized. Viewing the Indian map upside down makes a paradigm shift in the way we see the Indian subcontinent and South Asia totally surrounded by sea and the empires that ruled from the South. The 1000th year of coronation of renowned King Rajendra I of the famous Chola Dynasty of Bharat (India) is a matter of great pride and inspiration. Crowned in 1014 CE, King Rajendra I had his rule extending not only from the banks of river Ganga to the whole of Southern Bharat (India) but also up to Sri Lanka, Lakshadweep, Maldives, Myanmar, Indonesia, Malaysia, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.⁴⁸ By virtue of his well governed administration and a vibrant military, trade, commerce, art, culture, architecture and sculpture flourished under his reign in this entire region. Indian history narrates the Mahmud Ghazni's attack on its north-western frontier but marginalizes that King Rajendra I provided stable rule to ensure peace, prosperity and unhindered trade in the entire South East Asian Region to South India, especially Tamil traders and their trade associations. He also established diplomatic Mission in China to promote trade.⁴⁹ An empire that wanted unthreatened and unhindered trade for wealth and prosperity⁵⁰ is indeed a feature where culture was also intermingled. It was a mixture of hard power with soft power that did succeed. It was the golden period of the maritime and the trading state where culture became the catalyst.

The Cholas followed the Tamil traditions of looking East and here the Tamil concept of *Kumari Kandam*, where the territorial unity of the southern part of India with Australia, South East Asia and Japan is significant. The linguistic similarities with this region is a case in point. We are all aware that the origin of the Tamil people and their culture is shrouded in deep mystery. Though there are many traditions narrated in early literature, “Kumari Kandam”, the land that lay to the south of India and, which later submerged in the Indian Ocean, has been a matter of conjecture for a study by scholars.⁵¹ The present formations of India, Arabia, Africa, Antarctica, South America and Australia started breaking up due to natural upheavals and the movement of different parts of the earth at the rate of 15,000 years per mile on an average and found their places in the Asian Continent. The movement of the earth mass, called Navalam Theevu in Tamil, caused the formation of the present continent of India. Lemuria and Kumari Kandam, which existed in southern part of India, are different lands.

According to Kandha Puranam, [The words “Kumari Kandam” first appear

Figure I: The lost continent of Kumari land: home of humanity?



Source: www.evoanth.net

in Kanda Puranam, a 15th century Tamil version of the *Skanda Purana*, written by Kachiappa Sivacharyara (1350-1420)] Kumari Kandam was the place where the first two Tamil literary academies (sangams) were organised during the Pandyan reign. They claimed Kumari Kandam as the cradle of civilization to prove the antiquity of Tamil language and culture.⁵²

The power projection of India to spread beyond the South Asian region, was the naval expedition of King Rajendra Chola to South East Asia.⁵³ Rajendra Chola, having despatched many ships in the midst of the Indian Ocean and having caught Sangrāma-vijayottunga-varman, the King of Kadaram [Kedah, Malay Peninsula], together with the elephants in his glorious army, took the large heap of treasures, which the other king had rightfully accumulated; captured with noise the arch called Vidhyādhara-torana at the ‘war-gate’ of his extensive city; ŚrīVijāya [Palembang] with the ‘jewelled wicket-gate’ adorned with great splendour and the ‘gate of large jewels’; Pannai [east cost of Sumatra] with water in the bathing ghats; the ancient Malaiyur [Jambi, Sumatra] with the strong mountain for its rampart; Māyuridingam [Malay Peninsula] surrounded by the deep sea as by a moat; Ilangāsoka [Langkasuka, Malay Peninsula] undaunted in fierce battles; Māpappālam [near Pegu, Burma] having abundant water as defence; Mevilimbangam [near Ligor, south Thailand] having fine walls as defence; Valaippanduru [perhaps Panduranga, central Vietnam] having Vilappanduru; Talaitakkolam [at the Isthmus of Kra, southern Thailand) praised by great men (versed in) the sciences; Mādamālingam [Lamuri, north Sumatra]; Ilāmurideēam [Tambralingam, east coast of Malay Peninsula], whose fierce strength rose in war; Mānakkavāram [Nicobar Islands] in whose extensive flower gardens honey was collected; and Kadāram of fierce strength which was protected by the deep sea.⁵⁴

Under Rajendra Chola (1012-1047) South India experienced a period of imperial expansionism not only in South India but into Sri Lanka, South East Asia until China. After his father Rajaraja had already conquered the whole of South India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, Rajendra subdued the eastern coast of up to Bengal in 1022-1023 AD and launched a naval expedition to Southeast Asia in 1025, conquering the maritime power Srivijaya (present-day Palembang) and its harbour cities on Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula. The possible reasons of this unique Indian naval expedition are still disputed, especially since Srivijaya had sent several friendly missions to the Cholas. Whereas previously it was interpreted either as a kind of maritime Digvijaya (world conquest) or as “politics of plunder”⁵⁵ of the Cholas, more recent research emphasizes the economic causes of an increasing competition for the control of the lucrative China trade of the Cholas as the newly emerging South Indian maritime power and Srivijaya with its hitherto uncontested control of the Straits of Malacca. Details of the “Chola raid of Srivijaya” are known nearly exclusively from the quoted Tanjore inscription

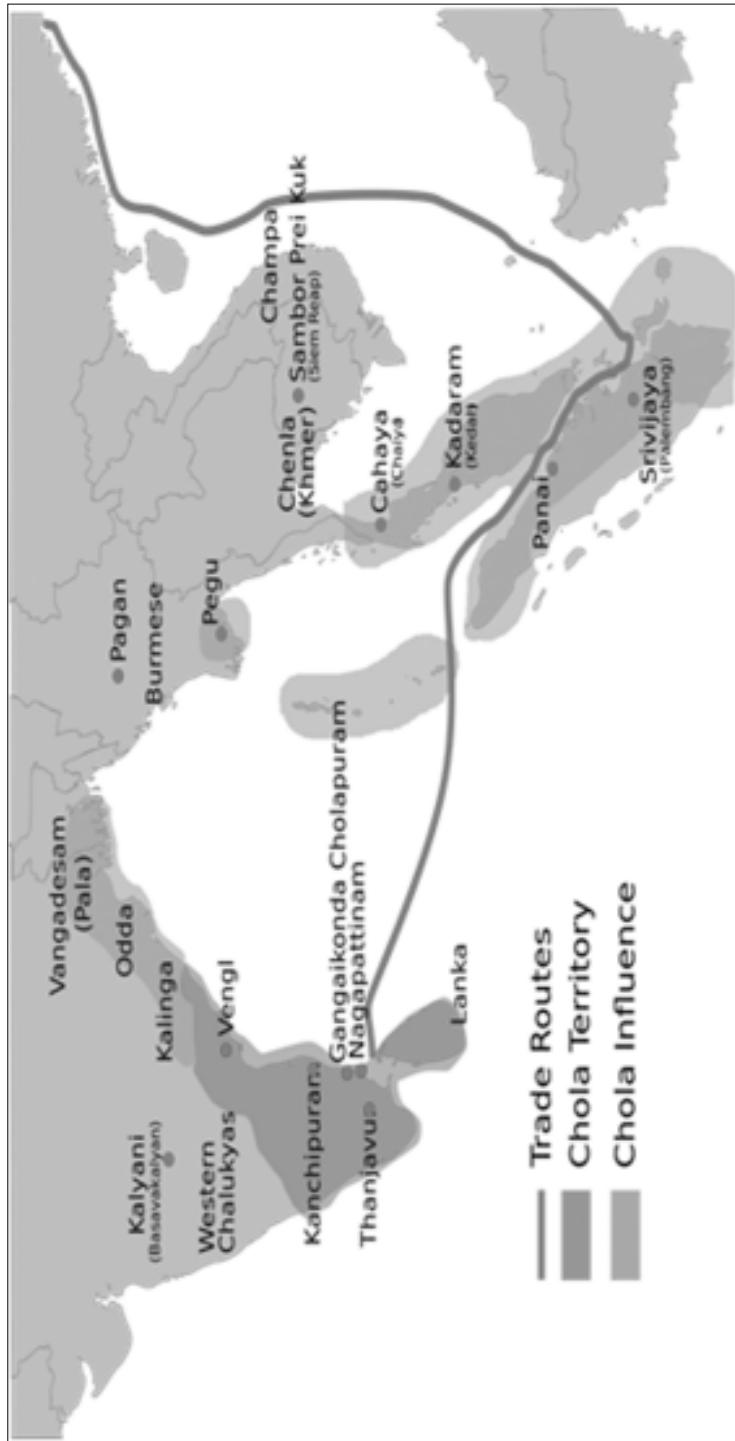
of Rajendra of the year 1030-1031. It mentions besides Srivijaya and Kadaram (Kedah, Srivijaya's second capital on the Malay Peninsula), three raided harbours on Sumatra (marked in the text by S), five at the west and east coasts of the Malay Peninsula (MP), one (perhaps) in Central Vietnam (V), one in Burma (B), and the Nicobar Islands.⁵⁶ There seems to an attraction of trade with Chinese markets as well. This was due to the changes the Song dynasty brought about in its fiscal and commercial policies. The maritime trading network in the Indo-Pacific region was a triangle between Song China, Cholas and the Srivijaya.⁵⁷ A maritime triangle of power that has conflict and cooperation as part of its relations along with hegemonic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region was indeed interesting for the construction of norms and the existence of conflict and cooperation in the pursuit of hegemony.

The Chola Navy was specialized and performed several functions of empire. The Chola state was an example of excellent coordination between the traders and their merchant guilds, the bureaucracy and the military especially the Navy. The Chola Navy was unique in Indian history for its power projection through its unique maritime strategy.⁵⁸ It could undertake any of the following combat and non-combat missions which clearly brings out its rationale of unhindered access for its trading pursuits. It became a symbol of political, economic and cultural power.

- Peacetime patrol and interdiction of piracy.
- Escort trade conveys.
- Escort friendly vessels.
- Naval battle close to home ports and at high-seas.
- Establish a beachhead and/or reinforce the army in times of need.
- Denial of passage for allies of the state's enemies.
- Sabotage of enemy vessels

This multi-dimensional force enabled the Cholas to achieve the military, political and cultural hegemony over their vast dominion. The Grand vision and imperial energy of the father and son duo Raja Raja Chola I and Rajendra Chola I is undoubtedly the underlying reason for expansion and prosperity. But, this was accomplished by the tireless efforts and pains of the navy. In essence, Raja Raja was the first person in the sub-continent to realize the power projection capabilities of a powerful navy. He and his successors initiated a massive naval buildup and continued supporting it, and they used it more than just for wars. The Chola navy was a potent diplomatic symbol. It was the carrier of Chola might and prestige. It spread the Dravidian culture, the literary and architectural grandeur. For the sake of comparison, it was just the equivalent of the "Gunboat diplomacy"⁵⁹ of the modern-day Great powers and super powers.

Figure II: Imperial Navy with Blue-Water Capabilities, Rajendra Chola's Territories c. 1030.



Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medieval_Cholas#mediaviewer/File:Rajendra_map_new.svg

The stark expansionist norm coupled with economic interests did decide the expansion of King Rajendra Chola's South East Asian expansion, which implies that India did have the norm of expansionism too, as the hall mark of statecraft, when required. It combined trade, commerce and diplomacy. The norm was aggression and assertion of culture with the image of Shiva the destroyer as the reigning God of the Cholas. Shiva is the symbol of culture, creation and destruction, all in one. This norm was constructed by the Colas in their expansionism in East Asia.

Indian National Movement

India's national movement is viewed as the Hindu revivalist movement as inferred in the discourse of the modern thinkers. There seems to be a change with continuity from hard power and soft power combined to make smart power in the building and contribution of norms. The effectiveness of Indian norms is to be acclaimed to its various spiritual social reformers, like Swami Vivekananda, Rishi Aurobindo, etc. Of them, Swami Vivekananda is seen as a modernizer of the Indian way of life, a reformer who made it relevant to contemporary times. He strode like a colossus across the Indian renaissance. He is highly acclaimed as one of the greatest metaphysicians of the Vedantic School of thought of India, the idea of Swami Vivekananda, although conceived several years ago, is still relevant. As the greatest interpreter of Vedantic philosophy, he was the first Indian of modern time who made persistent and relentless efforts to realize the dream of the universal propaganda of Indian religion and philosophy. From the point of a political philosopher, Swami Vivekananda cannot be termed like Western political philosophers Hobbes or Rousseau, since he was not a system-builder in the field of political thought. However, like a Stoic, he was relentlessly engaged in teaching, preaching and following the path of 'karmayoga' (path of action).

Unlike many theologists of India, Swami Vivekananda preached patriotism, unity of India, the true meaning of freedom, and above all the dedication of oneself to 'karmayoga'. Thus, in order to understand the social evolution of India, ideas of Swami Vivekananda is inevitable. Some of his ideas also act as the solution to some of the most pressing problems of the world. Swami Vivekananda visualized the role of Vedanta in the course of decision-making in foreign affairs too. There has been a connection between the ideas of Swami Vivekananda and the political leaders of the modern age. Thus, the teachings of Swami Vivekananda and the ways and means he focused on to resolve the problems in India can be well implemented for the world, which indeed attest India as the norm-builder of Asia.

The ideas of the revolutionary Vedantic monk, thus, today, can guide the modern statesmen and can well-address the insecurity in the field of relations

amongst different religious communities within and outside the state borders. An excellent norm ‘tolerance’ originating from India, and that ought to be spread all over the world, given the present intolerance as observed by the *Charlie Hebdo* incident in 2015. Swami Vivekananda was thus, fully aware about the need of *fraternity* amongst different races of human beings and accepted the Vedantic concept of the universal oneness of humanity irrespective of its inherent diversities. He clearly understood the divinity in man and tried to make human being feel the need to realize the manifestation of the divinity already within, which, in its turn, can reduce the conflictual view of international relations. Today, there is much requirement of “human face” in the study of International relations, which can be introspected through Swami Vivekananda’s ideas. There is a requirement of reaffirmation of the importance of spiritual realization at the time of making policy-decisions in international relations, which ought to be revived.

On the other hand, Rishi Aurobindo Ghosh, with his profound knowledge in western and eastern cultures, helped to integrate human potential and growth. That is one of the most outstanding and contemporary contribution of India in norm building in Asia. The relevance and importance of human development and growth, which is sanctified by UNDP today, and applauded by theories of human security, is but an original contribution of the Indian political philosopher. The goal of Rishi Aurobindo is not merely the liberation of the individual from the chain that fetters him and the realization of the self, but also to work out the will of the Divine into the world, so that it effect a spiritual transformation of human beings. The connection of spiritualism and existentialism is thus an original contribution of Rishi Aurobindo. He taught the processes of what he called involution and evolution. His theory of involution involved a timeless and spaceless energy, the omnipresent reality called *Brahman*, which developed consciousness, knowledge and will. This energy became the source of the created universe. More than religion it is related to physics, energy, and that is one of the original contribution of India in norm building; connecting the individual with the cosmic and the earth.

According to Rishi Aurobindo, evolution is the gradual emergence of matter, life and the mind out of the conscious energy that he calls the *In conscience*. It begins with matter becoming complex and life emerging from complex matter. From complex life, emerges the mind, which develops into complex reasoning and thoughts. This philosophical norm of intellectual absurdity, is essentially theorized by Rishi Aurobindo, and is the original philosophical contribution of norm building of India. When all of humankind reaches higher levels of spiritual consciousness together in the final stage of “supramentalisation,” a new universal consciousness will connect with *Sachchidananda* [the universal omnipresent and omnipotent Spirit], which is infinite in existence, consciousness, and bliss. Thus,

he has re-iterated the Vedantic concept of cosmic connection of the human self, and thereby making individual freedom more pragmatic. Once human freedom transcends the boundary of borders, the true meaning of freedom is realized, and that is an original contribution of India in building the norm of “*freedom*” in the universal sense. The sheer magnitude of the nation state, the stark ultra nationalist approach of the individuals to control, is just the manifestation of the inert insecurity of a state and an individual. Freedom of the true form is thus addressed by this great social reformer, which have altered the Indian national movement, and in the process contributed originally in the norm building effort of India.

Conclusion

Norm building is not necessarily meant as a mere rhetoric of hardcore theoretical jargon, it is also a way of life, and a theory to be practiced in the hardcore political grounds. Historical attestation of Indian foreign policy, not only of the post-1947 period, did state a steady resemblance of its cultural exuberance, blend with spiritualism. That undaunted spirit of India, is in itself a norm, which is always applauded without coercion by the world. The quest of human and the artificial entity called state is all blemished in the discourse of bloody clash, and the intense desire to prove of superiority. Norms formed, thereby, always thus tries to highlight evidently some of the greater trajectory of state-making and statecraft. The norms of celebration of cultural diversity, the maritime trading state, destruction and creation, sublime power as well as the *Kshatriya neeti* (warrior craft) in foreign and security policy have evolved over the Indian civilization state.

Incidentally, India has been arguing philosophically for the existence and enthralling of human emancipation through its political discourse. Those theories, compiled and addressed as norm building may be accepted as one of the greatest and original contribution of India in norm building in Asia. Philosophical base of norm is always an accepted form, and from that point of view, Indian philosophy has been the base of Indian political norm building. These norms did address above all the individual, and universalism, which made India a unique country exhibiting civilizational responsibility in Asia and the world.

In retrospect, India has actually being the original contributor of norms pertaining to *individualism* in the context of *spiritualism; universalism; tolerance; and brotherhood* as well as conquest through culture and trade like the Cholas and the other dynasties of the South had done as part of their sea faring and maritime conquests. India has been a norm builder as well as a contributor. This does raise the construction of norms for civilizational states as against nation states in Asia, like India, China and Persia.

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3

How India is Viewed as a Regional Actor

S.D. Muni

The subject given to me is India's image as a regional actor in Asia. Obviously we are looking at this image in the strategic sense. Constructing strategic images are difficult and a slippery exercise. More so when it comes to India and particularly when you are confronted with strategists and economists, it really becomes a challenge because image is neither 100 per cent reality nor 100 per cent imagination. When it comes to the country concerned, the image of that country would depend on two factors—the country's conduct and capabilities. How that country conducts itself and what its capabilities are in dealing with the world around. From the viewer's side, I am reminded of a very apt Hindi saying, 'you look at the other guy depending on what your own composition is, what your own bias is, preference is, anxieties are' etc. But these images, both from the viewer point of view and the one who is being viewed are also being shaped by media, by consultancy firms, by opinion makers and analysts these days, whatever the international consultancies say your economy will grow or dip down, your strategic projections by the *Pew* opinion surveys, opinion polls, academia, think tanks; they all butt in to create images and sometimes it is really a challenge to fight some of these images or redraft them. In this sense, India's image in Asia depends on each and every country of Asia because there are broad perspectives but within those broad perspectives, there are very clear nuances as to how one country looks at the other one.

Four Phases of Evolution

Everything evolves. India's image has also evolved. Let me offer four phases of India's image evolution. The first phase is 1947 to the 1950s. I would say in this decade, India was viewed as an Asian leader, not boxed simply into South Asia.

India organised Asian Relations Conference and was the key sponsor of the Bandung Afro-Asian conference. India played a role in Korea and India was the principle peace maker under the UN in the Indo-China states of Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. India extended military assistance to Burma, and mobilised international support also for Indonesia. A special conference on Indonesian freedom struggle was organised in New Delhi for that purpose. India was also the decisive factor in helping Nepal throw away its anachronistic Rana system during 1950-51 and reached out to Egypt. Therefore, India was active and influential in whole of Asia and the developing world. India was viewed as a leader that stood up to fight against colonialism, against racialism. It was viewed as an Asian giant that wanted Asia to chart its own destiny rather than be guided or led by the West. It was a moral and intellectual hub which was considered inspiring but an economically ill equipped country which could not help in the material wellbeing of its Asian neighbours. So, there were dents about it. India was also a strong norm builder in this decade, for sovereignty, non-interference, freedom, peace and disarmament, including nuclear non-proliferation and against military alliances.

In the second phase, India's image suffered a very serious setback. This was on account of conflicts imposed on India and India's failure to give a fitting reply. India appeared to be an imbecile giant who was ill equipped to take care of its own security and territorial integrity. The military challenge to India came from its two immediate neighbours; first from China in 1962 in a most unexpected manner, and the second came from Pakistan shortly after, in 1965. While India faced military humiliation in 1962 at the hands of China, it could not decisively defeat the Pakistani aggression in 1965. In the face of these conflicts from its immediate neighbours, India realised to its shock that the rest of Asia was not prepared to stand by it despite India's best efforts to remain creatively engaged with the Asian countries. In 1962, Sri Lanka came forward to mediate between India and China than to support India which felt itself to be a victim of an unprovoked and unexpected aggression. In 1965, Indonesia was even willing to fight on the side of Pakistan rather than stand with India. These military debacles also coincided with serious economic difficulties and political turmoil at home. Economic difficulties were marked by food crisis and PL 480 shipments of wheat from the US, fraught with uncomfortable conditions. The experience then prompted the search for green revolution and food self-sufficiency. Politically, the ruling Congress party went through a crisis of confidence and leadership which was resolved only towards the beginning of the Seventies, with Indira Gandhi emerging as the undisputed leader. India had virtually been boxed into 'South Asia' as the wider canvas of its engagement with Asia and the world shrunk into coping with internal and neighbourhood challenges.

The third phase of the evolution of India's strategic image, to my mind is comprised of two decades, of the 1970s and 1980s. During this period India tried to come out of some of its critical national deficits. India's foreign policy has always struggled against three deficits, the developmental deficit in terms of economic performance, the defence or the security deficit in terms of really protecting itself for extending its support to others and the status deficit, of lack of recognition of its potential and capabilities, and also its role and place in Asian and global affairs. India's self-perception is of being a great power, a great civilizational country, of huge economic potential and considerable potential military clout with strategic location in the high Himalayas and deep into the Indian Ocean. However the world did not acknowledge India as a great power or even as a big strategic player of considerable potential. India has been struggling to bridge this gap between its self-perception and the prevailing global ground reality with regard to its international status.

In search of bridging its status deficit, India's role in the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971 was a landmark development. This role was virtually thrust upon India, thanks to complete mismanagement of the internal crisis within Pakistan by its then military rulers, as also by unexpected consequences of this management on India in terms of the millions of Bangladeshi (East-Pakistani) refugees coming into India. Almost single handed, India played this role, facing stiff opposition from the US, China and the whole of the international community. Following the emergence of Bangladesh, the then US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger had to acknowledge that India was a great 'regional' power. Then again in 1974, India's Pokharan nuclear test helped India to enhance its image on the front of technological and military capabilities. It would have been better for India to declare its status as a nuclear weapons state then, and proceed further with its programme to develop a reliable nuclear deterrent. During 1974-75, India also performed a deft politico-diplomatic feat in getting the protectorate of Sikkim integrated with the Indian Union. During the decade of the 1980s, India defied China and the Western powers hegemony in Asia by recognizing the Heng Samrin regime in Cambodia and coming to the support of Vietnam. India's then foreign minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, in 1979, cut short his official visit to China in protest against inflicting a war of "punishment" on Vietnam on the question of Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. 1979-80, India went right up to Vietnam supporting Hun Sen and was severely criticized by South East Asian countries and the big powers particularly the western ones. India was labelled as Soviet ally and a Soviet stooge. The world then did not realize that China mattered more to India than the Soviet Union, and Vietnam, China's neighbour, was being punished by China. In terms of international values like human rights, Vietnam at that time was fighting the Khmer Rouge. All these countries that criticised India at

that time are now criticising the Khmer Rouge as the worst perpetrator of human rights. At that time China, the US and the ASEAN, sided with Khmer Rouge as they were working within the constraints of the Cold War politics.

Again in 1987 in Sri Lanka and in 1988 in Maldives, India played a decisive regional role. In Sri Lanka, India halted the genocide of the Tamils and forced a Constitutional arrangement that promised justice and dignity to the Tamils in a Sinhala dominated State. It was this Cold War politics that influenced image construction, mixed with whatever India tried to do in Bangladesh, Pokhran, and Sikkim. This image of India invoked a mix of respect and anxiety respect because India could carry out what it wanted to and anxiety because India had successfully defied regional hegemons like China and the US, in more ways than one.

A Benign Power and Capable Partner

The fourth phase of the unfolding of India's strategic profile may be considered as beginning from the early 1990s till at present. During this phase, India has notably advanced in bridging the three traditional deficits; of economy, security and status. The Indian economy has performed reasonably well, hitting nearly 10% growth rate, but settling at 7%. There have been setbacks too, particularly between 2010-13 when there was a perception of policy paralysis in India. Especially in the economic field, this image was widely shared. There were also serious jerks in the global economy as a whole and India could no longer remain unaffected. Hopefully, the economy looks like being on a revival mode. India is also on a fast track to modernise its military capabilities. India is seen as a rising benign power that may not only offer economic opportunities through cooperative engagement, but also be a security provider in parts of Asia at least. India's benign image is also buttressed by its civilizational character and renewed emphasis on soft power. India does not have an uncomfortable baggage of history that it conquered countries or it encroached upon countries in one way or the other. The neighbours, as we shall see later, do feel pressure sometimes because of India's sheer size in their close proximity creating discomfort and that discomfort is explained in several ways. As regards India's status deficit, the civil-nuclear deal with the US has brought India closer to the nuclear club. Besides, the end of the Cold War, and with it the end of the old polarisation and divisions have reduced significantly irrelevant suspicions about India.

The significant improvement in Indo-US relations have also reinforced, in many ways, India's Look-East policy. This policy did not start in the early 1990 as is commonly and journalistically assumed. It has been explained elsewhere in the book that India's Look-East policy has emerged through four phases since the period of the Chola Empire (10th century) and the flourishing spice trade between

India and the Southeast Asian countries.¹ Recall the period when many of the Southeast Asian countries were considered the “Indianised states”, in cultural and civilizational sense. During the spice trade and also with the establishment of the Mughal Empire in India, there was also the flow of moderate Islam from India to South East Asia. Nehru’s India also had a vigorous policy of engagement with the extended eastern neighbours, but then the Cold War intervened to break many of the old links which are now being revived under the contemporary Look-East policy. This policy has now been renamed as “Act-East” policy, though one may not much understand or appreciate the effort behind this renaming. Perhaps this has brought India strategically closer to the US. Perhaps this gives a message to many of the perturbed South East Asian countries that India may be a viable strategic option in the face of growing Chinese assertion and pressure. On the whole however, India’s image has received a big boost where India has been sought after by many countries and India on its own has reached out to as many countries as possible.

India is now described as a net security provider which prompted the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses to turn out a volume called *India as a security provider* under its Asian Strategic Review series.² For these, there are two or three significant turbulent changes which are taking place in Asia. One is of course the rise of China and the new competition which is taking place in the Asia Pacific region. The second is rise of terrorism and extremism in the west, not on the Asia-Pacific side but mostly on the West, including if you want to call it, as the fall out of the Arab Spring and the rise of the Islamic State forces. Third is of course perhaps a lurking suspicion that the power order of the world is changing in the sense that the US may not be able to carry out what it did earlier and therefore you need new players. In these contexts, whether in terms of the rise of China in Asia-Pacific region, or in terms of extremism on the West Asian front, or in terms of the global order, people look at India as one of the balancer; a benign balancer and strategic player. This is where US has changed its policy. There is a lot of debate on whether it is India’s change in policy towards the US or it is the US’ changed policy towards India that is bringing about this shift in thinking. Mostly it is being argued, certainly in the prestigious western journals that India has given up its non-alignment and therefore India has changed. The facts, however, speak otherwise. Even after the first decade of the end of the Cold War, India was viewed as a category different from that of “friends of the US” in the official US assessments. Please recall a US Commerce Department report which came out in mid-80s which identified 10 big emerging markets and India was one of those markets but nobody wanted to woo that market at that time. Even during the early part of the second Clinton term, there was an effort to keep India in its place. But India has consistently, and starting with Nehru, always

and repeatedly sought as much of a close relationship with the US as possible. Nehru tried it, Indira Gandhi tried it, Rajiv Gandhi tried it, Narsimha Rao tried it, almost everybody tried it, but it was the change in the US strategic attitude after the 1998 (nuclear tests) that precisely changed the India-US equation. Before there were some ramblings of it but no real change in attitude took place in Washington DC about India's credentials or capabilities as an Asian strategic player. Therefore the change has taken place and this change is now very strongly signified in the new US approach of taking India as a strategic partner, as a lynchpin for its security strategy in Asia-Pacific, as a net security provider, which India is being pushed on to at least in the Indian Ocean. To a very large extent this change in the US attitude towards India has influenced many other Asian countries in their respective approaches towards India.

Now, as a result of these changes, India is being sought after as a partner for engagement by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar, Israel, Iran, etc. India has also tried to reach out to others. Indonesia and Malaysia, which had lot of reservations earlier vis-à-vis India, Japan and Australia are seeking closer relations with India. India is playing its own role in various parts of Asia and in various crises including in helping Nepal to mainstream its Maoist insurgency and nudging countries like Myanmar and Maldives towards democracy. India's image both on the Western front as well as the Eastern front of Asia is notably improved. There are public opinion surveys including Pew that say how India' image is improving.

This positive turn in India's strategic image is not without caveats and constraints. Firstly, everyone feels that India is punching much below its weight, that it is not doing what it is expected to do. Expectations sometimes can be unrealistic but there are expectations and everybody says that India is hesitant in undertaking responsibilities and launching initiatives that it is quite capable of. Look at the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) issue in relation to Libya or Syria or fighting ISIS. Most of these expectations are coming out of the western world. Why in Afghanistan India does not want to take a military role in one way or the other? There are genuine constraints in India both in terms of capabilities and strategic calculations that India would not like to plunge into some of these attractive offers or proposals or situations.

The Challenge Ahead

The expectations out of India are enormously increasing. As compared to this there is a huge delivery deficit on the part of India's own policy. India does not deliver on its promises on time and that creates a great mismatch between what India can do and what India is doing. India has emerged as a democracy promoter, it has joined United Nations efforts to promote democracy, even as a group. India is financing efforts to develop all kinds of electoral practices but there are

several instances where it does not measure up to supporting democratic forces in a manner one should be. Therefore there is a mix of feelings that India is capable, India is benign, India can be relied upon but why is India not coming forward to meet expectations. In the immediate neighbourhood, there is a mix of anxiety and expectation. While India is not treated as a threat anywhere, yet there is an element of anxiety that India will micromanage South Asian affairs, it will pressurize its neighbours on political issues, India will not give the economic assistance which is expected out of it, so on and so forth. The loss of good will and credibility in Nepal on the Constitutional issues is the latest example of neighbourhood woes for India.

We can discuss to what extent these expectations are realistic and to what extent the delivery deficit is legitimate. To my mind there is a lot of scope in both these parameters to be discussed. From 2010 to 2014, as noted earlier, there was some sort of a policy paralysis in India and its image dipped down as to whether India would be able to deliver on its foreign policy goals. I think Prime Minister Modi's regime is trying to undo that image but it remains to be seen to what extent the hopes and expectations aroused out of India can be sustained and much would depend upon what it does at home. For the success of its foreign policy and to sustain its standing in Asia and the world, India has to remain plural and democratic; India has to remain very active on the growth trajectory and India has to modernize its own capabilities. If it fails on either of these counts, India's image would suffer a dent.

NOTES

1. A.N. Ram., eds, *Two Decades of India's Look East Policy: Partnership for Peace, Progress, and Prosperity* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2012).
2. S.D. Muni and Vivek Chadha, *Asian Strategic Review 2015: India as a Security Provider* (New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2015).

INDIA AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

4

The Geo-strategic Context of the India-Russia Partnership

P. Stobdan

The Context

Russia, in its geopolitical form, has always remained the most critical component in India's strategic calculus. If we look back in history, the developments in Eurasian continent had decisively shaped much of the course of India's political history. The Indian history textbooks amply provide vivid description of the region's military context as a staging ground for invasions into India. In fact, the origin of Indian strategic thought, found in ancient texts and treatise, had their genesis in Eurasia and relentless threats emanating from the Northwestern dynamics. Surely, the southern fringe of Eurasian continent also remained as a bridge for promoting Indian commerce and culture across Asia for centuries. India was part of the Silk Route dynamics – something now forgotten in history. It receives no attention in India's current policy thinking. In fact, until the Timurid period (14th Century), the region was the epicentre of power, whose dominance and influence pervaded throughout the Eurasian World. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the extent of Russian Empire had touched the northern peripheries of India where Anglo-Russian Great-Game played out. Interestingly, in the 20th century, most Indians viewed the USSR's grip of power over the vast stretch of Eurasian landmass as a positive historical phenomenon with enduring security implications for India.

This geo-strategic reality underpinned the 'India-Russia' Strategic Partnership, the genesis and evolution of which dates back to the Soviet era. The geopolitical and geo-strategic context of the US supply of military hardware and economic aid to Pakistan in 1954 (after it joined the SEATO and subsequently the CENTO)

had drew India and the Soviet Union closer to each other. The Sino-Soviet rift, followed by Sino-India conflict in 1960s, provided added impetus for the Indo-Soviet strategic alignment. When the Sino-Pakistani axis became firmer in the 1960s, the context of strategic understanding between the two deepened further, culminating in the signing of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation in 1971.

Among other things, including seeking a common goal of promoting global peace and security, the 1971 Treaty sought the common goal of promoting global peace and security and underlined commitment from each other for respecting the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the two countries. The provisions under Article VIII, IX and X of the Treaty prohibited any military alliance directed against the other, and providing any assistance to any third country. Importantly, in the event of either being threatened, the two were to immediately enter into mutual consultations, and undertake effective measures to counter such threats. It also included a commitment not to enter into any obligation, secret or public, with one or more States which is incompatible with the Treaty, and might cause military damage to the other Party.

A New Strategic Partnership

The close and amiable Indo-Soviet equation, often dubbed by the world as ‘allies’, continued even after the Russian Federation came into being. For India, maintaining the longstanding time-tested partnership with Russia became imperative for its foreign and security policy as it was heavily dependent on weapons supplies from Russia for its defence purposes. However, the bonds between the two since then have undergone a rapid change as the main spirit and rhythm of the old ties inevitably watered down in more than one way. As the economies of both countries had to undergo difficult periods of structural change, the foreign policy orientations of the two have also gone through significant transformation. In fact, Indo-Russian relations gained no significance during the Boris Yeltsin Presidency—he visited India only once in 1993.

It was not until October 2000, when President Vladimir Putin visited New Delhi, that the two countries signed the “Declaration on the India-Russia Strategic Partnership” (IRSP). However, the nature and structure of the IRSP did not carry the same obligatory and binding *specificities* as were entailed under the 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty. The Strategic Partnership was elevated to the level of a “Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership” (SPSP) in 2010 with the aim to revive the old bonds, and make them relevant to changing needs and aspirations. These were done while building a robust bilateral cooperation partnership in almost all areas, including the political, security, trade and economy, defence, science and technology, and culture.

When President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Narendra Modi met on December 11, 2014 for the 15th Annual Summit to evaluate the SPSP, they were quite upbeat and displayed full confidence to take the partnership to a higher level. Significantly, Prime Minister Modi saw no ambiguity in India's perspectives on ties with Russia. He said the relationship with Russia is "unique" and "incomparable in content";¹ and will remain so even as global politics change. In a series of tweets, Prime Minister Modi said,

The bond between the people of Russia and India is very strong. Our nations have stood by each other through thick and thin ... Times have changed, our friendship has not. Now, we want to take this relation to the next level & this visit is a step in that direction."²

Notwithstanding this, the significance of the SPSP had, inevitably, come under sharp public scrutiny against the backdrop of the prevailing aberrant nature of global politics that has engulfed both India and Russia. Despite the holding of Annual Summits and multiple institutionalized dialogues at both the political and official levels since 2000, the vibrancy and maturity of the past bonding has failed to regain itself. In fact, opinion among informed circles suggested that the partnership was suffering from deep stagnation despite repeated attempts at providing strategic dimensions to ongoing bilateral cooperation in the defence, technology, space, nuclear power, and energy sectors. The military-technical cooperation continues to form the lynchpin of the partnership. Over 70 per cent of weapons and military equipment came from Russia. However, as other international vendors join the Indian arms market, the global competitiveness increasingly threatens the existing 'buyer-seller' relationship.

Not surprisingly, these changes are already causing the two countries to get miffed with each other. Moscow is not only upset with India's military procurement policy but is also unable to digest the USA and others overtaking its weaponry market, especially regarding helicopter, fighter-aircraft and missiles purchases. Senior Russian officials have described such deals as "illogical and unfair". In fact, the Russian Ambassador in New Delhi, Alexander Kadakin, questioned the fairness and transparency of India's policy of awarding contracts, and told the Indian media, "We know what gimmicks are used to manipulate deals". He also added that Russia may not bid for tenders because. "Sometimes, the terms of tenders are crafted specifically to get the required results." He thought losing the number one position "causes damage to our reputation".³ Already a spectre of voices have emerged in the Russian media over India's changing approach, and it has raised questions like 'whom does India stand—the US or Russia?'.⁴ In fact, many Russians have sought retribution by forging closer Russia-Pak ties to compensate the market loss.

Moreover, an element of suspicion has grown on the Indian side over Russia's

recent signing of a defence pact and the lifting of its embargo on arms sales to Islamabad. In a veiled signal, Putin also sent his Defence Minister to Islamabad before he visited New Delhi. Many analysts in India also feel that all is not well with the relationship when President Putin declined to address a joint session of Parliament.⁵ However, Indian discontent stems mainly from the Russian failure to meet delivery schedules, its jacking up costs, its reluctance to transfer technology, and its supply of unreliable spares, among others. The late delivery of *INS Vikramaditya* is a case in point. It could also happen to the timely commencement of the stealth Fifth-Generation Fighter Aircraft (FGFA) and the Multi-Role Transport Aircraft (MTA).⁶ As it stands, it may take years before production will start. A similar story also persists in civil nuclear cooperation projects.

Rising Strategic Incongruity

Today, there are other critical issues of geopolitical importance wherein India and Russia find themselves increasingly on a lesser strategic congruity. Already many doubt whether the two countries have moved away substantially from each other, as can be seen from the divergent pursuance of their foreign and defence policies. On the one hand, India's protracted standoffs with both China and Pakistan continue to remain stalemated; on the other hand, Russia has not only pivoted itself towards China but also started to cosy up with Pakistan, even though the interactions may be limited at present. While the context of India-Russia ties has changed, the traditional Sino-Pakistan nexus has not.

To put the Indo-Russian partnership in a strategic perspective and to analyse the emerging trend of divergent policies pursued by Russia and India in a broader geopolitical scenario, some points need attention. First, on the one hand, after the 2005 Indo-US nuclear deal, India has striven hard to achieve a gradual thaw in its relationship with the USA. Indo-US relations have moved closer, and even include cooperation with each other in the defence field. On the other hand, after Putin's second Presidency, Russia has pursued a more confrontationist position *vis-à-vis* the West. The standoff has only heightened following Russia's annexation of Crimea and the continuing differences with the West over the Ukraine crisis since early 2014. The renewed West-Russia standoff is already affecting the realignment of geo-politics as well as the global economy. Crippling Western sanctions, the falling price of oil, the fast depreciation of Russian currency, etc., have posed a massive challenge to Russia. It seems that the West is likely to draw a host of international scenarios against Russia (especially in its neighbourhood). Needless to say, there is no doubting that the continuing standoff between Russia and the West has ramifications for India. The events have already put India in an awkward diplomatic situation.

The second consequence of the above is Moscow's big shift towards Beijing.

Russia has used Western sanctions as a strong impetus to pivot itself towards China. The mammoth US\$400 billion energy deal will enable China to receive 68 billion cubic gas annually from Siberian fields.⁷ This could not only offset Russia's reliance on the European market significantly, but would also help Beijing alter the balance of power in Asia—with major implications for India. Moreover, Russia's plans to sell cutting-edge S-400 anti-aircraft missile systems to China—that can bring down stealth bombers and ICBMs—could alter the military balance.⁸ Russia falling into the Chinese terms and conditions does not portent well for India and, at this stage, it would be difficult to gauge the direction of Russian future strategic calculations with China.

The third is Russia's growing military ties with Pakistan—although President Putin has clarified that its proposed arms supply to Pakistan will not impede ties with India, and that Moscow's latest US\$ 1.7 billion energy deal with Islamabad for a gas pipeline is to override Western sanctions.⁹ Surely, Moscow cannot escalate sale of weapons to Islamabad beyond limited defensive purposes. So far, Russia has sold combat MI-35 Hind helicopters to Pakistan for use in combating terror. However, the appetite for arms trade could grow. Pakistan described the November 20, 2014 deal as a “milestone” in Russia-Pakistan relations.¹⁰ In Islamabad, the Russian Defence Minister, Sergei Shoigu, promised to translate the Defence Cooperation Agreement into tangible terms and pave the way for politico-military understanding, including on regional security matters. Sergei Shoigu praised the expertise of the Pakistani Armed Forces in fighting the war against terrorism, and said, “The world community wants to do business with Pakistan now”.¹¹ Russia vowed its support for Pakistan's fight against the Taliban militants. Of course, such statements to court Pakistan are linked to Moscow's current isolation over the Ukraine standoff. However, by supplying weapons to Pakistan, Moscow may be deliberately sowing the seeds of confusion and doubt in Indian public perception.

Fourthly, there are a host of unresolved issues on which the positions of both countries remains ambiguous. Combating terrorism and extremism as well as stability in Afghanistan has been a traditional area of understanding. However, as Russia increasingly views Pakistan as an important determinant in Afghanistan, Moscow's Afghan policy may not remain identical to India's Afghan policy. The shift of stance on regional issues could have an impact on Kashmir as well. In 2000, President Putin told the Indian parliament, “the same forces that were creating problems in J&K were behind problems in Chechnya”.¹² In his visit to India in 2014, President Putin decided to skip his address to the Indian Parliament citing busy schedule. This time the joint statement only condoned the loss of life in senseless terrorist acts in Jammu and Kashmir as well as in Chechnya, and called for a global resolve and cooperative measures without double standards.

The Russians are ‘old’ players, and they know how to play regional games. By supporting the entry of India and Pakistan into SCO, Moscow may be contemplating a bigger game.

The fifth important point is that under Prime Minister Modi, India is showing a greater propensity for a stepping-out-in-the-world, especially forging a strong partnership with the USA as central to the pursuit of its global interests. President Barack Obama’s visit to New Delhi in January 2015 no doubt created ripples in Moscow. It was clear that India and the USA have agreed to upgrade their defence relationship. The finalization of the 2015 Framework for the US-India Defence Relationship will guide and expand the bilateral defence and strategic partnership over the next ten years.¹³ The framework includes agreements signed on January 22, 2015 on India-US Research, Development, Testing and Evaluation (RDT&E); the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) to pursue the co-production and the co-development of four pathfinder projects; and to facilitate cooperation in defence research and development. Among other things, the formation of a working group to explore aircraft carrier design and technology sharing and explore possible cooperation on the development of jet engine technology could impact the Indo-Russian defence cooperation relationship.

The DTTI collaboration will surely yield additional joint projects in the near future, particularly when India has liberalized the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Policy regime in the defence sector with the aim to establish a defence industrial base through initiatives like ‘Make in India.’ The DTTI seeks to achieve opportunities beyond a buyer-seller relationship, and move towards co-development and co-production that would boost India’s economy and security.¹⁴ It will compliment Prime Minister Modi’s “Make in India” initiative to create more jobs, and make India a competitive exporter of strategic weapons. Clearly, behind Prime Minister Modi’s subtle message is that Russia is unable to satisfy the growing ‘Make in India’ demand.

To be sure, the impact of the US factor is bound to affect the India-Russia Strategic Partnership. Washington has already expressed its displeasure with India’s recent conclusion of 20 agreements with Russia. The USA was, of course, envious—especially of the expanding India-Russia nuclear cooperation. While reacting to the Modi-Putin Summit Meeting, the US State Department spokesperson Marie Harf said,

We’ve seen press reporting on India concluding business, nuclear and defence deals with Russia, but not confirmation of those agreements or specifics of what those agreements would entail. Our view remains that it’s not time for business as usual with Russia.¹⁵

Moreover, a glimpse of those challenges in the diplomatic sphere already appeared when the USA and Ukraine were peeved by Crimea’s Prime Minister

Sergei Aksyonov's 'unofficial' arrival in India along with the Russian Presidential delegation. The US felt "troubled" by Aksyonov's presence in New Delhi.¹⁶ On the other hand, the Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko accused India of putting "money" ahead of "values" and "civilisation". Indian officials had to clarify that New Delhi was not "officially aware" of Aksyonov's presence in the Putin delegation.¹⁷

India does not support Western sanctions against Russia that do not have the approval of the UNSC;¹⁸ at the same time, New Delhi maintains a non-partisan and balanced standpoint on the Russian annexation of Crimea. The wisdom in the Indian position is to defuse Cold War-like tensions without resorting to the use of force. However, India risks being caught in the confrontation between Russia and the West that may potentially dampen mutual trust between Moscow and New Delhi. Moreover, four days ahead of US President Barack Obama's visit, the Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu visited New Delhi to assure Russian commitment to fast-track joint military programmes, including the proposed joint development and production of the fifth-generation fighter aircraft (FGFA) project. India had shown "some apprehensions" about the slow pace in execution of projects with Russia. Prior to Obama's visit, India and Russia discussed the possibility of Russian armament companies participating in the 'Make in India' endeavour "in a big way", and decided to hold "interactions at regular intervals" to ensure project deadlines are kept.

The Future of the India-Russia Strategic Partnership

There is no doubt that today neither Russia nor India figure high on each other's foreign policy priorities. However, the long-standing friendship, a genuine sense of moral obligation, the high level of mutual trust and comfort, continue to nurture the partnership. There are practically no significant political and cultural disagreements between Russia and India. However, the exigencies of 21st century geopolitics seem to require nations to peruse their national interests through the prism of pragmatism which can often challenge older, cherished values. Many view this as the inevitable reality of an emerging multi-polar world.

The engagement of Russia and India over the past decade has been marked by the concept of 'benign indifference'. Except for making lofty Joint Statements, any genuine zeal towards nurturing initiatives regarding converging interests—especially in addressing the contemporary aspirations of their peoples—has been lacking. Despite over five decades of close friendship, India has failed to explore Russia's vast technological potential as well as its natural resources spanning mammoth territory—both of which are now filled by Chinese and South Korean companies.

As compared to Chinese companies, Indian Majors (including the ONGC)

have made only a tardy investment of US\$6.5 billion in Russia. It is a story of missed opportunity. Practically, no smart policy exists to establish linkages between engines of growth in India and Russia. Indian companies could have entered into Russian known sectors—such as chemicals, pharmaceuticals, automobiles, telecommunications, infrastructure and fertilizers—a long time ago, but have not done so. Similarly, Russia too has failed to update the scope of cooperation—especially in the high technology area—to help itself expand business beyond the Indian market. Russia is no stranger to the Indian market, having transferred critical technology to India (for both research and production purposes) a long time ago. However, diversification is a major challenge and, except for a few firms —like Shyam-Systema, Rusal, Severstal, Kamasm, and some others—the Russians have made no effort to explore Indian's non-defence sector. Russian investment in India has been a mere US\$1 billion. As a result, two-way interactions have already fallen. The annual trade turnover targeted to achieve US\$20 billion by 2015 still hovers around US\$10 billion.

Indian business companies remain loath to invest in Russia. After the Shyam-Sistema 2G fiascos, Russia too has less interest in having business ties with India. The reasons are well known. However, actions to bridge the huge information gap, language barriers, and stiff travel regulations by Russia that impede growth in ties are lacking. Moreover, the traditional practice of building ties through state-structured bureaucratic mechanisms come in the way of building a more meaningful partnership. Platforms required to open up the two way interactions and sustain the old ties at a popular level are miserably missing. Russian institutions and think tanks are poorly funded, and even the fields of once popular Russian Studies in India as well as Indology in Russia are almost dead. Learning the Russian language is no longer popular in India. The recent *Druzhba-Dosti*¹⁹—‘A Vision for strengthening the Indian-Russian Partnership over the next decade’—signed by President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Narendra Modi—talks about boosting bilateral inter-regional and inter-city linkages as well as cooperation to encourage investment, tourism, cultural and people-to-people contacts. However, most probably, these will remain true only on paper.

The challenges in the future will come from how much Russia contributes to fulfil the rising economic aspirations of India, especially to meet needs of the ‘Make in India’ campaign. Thus, the *Druzhba-Dosti* vision statement through a string of 20 agreements lays emphasis on enhancing higher flows of investments and fast tracking cooperation in the energy (oil and gas, electric power production, nuclear energy, LNG projects and renewable energy sources), defence, economic and infrastructure sectors. These also include the building of 12 nuclear plants by Russia in India over the next two decades. Of course, all these may be an ambitious goal considering that the first agreement to build Kudankulam was in

1988. Kudankulam 1 has been commissioned for a warranty-period operation only recently—and, of course, is not without technical glitches. Needless to say, when it comes to Russia, no one clearly articulates the hurdles relating to nuclear liability laws.

The vision talks about defence cooperation (notwithstanding multiple constraints) as well as enhancing the proposed joint design and development of new weapons systems. India is seeking the transfer of technology, more local manufacturing, and the assembly of military hardware components (and spares) to go in line with Prime Minister Modi's 'Make in India' campaign. This does suggest a resolve to broaden the defence relationship and is also meant to convey a message that India and Russia are all-weather allies, even though meeting these goals would require financial and legal modalities.

This time, the joint statement envisages some other tangible actions that could be of strategic significance to both countries. These include: the early implementation of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) through Nhava Sheva via Bandar Abbas to Astarkan, and exploring the possibility of having a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement between India and the Customs Union (CU) of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia. Armenia and Kyrgyzstan will also formally join the CU in 2015. Russia has offered Siberian oilfields to ONGC for gas and oil exploration/production as well as in LNG projects and supplies. It has talked about exploring the building of a hydrocarbon pipeline system from Russia to India. An Agreement to facilitate scientific cooperation for the study of challenges in the Arctic region could assume significance for India in terms of exploring prospects in the Arctic and the Northern Sea Route.

Also, on the optimistic side, one must not forget that both Russia and India are growing economies. Russia has technology and resources, while India has a work force and a market. A convergence of interests would be natural in the years to come. That is why it seems clear that the economic relationship will have to drive the strategic partnership. In fact, for the sustainability of any future partnership a blockbuster deal is required—that is, the laying of a multi-billion dollar long-distance oil and gas pipeline from Russia to India. If this were to happen, it could turn around trade prospects between the two countries to touch over US\$100 billion. Only energy diplomacy can replace the waning defence business and bring rationality in Indo-Russian relations. All these projects are surely difficult to implement without problems; but they are promising areas and, if they materialize, they could help enhance India's strategic outreach in the Eurasian region while bypassing the immediate and troubled Afghanistan-Pakistan region.

The Joint Statement between the two countries also signifies the importance

both give to pushing for a multi-polar world. The two sides are committed, politically and economically, for broadening their base of interactions through multilateral fora, such as the BRICS; the G20; the East Asia Summit; and the Russia, India, and China (RIC). Russia is keen to have India becoming a full member of the SCO. It seems to indicate that India and Russia share similar perspectives on many key regional and global issues, including cross-border terrorism, Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, and Iran. Interestingly, Russia has interpreted its new engagement with Pakistan to boost its influence effectively in Afghanistan-Pakistan region that would serve India's interests too.

Conclusion

Even though the contents in the Joint Statement often remain problematic in the implementation (in terms of bureaucratic and procedural delays), at the same time, the widespread impression remains that India-Russia relations have withstood stringent endurance tests and have been marked by continuity. India's options for seeking business have increased today. However, for the time being, no other partner could possibly replace the geostrategic relevance of Russia for India. Prime Minister Modi is perhaps right in saying that the India-Russia partnership will remain strong even as global politics change, for he also knows that the country still relies on Russian made defence inventory. Undoubtedly, New Delhi will have to keep Moscow in good humour, with the two countries being able to 'manage' any displeasures and discontent on both sides. This was a good enough reason for Prime Minister Modi to assure Russia that it would remain India's "closest relationship" and its "most important defence partner".

Irrespective of what the USA and other powers may contribute to Indian growth plans in the coming years, ties with Moscow remain pivotal to India's core national interests. New Delhi's understanding with Moscow is important for India to realize its broader geopolitical aspirations. These include India's quest for a reform of the UN Security Council, and becoming a permanent member. India also requires Russia's support to become a full member of the SCO so that it could play a wider role in the Eurasian region, hitherto forestalled due to the negative approaches adopted by Pakistan and China. Prime Minister Modi visited Ufa in July 2015 to attend the BRICS and the SCO Summits that have had major significance for strengthening the bilateral relationship.

Moreover, India cannot afford to wish away Russia as New Delhi is mindful about the risk of relying totally on the USA. In pursuit of its political purposes, the latter could quite abruptly restrict access to civil-military technologies as it did after the nuclear tests of 1998. Should India decide in the future to lift the moratorium on nuclear weapons testing, the USA will surely cut all cooperation with India. New Delhi cannot afford to forget Russia's assistance in civil nuclear

cooperation and civilian space partnerships, especially when others had shunned nuclear commerce with India.

Importantly, India cannot also lose sight of the geostrategic calculations and Russia's diplomatic support to India in the context of Kashmir, especially when the traditionally strong USA-Pakistan and the China-Pakistan nexus persist. The US propensity to underwrite Pakistan's misadventures in South and Central Asia could endanger any enduring strategic partnership with India. The West still maintains an ambiguous policy on the India-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir. Even more importantly, a country with large stockpiles of strategic bombers with a veto power in the UNSC, acts as a useful counterweight against global hegemony.

While pursuing strategic interest with Russia, India will have to keep the following things in mind:

- While India's pursuance of a more balanced position in the new emerging order is important, but sustaining the traditional bonds and engagement with Russia is extremely critical for India's geopolitical power play and pursuit of interests. For India playing a subordinate role vis-à-vis, any one major power is not possible. So far, the notion never existed in India's partnership with Russia.
- Rise of China and its increasing regional influence will pose major strategic challenge for Asia. The idea that US 'Asia Pivot' strategy will offset China's rising regional outreach is not only fraught with uncertainty but also cannot be relied by India. Importantly, India should not think of any ancillary role in the US rebalancing or 'pivoting' Asia strategy. Moreover, the US is unlikely to have longer-term commitment to containing China, despite its anti-China posturing.
- The attempts by the West to containing Russia and assuring Moscow's diminished role in Europe is already pushing Russia towards developing strategic proximity with China. Russia's redundant role in Europe and playing a secondary role to China in Asia would not be in India's interests.
- At the same time, the future trajectory of Russia-China relations is likely to be uncertain. Traditionally, Russians are known for their deep distrust of the Chinese. Many in Russia are wary of growing shift of focus on China, and wonder if Beijing is taking advantage of Moscow's moment of difficulties. India should try to exploit the Russian sentiments and play it in its pursuit of policy. Similar anti-China sentiment persists in Japan, Vietnam, and Mongolia and even in the Central Asian states.
- Russia is critical for India's Eurasia policy. The growing influence of China and rising tide of Islamic fundamentalism in India's geostrategic vicinity would inevitably have implications far beyond. India, therefore, has to factor not only the role of Russia as a regional stabilizer but also take

advantage of Russia in reaching out to Central Asia before the region is completely swamped by China and extremist forces; not unthinkable though given the current unfolding scenarios. In fact, the trend of geopolitical actions is compelling observers to think in a zero-sum game of who will control the region next, following Sir Halford Mackinder's thesis of "he who controls the heartland controls the world".

- Finally, it must be underlined that the sustained China-Pakistan alignment and US-Pakistan ties essentially served to erect a barrier-wall for a direct India-Russia geo-strategic congruity. Like in the maritime domain, the vast pipeline network, intersecting with growing Sino-Russian, Sino-Pakistani and now Pakistani-Russian politico-economic-security partnership could adversely affect India's interest. India must do everything to overcome the physical barrier with Russia while seeking connectivity and reliable land route through China and Central Asia. A creative diplomacy to achieve this is urgently needed.

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5

Framing US-India Relations

Holli A. Semetko

Over the past century, the constantly evolving field of information technology brought more opportunities for elites to influence public opinion at home and abroad. From the press to radio and eventually 24/7 cable and satellite television, issues that were once the purview of the highly educated came to reach larger audiences in record time. Yet power remained projected by established news media with established political players as sources.

The highly orchestrated state visits, strategic dialogues and expert conferences so common in the past continue to remain important today. However, they now occur against a rapidly moving backdrop that has upended the power of elites to frame the issues as easily as they had done in the past. Instead, the power of individuals with hand-held devices to generate alternative perspectives through new social media platforms has ended business-as-usual for the establishment in the U.S. and India today. Leaders and managers, political parties, governments, businesses and organisations all face the same challenge—understanding and responding to new expectations from citizen-consumers empowered by social and mobile media.

This new media environment context actually facilitates one recommendation made by Namrata Goswami that came out of a conference on *The U.S. India Relationship: Cross-Sector Collaboration to Promote Strategic Development* in 2013: “The best way for shaping attitudes lies with a greater number of societal interactions among individuals, so that Indian and American voters better grasp how the relationship benefits their lives on a daily basis.”¹ In this spirit, I begin with a discussion of developments in television and the press industries in the U.S. I then discuss the concept of the attentive public for foreign affairs and research on news frames and framing effects before turning to my case study of

U.S. news reporting of the January 2015 visit of President and Mrs. Obama to India.

Drawing on all of the above, I argue that we need to expand the concept of influence on public perceptions of U.S.-India relations beyond the news media to include a broader range of groups, individuals and initiatives that includes business ties between the two countries such as foreign direct investment (FDI); projects for sustainable development and corporate social responsibility (CSR); governmental agreements and their implementation; and common social and cultural preferences. Taking together all sources of influence, it is clear that a direction for future research would be to develop a set of multiple indicators that capture the changing breadth and depth of the relationship through these various channels over time. The danger of relying on analysis of TV news, the press and social media alone to gauge the strength of U.S.-India relations is that it may generate a misleading picture. Instead, media indicators as well as other metrics that include investments, projects and practices, should be developed to address and assess progress in India-U.S. relations.

Developments in the U.S. Television and the Press Sectors

Both television and the press in the U.S. have experienced disruption with the emergence of new technology. Television in the U.S. involved three prominent national broadcasting networks over most of the 20th century: ABC, CBS and NBC. The landscape changed significantly with a widely expanded range of channels with the introduction of cable and satellite technology. The 1980 launch of CNN and 24/7 news led to a plethora of research over the next two decades on CNN's effect on the practice of politics, foreign policy and governance.² The 1996 roll-out of Fox News on the cable systems in some 9,000 towns in the run up to the 2000 U.S. presidential election was not a coincidence and may be seen as part of a larger electoral strategy that included preventing voters getting to the polls in some battleground states, among other tactics. The outcome was resolved only by a 5-4 Supreme Court decision. According to economists Stefano Dellavigna and Ethan Kaplan, the new Fox News channel rolled out between 1996 and 2000 "convinced 3 to 28 percent of its viewers to vote Republican, depending on the audience measure" which led to the first term presidency of George W. Bush.³ Around the same time in the mid-1990s, MSNBC was launched with news anchors and programs that represent a center-left alternative to the conservative Fox News. At the end of 2014, ratings for these three cable channels showed Fox maintaining the lead it had held for thirteen years, with CNN placing second ahead of MSNBC, in terms of both prime-time and all day viewers.⁴

Nielsen distinguishes between three types of television news programs—local,

network, and cable—in terms of ratings and viewing behavior. The main evening news programs on the three networks showed total viewers numbering in the millions ABC (8.0), NBC (8.9), and CBS (6.8) and these broadcast network programs have a larger reach than the cable network news programs as they do not require a cable subscription.⁵ A study published by the Pew Research Center based on February 2013 data from Nielsen concluded that 71% watch local TV news, 65% network news, and 38% cable news over the course of a month, and that cable viewers spend more time on cable than broadcast viewers on local or network news.⁶ On average, network news viewers are over 50 years of age. The median age of cable is even older, the CNN viewer is 58, compared to 61 for MSNBC and 68 for Fox.⁷

The television landscape changed again with the emergence of the internet and the many platforms for online TV viewing. Within a decade it is expected that few people over 50 years of age will be watching linear television, which is TV programming delivered as we now know it. Instead, increasing numbers will turn to on-demand TV streaming services. Present examples include Netflix, Amazon, and Google-owned YouTube is also a popular site for watching news.

The newspaper industry had already undergone dramatic decline as advertising moved from hard-copy to online. Between 2003 and 2014, print and online ad revenue declined more than half from \$44,939 million in 2003 when only \$1,216 million of which was online to a total of \$16,366 million in 2014 of which \$3,506 was online.⁸ As hard copy advertising revenue declined, online revenue has not increased at the same rate. Many organisations found that they were unable to invent a new profitable business model online when hard-copy advertising began to decline. A headline in *The New York Times* in 2009 summed up the situation: "As Cities Go From Two Newspapers to One, Talk of Zero."⁹ With the rise of blogs and then independent news aggregation sites such as *The Huffington Post*, traditional news organisations find themselves challenged to overcome the costs of maintaining office space and employee salaries. For many traditional newspapers, the shift to providing an online paywall has still not brought them to break even. The recent round of layoffs at *The New York Times* is just one high profile example of developments in the press.

Attentive Publics for Foreign Affairs

With advances in technology, the decade of disruption that we've now entered is also the beginning of a new era of rapid change the consequences of which may no longer be predictable as in the past. As every sector and profession comes to confront new economic realities emerging from new technologies, increasing access to mobile media will bring about greater social interaction among citizens from both countries on issues that were once the purview of elites only. Those

with similar interests may group themselves online with greater access to media that differentially magnify certain issues and ignore others, issues that may be of greater concern to some than others.

The new era can also be described as a shape shifter when it comes to thinking about the attentive public for foreign affairs. A tall narrow isosceles triangle is one shape that comes to mind. It depicts at the top the small attentive public for foreign affairs in the U.S. in 1960.¹⁰ Today, however, the shape has arguably changed considerably to become an equilateral triangle—one that is wider at the top and broader at the base than the isosceles triangle. The equilateral triangle is meant to relay greater access to media across all levels of the public from elite at the top to mass at the bottom, and signifies the potential for a larger attentive public.

Research in the U.S. has already shown that entertainment programs and soft news programs such as Oprah Winfrey's talk show can be a source of political learning among mass audiences that can impact public opinion about U.S. foreign policy.¹¹ Given the increasing use of mobile media for obtaining news, we can imagine a scenario in which the attentive public for foreign affairs in the U.S. could be growing beyond even that generated by entertainment programs and soft news.

Attentive publics form around certain issues or events as they ebb and flow through the news. As a whole, as issues become magnified in the news, attentive publics expand from elite to include mass publics. How issues are reported on, and framed, in the news also may have the potential to enhance or diminish changes in the size of attentive publics.

Research on Framing

Research on news frames and framing effects has produced a considerable amount of scholarship over the past two decades, far more than can be cited here. News frames serve as a guide to understanding the issue and to interpreting the essence of the story: they are both "mentally stored principles for information processing and...characteristics of the news text".¹² For example, the "Cold War" frame in U.S. reporting of international affairs news has been described as an historic frame, and is one of several to emerge from historical studies of war and protest such as the Intifada.¹³ The "horse race" frame is often used in reporting on election campaigns and the "conflict" frame is often found in the reporting of political news in democracies.¹⁴ Each of these frames provides a schema for citizens to think about the issue or problem. Framing effects refer to the emergence of this schema in public opinion.

There is a long history of research in psychology that demonstrates the effectiveness of framing on public perceptions of risk, and a growing body of

research on framing effects in communication research.¹⁵ In election campaigns and on day-to-day policy issues, the battle for public opinion is fought with each side attempting to frame the issue to its advantage—framing and counter-framing. The evolution of U.S. public opinion on climate change is an example of the varying success of framing and counter-framing strategies by opposing groups. Recent research on the dynamics of counter-framing using experimental designs found that effects depend on the extent to which the audience holds weak or strong opinions so strategic communications that are effective with one group could be counterproductive with the other, making a uniform communications strategy a challenge.¹⁶

Research on identifying frames in the news has generally taken one of two approaches: one is to identify specific frames that emerge from narratives, and another is using existing reliable and valid definitions of more general frames from previous research.¹⁷ The case study in this chapter of President and Mrs. Obama's 2015 Republic Day Visit to India is more of the former than the latter.

Reporting U.S.-India Relations: President and Mrs. Obama's 2015 Visit to India

President and Mrs. Obama's visit to India began on January 25th, 2015. The visit was historic not only because it was the first time that a sitting U.S. president was to attend the nation's Republic Day events in Delhi on January 26th, but also because this was the second time that President and Mrs. Obama had visited India while in office.

Television News

Despite the lamented decline in foreign affairs news in the U.S. over the past two decades,¹⁸ and the fact that the most popular foreign news stories in terms of public interest are most often about disasters and crises,¹⁹ we might nevertheless expect that good news, a presidential visit, might generate interest among the TV news networks and cable channels. Moreover, a visit on India's Republic Day and the related colorful visuals on the activities of the leaders of the two countries would generate take up among U.S. TV news organisations.

However, in early 2015 the approach of an historic winter storm in the U.S. northeast occupied the bulk of television news on the days prior to the Obamas' arrival in India on January 25th and throughout their stay in the country. The main focus of U.S. TV news became the anticipated extent of expected disruption when "Blizzard 2015" was set to hit on January 27th, and what the cities and states in the blizzard's path were doing about it. This was a visually compelling and fear-inducing extreme weather story, and it was low cost as visuals from

previous winter storms were broadcast. The story about the advance of Blizzard 2015 captured considerable attention on all channels, and disaster preparation began in some states several days before the Obamas flew abroad. Pre-visit reporting of this foreign affairs story on television was therefore extremely limited. Throughout January 2015, there were no pre-visit TV news stories about the India trip nor the anticipated strategic outcomes important in diplomatic and business circles including negotiations on climate change and foreign direct investment (FDI).²⁰ Only two channels CBS (with a length of 1'40", one minute and forty seconds) and ABC (0.30") reported on the forthcoming visit to India, on January 24, 2015, and those stories included the change in schedule to permit President and Mrs. Obama to alter their itinerary in order to attend the funeral of the King of Saudi Arabia.

Yet on Sunday, January 25, 2015, four cable/satellite 24/7 channels together devoted a considerable amount of time to live coverage of the press conference given by President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Overall a total of nearly three hours was devoted to live coverage of the two leaders—CNN (60'), Fox (47'), MSNBC (42') and Al-Jazeera (10'). This was the day of the Obamas' arrival in Delhi.

And later that same day, the original three TV news networks, NBC, ABC and CBS each carried a story in the evening news. NBC (2'40") showed scenes from the Presidential palace and ceremonies, and discussed climate change and the nuclear power deal. CBS (2'00") described it as a symbolic state visit overshadowed by events in Ukraine and Yemen, and was similar to NBC in showing the various ceremonies in which the President participated. CBS also provided details on the issues of nuclear power and the environment. ABC (1'50") by contrast emphasized the high security aspects of the visit, citing security statistics, and the larger goal to promote U.S.-India relationship against a backdrop of scenes from the Mahatma Gandhi memorial.

In sum, there was commonality on the agendas of the three network TV news channels' reports in terms of the ceremonies and two of the key issues—energy and environment—on the first day of the visit. The live coverage of the press conference on the cable and satellite channels was extensive. All of these stories were favorable in tone towards India and they would have had a broader reach than any newspaper reports. These findings on main evening news and 'special programs' or press conferences, do not exhaust the possibilities of news on India that might be available on other programs not deposited at the Vanderbilt Television News Archive (VTNA).²¹

To better understand the impact of the anticipation of "Blizzard 2015" and its obstruction of the visibility of India in U.S. news reporting on the presidential visit, we can look back to the first visit to India by President and Mrs. Obama

from November 4-8, 2010, which received more attention in the main evening news and also took place over twice as many days. There were 20 items in the VTNA pertaining to that 2010 visit, compared with 9 items in 2015. Of the 20 items in 2010, there were five special programs including press conferences, two of which focused on the President's speech to the Parliament that was featured on Fox (39'00") and CNN (30'00"), and special programs at the start of the visit on MSNBC (7'00") and CNN (8'00"), and CNN (12'50") that was a discussion of the cost of the visit. The remaining 15 items were stories in the evening news programs.

The National Press

A review of four major newspapers including hard copy, online and blogs, and the Associated Press news agency, all drawn from the Factiva database, are the basis for this analysis: The New York Times (NYT), The Wall Street Journal (WSJ), The Los Angeles Times (LAT), and The Washington Post (WP). Table 1 provides headlines that reflect the general tone of the stories. Headlines in Table 1 were classified by time frame: Pre-Visit, Visit, Post-Visit.

In the pre-visit phase, the news in general was framed in terms of expectations. A stronger personal rapport between leaders was a common expected goal as were economic issues and climate change. The tone was generally favorable, and topics were diverse across the different outlets. The *NYT* with five stories, also mentioned Pakistan, and *WSJ* carried four stories, whereas the one pre-visit story mentioned the 'Asia Pivot' in *LAT* perhaps reflected the geographic proximity of the outlet and its readers. *The WP* with 3 stories had generally favorable pre-visit coverage. The only source to mention Communist opposition in India to the Obamas' visit was the Associated Press that carried 3 stories.

The reporting during the visit phase was more complex than the pre-visit phase. There were more events and stories. The news in general framed the visit coverage in terms of progress and the obstacles to progress during the brief window of the visit, although there were some digressions primarily in one newspaper. In general, compared with the favorable pre-visit coverage, the visit coverage was favorable to mixed: in some outlets it was quite favorable while in others it was more mixed. *WSJ* (7 stories) offered the most favorable visit coverage with business topics and China as the predominant focus, along with the personal connections between the two leaders and partnership. *The WP* (14) had an even larger number of stories that were also quite positive but carried a handful of negative ones that will be discussed below. AP (5) headlines were largely favorable, *NYT* (4) headlines were factual and more mixed. *LAT* (2) was probably the least favorable including one on air pollution and one on India rejecting climate goals but offering progress on a nuclear deal.

The WP, which has primary circulation in the nation's capital and launched a digital version in 2014 after being acquired by Amazon, carried examples of both very favorable and very unfavorable coverage. An example of the latter was that, for two days, it ran opinionated stories with the following headlines on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's personal life that might have created doubts for some readers unfamiliar with the history of certain cultural traditions:

Abandoned as a child bride, wife of Narendra Modi hopes he calls; Few people know that India's PM is still married to a woman he wed as a teen;

'If he calls me, I will go': Wife of India's leader, a child bride, was kept secret.

Other examples from headlines of the *Post's* negative coverage during the visit also fall outside of the general frame in the news of the visit coverage that was on the progress being made during the visit:

How Indians feel about Obama's visit for their country's Republic Day; 'There's too much hype around Obama's visit', one person said.

As Obama visits, what Delhi's air pollution says about India and climate change; The air in New Delhi is the worst in the world, according to a WHO report last year;" and

Prime Minister Modi wore a suit that takes personalization to a ridiculous extreme.

The WP's favorable or neutral headlines outnumbered the unfavorable ones:

"President Obama and first lady Michelle Obama participate in Indian Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi,"

"How Modi dressed better than Michelle, and other highlights of Obama's India trip," "The bear hug, the fashion and, oh yeah, a new "nuclear understanding" were among the big moments,"

"On the road with 'MObama' in India, Reporter Katie Zezima snaps pictures of President Obama's visit to India,"

"A 'breakthrough understanding' on nuclear issues in India,"

"Obama, long inspired by Gandhi, visits his memorial in India,"

"Obama, India's Modi claim breakthrough on nuclear issues; They also spoke of their newly forged friendship, which both say can benefit their countries; "

"India's Modi welcomes Obama with a big hug; "

"When presidents travel abroad."

The post-visit coverage actually featured the last day of the visit as well as the following days. Across all of the press outlets post-visit reporting featured words praising Obama's speech, for example as a "sweeping vision" and in particular the issues of climate change, human rights, religious tolerance and women's rights. China featured in several headlines, often framed as in conflict with the U.S.-India relationship. In general, post-visit reporting was framed in terms of

accomplishments and remaining challenges. Overall the 2015 visit was highly visible in the press compared to TV news, with 68 stories over the three phases in the press: Pre-visit 16 stories, visit 32 stories, post-visit 20 stories. The press headlines suggest that the majority of the news was favorable, but some stories, particularly in the *Post*, were unfavorable to India or the country's Prime Minister.

What this analysis of the U.S. media environment on the 2015 visit misses is a review of social media engagement. It would be interesting to determine the articles that were most often tweeted, for example, and create influence scores for positive and negative content. While there were many venues for this type of social media news generated by both governments and independent and citizen sources, it was not possible to include them here.

Broadening the Concept of U.S.-India Relations

In addition to the news from established news organisations on the visit and the social media posts generated by citizens and elites, there are other sources of information involving ties between the two nations that may impact public perceptions. The many U.S.-India ties should be the basis for broadening the concept of bi-lateral relations. Among these are business ties in both directions such as FDI and projects for sustainable development often described under the umbrella of CSR; governmental agreements and their implementation [in education, environment and energy sectors, national security and the Digital India initiative, for example]; and the contributions of the Indian diaspora to the economy and society in both nations. An example of the impact of the Indian diaspora in the U.S. is the high rate of Indian founded start-ups in Silicon Valley, and the potential for that number to grow in cities and university towns across the country if U.S. immigration laws can be fixed.²² The diaspora also can be thought of as bi-directional. Take for example, the illustrious career of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Raghuram Rajan and its trajectory from India to the U.S. and back. Other examples include Americans of Indian heritage moving to India for their careers, as well as those who spend time in India irrespective of their ethnic heritage that cross the gamut from tourists and students to professionals sent by employers for training.

The case study in this chapter on the U.S. reporting of President and Mrs. Obama's visit to India in early 2015 also does not take into account the backdrop against which it was played out, which includes many popular culture ties between the two countries via, for example, documentaries, films, music, entertainment, and spirituality. There is great admiration and respect for India as a home to ancient and modern history and texts, a diverse population, and a long history of world-renowned gurus and experts on Yoga, meditation, and spirituality that attract large followings in the U.S. and around the world. Some of the profound

individuals are mentioned briefly here, as examples of cultural ties between the U.S. and India.

Mahatma Gandhi is of course a household name and his stance on non-violence or *ahimsa* served as a guide for Rev. Martin Luther King Jr and the U.S. civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s. More recently, many came to learn about Swami Vivekananda's rousing speech in Chicago at the World Parliament of Religions in 1893 because India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Barack Obama's mentioned him in their co-authored op-ed published in *The Washington Post* during the Prime Minister's highly successful visit to the U.S. in September 2014.²³ Swami Vivekananda's historic speech on September 11, 1893, can be heard today on YouTube. Thanks to Vivekananda's emphasis on serving others, there are many strong non-profit networks in both countries supporting society today including for example the education of India's tribal and underserved populations. Another shining individual is Paramahansa Yogananda, who has been described as the first yoga master from India to take up permanent residence in the U.S. and whose *Autobiography of a Yogi* was deemed the spiritual classic of the 20th century. His remarkable life, his work and his legacy of the Self-Realization Fellowship founded in 1920 in southern California, attract thousands annually from the U.S. and around the world. Along with many historic and contemporary leaders in the field of Yoga, photos and brief bios of Swami Vivekananda and Paramahansa Yogananda were recently featured on the International Yoga Day website that came into existence after Prime Minister Modi brought more than 50 countries together in the United Nations to name June 21 as the International Day of Yoga (see idayofyoga.org). These are just some of the remarkable departed souls whose legacies continue to contribute to U.S.-India relations, not to mention the many Indian gurus and Buddhist monks including His Holiness the Dalai Lama based in Dharamsala, who travel and speak before grateful audiences in the Americas and around the world today.

Conclusions

The case study of U.S. news reporting on the visit of President and Mrs. Obama to India for Republic Day in 2015 found what in the U.S. would be considered a large number of stories in the press, with many focused on key issues and negotiations between the two countries, and significant time devoted to live TV coverage of the joint press conference between Prime Minister Modi and President Obama. The case study suggests that events involving heads of state may reflect high points of visibility in U.S.-India relations in the traditional news media, high points that may be further augmented by today's social media platforms. In response to Namrata Goswami's call for a greater number of societal interactions mentioned at the outset of this chapter, we can expect to see more public

engagement on issues of concern to populations in the U.S. and India as social media use grows in both countries. There also will be more opportunities for potential disruption to establishment sources of influence on framing U.S.-India relations in the news and in social media.

Given that media sources of information may contribute to public opinion about U.S.-India relations in both countries, it may initially seem ironic to say that researchers are limited by what is available. But limitations clearly appear when we attempt any longer-term perspective on television as a source of information. Television is interesting given that it has a much larger reach than newspapers and a greater capacity to enhance political learning through visuals. One invaluable public resource to investigate the past content of U.S. television news is the Vanderbilt Television News Archive, housed at Vanderbilt University. There are also a number of publicly available survey data sources to assess the potential contribution made by media to the formation of U.S. public opinion on foreign countries. Given the massive growth in visual sources of influence thanks to advancing technology, first with cable and satellite and now with the internet, our societies face a common capacity problem with an overabundance of data which also can be a limitation for researchers.

What we lack in this important and growing field of strategic communication research are open platform tools that can easily and efficiently capture, archive and generate data and analytics from multiple online sources, on the order of exactness that can be found in what, for example, the commercial product Topsy.com does with Twitter. Were India to launch a digital TV news archive in the form of a public private partnership, and open platform tools that rival the commercial ones available at present, it would be a tremendous contribution to the future histories of our increasingly interdependent and mediated societies and a boon to researchers.

I have argued here that we need to broaden the concept of influence on public perceptions of U.S.-India relations beyond the news media to include a wider range of groups, individuals and initiatives that include business, educational and cultural ties between the two countries. While the news media may impact public perceptions and generate some evidence of the strength of the relationship between the two nations, a more diverse combination of indicators should be developed. The dynamic and changing information environments in both countries provide another reason as to why we should not wait to broaden the concept of U.S.-India relations and work now to develop multiple indicators that capture the depth and breadth of the relationship over time.

Table 1: Headlines from Five U.S. Press Outlets for the January 25 & 26, 2015 visit of President and Mrs. Barack Obama to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi

I. Pre-Visit Headlines (n=16)

The New York Times

January 23

Obama and India's Premier See Mutual Benefit in Breaking the Ice

January 24

Fix the Link to Pakistan, Bond with India

For Obama's Visit, India Takes a Broom to Stray Monkeys and Cows

U.S. and India Appear Ready to Try to Hash Out Differences

The Los Angeles Times

No pre visit headlines in the sample

The Wall Street Journal

January 23

The U.S. India Transformation

January 24

World News: Obama's Trip to India Signals Stronger Ties

India-Pakistan Tensions Cast Long Shadow Over Obama's visit;

U.S. Hopes for Renewed Dialogue As Countries Trade Heavy Fire in Disputed Border Area

Obama to Cut Short India Visit; Visit to Taj Mahal Canceled

The Washington Post

January 22

White House lays out Obama's India itinerary; His three-day journey will include a stop at the Taj Mahal

January 23

Obama's visit spurs hope that obstacles to U.S.-India relations can be overcome;

Two big goals are opening up India's economy for U.S. businesses and limiting greenhouse gas emissions

January 24

Obama shortens trip to India to pay respects to the late King Abdullah's family in Saudi Arabia; He had planned to visit the Taj Mahal on Tuesday, but instead will head to Riyadh.

The Associated Press

January 24

Indian communist groups oppose Obama's visit to New Delhi

Indian officials: Obama cancels end of India visit

January 23

Obama heading to India, hoping to improve ties

January 22

Michelle Obama accompanying Obama to India

II. Visit Headlines (n=35) (count excludes photo captions)

The New York Times

January 25

Human Rights Groups Press Obama on India

Obama Will End India Trip Early to Visit Saudi Arabia

January 26

Today in Politics

Obama Clears a Hurdle to Better Ties with India

The Los Angeles Times

January 25

THE WORLD; Obama heads to India to revive Asia 'pivot' policy; with no key decisions expected, he plans to focus on talks with the new prime minister

PHOTO CAPTION: Indian Army soldiers rehearse for Monday's Republic Day parade in New Delhi. President Obama will join Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the event, which marks the anniversary of the Indian Constitution.

PHOTO CAPTION: The Obamas prepare to board Air Force One at Andrews Air Force Base for their flight to India

January 26

Clearing India's Air

India's premier rejects U.S. call for climate goal; Obama does manage to make progress on a deal to build nuclear reactors for energy

PHOTO CAPTION: There was obvious warmth between President Obama and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the first day of the U.S. leader's visit to New Delhi, aimed at highlighting the nations' shared ideals

PHOTO CAPTION: A Layer of smog shrouds New Delhi, India's capital, in the fall. India is the No. 3 emitter of greenhouse gases, behind China and the United States

The Wall Street Journal

January 25

BAE Offers to Build Howitzers in India; U.K. Defense Company's U.S. Arm Has Been Negotiating to Sell Weapons to India Since 2010

Obama's Trip to India Signals Stronger Ties; As China Asserts Itself, Washington Aims to Improve Its Historically Strained Alliance with New Delhi

Obama, Modi Look to Promote Ties With India Trip; U.S. President Barack Obama Greeted by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Arrival Sunday

January 26

It's Springtime for U.S.-India Relations; Here's an opportunity for President Obama to leave behind a relationship with India that is stronger than the one he inherited

U.S. and India Advance Nuclear Trade: Leaders Reach 'Breakthrough,' but Work Remains Before Proceeding with Sales of Reactors and Fuel

Obamas in India for Three-Day Visit; U.S. President to Showcase Deepening Relationship between U.S. and India

Obama's India Visit is Message to China: Obama's attendance at a military parade in New Delhi on Monday was a display of solidarity in face of increasingly assertive China

The Washington Post

January 25

Obama, India's Modi claim breakthrough on nuclear issues;

They also spoke of their newly forged friendship, which both say can benefit their countries

India's Modi welcomes Obama with a big hug

When presidents travel abroad

How Indians feel about Obama's visit for their country's Republic Day;

"There's too much hype around Obama's visit," one person said.

Obama, long inspired by Gandhi, visits his memorial in India

Abandoned as a child bride, wife of Narendra Modi hopes he calls;

Few people know that India's PM is still married to a woman he wed as a teen²⁴

January 26

A ‘breakthrough understanding’ on nuclear issues in India
 As Obama visits, what Delhi’s air pollution says about India and climate change;
 The air in New Delhi is the worst in the world, according to a WHO report last year
 ‘If he calls me, I will go’: Wife of India’s leader, a child bride, was kept secret
 President Obama and first lady Michelle Obama participate in Indian Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi
 How Modi dressed better than Michelle, and other highlights of Obama’s India trip
 The bear hug, the fashion and, oh yeah, a new “nuclear understanding” were among the big moments
 On the road with ‘MObama’ in India; Reporter Katie Zezima snaps pictures of President Obama’s visit to India
 Prime Minister Modi wore a suit that takes personalization to a ridiculous extreme

*The Associated Press***January 25**

Obama looks to build toward policy breakthroughs with India
 Obama to cut short India trip to pay call on Saudi Arabia
 WHITE HOUSE NOTEBOOK: Obama’s presidential ‘namaste’

January 26

Obama, Modi declare era of ‘new trust’ in US-India relations
 China’s shadow looms large over Obama visit to India

III. Post-Visit Headlines (n=20) (*excluding photo captions*)

*The New York Times***January 27**

In India, Obama Elevates the Nation’s Self-Esteem
 U.S. and India Share Sense of Unease Over China

January 28

Today in Politics
 Hugging for India’s Security
 Top Officials Join Obama in Brief Visit to Saudi King
 Pakistan Criticizes India’s Inclusion in Nuclear Suppliers Group
 New Chapter for America and India
 As Visit Ends, Obama Presses India on Human Rights and Climate Change
 U.S.-India Ties Deepen; China Takes It in Stride

*The Wall Street Journal***January 27**

New Delhi and Washington’s China Convergence
 India, U.S. Bolster ties, Faced With Assertive China
 World News: Asia: Obama Presses India on Equal-Rights Issues
 A U.S.-India Nuclear Test; Obama’s visit leaves Modi with a chance to show his reform chops

*The Associated Press***January 27**

Obama promotes religious and gender equity in India speech
 India nuke deals still thorny for US despite ‘breakthrough’

January 28

Obama pays respects to Saudis, defends close ties with kingdom despite human rights record
 (contained sentence: Hours before arriving in Riyadh, Obama spoke at length about the importance

of women's rights during an address in India, setting up a jarring contrast with his warm embrace of Saudi Arabia, a country where there are strict limits on women's freedom.)

The Washington Post

January 27

Name that suit: Modi displays a fondness for flashy attire during the president's visit
 Obama heads to Saudi Arabia to pay condolences to family of King Abdullah;
 President cancels a visit to the Taj Mahal to lead a high-level delegation at funeral for Saudi king.
 Obama lays out sweeping vision for US-India relations, emphasizes human rights;
 Obama spoke to an enthusiastic crowd about issues such as religious tolerance and equality for women

January 28

In one day of diplomacy, Obama showcases an American double standard
 Mr. Obama's trip to India leaves a clear deal on curbing emissions up in the air;
 In India, Mr. Obama makes a start on climate partnership
 Obama pays respect to late king's family (mentions scrapping plans to visit Taj Mahal in order to pay respects to late Saudi Monarch)

January 29

Up in the air

Los Angeles Times

January 27

White House places hope in India; The rapport between Obama and Narendra Modi is seen as a key that could open door to better relations
 PHOTO CAPTION: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Obama pledged to ease hurdles that have prevented their nations from what Obama called "so much untapped potential" in their economic relationship

January 28

Obama visits Saudi leader; A hastily planned trip aims to get the new relationship off to a good start
 Pakistan uneasy about Obama's visit to India; Islamabad is worried the outreach could jeopardize its lucrative alliance with the U.S.

Note: All articles were obtained through Factiva in a search from Jan. 23-29, 2015. Not all newspapers provide information about photo captions, and what was provided is given here. For more, see <https://global.factiva.com/factivalogin/login.asp?productname=global>

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6

India's Strategic Partnership: A Perspective from Vietnam

Vo Xuan Vinh

During the state visit of Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung to India in 2007, Vietnam and India agreed to upgrade the comprehensive cooperation established in 2003 between the two countries into a strategic partnership. The strategic partnership encompasses bilateral relations in the political, economic, security, defence, cultural, scientific and technological dimensions, and steers their cooperation in regional and multilateral fora. According to a report by the Foundation for National Security Research New Delhi, India 2011,¹ amongst all the countries with whom India has strategic partnerships, Vietnam as India's strategic partner was not listed as a priority. The priority listing belonged to Russia, followed by the USA, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Japan. According to In a keynote address at a special leaders dialogue of ASEAN Business Advisory Council in 2005, former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said that India's Look East Policy launched in the early 1990s, 'was not merely an external economic policy, also a strategic shift in India's vision of the world, and India's place in the evolving global economy', and that Vietnam is regarded as a trusted and privileged strategic partner and an important pillar of the policy² Indeed, the strategic partnership with India enjoys a significant position among Vietnam's strategic elites and, as a result, the strategic relations between the two countries have deepened in all fields of cooperation in the last ten years. This essay focuses on the progress of the India-Vietnam strategic partnership since 2007, and also makes some comparisons with several other of Vietnam's comprehensive strategic partnerships which are limited to political and defence issues.

According to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pham Binh Minh, of Socialist Republic of Vietnam,

Strategic and comprehensive partnerships are an important foundation for the establishment of many close bilateral mechanisms. Vietnam's relations with other countries are its soft power to establish and elevate its global status, make the most of opportunities and resources for national construction and defense, contributing to the maintenance of peace, stability, and development in Southeast Asia and the world at large.³

Till date, Vietnam has established strategic partnership with 14 nations, comprehensive partnership with 11 nations, and special relations with three nations. Vietnam's strategic partnerships fall into different categories: comprehensive strategic, extensive strategic, and sectorial strategic. Two comprehensive partnerships are with Russia and the People's Republic of China (PRC). Vietnam has special relations with the Kingdom of Cambodia, the People's Democratic Republic of Laos, and Cuba. The Vietnam-Japan strategic partnership established in 2006, and was upgraded to an extensive strategic partnership in March 2014. The strategic partnerships of Vietnam include: the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore and France. Vietnam-Netherlands Strategic Partnership Arrangement on climate adaption and water management was formalized in 2010. Vietnam has established comprehensive relations with Malaysia, South Africa, Chile, Brazil, Bolivia, Venezuela, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, United States of America, and Denmark. The Republic of India is one of the strategic partnerships of Vietnam.

In the process of diversifying its foreign relations, Vietnam applies the term strategic partners to nations which are considered to be playing important roles in its national interest. As argued by Carl Thayer,

Vietnam's strategic partnerships with other countries vary in form and substance from partner to partner. In general, these agreements set out a high-level joint mechanism to oversee their implementation, and are accompanied by a multi-year Plan of Action covering objectives in key sectors of cooperation, such as political-diplomatic, economic, science and technology, social-cultural, and security and defence.⁴

The substance of strategic cooperation between Vietnam and India was first identified in the Vietnam-India Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership in 2007. The Declaration states that the New Strategic Partnership would encompass bilateral relations in the political, economic, security, defense, cultural, scientific, and technological dimensions which would steer their cooperation in regional and multilateral fora.⁵ In 2013, on a State visit to Vietnam by Indian President Pranab Mukherjee, the two countries agreed that the focus of the Vietnam-India strategic partnership would be on political and security cooperation, economic

cooperation, science and technology, culture and people-to-people links, technical cooperation, as well as multilateral and regional cooperation.⁶

Regarding the level of the relationship, comprehensive strategic and special partnerships are a priority in Vietnam's foreign policy, followed by the strategic and comprehensive partnerships. However, it could be said that the progress of the Vietnam-India strategic relationship for nearly ten years has brought the partnership to a new high, that of the comprehensive strategic one, not at the stage of 'considering potential for cooperation and strongly enhancing the comprehensive strategic partnership'⁷ or 'reaffirming commitment for comprehensive development of the Strategic Partnership between the two countries'⁸ as commitments of the two countries in 2011 and 2014 respectively, especially in political and defense fields.

Political and Defence Dimensions

In 2001, Vietnam established its first strategic partnership with Russia. Vietnam's second strategic partnership with Japan was formalized in 2006. Although Vietnam-India strategic partnership was just built in 2007; yet before that, in 2003, *the Joint Declaration on the Framework of Comprehensive Cooperation between the Republic of India and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam as they enter the 21st Century* was released. It was clear that the leaders of the two countries were 'aware of the strategic importance of their bilateral cooperation', and would endeavour to develop a strategic dimension to their partnership for the mutual benefit of their peoples as well as contribute to peace, stability, cooperation and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region and the world at large.⁹

Unlike other strategic partners, even comprehensive strategic ones, India and Vietnam have enjoyed strong trust for decades. Although Vietnam and China established a comprehensive strategic partnership in 2008, the two countries still needed to underline the necessity of 'enhancing mutual comprehensive trust'¹⁰ between them. In the Joint Statement by President Barack Obama of the United States of America and President Truong Tan Sang of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in July 2013, 'deepening mutual trust'¹¹ between the two countries was also underlined. In contrast, the strategic partnership between Vietnam and India was based on 'traditional friendship, mutual understanding, *strong trust*, support and convergence of views on various regional and international issues (emphasis added).'¹² Indian President Pranab Mukherjee even said that 'political relations between India and Vietnam have always been strong and cloudless'.¹³ This is the most important foundation for strategic cooperation between the two countries in all fields, particularly in political and defence dimensions.

Political Engagement

Vietnam and India have made important progress in political cooperation. The 2007 *Joint Declaration on Vietnam-India Strategic Partnership* states that the two sides “agreed to establish a Strategic Dialogue at the level of Vice Ministers in the Foreign Office”.¹⁴ As a result, the first strategic dialogue meeting between Vietnam and India took place in New Delhi, on October 15, 2009. The second strategic dialogue and the fifth political consultative meeting between the two countries were held in Vietnam in August 2011. The noteworthy point is that in the second strategic dialogue and fifth political consultative meeting, officials from both countries exchanged views on the East Sea/South China Sea disputes. These disputes had been rarely mentioned before in bilateral meetings between the two countries. In the dialogue, the two sides also discussed bilateral cooperation in all fields, especially military and security, high-tech, training of human resources, and exchanged ways to cement and deepen the Vietnam-India strategic partnership.¹⁵ In April 2014, the two countries held the sixth political consultation and the third strategic dialogue. In the dialogue, both sides agreed on take concrete steps to further nurture their strategic partnership on five pillars: politics, national defence-security, economics, science-technology, and culture-education. It is also significant that Vietnam is among a few countries in the Asia-Pacific—others include the USA, China, Japan, Malaysia and Singapore—which have jointly organised bilateral strategic dialogue with India in recent years. Beside political consultation and strategic dialogue, Vietnam and India have agreed to hold defence dialogues between the two defence ministries.

At regional and international fora, Vietnam and India have been strongly supporting each other in strategic political issues. Vietnam supports India’s Look East Policy and welcome India’s engagement in the Asia-Pacific through regional cooperation mechanisms. Vietnam also supports India to become a permanent member of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) when this organ is reformed and enlarged. India for its part supports to solve the East Sea/South China Sea disputes in accordance with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Considering India as an important strategic partner, Vietnam has been a trusted friend of India in regional and international fora. At the regional level, Vietnam bolsters India’s attempts to engage deeply in the Asia-Pacific region. Vietnam has, over and over again, raised voice to support India’s Look East Policy which was launched in the early 1990s. Thanks to support of Vietnam and its other partners in Asia-Pacific region, India has enjoyed an increasing presence in cooperation mechanisms in the region. In 2002, the first ASEAN-India Summit meeting (which India proposed in 1999) was held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Geographically, India is not a country located in East Asia. However, it was one

of 16 first members of the first East Asia Summit (EAS) meeting held in Kuala Lumpur in 2005. India is also an official member of the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM+) which was held for the first time in Vietnam in 2010. Before that, India became a member of ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1996. India is now, along with other nations as members of EAS, negotiating to conclude the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) whose negotiations were formally launched in November 2012.

Strategically, cooperation with Vietnam has made possible the Indian Navy's regular presence in the East Sea/South China Sea. The frequency of friendship visits to Vietnam of India's naval ships in Hai Phong province, near Hanoi has led to the confidence cited by an Indian government source in *The Deccan Chronicle*: 'the move will give India the key to a sustainable presence in the South China Sea'.¹⁶ Since 2007, India started its bilateral and multilateral naval exercises with countries surrounding the East Sea/South China Sea and other partners in the Asia-Pacific. The Indian Navy conducted naval exercises with Japan's Maritime Self-Defence Force and the US Navy in the West Pacific in 2007. In the same year, India and the Republic of Korea decided to conduct their annual naval exercise.¹⁷ In June 2012, India and Japan held their first-ever maritime exercise off the coast of Tokyo.¹⁸ The large scale deployment of Indian naval ships' friendship visits to the Asia-Pacific, mostly through the East Sea/South China Sea has been seen since 2010. In May and June 2010, guided missile destroyers *INS Rana* and *INS Ranjit*, fleet tanker *INS Jyoti*, and missile corvette *INS Kulish* were on eastward deployment. Of these ships, the *INS Rana* arrived in Jakarta. Along with Jakarta, the ships of the Indian Navy's eastern fleet will make port calls at various cities, including Hai Phong (Vietnam), Manila (the Philippines), Muara (Brunei), Bangkok (Thailand), Fremantle (Australia), Singapore and Port Kelang (Malaysia).¹⁹

At the international level, Vietnam has been a firm supporter of the ongoing reform of the United Nations and its principle organs, including the UN Security Council, and India's candidature for permanent membership of the UNSC. The position was made clear in the 2007 joint declaration on strategic partnership in which Vietnam claimed it has been consistently supporting India's candidature for a permanent seat on an expanded and reformed Security Council and reconfirmed this support.²⁰ Indeed, even before the two countries officially established a strategic partnership, Vietnam affirmed that it 'always highly values India's traditional role in the United Nations, and supports its entry as a permanent member of an expanded UN Security Council' in a joint declaration in 2003.²¹ Recently, in the Joint Statement on the State Visit of Prime Minister of Vietnam to India (October 27-28, 2014), Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed gratitude for Vietnam's consistent support to India's candidature for permanent

membership of a reformed and expanded UNSC.²² In the same statement, the leaders of the two countries reaffirmed support for each other's candidature for non-permanent membership of the UNSC: Vietnam for the term 2020-21 and India for the term 2021-22. India also agreed to assist Vietnam in capacity building for participation in UN peacekeeping operations.

Since it perceives Vietnam as a trusted and privileged strategic partner and an important pillar of its Look East Policy,²³ India has actively supported Vietnam in strategic political issues. Besides selling Vietnam military equipment and strategic weapons, training submarine sailors and pilots operating Sukhoi fighters, India has raised its voice to support to apply and comply with international law in solving the East Sea/South China Sea disputes. India's viewpoint of the East Sea/South China Sea disputes includes: (1) affirming that China's nine-dashed line map in the East Sea/South China Sea is illegal; (2) support for solving disputes through peaceful means in accordance with universally recognized principles of international law; (3) raising its voice to protect freedom of navigation and over flights in the East Sea; (4) support for solving disputes internationally; (5) continuing with its oil and gas exploration in block 128 offered by Vietnam; and (6) being ready to deploy naval force in the East Sea/South China Sea to protect India's interests if its interests are threatened.

India expressed consistency in its stand on ES/SCS disputes when it definitively affirmed that China's sovereignty claim in Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Vietnam in the ES/SCS—especially China's objections to Oil and Natural Gas Videsh Ltd (OVL)'s oil and gas exploration in Vietnam's EEZ—has “no legal basis” as the blocks belong to Vietnam.²⁴ Relating to the tension between China and the Philippines over the Scarborough Shoal, the Press Briefing of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on May 10, 2012 stated that:

India has been following with concern recent developments involving China and the Philippines in the South China Sea. Maintenance of peace and security in the region is of vital interest to the international community. India urges both countries to exercise restraint and resolve the issue diplomatically according to principles of international law.²⁵

Regardless of unreasonable and illegal objections as well as the warning by China,²⁶ India's OVL has been continuing with its oil and gas exploration in block 128 offered by Vietnam.

From the beginning of September 2011, the Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs started issuing statements which expressed India's clear views on the East Sea/South China Sea disputes. In response to questions on news reports about the incident involving *INS Airavat* in the East Sea/South China Sea in July 2011, the Spokesperson of the MEA emphasized (September 2011) that 'India supports freedom of navigation in international waters, including in the South China Sea,

and the rights of passage in accordance with accepted principles of international law. These principles should be respected by all'.²⁷ That India supports peaceful resolutions of the disputes in the East Sea/South China Sea was also made clear when the MEA Spokesperson stated (September 16, 2011) that New Delhi 'supports freedom of navigation in the South China Sea and hopes that all parties to the disputes would abide by the 2002 declaration of conduct in the South China Sea'.²⁸

Recently, in a joint statement, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his counterpart from Vietnam agreed that freedom of navigation and over flights in the East Sea/South China Sea should not be impeded, and called the parties concerned to exercise restraint, avoid threat or use of force, and resolve disputes through peaceful means in accordance with universally recognized principles of international law, including the UNCLOS-1982. They also welcomed the collective commitment of the concerned parties to abide by, and implement, the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, and to work towards the adoption of a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea on the basis of consensus. They called for cooperation in ensuring the security of sea-lanes, maritime safety and security, combating piracy, and conducting search and rescue operations.

While China wants to solve the East Sea/South China Sea disputes bilaterally with the countries involved, India wants to deal with the issue through multilateral means. Answering questions in an interview to NDTV 24x7 on November 23, 2012, former Indian Foreign Minister Salman Khurshid stated that, India has accepted much more of a multilateral approach.²⁹

India has strongly and consistently affirmed that it will protect its interests in the East Sea/South China Sea. When asked to comment (September 2011) on the recent incursions by Chinese troops in Ladakh, and Chinese objections over oil exploration by Indian companies in the East Sea/South China Sea (on the side lines of a Navy function), former Minister of State for Defence, M.M. Pallam Raju said:

I think like any nation which wants to assert its right, I guess China is trying to do its bit ... As a country, we are very clear about our rights and interests. We will protect our interests very strongly.³⁰

In another development, the Indian Navy confirmed its preparedness for sending force to protect Indian interests in the East Sea/South China Sea when, at a press conference in December 2012, former Indian Navy Chief, Admiral D.K. Joshi emphasized that India's main concern was 'freedom of navigation in international waters' in the East Sea/South China Sea, and 'ONGC Videsh [which has] has three oil exploration blocks there ... we will be required to go there and we are prepared for that'. Relating to India's stand on the East Sea/South China

Sea disputes, Admiral Joshi said: 'Not only us but everyone is of the view that they [the disputes] have to be resolved by the parties concerned, aligned with the international regime which is outlined in UNCLOS; that is our first requirement'.³¹

Interestingly, in his speech at the banquet hosted in the honour of the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Nguyen Phu Trong in November 2013, former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh even used the term 'East Sea'³² to refer the East Sea/South China Sea. Since 2011, the term East Sea/South China Sea is used instead of the term South China Sea in Vietnam-India bilateral documents.³³

Defence Cooperation

Defence cooperation is one of the most successful areas in Vietnam-India relations since the end of the Cold War. During former Prime Minister N. Rao's visit to Vietnam in 1994, India and Vietnam signed a MoU on Defense Cooperation and, with this development, Vietnam was one of the first countries in Southeast Asia which signed a defence arrangement with India. "Since then, India has been supplying ammunition, propellants, MiG tyres, spares and Silver Oxide aircraft batteries".³⁴ During former Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes's visit to Vietnam in 2000, agreements were signed between Vietnam and India on strategic issues like: joint naval training; joint anti-sea piracy exercises in the South China Sea; jungle warfare training; counter-insurgency training; air force pilots training in India; and India's Repair Programmes for Vietnam Air Force fighter planes (MIGs). In his visit to Vietnam in 2007, former Indian Defence Minister, A.K. Antony announced at a meeting with his counterpart, General Phung Quang Thanh that India would transfer 5,000 items of naval spares belonging to the Petya class of ships to Vietnam. He also announced that India would depute a four-member team to impart training on UN peacekeeping operations in the first half of 2008. The two sides agreed to facilitate the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on defence cooperation. The Vietnamese Defence Minister, General Phung Quang Thanh paid an official visit to India from 4-8 November 2009, and an MoU was signed during the visit by the two Defence Ministers.³⁵

The strategic relationship in the field of defence between Vietnam and India was upgraded to a new level when India decided to offer credit line to Vietnam to purchase military equipment, and to sell Vietnam strategic weapons. In early 2015, the Kolkata-based defence Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) known as Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd. (GRSE) finalized the design of a series of 140-tonne fast patrol boats for the Vietnam Navy. A US\$100 million line of credit to Vietnam for the order was offered by India. It is interesting to

learn that this was the first time an Indian shipyard has been commissioned to design and build a warship to specifications formulated by a buyer country.³⁶ In October 2014, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi affirmed that the naval vessels would soon be supplied to Vietnam.³⁷ In September 2014, New Delhi confirmed that it was in talks with Hanoi for the supply of BrahMos missiles to Vietnam. BrahMos missiles are jointly developed by India and Russia; thus the decision to sell these cruise missiles to Vietnam would no doubt have required the approval of both the Indian and Russian governments. Luckily, Moscow had already informally given its nod to New Delhi for the supply of the missiles to Vietnam.³⁸

India has also been helping Vietnamese train personnel—especially submarine operators and pilots. Since the Vietnamese naval force is deployed in modern submarines, including the Kilo-class, the Indian Navy has begun training a large number of Vietnamese sailors in submarine operations and underwater warfare. The ongoing “comprehensive underwater combat operations” training for these Vietnamese sailors is in progress at the Indian Navy’s *INS Satavahana* (Submarine School) in Visakhapatnam.³⁹ By 2015, Vietnam will have a fleet of 36 Russian-manufactured Su-30MK2 fighter jets and, according to sources in the Indian Ministry of Defence, it seems that India will help train Vietnamese pilots to operate Russian-built Sukhoi fighters.⁴⁰

In the decades of cooperation between India and Vietnam, the defence relationship has played a vital role in the Vietnam-India strategic partnership. India is the second largest supplier of military equipment and strategic weapons as well as personnel training to Vietnam—just after Russia.

Conclusion

The Vietnam-India strategic partnership has gained outstanding achievements for nearly ten years, especially in the political and defence fields. India is now the second largest supplier of military equipment and strategic weapons to Vietnam. India is also among the most important countries providing training to Vietnamese military personnel. Politically, Vietnam and India are strong, trusted friends in regional and international fora. Vietnam has been consistently supporting India’s engagement in the Asia-Pacific as well as the latter’s bid for permanent membership in the UNSC when this organ is reformed. On its part, India has been strongly supporting Vietnam’s policy of the peaceful resolution of the East Sea/South China Sea disputes. Vietnam-India relations in other fields of cooperation have also gained important achievements. Thus, it is not an exaggeration to say that the Vietnam-India strategic partnership has been upgraded to a higher, more comprehensive, and a new strategic level.

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7

The Japan-India Strategic Partnership: A New Hope for Asia

Satoru Nagao

One of the salient features of India's foreign policy is that it has many "Strategic Partners", including Japan, the USA, Australia, Vietnam, ASEAN, Indonesia, South Korea, China, Russia, Afghanistan and Iran. The fact that many countries want to be India's strategic partner bears testimony to India's growing popularity in the world. However, "several strategic partners" might be an interesting point to analyse so that India's real intentions may be better understood.

From the aspect of security, it might be clear that having several strategic partners reflect India's threat perception. The strategic partners, including Japan, USA, Australia, Vietnam, Indonesia and ASEAN have been concerned about China's assertiveness. And, Afghanistan and Iran are countries situated around Pakistan. Russia is an influential country in the north, bordering with both China and Pakistan. Except for China, it seems as if India wants to cooperate with these countries as strategic partners because China and Pakistan are "potential threats" for India.

However, for the Japanese, assessing the importance of Japan-India relations is a major concern. For example, the report "India's Strategic Partners: A Comparative Assessment"¹ compared various strategic partners of India, and evaluated Japan's case. In this report, Japan got only 34 out of 90 points—the lowest among the six strategic partners of India, including the USA, Russia, UK, France and Germany. Why did the specialists mark Japan so low? This report gave the lowest score to Japan because there is no substantial, sustained, and potential support for India's defence sector. Compared with the USA's 18 points, Russia's 24 points, Germany's 8 points, Japan got only 2 points in this sector. It is because of regulated arms exports that Japan has not contributed to India's

defence sector for a long time. However, arms trade is merely one part of the defence sector. When we evaluate how to contribute to India's defence sector, we should check not only arms trade but also other aspects of defence, including geopolitical location, military infrastructural development, etc.

In addition, the report which was written in 2011, is based on relatively old information. Now, Sinzo Abe is the Prime Minister of Japan, and Japan has already changed its security policies, including easing the rule of arms exports under his leadership. And, because India's new Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, chose Japan as the first major country for a state visit in the summer 2014, the Japanese have enough reasons to believe that India values their association.

Thus, we should re-evaluate the importance of the Japan-India strategic partnership based on wider defence aspects, including geostrategic location, military infrastructural development, etc. along with the latest information. In this essay, three important factors underlying this analysis are discussed: the current security situation in Asia, the role of Japan-India Defence Cooperation in Asia's Security, and whether Japan trusts India as a responsible great power.

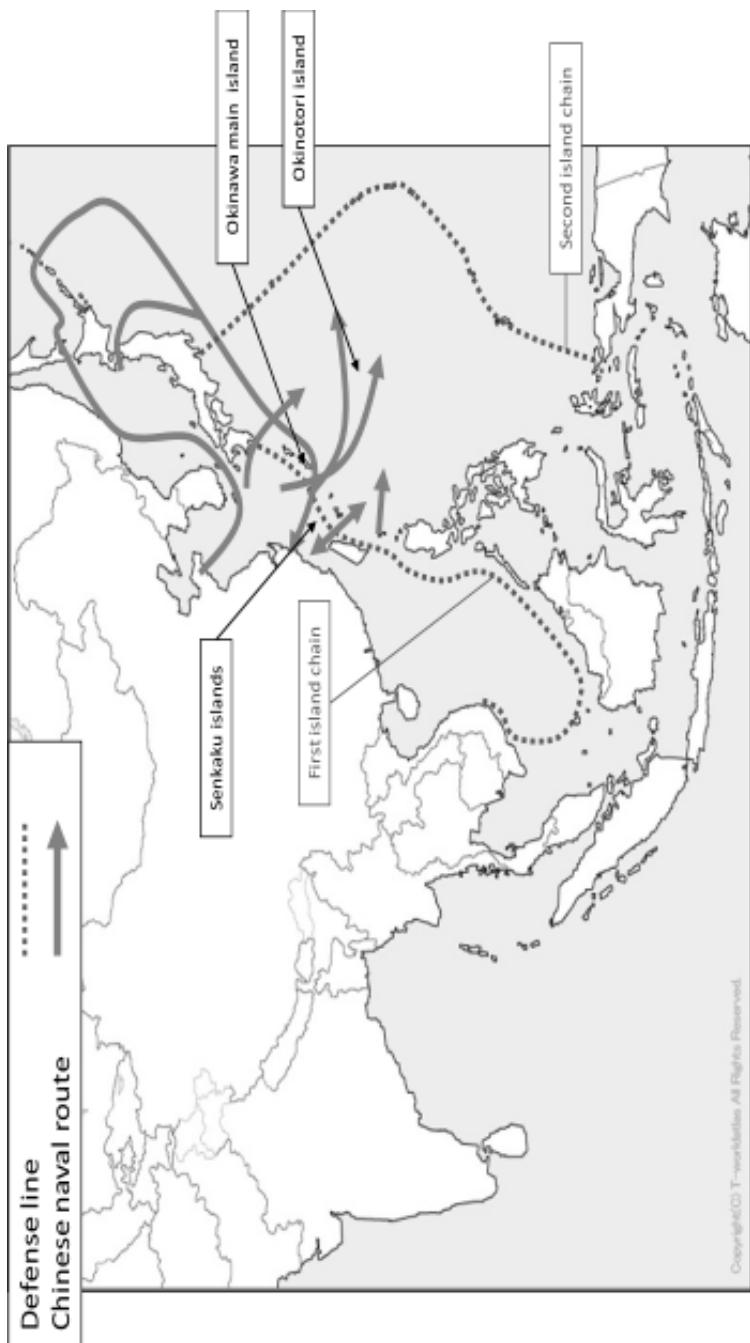
The Current Security Situation in Asia

The East China Sea and South China Sea

From the security aspect, we cannot overlook the China factor. China has started to expand its military activities around Japan and the countries around South China Sea. For example, in the East China Sea, a Chinese nuclear attack submarine violated the territorial seas of Japan in 2004. Since 2008, China has also started its naval exercises on the Pacific side of Japan. The area of these naval exercises has been expanding from the first island chain to the second island chain, which form the defence line of China. Later, in August 2013, the five Chinese warships which had participated in the Russia-China joint exercise, travelled around Japan. This was the first time that the Chinese navy had moved around Japan.

Along with their naval activities, the Chinese air force too has been expanding their activities. The White Paper of Japan's Ministry of Defence pointed out that "In FY (Fiscal Year) 2012, the number of scrambles against Chinese aircraft exceeded the number of those against Russian aircraft for the first time".² In FY 2013, the number of scrambles against Chinese aircraft increased further. In addition, on November 2013, China set up a new Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ). This is tantamount to the Chinese air force providing air cover to Chinese naval ships for expanding their area of activity. In May and June 2014, two Chinese fighters came close to colliding with two aircraft of the Japan Self Defence Force.

Figure 1: China's Naval Activities around Japan



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Source: Ministry of Defense of Japan, *Defense of Japan 2014*, p. 41 at http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2014/DOJ2014_1-1-3_web_1031.pdf (Accessed on January 7, 2015).

In the South China Sea, under its claim of “nine dotted lines”, China claims 90 per cent of the sea. This rightly reminds us about the China-Vietnam skirmish after China set up an oil rig in the South China Sea in the Spring of 2014. Because China is building a new airport in the South China Sea, we can expect that China will provide air cover for their military and paramilitary ships in the near future.

Changing the Military Balance

Why has China’s assertiveness intensified so much lately? In August 2013, then Japanese Defence Minister Itsunori Onodera’s statement at a symposium in Tokyo highlights an important point. He reiterated that

China has made more and more advancement into the seas ... When it did not have as much military capability, [it] tried to promote dialogue and economic cooperation, setting territorial rows aside. ... But when it sees a chance, any daylight between a nation and its ally, it makes blunt advancements. This is what is happening and what we should learn from the situation in Southeast Asia.³

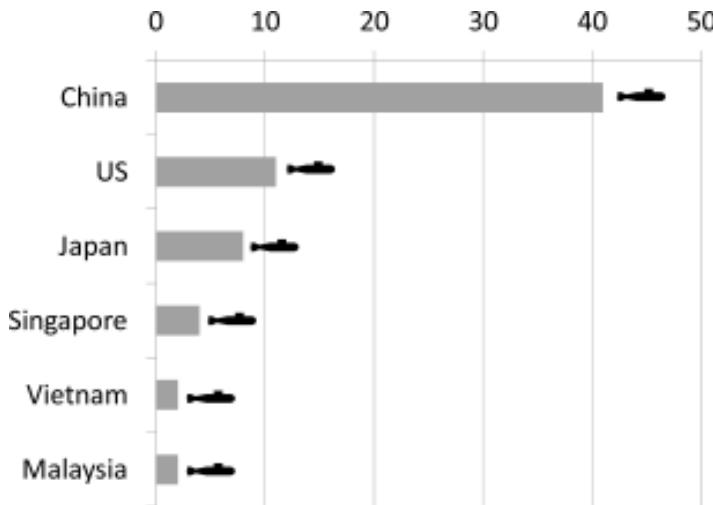
This statement clearly denotes that Southeast Asian countries cannot deter China’s assertiveness as they do not have enough military power to do so. Historically, the tendency of China’s maritime expansion has been based on power balance. For example, in the South China Sea, China occupied the Paracel Islands in 1974, just after the Vietnam War ended and the USA withdrew from the region. After the Soviet withdrawal from Vietnam, China attacked the Spratly Islands controlled by Vietnam in 1988. Similarly, after the USA withdrew from the Philippines, China occupied the Mischief Reef which was claimed by both the Philippines and Vietnam.

Moreover, after the Cold War, the power balance around the South China Sea has been changing. The procurement of a number of submarines is a good example since the main task of *submarines is the execution of war and the deterrence thereof*. Between 2000 and 2014, China has acquired at least 41 submarines. During the same period, Singapore has acquired only four submarines, while Malaysia and Vietnam have got two each. In the South China Sea, there was no other country that had acquired submarines by 2014. Like the situation in the South China Sea, the military balance between Japan and China has also been changing quickly. Compared with China’s whopping 41, Japan has acquired only 8 submarines since 2000.

Reflecting on the situation of Japan and countries around the South China Sea, it becomes evident that, despite not possessing enough military power, the USA emerges as the key player in maintaining power balance in that region. However, the caveat is that US power is also declining. Since 2000, the USA has acquired only 11 submarines while the total number of submarines possessed by the USA has been declining from 127 in 1990 to 72 in 2014. No doubt US

submarines are far more sophisticated than China's; however, numerically speaking, both the USA and China possess about 70 submarines each. This sensitive status quo is further disturbed by the fact that after reviewing a 30 year shipbuilding plan, the US submarine fleet is expected to decrease more than 25 per cent.⁴

Figure 2: The Number of Submarines Acquired between 2000 and 2014



Source: International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance* at <https://www.iiss.org/en/publications/military-s-balance> (Accessed on November 09, 2015).

While the former US Secretary of Defence Leon Panetta said at the annual Shangri-La Dialogue in 2012, "By 2020, the navy will re-posture its forces from today's roughly 50-50 per cent split between the Pacific and the Atlantic to about a 60-40 split between those oceans",⁵ it remains doubtful whether the number of warships are enough to deter China's assertiveness as the total number of warships the USA possesses is declining. In addition, there is a possibility that the USA cannot concentrate all military power in Asia because it needs to deal with other likely problems in different parts of the world as well. Japan and/or countries around the South China Sea are always concerned about conflict situations arising in Eastern Europe, Middle East, Central and South America or Africa which might lead to US involvement, thus leaving it too busy to provide enough military support to any conflict erupting in the South China Sea.

The Indo-China Border and the Indian Ocean

In addition, we must not overlook China's activities around India, especially in terms of security. Firstly, India is facing China's assertiveness in the Indo-China border area. It is well known that the military balance between India and China is changing because Chinese military infrastructural modernisation is moving

along at a very fast pace. Chinese armed forces can be ready for battle in the border areas within 48 hours, while India needs one week for preparation as there are not enough roads on the Indian side.⁶ This means that India could land in a dangerous situation of facing Chinese forces that are more than three times bigger in the border areas.⁷ In the air, the situation is similar. In 2009, former Air Chief Marshal P.V. Naik had accepted that India's "aircraft strength is inadequate, and is just one third of China's air force". In addition, the possibility that China could use ballistic missiles (or other cruise missiles) to destroy the air bases of India cannot, and must not, be overlooked.

Along with rapid military modernisation, the area of Chinese military activities too has been widening. Since 2011, India has recorded more than 400 Chinese incursions within its territory every year. April to May 2013, Chinese troops set up tents and stayed for about three weeks in Ladakh inside Indian borders. In addition, China is also deploying troops in Pakistan-administered Kashmir. Secondly, in the Indian Ocean, China has started to increase its military activities. Because China is concerned about its total dependence on the Sea Lane of Communications (SLOCs) from the Middle East to China through the Strait of Malacca, it has tried to make an alternative route via the Middle East-Pakistan-China and/or Middle East-Myanmar-China through the Indian Ocean. More specifically, since the mid-2000s, China's military activities in the Indian Ocean have been expanding. In 2012, at least 22 contacts were recorded with vessels suspected to be Chinese nuclear attack submarines patrolling in the Indian Ocean. On December 3, 2013, the Foreign Affairs Office of China's Ministry of Defence informed India's military attaché in Beijing about the two month deployment of its nuclear submarine in the Indian Ocean.⁸ The activity of these submarines indicates that the influential area of China will expand in the Indian Ocean because these Chinese submarines can attack India's nuclear ballistic missile submarines and SLOCs anytime they want.

In addition, China exports weapons to countries around India. If these exports include submarines, they will no doubt affect India's strategy. Bangladesh is set to import two submarines from China. Logically then, the Indian Navy will need to have enough ships to keep a regular watch over the location and purpose of the submarines of other countries. This means that these submarines will, to a great deal, regulate India's naval activities. In addition, the possibility that India's hostile neighbour Pakistan, in its constant effort to counter India's rising power in the region, may also be willing to possess nuclear submarines cannot be overlooked. Further, because Pakistan does not have the technology, there is again a reasonable possibility that China will support the creation of such "indigenous" nuclear submarines to counter India.

The weak point in China's strategy is that they do not have a naval port in

this region. Therefore, under their String of Pearl Strategy, China is investing in the development of many ports in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Myanmar in the Indian Ocean. If Chinese navy use a civilian port as a naval supply base, China could tackle its weakness of not having a naval port in the region. In 2014, at least two Chinese submarines and one submarine support ship docked at a port in Sri Lanka.

Thus, it is important to re-realize the alarming speed of China's military modernisation, because of which Japan, the countries around South China Sea, as well as India are likely to suffer from China's assertiveness in the near future. There is a need for all these countries to maintain a military balance with China.

Japan-India Defence Cooperation in Asia's Security

One answer to the question regarding what should be done is encouraging Japan-India strategic cooperation which could play an important role in this balancing. There are three areas especially where Japan-India cooperation can help maintain the military balance with China.

The Linking of the Indo-China border with the East China Sea

Firstly, the focus should be on linking the Indo-China border areas with the East China Sea. This kind of Japan-India cooperation could help rectify their respective numerical inferiority. For example, if India cooperates with Japan, India will not need to deal with all the Chinese fighters at once because it is likely to keep some of its fighters on its east side against Japan, and vice versa. In addition, under Japan-India strategic cooperation, the use of Japan's know-how of high-end military infrastructural development could support India's efforts to modernize its defence in the Indo-China border areas. Since 2014, Japan has plans to invest in a strategic road project in the north-eastern region of India. This road could be useful for the Indian army to deploy more forces and supplies to border areas.

Moreover, this road building project is just a beginning. Because Japan's government will ease those regulations that restrict Japan's Official Development Assistance to support military related infrastructural projects, further substantial support from Japan's side may be expected in India's strategic projects—such as the construction of roads, tunnels, airports, and helipads of strategic importance.

In the Indian Ocean

What could be the contribution of Japan-India defence cooperation in the Indian Ocean? India could use Japan's technology to strengthen its naval power. For example, as in the Indo-China border areas, Japan is also planning to assist India's airport project in the Andaman Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep islands. If India could strengthen these bases, it would be relatively easy to project power

in the Malacca Strait. Japan will also contribute to India's shipbuilding capabilities to build warships—including aircraft carrier and submarines. Japan already possesses sophisticated helicopter carriers, cruisers, destroyers, frigates and conventional submarines, etc. Australia is planning to acquire Japan's Soryu class submarine which is a top level submarine. After exporting such submarines to countries like Australia, Japan can also export them to other countries like India. At present, India wants not only to get arms but also acquire the capacity to build under its "Make in India" policy. In this context, cooperation between Japan and India in shipbuilding will be a good initiative.

Besides buying submarines, other arms' trade will be an important part of the Japan-India strategic cooperation. It is well known that Japan and India are under negotiations regarding the trading of US-2 rescue planes. This rescue plane can land on the sea and fly from the sea. While the main purpose of the plane is rescue activities, it can also be used for marking a country's presence. For example, if India deploys this plane for rescuing people or for disaster management in other countries, it will be perceived as a marker of India's will to extend tangible support to those in need, thus marking India's presence. The image of India will improve, making for an expansion of Indian influence in these countries. From the Japanese point of view, this plane could become a very useful political tool for India.

The US-2 is just the beginning of the trade in arms between the two countries. Japan has a considerably amount of sophisticated technology and know-how. For example, to protect its aircraft carriers, India needs to deal with China's anti-ship ballistic missiles which can attack India's aircraft carrier at any time. This means that India needs sea-based missile defence system. It is significant that, under the Japan-USA joint development of a sea based missile defence system, Japan is developing some its most important parts. If so, Japan and India, along with USA can cooperate in the missile defence sector.

The mine sweeper is also an important tool to deal with Chinese submarines which can set up sea mines. Japan has good know-how and equipment to deal with sea mines. Because the USA used many sea mines during World War II, Japan had to sweep these sea mines away for more than 65 years after the war. Under US occupation, Japan joined the Korean War to sweep sea mines. Moreover, in 1991, Japan sent mine sweepers to deal with mines after the Gulf War. As a result, under the Japan-US alliance, the USA has high expectations from these Japan's sea mine sweepers now. Japan is proud of its world level know-how and equipment to deal with sea mines. If India needs to deal with sea mines set up by China's submarines, Japan and India can share this skill and equipment under the Japan-India strategic cooperation. In other words, Japan-India strategic cooperation could be very effective and useful while dealing with China's naval activities in the Indian Ocean.

Moreover, Japan-India cooperation is useful even when we think about the countries around India, China has invested a huge amount to build infrastructure and expand its influence in the countries bordering India. If India does not possess enough of a budget or technology, China will increase its influence in the Indian Ocean Region and harm the image of India. Thus, cooperation is a useful method to rectify India's individual numerical inferiority. If India's knowledge of South Asia and Japan's budget and technology could be coupled, India's influence would strengthen. To achieve this collaboration, a Japan-India strategic seaport and airport development dialogue should be established.

The South China Sea

Because China's military power is far bigger than other countries in the South China Sea, the countries bordering this sea need to amalgamate their leadership as one integrated power, and beef up their military strength with a trustworthy partner to provide coastal countries military support. In this case, Japan-India strategic cooperation would be useful.

By now, India has already started to support the armed forces in Southeast Asia as a part of its Look East Policy. India has trained the crew of the aircraft carriers of Thailand, the crew of submarine and fighter pilots in Vietnam, as well as pilots and the land crew of fighter airplanes in Malaysia. Further, India has agreed to train the pilots and provide maintenance to the fighter airplanes in the Indonesian Air Force. Singapore is using India's land and air base for the training of their air force personnel.

For a long time, while not supporting the armed forces in Southeast Asia, Japan, has supported many systems, including the anti-piracy system, the Tsunami warning system, the cyber defence system, as well as building infrastructure like air and sea ports, etc. These systems are indirectly related to maritime security in the South China Sea. In addition, under the Prime Minister Abe, Japan has also started arms donation to these countries. For example, Japan will donate patrol ships to Vietnam and the Philippines.

Thus, if Japan and India collaborate with each other, we can support countries around the South China Sea more effectively. For example, if Japan builds the airport in Vietnam and the Indian Air Force trains Vietnam's fighter pilots, Vietnam can get *both* an airport and fighter pilots. Hence, under the Japan-India-Vietnam cooperation, we can create a win-win-win situation. The question that then arises is: what kind of systems should be established to achieve this goal? In January 2014, when Prime Minister Abe visited Delhi, the two Prime Ministers "welcomed the launch of a bilateral dialogue on ASEAN affairs." It is hoped that the dialogue will promote a more practical trilateral strategic dialogue: for example, Japan-India-Vietnam, Japan-India-Philippine, Japan-India-Singapore, Japan-India-Indonesia, Japan-India-Malaysia, and Japan-India-Australia. Through such

dialogue, both Japan and India can share information, better identify the needs of these Southeast Asian countries, and decide how to cooperate or support these countries.

India a Responsible Great Power: The Japanese View

What then is the importance of Japan-India strategic cooperation? One of the most important factors is that Japan respects India as a great power in South Asia. There are three main reasons why Japan respects India as great power in South Asia and in the Indian Ocean Region. Firstly, because India's foreign policy towards countries bordering India is relatively generous. Below is the list of India's military operations since Independence. This list proves that most of India's operations are *reactive*, and the Indian army has not crossed its border since 1972, except for peace keeping or peace building operations. India's restraint in the use of force is a consistent strategy. For most countries, India is perceived as a trustworthy country. (See Table 1 below).

Table 1: India's Military Operations

	<i>Active or Reactive</i>	<i>Type of Operation</i>	<i>Area of operation</i>
Junagadh (1947)	Active	Limited war	Outside
India-Pak (1947-48)	Reactive	Limited war	Outside
Hyderabad (1948)	Active	Limited war	Outside
Northeast (1956-now)	Reactive	Counterinsurgency	Inside
Goa (1961)	Active	Limited war	Outside
India-China (1962)	Reactive	Limited war	Inside
Kutch (1965)	Reactive	Limited war	Inside
India-Pak (1965)	Reactive	Limited war	Outside
Nathu La and Chola (1967)	Reactive	Limited war	Inside
Maoist (1967-now)	Reactive	Counterinsurgency	Inside
India-Pak (1971)	Active	Limited war	Outside
Siachen (1984)	Active	Limited war	Inside
Falcon and Checkerboard (1986-87)	Reactive	Coercive diplomacy	Inside
Punjab (1984-92)	Reactive	Counterinsurgency	Inside
Brasstack (1987)	Active	Coercive diplomacy	Inside
Sri Lanka (1987-90)	Active	Peace building	Outside
Maldives (1988)	Reactive	Peace building	Outside
Kashmir (1989-now)	Reactive	Counterinsurgency	Inside
1990 Crisis (1990)	Reactive	Coercive diplomacy	Inside
Kargil (1999)	Reactive	Limited war	Inside
Parakram (2001-02)	Reactive	Coercive diplomacy	Inside
UNPKO	Reactive	Peace keeping	Outside

Source: Satoru Nagao, "The Emerging India is Not a Threat, Why?: An Assessment from Japan" *Asia Pacific Journal of Social Science*, Vol. III, Jul-Dec 2012, pp.99-109, at http://203.200.1.30/CSIR_RootRepository/Content/Themes/Defence/DefenceHistory/HistoryofDefen/History/df%20history.pdf (Accessed on January 28, 2015).

Why India's foreign policy has been termed by other countries as being relatively generous and one of "strategic restraint"? If we focus on power balance in South Asia, we could find one fitting explanation. Because India has already been the only great power in South Asia, there is not enough benefit India can get from bullying smaller neighbours. After the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war, India has a 7 times bigger GDP than Pakistan.⁹ Currently, about 80 per cent of the total defence budget spent in South Asia is spent by India alone. If India tries to attack small neighbours, it can get only some marginal benefits at best, because the size of the opponent would be far smaller than India. Instead of bullying its neighbours, India has shown a generous attitude to persuade them to cooperate. This is the kind of expertise in foreign policy that is expected from a great leader in South Asia. Thus, such generosity encourages Japan to trust India as a great leader. Simply said, India's attitude in South Asia is not like China's attitude in West Pacific.

Secondly, international cooperation inevitably leads to greater Indian influence since the country has had a long experience of joint international military operations. Why is international cooperation so important for an influential country? When we think about who should be the leader of a group, those living in democratic countries emphasize that leaders should be democratically elected by their supporters. Leaders are supposed to care for their supporters. Hence, any influential country that approaches problems by using multi-national cooperation faces a similar situation. It needs to care for the supporting countries. The experience gained through several multi-national operations contributes to acquiring the know-how to become an influential country. For example, the Indian Army homepage states that The Indian Army's participation in the UN peacekeeping operations spans a period of 57 years, covering 43 UN Missions in which over ninety-thousand Indian soldiers served in various parts of the world ... Indian troops have taken part in some of the most difficult operations, and have suffered casualties in the service of the UN.¹⁰

Anti-piracy measures and joint exercises also indicate India's collaboration with other military organisations for achieving objectives. India organised the multilateral joint exercise *Miran*. Moreover, there are also annual joint exercises or joint patrols with Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia. There have been more than 60 joint Indo-US exercises over the foregoing decade. So far, Japan and India have also implemented six joint exercises. Military capacity-building measures are another form of international cooperation. Besides India's support to Southeast Asia, many foreign students from coastal countries in the Indian Ocean—such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Myanmar, Singapore, and Oman—study at the various military schools in India. It has given and is planning to give patrol vessels and planes to Maldives, Seychelles and Mauritius along with the relevant training. Also, the experience gained through several multi-

national operations, such as the PKO, joint exercises, capacity-building measures, contributes to India's acquisition of know-how, thus making it an influential country in the region.

And thirdly, India will be the most influential security provider in the near future because of the same six reasons pointed out by Alfred Thayer Mahan while analysing why Britain became a sea power. He listed six important factors: 1) "Geographical Position"; 2) "Physical Conformation (especially, the length of coast line)"; 3) the "Extent of Territory (especially the balance between the extent of coastal line and military defence resources)"; 4) the "Size of Population (for working at sea)"; 5) the "Character of the People"; and 6) the "Character of the Government".

First of all, India has an advantageous "Geographical Position" because the Indian subcontinent is separated from the Eurasian continent by high mountains. This advantage is also proved by historical fact. There are only three empires that dominated most of the Sub-Continent through Indian history; the Maurya Empire, the Mughal Empire, and the British Raj. The territories of these three empires are very similar, and all their territories were determined by the mountain range (Figure 3). Thus, the Indian sub-continent is a kind of island. And, India can concentrate on its naval forces—but only if it possesses the necessary will.

In addition, the history of the Cholas indicates another geographical advantage of India. Representatives of the Chola Empire, which was located in Southern India, made an expedition to Southeast Asia in the 11th century. The sphere of its influence expanded along the entire coastal area off the Bay of Bengal. This historical fact is another prominent example of India's geographical advantage. Since India is located at the northern centre of the Indian Ocean, it is not only able to access Southeast Asia, but also all sides of the Indian Ocean, including the Middle East and East Africa.

In the second place, India has "Physical Conformation" because it has 7517 (only mainland 6100) kilometre of coastline. And, as a coastal country in the Indian Ocean Region, it has enough "Extent of Territory". India has the sixth largest population at sea, consisting of 55,000 sailors, in various countries. Thus, India also satisfies the fourth condition: that is, the "Number of Population" to work at sea. Based on the history of the Chola Empire, there is also a possibility that the "Character of the People" in India includes being sea-power oriented (the fifth condition). And finally, along with the "Character of Government" point, these two reasons could be cited that the Indian government is interested in expanding its sea power.

The report titled "Nonalignment 2.0: A Foreign and Strategic Policy for India in the Twenty First Century", states that "presently, Indian military power has a continental orientation. Emerging as a maritime power should, thus, be India's

strategic objective.”¹¹ Accordingly, India’s defence budget has increased the share of its navy from 12.7 per cent in 1990 to 17 per cent in 2014.

Figure 3: Influential Empires in the Sub-Continent



白地図 <http://www.freemap.jp/>

Source: Satoru Nagao, “The emerging India is not a threat. Why?: An assessment from Japan” Asia Pacific Journal of Social Science, Vol. III, Jul.-Dec. 2012, pp.99-109 at http://203.200.1.30/CSIR_RootRepository/Content/Themes/Defence/DefenceHistory/HistoryofDefen/History/d%20history.pdf (Accessed on January 28, 2015).

Thus, according to Mahan’s theory, India has sufficient potential to become a sea power, and become an influential country in the Indian Ocean Region. Because Japan’s vital SLOCs run through the Indian Ocean, it is natural that Japan would cooperate with India as a responsible great power in the Indian Ocean Region.

Conclusion

Thus, Japan, countries in Southeast Asia, and India are facing China’s assertiveness backed by its rapid military modernisation. The role of the Japan-India strategic partnership is quite potent in dealing with this assertiveness. Firstly, because of India’s geographical situation, Japan-India cooperation can divert China’s huge military power towards multiple sides, and thereby lessen its collective power. By furthering Japan-India infrastructural, technological, and financial collaboration, India could be made the most influential country in the Indian

Ocean Region. Moreover, to support the defence capability of countries around the South China Sea, the Japan-India strategic partnership will be influential. In addition, putting all the aforementioned factors together, it is natural for Japan to believe that only India could be a responsible great power in the Indian Ocean Region.

Thus, as a strategic partner, Japan is one of the most important countries for India, especially in the defence sector. If so, now is the time to re-evaluate the importance of the Japan-India strategic partnership, and advance their cooperation.

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ASIAN ECONOMIES AND
RESOURCE COMPETITION

8

Looking East: Security through Greater Cross Border Connectivity

Rajat M. Nag

Asia's economic growth in the past several decades has been stellar. Today it accounts for over a quarter of the global GDP, and three of the five largest economies in the world are in Asia. This share is growing and, by some accounts, could well account for over half the global output by 2050. Some have dubbed the twenty-first century as the Asian Century. Hundreds of millions have been lifted out of poverty. In 1970, one in every two Asians was poor, living on less than one dollar a day. By 1990, this had come down to about one in every three, and by 2010, it was less than one in five. Asia has achieved in 40 years what some other regions of the world took a century, or even longer. Compared to a generation ago, Asians today are more prosperous, more educated, healthier, and live longer. This is a very significant achievement in just one generation—one that Asia can be justifiably very proud of.

But there is another Asia, just as real, but much less shining. Two-thirds of the world's poor still live in Asia. About 740 million people in Asia live on US\$ 1.25 a day. This is more than the population of the United States and Europe combined. If the bar is raised just a little higher to US\$2 a day (which is less than the cost of a cup of coffee even in many Asian cities), about 1.6 billion people would fall below this mark. About 360 million people do not have access to clean drinking water; 1.7 billion people have no access to improved sanitation. Thus, amidst all the wealth and prosperity that Asia enjoys, there is this 'other', not so shining Asia.

Asia is also becoming more unequal. From the early 1990s to the late 2000s, the Gini coefficient—a common measure of inequality—worsened from 0.32 to 0.43 in the People's Republic of China (PRC), from 0.33 to 0.37 in India, and

from 0.29 to 0.39 in Indonesia. Treating developing Asia as a whole, its Gini coefficient rose from 0.39 to 0.46 over the same period. This is the phenomenon often referred to as the ‘Two Faces of Asia’, which co-exist simultaneously. Asia’s major challenge in the years ahead is to get these two faces to converge rather than diverge, which unfortunately is the current trend.

The above description of Asia as a whole applies equally well for South and Southeast Asia. Both regions have grown rapidly in the past several decades. The PRC and India have gained status as global economic power houses, while countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam are progressing toward middle-income status. As both regions pursued outward oriented economic reforms over the past twenty five years, economic relations between them have grown substantially, fuelled by India’s Look East Policy, ASEAN’s efforts to reach out to South Asia (India in particular), as well as China’s and India’s increasing interests and attention to each other, and the two regions. Myanmar’s recent return to the international fold after years of relative isolation has also added significant impetus. Cross regional trade, for example, between the two regions has grown from a paltry US\$ 4 billion in 1990 to about US\$ 90 billion in 2013, an increase of over 22 times; most of this increase has occurred since the beginning of this century.

A key feature influencing greater trade between any two partners is the degree of physical connectivity between them. It is striking that trade between South and Southeast Asia has grown significantly over the past two decades in spite of the relatively poor transport connectivity between them. Improving transportation connectivity (hardware such as roads, railways, inland and maritime waterways, air traffic) accompanied by improvements in trade facilitation measures (software) will no doubt provide a significant boost to greater economic relations between the two regions. As South Asia’s largest economy, India’s connectivity with Southeast Asia and China is of critical importance, and is the focus of this chapter.

India’s Look East and Act East Policies (LEAP)

Passionate renderings of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* in Indonesia, the majestic temples dedicated to Hindu gods at the Angkor Wat in Siem Reap, the Prambanan in Solo or the Borobodur in Yogyakarta, the archaeological finds (including seals with Sanskrit inscriptions) in Vietnam, and many Hindu traditions still followed in Bali—all attest to a deep and long relationship between India and Southeast Asia going back almost two millennia. In 1927, as Tagore left for his first trip to Southeast Asia, he spoke excitedly of his impending journey as “a pilgrimage to see the signs of the history of India’s entry into the Universal.”¹ During this trip, as a guest of one of the local kings in Bali, the poet and his host happily discovered Sanskrit words as the only means of communication between them.

Close interaction between South East Asia and India continued through colonial times, as well as for slightly over a decade after India's independence as the newly independent countries, particularly India (Nehru) and Indonesia (Soekarno) sought to set and influence the regional (and global) agenda in the immediate aftermath of decolonization in Asia and the emergence of the Non-Aligned Movement. However, this started to wane in the aftermath of the Indo-China War of 1962, and a gradual drifting of India towards the Soviet Union, and that of the South East Asian countries towards the USA in the following decades.

The late 1980s and early 1990s saw some dramatic developments which reoriented India again to "look east". The collapse of the Soviet Union, India's severe and growing economic woes, the simultaneous evidence of East Asian tiger economies picking up significant economic steam, China's growing economic strength and influence in South East Asia—all led India to reassess its strategy of engagement with its eastern neighbourhood, resulting in the country's Look East Policy being articulated in 1991.

Initially rather hesitatingly, but later at an increasing pace, India has deepened its relationships, both multilaterally and bilaterally, with South East and East Asia. A new Government in Delhi in May 2014 almost immediately not only reaffirmed the primacy of India's Look East Policy but extended the emphasis on action; it now aptly re-labelled this policy as Act East Policy. While a critical objective of India's Act East Policy is to enhance trade in goods and services with its eastern neighbours, the geostrategic objectives go far beyond; they extend to greater people-to-people exchanges involving ideas and culture. This chapter will however focus on the former. A necessary condition for achieving this is greater physical connectivity between India and its eastern neighbours. Thus, a major focus of this chapter is to look at the means by which such connectivity may be achieved, and the logistical and financial challenges such efforts would entail.

East and North East India: Critical in achieving LEAP

For India looking East or Southeast, any land connectivity has to be through Bangladesh or Myanmar (Figures 1 and 2). Both themselves suffer from significant shortfalls in both quantity and quality of physical infrastructure.

Myanmar's isolation from the international community for over two decades has been a major contributing factor while, at the same time, its recent return to the international fold offers very significant opportunities.

It is worth noting that while during this period that Myanmar stayed relatively isolated, China made very substantial infrastructure investments in Myanmar which not only earned it physical access along the North South axis but considerable political influence as well. Comparatively, India's investments and

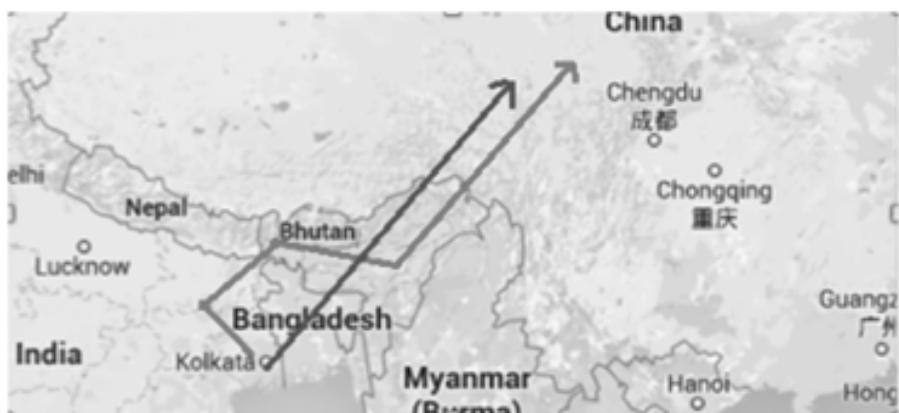
assistance, particularly in infrastructure, have been comparatively rather muted and, thus, it now needs to more aggressively pursue connectivity plans to make up for lost time.

Figure 1: India's Land Connectivity with Southeast Asia



Source: Author.

Figure 2: India's Land Connectivity with China



Source: Author.

The Eastern and North Eastern states of India are at the cross roads of India and the vibrant economies of Southeast Asia and indeed East Asia, including China. These states, therefore, serve as a bridgehead and, thus, any connectivity

between India with its neighbours and beyond would, essentially, need adequate high quality infrastructure within its own eastern and north eastern states as well. These states are critical in achieving the objectives of India's Look and Act East Policies.

Connectivity: Hardware and Software

More than 200 years ago, Adam Smith observed,

Good roads, canals, and navigable rivers, by diminishing the expense of carriage, put the remote parts of the country more nearly upon a level with those in the neighborhood of the town. They are upon that account the greatest of all improvements.²

What he said then remains true today. Connectivity is a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for development. Though there have been improvements in recent years, the infrastructure links between India and its Southeastern neighbours through Bangladesh and Myanmar remain weak. Many sections of many roads are of inadequate quality, and there are several key missing links. Railway links suffer from similar issues, exacerbated by the fact that gauges are not consistent. Ports in the Bay of Bengal are similarly handicapped by quality and capacity constraints, and are unable to handle a significantly growing trade volume efficiently. While air links have improved significantly in recent years following deregulation and the entry of private airlines, particularly in India, they are still inadequate in linking secondary towns; and, in any case, trading goods by air is much costlier than other modes of the movement of goods. In addition to physical infrastructure, the situation at and behind borders and barriers imposes considerable constraints to increased trade. Improvements in trade facilitation measures (software) are thus as important as hardware development.

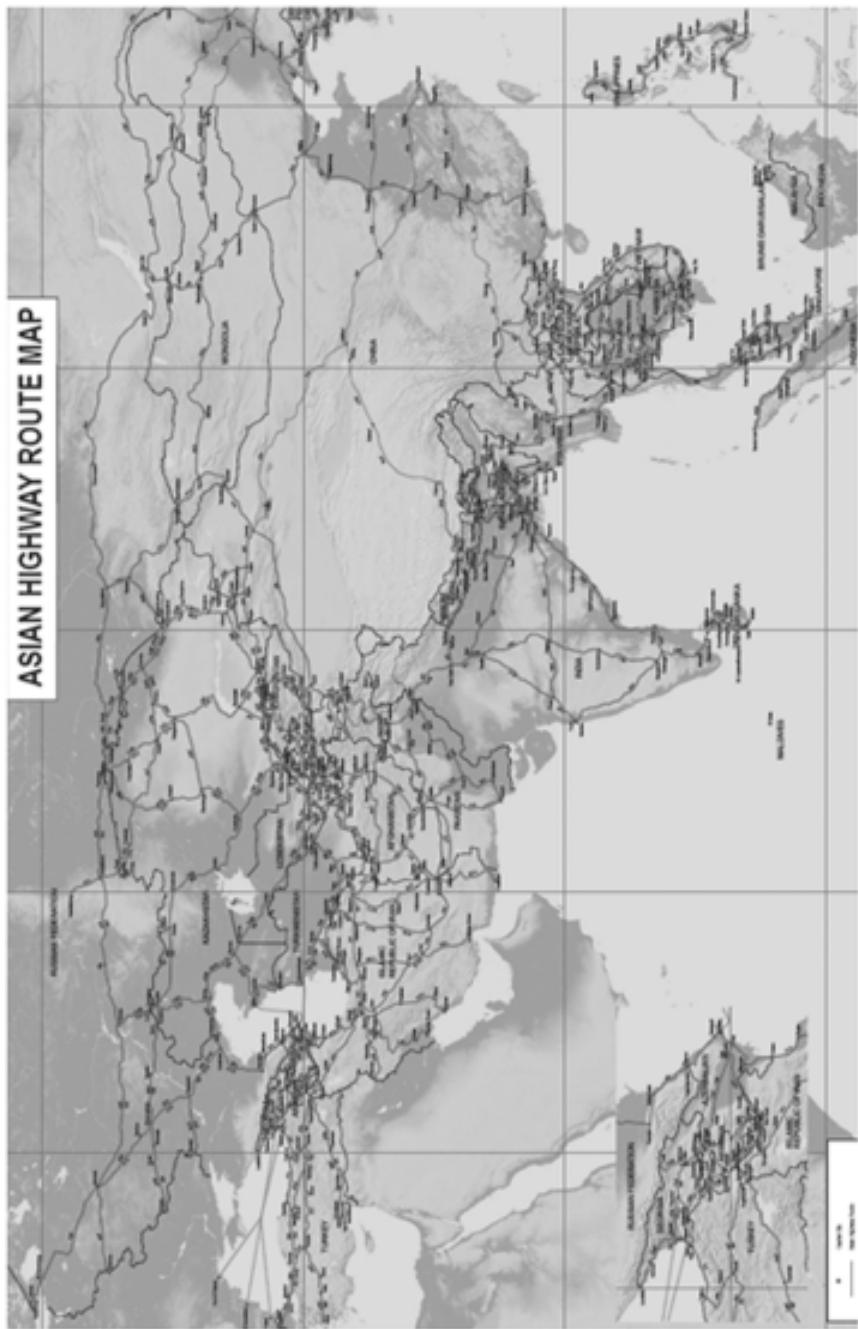
Hardware: Roads

The Planned Asian Highway (AH) provides the backbone of such cross continent land connectivity (Figure 3). The AH aims to be a network of about 141,000 kilometres (kms) of standardized highways—including 155 cross-border roads—that criss-crosses 32 Asian countries, and seeks to improve economic links among them.

It would be a misnomer to call this a planned network implying that there is nothing on the ground as yet; on the contrary, almost three quarters of the network is in place (though of varying degrees of quality); but there are also several critical missing links. AH1 and AH2 are the principal Asian Highway routes which connect India with Southeast Asia, passing through Myanmar.

Of significance to India's LEAP, the three major missing links are between

Figure 3: Asian Highway Route Map



Source: http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/AH-map_GIS.pdf

northeast India and Myanmar. These are central to connecting India with its eastern (China) and Southeastern neighbours. The missing segment between Moreh (in Manipur on the Indian side) and Tamu (in the Sagain Region of Myanmar) is a critical link in the proposed India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway (which is part of the Asian Highway) and needs to be developed urgently (see Figure 4 below).

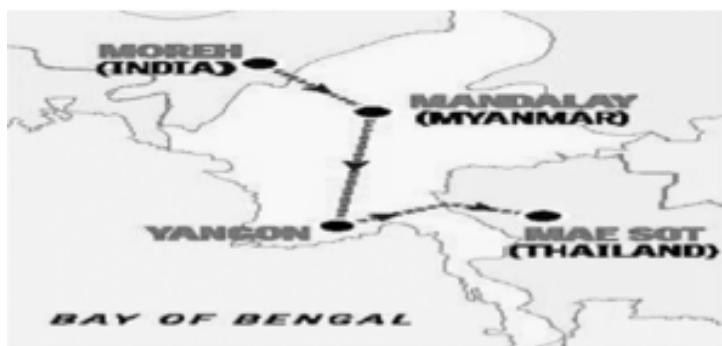
Figure 4: The Moreh (India)-Tamu (Myanmar) Missing Link



Source: <https://www.google.co.in/>

The importance of developing such missing links is that, once developed, they would allow significant increases in the movement of goods, services and people not only across borders but within the countries themselves. For example, developing the Moreh-Tamu route (as part of the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway) would enhance movement within some Northeastern Indian states as also between the major cities of Mongywa, Mandalay and Bagan on the Myanmar side, and on to Mae Sot in Thailand (see Figure 5 below).

Figure 5: India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway



Source: *The Hindu*, 30 May 2013 <http://www.thehindu.com/>

Another example illustrating the importance of regional cooperation between neighbouring countries to realize the total potential of greater connectivity would be the route between Zolkawtar (in Mizoram) and Rhee (Chin State, Myanmar). This would potentially help improve border trade between the two countries greatly. An even more important benefit of this link is that it is the shortest land route connecting Myanmar and Kolkata through Northeast India and Bangladesh. Moving through Bangladesh would require improving the section of road from Aizawl to Agartala (in India), and that transit trade through Bangladesh be allowed.

While increased connectivity with ASEAN countries is obviously very desirable, equally (if not more) important is the potentially enhanced land connectivity between India and China. Rehabilitating the Nampong-Pangsu Route (also known as the Stilwell Road, a 1700+ km road built during the Second World War but which fell into disuse after the war) connecting the two countries is a possibility. Starting from Ledo in Assam, it weaves through upper Myanmar before turning eastwards to end in China's Yunnan province (see Figure 6 below).

Figure 6: The Stillwell Road



Source: *Indian Express*, 4 September 2007.

Completing these missing links will enable India to connect with the various transport corridors already in place in Southeast Asia through the ASEAN and Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Programme, and in China.

The ASEAN Highway Network (AHN) comprising of 23 routes for a total of about 38,400 kms creates an intra ASEAN network by expanding the Asian Highway Network in the ASEAN member countries. With the Asian Development Bank (ADB)'s longstanding support, the GMS program has already put in place several East West and North South Corridors (see Figure 7). The former connects Vietnam with Thailand through Laos and Cambodia, while the latter connects China to its southern neighbours.

Figure 7: IMT Trilateral Highway Connectivity to Southeast Asia

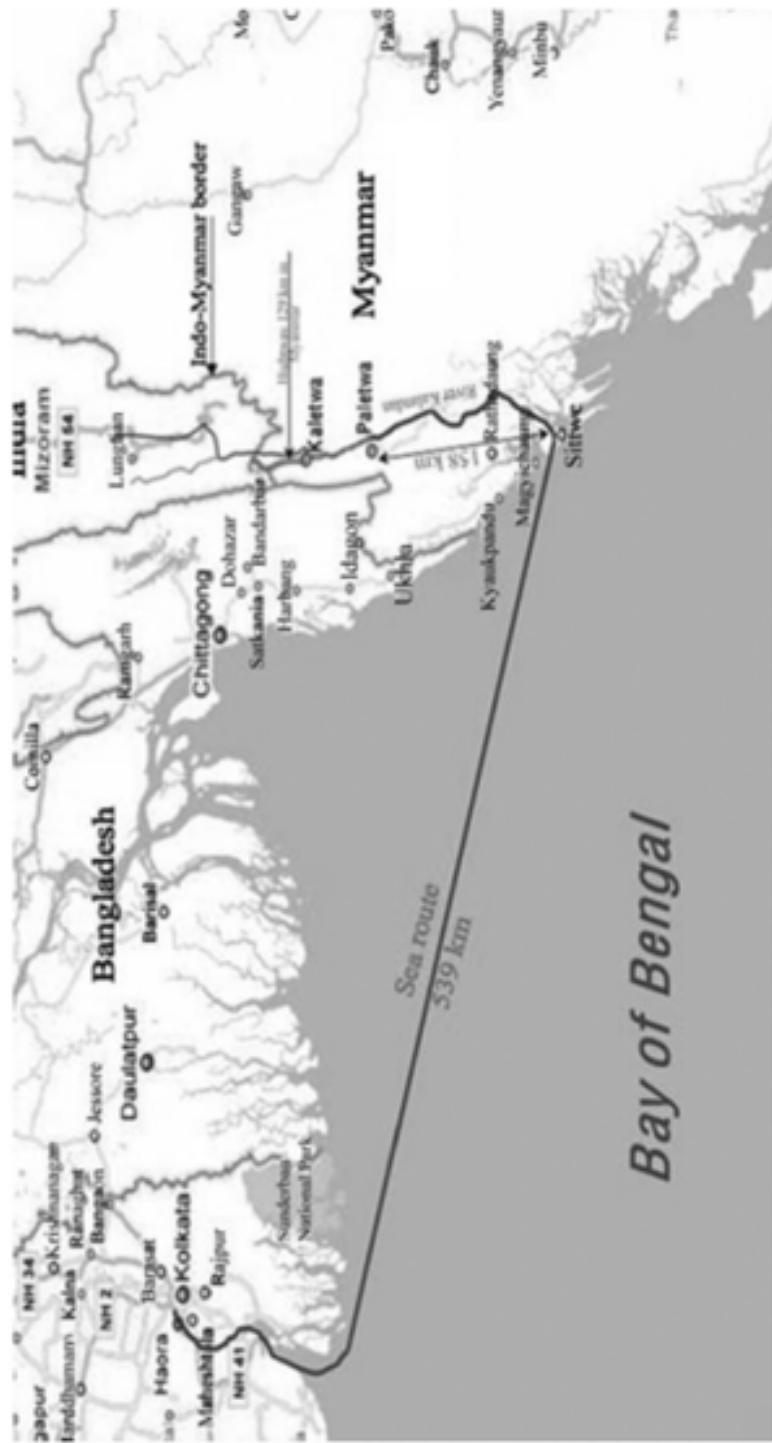


Source: Strategy and Action Plan for the Greater Mekong Sub-region East West Economic Corridor, ADB 2010

Through its own long and intensive investments in infrastructure development, China has built an extensive network of high quality roads and expressways within its own borders. Once the missing links discussed above are in place, India will be able to link well with China by road transport.

Another important sub-regional initiative which will significantly impact

Figure 8: Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project (1)



Source: ESCAP-AITD Regional Policy Dialog on Strengthening Connectivity in Southern Asia, November 2014, Prabir De, ASEAN India Centre, New Delhi

India's connectivity with Southeast Asia is the BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation), the only sub-regional grouping which includes countries in both South and Southeast Asia. BIMSTEC's focus is, therefore, on developing border links between these two regions, particularly those bordering Myanmar. An important component of the BIMSTEC Program is the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway (IMMTH), a 1360 kms road network connecting northeast India with Southeast Asia through Myanmar.

The benefit of this link for India is further accentuated by the Indian sponsored Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project (see Figure 8 below) which provides access to India's northeast (by sea from Kolkata) through the Sittwe Port in western Myanmar, then through an inland waterway between Sittwe and Kalatwa along the Kaladan River, and subsequently a 130 kms road to the Indian border town at Lawngatlai in Mizoram. (See also, Figures 9 and 10 below).

Figure 9: Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project (1)



Source: ESCAP-AITD Regional Policy Dialog on Strengthening Connectivity in Souther Asia, November 2014, Prabir De, ASEAN India Centre, New Delhi

Figure 10: Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project (2)



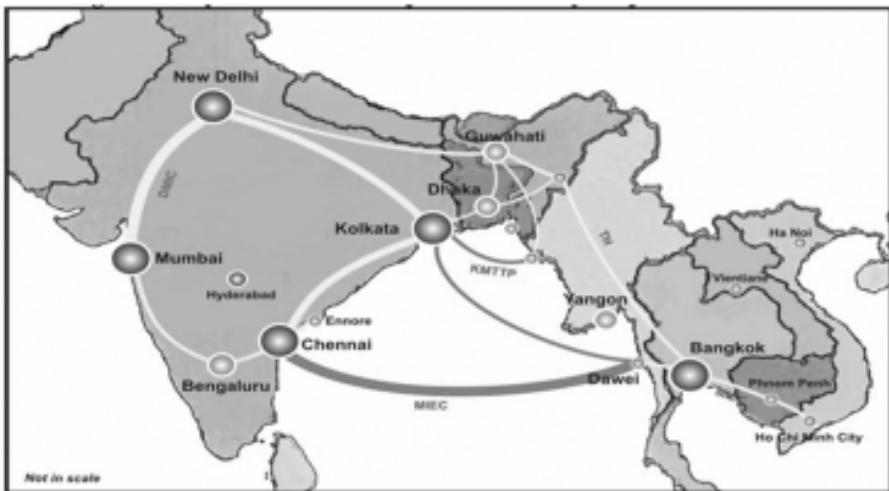
Source: ESCAP-AITD Regional Policy Dialog on Strengthening Connectivity in Souther Asia, November 2014, Prabir De, ASEAN India Centre, New Delhi.

Another important proposed connectivity between India and the Southeast is the Mekong India Economic Corridor, an initiative of the East Asia Summit (another inter regional grouping of ASEAN+6 which includes China, Japan, Korea, Australia, New Zealand, India—and now including the USA and Russia as well). This Corridor, is a far thinking initiative to link Chennai in Southern India to Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam. It would involve putting in a deep water port in Dawei in Myanmar and thence a highway to the Thai border which would connect with the existing East West and North South Economic Corridors already in place under the GMS program. Not only would this corridor cut the travel distance between India and the Mekong countries significantly (by over 1000 kms), enable the greater integration of production networks and supply chains in these countries, but also establish a new sea route to India, the Middle East and Europe from Southeast Asia (See Figure 11).

Railways

Even though considerable work remains to be done to connect India and Southeast Asia by road (most road links exist though they need to be upgraded and the missing links put in place), the situation with railway connectivity is considerably more challenging. There is currently no rail connectivity between South Asia and Southeast Asia, and rail connectivity within South Asia and within the GMS countries is also very limited. Like the Trans Asian Highway, the Trans

Figure 11: Mekong India Economic Corridor (MIEC): Chennai-Ho Chi Minh City



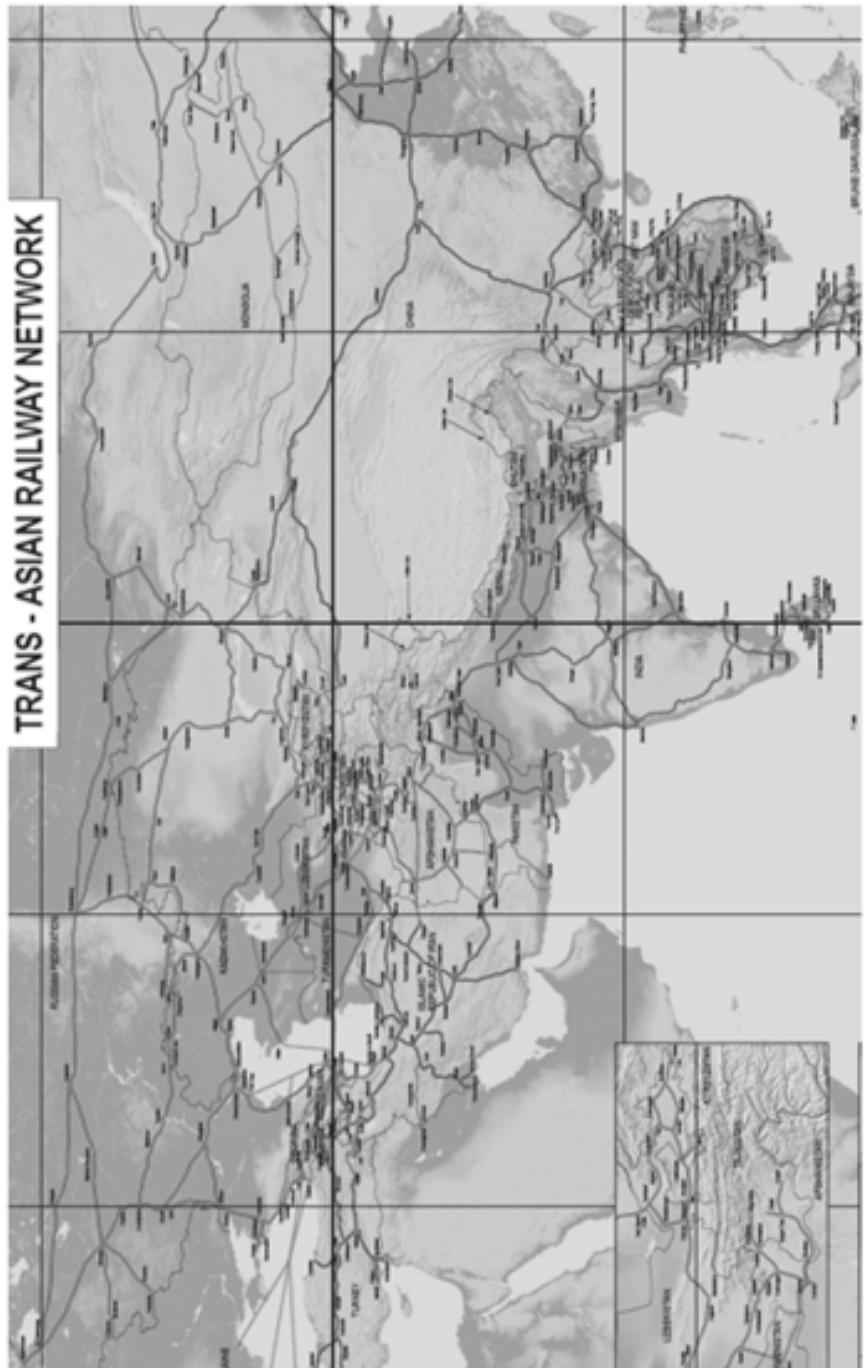
Source: RIS, "ASEAN India Connectivity Report: India Country Study"; Prabir De, August, 2012

Asian Railway Network (TAR) provides an Asia wide coverage spanning about 117,000 kms of railways 28 countries across the continent; this includes about 10,500 kms of missing links (see Figure 12).

Of particular concern to linkages between India and Southeast Asia is a missing link of about 350 kms between Jiripam in Manipur, India, and Kale in the Sagaing State of Myanmar. Several others connecting Myanmar onwards into Thailand and beyond, for a total distance of about 2500 kms (or almost a quarter of the total missing links in Asia as a whole) would also have to be constructed to complete the rail link between India and Southeast Asia (see Figure 13).

As part of its LEAP, India is planning a major rail link with Vietnam: connecting New Delhi with Hanoi. This will simultaneously serve several objectives: link Manipur with India's main railway corridor; link Imphal with Kale in Myanmar; and re-establish and renovate railway networks in Myanmar. Two routes for this link are being considered: Route I (see Figure 14) connects Delhi, Kolkata, and Siliguri through the "chicken's neck" to Hanoi/Haiphong Port in Vietnam through Myanmar, Thailand, and Cambodia. Route II takes southern diversion into Bangkok which would then further link up with Malaysia and Singapore (see Figure 15).

Figure 12: Trans Asian Railway Network



Source: http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/TAR%20map_GIS.pdf

Figure 13: Trans Asian Railway Network: Missing Links in Northeast India and Southeast Asia



Source: http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/TAR%20map_GIS.pdf

Figure 14: New Delhi-Hanoi Rail Link 1



Source: RIS, "ASEAN India Connectivity Report: India Country Study", Prabir De, August, 2012.

Figure 15: New Delhi-Hanoi Rail Link 2



Source: RIS, "ASEAN India Connectivity Report: India Country Study", Prabir De, August, 2012.

However, almost about 1000 kms of travel could be saved by avoiding going around the “chicken’s neck” through Indian territory and, instead, linking up directly with the Bangladesh Railways Network. This would, of course, need the conclusion of an India-Bangladesh Trade Transit Treaty, an initiative with significant economic benefits to both; however, significant political headwinds in Bangladesh still need to be resolved.

In any discussion of the railways as a connectivity option, it is important to recognize that they are probably significantly less economically attractive than road corridors. Several reasons may be cited: extensive missing rail links; and difficult terrain, significantly incomplete geological and technical information—

all of which mean that cost estimates, even if available, are tentative. Another equally important aspect to bear in mind is that each of the national railways concerned has significant performance challenges. Unless the national railways become profitable, it would be difficult to expect the regional links to be economically viable.

Maritime

Globally, about 70 per cent of total trade by value, and 80 per cent by volume move by sea and inland waterways. Similar proportions mark the trade between South and Southeast Asia, and it is likely that improvement in ports and port access has the greatest potential to improve connectivity between the two regions. Currently Kolkata, Chittagong, and Yangon are the major ports closest to connecting India and Southeast Asia. All of these are inland ports situated on major rivers (the Hooghly, Karnaphuli, and the Yangon Rivers respectively) with access to the Bay of Bengal. Despite their importance, each suffers from shallow channels, capacity limitations, operational inefficiencies, restrictions on road and rail access, and the hub and spoke feeder system that each follows. These significantly raise transportation costs

The economics of these ports is significantly compromised by these factors, most pressing of which that direct calls by large container ships are not possible. A first priority sea ports development in the Bay of Bengal should be able to attract such direct calls which would enable port-to-port container traffic, with the potential of either avoiding trans-shipments or switching to in-line trans-shipment.

Energy

Other than the shipment of coal and petroleum products, there is no energy trade between South and Southeast Asia. Yet, Southeast Asia has significantly larger natural gas endowments than South Asia, and could be a major source of this energy product for the latter. For example, India and Bangladesh have only 40 year's worth of their collective future demand while Southeast Asia has enough for about 200 years.

Some estimates indicate that Myanmar has oil reserves exceeding 3 billion barrels (bbl) while it currently produces only about 7 million bbl annually. Its confirmed gas reserves stand at about 18 tcf (probable 90 tcf), and a hydropower capacity of almost 40,000 MW. Such substantial energy endowments—plus its unique location at the bridgehead of South Asia and Southeast Asia—offers huge opportunities for substantial energy trade across its borders to Thailand and China as well as to India and Bangladesh.

Second only to China, India is a major destination for developing projects

under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). Prospective hydropower, say from Myanmar, could be used to replace some of India's thermal base generation, and help in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

However, in spite of obvious rationale for inter-regional energy trading, there has been very little, if any, accomplished so far. The barriers to such trade are many including: the technical (need for grid synchronization); unequal starting points of economic development of the countries (and, thus different domestic political compulsions); inadequate energy infrastructure (generating facilities, transmission lines, pipelines); distorted energy pricing and subsidy; regulatory regimes, environmental considerations, and constraints in constructing energy development projects.

Software: Trade Facilitation

Important as the development of the physical infrastructure (hardware) is, the latter will only be effective if accompanied by appropriate policies, processes and institutions (software). Devising common platforms and transportation policies which would enable vehicles of one country to pass to and through another, recognizing driving licenses of each other, common border infrastructure, one stop customs clearance, and customs harmonization would be some examples in the transportation sector. Similar software considerations are important for the energy sector as well in developing appropriate policy and institutional frameworks for energy trade.

Estimates of Benefits and Costs

A recent joint study by the ADB and the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADB/ADBI: "Connecting South Asia and Southeast Asia", 2015) estimated very significant benefits in greater integration between South and Southeast Asia amounting to some US\$568 billion for the two regions combined. These estimates are based on a scenario of "comprehensive integration", assuming : (i) the removal of all tariffs associated with trade between the two regions; (ii) a 50 per cent reduction in the non-tariff barriers; and (iii) a 15 per cent reduction in trade costs reflecting improved trade infrastructure and trade facilitation. Given the current state of play of trade between the two regions, these assumptions are judged to be quite achievable.

It seems clear in this study that the more populous South Asia would enjoy larger, absolute percentage gains than Southeast Asia: real income gains are estimated to be some US\$ 375 billion (8.9 per cent of GDP) for the former compared to US\$ 193 billion, (6.4 per cent of GDP) in 2030 for the latter. All South Asian countries enjoy substantial gains (India: 8.7 per cent) as do all Southeast Asian countries (to varying degrees, excepting Laos which shows a very

minimal contraction of -0.1 per cent. This is a reflection of the fact that Laos has very little trade with South Asia but significant amounts with its Southeast Asian neighbours. This diminishes slightly as the South Asia and Southeast Asia FTA kicks in.

On the other hand, the costs of linking the two regions through projects in transportation (roads, railways and ports) and energy trading amount to the significant US\$ 73 billion. These costs cover only the cross border infrastructure projects (either new ones or the up-gradation of existing border infrastructure) and do not include the cost of within border infrastructure projects, either in South or Southeast Asia. This amount of US\$ 73 billion is, of course, much less than the estimated benefits as discussed above, and is also a tiny fraction of the total infrastructure spending requirements for Asia as a whole (estimated to be some US\$ 800 billion annually).

Financing and Coordination Challenges

The financing of infrastructure projects is challenging. The amounts involved are usually significantly large to be funded by governments alone. On the other hand, private investors are often reluctant to go alone as big infrastructure projects involve long gestation periods, risks during implementation on issues such as unforeseen project delays, land acquisition, resettlement, etc. All these—as well as the information asymmetries between lenders and borrowers—make a public-private partnership one possible mode of financing infrastructure projects. These issues are further exacerbated when dealing with cross border projects as more than one sovereign entity is involved, and the incidence of benefits and costs are rarely, if ever, symmetrical between the concerned countries.

Coordinating the design and implementation of cross border projects is another challenge, and suitable institutional arrangements (which may be able to transcend national interests) are not always easy to put in place. Regional institutions (such as ASEAN, SAARC, SASEC or BIMSTEC) and international lending agencies (such as the ADB) can play an important proactive role. However, while financing and coordinating are obviously challenges, they need not be binding constraints. To make regional cross border projects happen ultimately requires political will, mutual trust, and statesmanship to be able to take a long term view of the benefits of cooperation, and proceed with the projects.

Security Implications of Greater Connectivity

Undoubtedly greater connectivity has its downsides as well. Illegal migration, human and drug trafficking, illegal trade in banned goods and substances, easier movement of insurgents across the borders—all become easier with greater connectivity and can pose considerable security threats to affected countries.

Like all other sovereign states, India has justifiable security apprehensions regarding greater connectivity. For example, there are concerns that if the railway link between Southeast Asia and India were to be established, an influx of illegal migrants and refugees from across the borders in Bangladesh and Myanmar may result. Myanmar's border challenges with both Bangladesh and Thailand could be exacerbated with easier connectivity between them, and India would very likely be the destination of people displaced or affected by those conflicts. Of even greater concern could be the possible (easier) movement of insurgents back and forth across the borders.

The North Eastern states of India are also sensitive and indeed vulnerable to shifts in the demographic composition of their population in the face of any large scale migration of people from across the Bangladesh borders. The influx of drug traffickers from the “Golden Triangle” areas of Myanmar, Thailand and Laos could pose severe challenges to the states in North Eastern India where the scourge of drug addiction has already become quite serious. Moreover, the easier movement across borders also makes it easier for transmission of diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

Thus, all these factors exacerbate the security concerns of any sovereign state. These are genuine concerns which can neither be ignored nor taken lightly. For policy makers, they have to be balanced against the benefits of greater connectivity. As noted above, greater cross border connectivity between South Asia and Southeast Asia would produce significant benefits for both regions—but more so for the former.

One could argue that, with or without connectivity, all the illegal acts mentioned above could still happen and, indeed, are happening. The issue is one of scale: how much easier would such illegal movements become with greater connectivity? If the benefits are deemed substantial, could not better policing and patrolling of borders mitigate (if not completely negate) some of these effects?

On the premise that no one is an island unto oneself, it has been argued that one cannot be safe in an unsafe neighbourhood in the same way as one cannot be rich in a poor neighbourhood. This thesis holds true for nation states as well. Improving the connectivity between neighbouring states results in each state investing in each other through greater trade, investment, and movements of people, goods and services.

If neighbours gain from regional cooperation, it is in their self interest to take steps to enhance rather than reduce security at their borders. Poverty is often a principal (if not the only) cause of many of the concerns (such as illegal migration, trafficking, etc.) discussed above; and if greater regional cooperation can increase incomes and reduce poverty (again this is, of course, by no means the only measure

for doing so), greater cross border connectivity should indeed lead to greater, not reduced, security.

Conclusion

In recent decades, both South and Southeast Asia have achieved significant economic successes. However, economic ties between them, though growing, have been limited. A major factor for this has been the ‘thick’ borders characterized by poor cross border connectivity.

Roads, railways and maritime links are inadequate both in terms of quantity and quality. Several missing links in the existing networks need to be filled. Associated trade facilitation measures (policies, processes of cross border movements, customs, and other non-tariff barriers) also need substantial enhancement. Moreover, greater economic cooperation and integration between the two regions will be in the interest of both, and has been a major driver of India’s Look East Policy of the 1990s. A necessary condition for achieving this is improved connectivity between the two regions.

For India looking East or Southeast, any land connectivity has to be through Bangladesh or Myanmar, both of which suffer from significant shortfalls in both the quantity and quality of physical infrastructure. The recent opening up of Myanmar after decades of relative isolation offers significant opportunities for enhanced connectivity between India and its South Eastern neighbours, and indeed with China to the east. Further, the Eastern and North Eastern states of India serve as a bridgehead to Southeast Asia and China. Thus, any connectivity of India with her neighbours and beyond would essentially need adequate high quality infrastructure within these states of India as well.

Security concerns about increased connectivity are often exaggerated. As a matter of fact, greater connectivity between India and Southeast Asia will enhance the movement of goods, services and people within and between these regions. This should diminish, rather than enhance, security concerns as neighbours get more invested in each other.

NOTES

1. Keynote Address by Sugata Bose, Gardiner Professor of History, Harvard University, at the Conference [“An Age in Motion: The Asian Voyages of Rabindranath Tagore”] May 11-13, 2010, Singapore, The Nalandā-Sriwijaya Centre, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore.
- . Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Volume 1 of Edwin Cannan’s Edition. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1776). p.165.

9

Debating Physical Connectivity between India and ASEAN: Economics versus Security

Sinderpal Singh

India's Look East Policy (LEP) is often regarded as a crucial shift in Indian foreign policy. It marked the Indian state's commitment to build stronger economic, political and strategic ties with the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). However, there is a sense that the Indian state has trepidations about India's North East Region (NER). This serves as India's land border with Southeast Asia, thereby playing a significant role in this project to build closer links to Southeast Asia. In fact, the relatively porous border between India and Myanmar in India's NER is occasionally viewed more as a liability than an opportunity. This essay seeks to understand the reasons for this view. It also attempts to explain how such perceptions impact on building closer relations between India and the countries of Southeast Asia.

The first section of this essay will attempt to locate the Indian state's approach to its northeast border via a brief discussion of the history of 'anxiety' amongst Indian political elites with respect to India's territorial borders. The second section will look specifically at how India's Northeast has been implicated in India's relations with its three key neighbours—Myanmar, China and Bangladesh—from 1947 till about 1990. The third section will look at developments since the early 1990's and chart the position of India's Northeast within the context of India's attempts to build closer ties with the member states of the ASEAN as part of its LEP.

The Indian State and India's Borders since 1947

Since Independence, the specific ways in which the Indian state has zealously guarded its territorial borders as part of its nation-building project has been well

documented in the literature.¹ The Indian political elite's preliminary encounter with the issue of territoriality occurred in the few years before Independence in 1947 by the claim for Pakistan and the status of the Indian princely states.

For Jawaharlal Nehru, in addition to the ideational implications of creating an independent Pakistan, the territorial implications of such a partition threatened the future viability of an independent Indian state in international politics. This weakness would stem from, among other factors, its territorial diminution. In Nehru's own words,

Whether India is properly to be regarded as one nation or two does not matter, for the modern idea of nationality has been almost divorced from statehood. The national state is too small a unit today and small states can have no independent existence. It is doubtful if even many of the larger national states can have any real independence. The national state is thus giving way to the multi-national state or to large federations.²

The prospect of the territorial diminution of a newly independent India was seen by Nehru, and many in the Congress party, as a significant setback for the party's political interests and goals in the aftermath of British withdrawal. For Nehru and the Congress party, independent India needed to retain the territorial boundaries of the British Raj because, without it, India would descend into a weak state in global affairs—quite without the influence and sovereign independence it deserved. Besides, a reduction of independent India's influence and stature due to its reduced territorial size, territorial partition would weaken India further through the disruption of administrative and economic links across India that had been developed during British rule.³

The eventual partition of India into two independent political units magnified this anxiety over territoriality and India's existence as a durable nation-state amongst Indian political elites, especially those in the Congress party. This anxiety acutely impacted upon the Congress party's view on the unresolved issue of the Indian princely states at India's independence in August 1947. It is a reflection of this existential anxiety that the Constitution of India contains provisions which do not permit the ceding of territory to another state or power without an amendment of the Indian Constitution, with the passing of the Amendment requiring a majority in the Indian Lok Sabha.⁴

The end of the Nehru era did not diminish this anxiety amongst Indian political elites about the durability of India's borders. The Indian state's approach to the East Pakistan crisis in 1971 demonstrates how this deep-seated anxiety about the viability of India's territorial borders was behind one of India's most significant foreign policy decisions. At the height of the civil war in Pakistan, millions of displaced refugees from East Pakistan crossed the border into the neighbouring Indian states of Tripura, Assam, and West Bengal.⁵ This created a

serious problem for the Indian state. Not only did the movement of such large numbers of refugees into India put enormous financial strains on the Indian state, it demonstrated the porous nature of India's territorial borders.⁶ Adding to this was Pakistani generals beginning to proclaim that the guerrilla soldiers who had crossed the border into India for refuge after attacking Pakistani soldiers in East Pakistan would be pursued into India and, if necessary, 'the war would be fought on Indian territory'.⁷ This was interpreted as a clear and direct threat to the integrity of India's territorial borders. In her public speeches, Indira Gandhi went to great lengths to locate the main source of the East Pakistan threat to India. To this end, she declared that

India will have to take whatever steps are necessary for the protection of the security of our *borders* and for the maintenance of our *integrity* and stability (emphasis added).⁸

Much of the literature on the creation of Bangladesh attributes Indian intervention in Pakistan's civil war to Indira Gandhi's pursuit of Indian 'hegemony' in the South Asian region. However, as Maya Chadda points out in her study of the Indian state, accounts that explain Indian intervention in East Pakistan in relation to the realpolitik motivations of Indira's venture to establish Indian hegemony in South Asia, 'confuse the outcome with motivation'.⁹ Therefore, although

it was in India's interest to weaken and reduce Pakistan in the region [...] this interest did not translate into action until after March 1971, when Pakistani armed action had sent a torrent of refugees into India. The steady stream of refugees virtually erased the boundaries between India and Pakistan.¹⁰

The importance of guarding the viability of India's territorial borders as a means of maintaining its sovereign status relates directly to the decision to intervene in Pakistan's civil war in this instance.

This acute anxiety about preserving the viability of India's territorial borders extends to contemporary Indian foreign policy. The Indian state's persistent desire to convert the dividing line between the Indian and Pakistani administered parts of Jammu and Kashmir into a *de jure* international border is evidence of this tendency.¹¹ This urge to endow permanence to India's territorial boundaries in Kashmir has, akin to the case of Indian intervention in East Pakistan in 1971, precipitated military conflict whenever the Indian political elite senses any instance of India's territorial boundaries being transgressed. The 1999 Kargil conflict was such an instance. The perception that the Pakistani military had attempted to unilaterally re-draw India's territorial boundaries in Jammu and Kashmir led to a national demand to restore the status quo, with some sections within India calling for the Indian military to annex Pakistan-administered Kashmir as a longer term solution to deal with Pakistan's persistent attempts to alter India's territorial frontiers.¹²

India's North-east and India's Neighbours till the 1990's: A History of Anxiety

India's porous north-east frontier has historically presented political leaders in Delhi with a similar, if not deeper anxiety. Only two percent of India's borders in the northeast are national—between the states of Assam and West Bengal. The rest of the borders are international: Assam-Bhutan and Bangladesh; Arunachal Pradesh-China and Myanmar; Nagaland-Myanmar; Manipur-Myanmar; Mizoram-Myanmar and Bangladesh; Tripura-Bangladesh; and Meghalaya-Bangladesh. This section will examine how the nature of this porous territorial border has translated into certain perceptions of India's North-east.

India's northeast region served as colonial India's border with colonial Burma; nevertheless it remained distinct from the rest of colonial India in important ways.¹³ Most importantly, the East Bengal Frontier Regulations of 1873 separated the region administratively from the rest of colonial India. The setting up of an Inner Line Permit under the 1873 regulations regulated the inflow of people from the rest of India across this boundary on the basis of protecting the 'traditional' lifestyles of the hill tribes in this region.¹⁴ This Inner Line Permit is still in force in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram. Beyond this Inner Line, the British authorities drew an Outer Line that served as the border of colonial India. In 1947, the newly independent state transformed this Outer Line into India's territorial boundaries.¹⁵ However, serious contestations to the integrity of these boundaries began even before Independence in 1947. The day before India's declaration of Independence, the Nagas in India declared independence from India and, aided by their brethren in Burma, began their insurgency against an Indian state yet to formally obtain independence from colonial rule.¹⁶

Since this declaration in 1947, the Nagas and other ethnic minorities in the northeast region sought to do two things. Certain groups representing these communities wanted to redraw India's territorial borders, and sought to locate their community outside the territorial boundaries of independent India. Other groups, however, wanted to do the perceived opposite—they wanted a more durable and less porous border between India and its neighbours in the northeast region. The latter desire stemmed from the perception that large scale migration across India's international borders in the northeast region was having an adverse impact on these communities. Such conflicting demands to both strengthen and re-draw India's northeast borders had implications beyond India's domestic politics. It also implicated India's relations with countries that shared borders with it in the northeast region.

The Tenuous Burma Frontier: Bilateral Relations, Insurgents and Refugees

At their respective inceptions as independent nation states, India and Burma—who share a one thousand six hundred and seventy kilometre land border in India's northeast region—had close bilateral ties. This good relationship was largely anchored in the close personal friendship between Prime Ministers Nehru and U Nu.¹⁷ Despite these warm ties, there were serious challenges to India's territorial borders with Myanmar. The Naga insurgency, based on the demand for a wider Indo-Burman homeland for the Nagas, was one such threat.¹⁸ This threat assumed greater significance in the context of Myanmar's own domestic challenges that ranged from secession to greater autonomy from various groups within Myanmar. The central government was reduced to having effective control of mainly the capital region, Rangoon, but barely any control of its border areas.¹⁹ This weak Burmese state, unable to protect its borders with India, was a liability for India's own territorial integrity. By taking advantage of the porous border, Naga rebels challenging the Indian state were able to seek sanctuary and supplies in Myanmar. They were transgressing India's borders wilfully, and this posed a serious threat in the perception of India's political leaders based in Delhi.

Regime change in Burma in 1962 signalled a qualitative change in bilateral relations with India. General Ne Win's rise to power was followed by new policies targeting 'foreign communities' in Burma. The settled Indian community in Burma was one such community and, by 1964, some three hundred thousand Indians had left Burma.²⁰ Besides a cooling of relations between the new military regime in Burma and the Government of India, this period ushered in developments that posed even greater threats to the sanctity of India's territorial boundaries with Burma.²¹ By 1966, the Naga National Council (NNC) established contacts with the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) which were located largely in the Kachin Hill Tracts of Myanmar.²² In addition, Mizo and Tripuri groups were also beginning to establish stronger links with various Burmese insurgent groups within Burma across the relatively porous India-Burma border.²³ At the same time, certain tribal groups in Burma belonging to the Kuki Chin group were also contesting the legitimacy of the India-Burma border in an attempt to merge lands claimed by them in Burma with their territorial claims within India.²⁴

Insurgents in both India and Burma were not the only threat to India's north-east frontier with Burma. In similar form to its relations with its other neighbours, the movement of refugees across the India-Burma border became a great cause of anxiety for India's political elite. The movements of refugees from Burma into India once again blurred the territorial boundaries between the two countries. In particular, the movement of Chin refugees from Burma has created a significant amount of local discontent in India's border state of Manipur.²⁵

Burmese authorities have, for decades, been perceived to be wilfully ignorant both to the movement of refugees across the India-Burma border as well as to the presence of anti-India groups operating out of the remote Naga, Patkai, and Lushai hills within Burma. This perceived stance, borne out of an inability as well as an unwillingness to control refugee movements and eject these insurgent groups, seems to have served the Burmese state well. This is largely because the Burmese state has viewed the presence of these insurgent groups to be potentially effective leverage vis-à-vis New Delhi. In pursuance of this goal, the Burmese military has allowed these groups to build up varied underground contacts in remote regions which are only nominally under the effective control of the Burmese state.²⁶

In the latter half of this decade, however, there were certain marked improvements as far as the Indian state's anxieties about its border with Burma were concerned. Firstly, India and Burma formally delineated their shared border in 1967. This was crucial from the perspective of the Indian state as it further legitimated the sanctity of India's territorial boundaries.²⁷ This delineation took place against the backdrop of a revival of bilateral relations between India and Burma. The burgeoning relationship between Indira Gandhi and General Ne Win was largely driven by the deteriorating relationship between Burma and China. Secondly, as an acknowledgement of India's angst about its territorial boundaries, the Burmese regime extended some amount of cooperation towards preventing Naga and Mizo groups (fighting Indian security forces) from utilising Burmese territory as a sanctuary.²⁸

Such improvements in bilateral relations and their positive impact on the legitimacy of India's borders with Burma suffered a crucial setback by the democratic uprising in Burma in 1988.²⁹ The Indian state became one of the fiercest critics of the military government in Rangoon, and relations steadily deteriorated from this point.³⁰ India's fierce criticism of the Burmese military regime at this point was also allied with India's support for pro-democracy Burmese students as well as the Kachin and Chin rebels fighting the Burmese military regime.³¹ In response to this, the ruling regime in Burma increased their support for anti-India insurgents—like the People's Liberation Army of Manipur (PLA), and the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA).³²

The Border with Bangladesh: War, Refugees, and Insurgency

The civil war in Pakistan and India's role in the formation of the state of Bangladesh in 1971-72 has already been briefly discussed in the first section. More crucially, it has been demonstrated how the movement of refugees across the borders into India at the height of Pakistan's civil war led to increasing Indian concerns about the viability of India's territorial borders. Given the eventual Indian military intervention that led to the formation of the state of Bangladesh, relations

between the Indian state and the new Bangladeshi government were initially very good. The close personal relationship between the leader of the Bangladeshi independence movement, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and Indira Gandhi further fostered the very close ties between the countries at the birth of Bangladesh. In fact, from 1971 to 1975, Bangladesh became the largest single recipient of Indian aid.³³

Equally, if not more significant was the signing of the Twenty-Five Year Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation between the two countries on May 19, 1972.³⁴ This treaty was meant to frame the future of India-Bangladesh relations as close allies. However, the spirit, if not the letter, of the treaty began to unravel rapidly after 1975.³⁵ The death of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman through an army coup in that year led to a fundamental change domestically within Bangladesh, and gradually, in its relationship with India.³⁶ From 1975 onwards, the two countries became increasingly estranged, with Bangladesh accusing the Indian government of harbouring and supporting groups opposed to the ruling regime in Bangladesh.³⁷ Despite the Indian state's vigorous and persistent denials, relations between the two countries continued their downhill spiral during this period.

Not surprisingly, the movement of people across the India-Bangladesh border has played a vital role in shaping bilateral relations. In the Indian view, the phenomenon of large-scale 'illegal' migration from Bangladesh across their shared, porous border has had major negative consequences for the sanctity of India's territorial borders. Since the late 1970s, the Indian state has repeatedly complained of the phenomenon of large-scale migration from Bangladesh into the Indian frontier states of West Bengal, Assam and Tripura. In the state of Assam specifically, this has led to political agitation against the scale of such 'illegal' large-scale migration, in a genuine belief among the local Assamese political parties that they and their ethnic kin are being made a minority in their own land.³⁸ Indian authorities have repeatedly claimed that Bangladeshi authorities have not done enough to stem the inflow of 'illegal' migration into India. Successive governments in Bangladesh have consistently denied these claims.³⁹

Besides refugees and economic migrants, the crossing of the Indo-Bangladesh border by insurgents in the Northeast opposed to the Indian state has been a major source of concern for successive Indian governments. Before the formation of Bangladesh, Mizo and Naga insurgents crossed this border regularly to seek sanctuary in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) as well as to receive military and financial support from Pakistani authorities in (then) East Pakistan.⁴⁰ Taking advantage of the friendly relations between the two countries in the aftermath of Bangladesh's independence, Indian intelligence agencies aided Bangladesh's new government to flush out these insurgents from the CHT between 1971 and 1972. This served to redress an important source of anxiety for India's political leaders.⁴¹

However, reflecting the downturn in bilateral relations after the removal of Mujibur Rehman in Bangladesh in 1975, both countries began to provide sanctuary and aid rebel groups opposed to the governments of Bangladesh and India respectively. India's intelligence services are alleged to have armed the *Shanti Bahini*, the military wing of the United People's Party in the CHT.⁴² In response—and because of the new regime's animosity towards the Indian state—Bangladesh's political leadership and security forces facilitated the movement of anti-India insurgents across the Indo-Bangladesh border. By 1976, the Mizo National Front (MNF) had set up bases and its 'tactical headquarters' in the CHT within Bangladesh.⁴³ This trend continued into the 1980's. By 1985, the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA)—formed in 1979 with the aim of securing an independent Assam by ending 'Indian colonial rule' had extensive training camps and sanctuary in Bangladesh.⁴⁴ By the late 1980's, Bangladeshi authorities—allegedly with assistance from Pakistan's intelligence services, namely the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)—were facilitating the ULFA's building of a vast financing network to fund its insurgency against the Indian state.⁴⁵

As a clear symbol of the Indian state's anxieties about its territorial borders with Bangladesh, the Indian government approved the fencing of the Indo-Bangladesh border in 1986.⁴⁶ Although no significant progress was made in erecting this fence till about 2000, this fence clearly represented the Indian state's deep desire to secure India's territorial boundaries.

India and China: An Unfinished Border War

In 1947, the newly independent Indian state inherited a four thousand and fifty six kilometre frontier with a neighbouring China that was still in the throes of its own civil war. From the perspective of India's political leaders, the de facto frontier that existed between colonial India and China—marked by the crest line of the Himalayan Ranges—was India's 'natural' northern border.⁴⁷ The victory of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in China's civil war in 1949 and the Chinese state's annexation of Tibet in 1950 initially did not signal any immediate major challenge to the 'natural' frontier that seemingly had existed between India and China for millennia. However, eventually, the annexation of Tibet did potentially challenge the place of Tibet as a traditional buffer between colonial India and China, and left India's political leaders relatively concerned.⁴⁸ Indian and Chinese troops were now facing each other across the India-China border without the benefit of Tibet as a buffer between them.

India's recognition of China's position in Tibet was encoded in the Panchsheel Agreement of 1954, signed by the two states. This effectively signalled the end of Tibet's status as a buffer space between the two newly independent Asian states.⁴⁹ This was also the phase of great euphoria for bilateral relations between these two

Asian states. Although China's border with India remained un-demarcated, Nehru seemed to assume—and publicly give the impression—that the two countries will eventually reach a settlement through negotiations.⁵⁰ This did not happen and, in October 1962, Indian and Chinese military forces engaged in armed hostilities that ended a month later, with Chinese military forces taking control of two areas in the disputed area (the Rezang La pass in the western theatre and Tawang in the eastern theatre). Chinese forces then withdrew from these two areas, signalling an end to the hostilities.⁵¹ This war left a lasting impact on India's political class. As one Indian observer puts it, 'India's humiliation during the India-China war of 1962, however, was to leave a lasting scar on the Indian psyche'.⁵²

In a similar pattern to its other neighbours on its north-east frontier, a deterioration in the India-China bilateral relationship had implications for the rebels groups in India's north-east. By the mid to late 1960's, it was apparent to India's security agencies and politicians in Delhi that China was aiding Naga insurgents by providing them refuge as well as arms in their armed battle with the Indian state.⁵³ By the late 1960's, the Chinese government was also providing funds and training to the Mizo rebels, especially once the MNF took up the cause of separatism. The role played by Kachin rebels—who were waging their own armed campaign against the Burmese state—in linking the movement of the MNF from Yunnan in China to India's north-east via underground connections once again demonstrated the porous and fragile nature of India's north-east boundaries.⁵⁴

Till the late 1980's, there was little progress on the resolution of this border dispute despite the two countries holding eight rounds of talks between 1981 and 1989.⁵⁵ The Indian border state of Arunachal Pradesh remains a symbol of the Indian state's deep anxiety about its north-east frontier. Given China's continued claims of this region and its frequent 'incursions' into Arunachal Pradesh, this sense of anxiety persists till the present day.⁵⁶

India's Look East Policy: India, the Northeast, and ASEAN

In order to understand more clearly the debate on whether India's Northeast is a gateway or a boundary, it is imperative to look at the factors that gave rise to the discourse of 'connecting' India to Southeast Asia via India's Northeast.

There is a huge amount of literature on India's Look East Policy (LEP) and this section will confine itself to outlining how the LEP impacted the Indian state's management of its northeast region.⁵⁷ The economic imperative was a central impetus for the Indian state to embark on the LEP. The LEP was meant to complement and aid India's own economic liberalization domestically in the early 1990's. The Indian state foresaw higher levels of trade with countries in Southeast

Asia as well as an increased amount of economic investment from Southeast Asia into India.⁵⁸ As a result, one initial policy change was the Indian government's decision to modify its approach towards Myanmar. From its earlier position of supporting the pro-democracy movement in Myanmar, from 1993 onwards the Indian government began to embrace ASEAN's "constructive engagement" policy towards Myanmar. Besides the seeming need to counteract the overwhelming Chinese influence in Myanmar, the Indian government saw two other incentives to improve relations with the authorities in Myanmar. The first was to develop economic links to acquire a share of the Myanmar market for Indian goods; and the second was to restrain the support that insurgents in India's Northeast were obtaining from the ruling regime in Myanmar.⁵⁹

This second incentive became clear in 1995 when, as part of India's improving relationship with Myanmar, India's then Chief of Army Staff, General B.C. Joshi, visited Myanmar to discuss issues related to insurgency in India's Northeast. This was followed by a joint India-Myanmar counterinsurgency operation known as 'Operation Golden Bird', in which sixty ULFA and other insurgents along the Mizoram-Myanmar border were killed over a forty-four day offensive.⁶⁰ This joint operation, although beset by certain problems, was a symbol of bilateral co-operation in dealing with border transgressions.⁶¹ India's improving ties with Myanmar assumed even greater importance in the context of India's LEP when Myanmar became a full-fledged member of ASEAN in 1997.⁶² India now shared a land border with an ASEAN member state, and this development was historically significant.

However, despite the improvement of India's ties with Myanmar, and Myanmar's admission into ASEAN in 1997, India's northeast region did not explicitly feature as part of India's LEP at this initial stage. Several observers of India's foreign policy view this period as the first phase of India's LEP⁶³

The second phase of India's LEP, beginning approximately in the early 2000's, involved building a closer relationship with Southeast Asian countries that went beyond merely forging closer economic and trade relations. In this phase, the Indian state aimed to cement growing economic and trade ties with a deeper strategic engagement with countries in the larger East Asian region, namely the ASEAN states, Japan and South Korea.⁶⁴ At this point, there was another emerging notion associated with this second phase of India's LEP, which was gaining ground amongst Indian political leaders. This emerging notion of physical connections between India and Southeast Asia and to the wider East Asian and even Asia-Pacific region was plainly articulated by former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in 2004 when he declared that

Our North-Eastern states are India's gateway to ASEAN countries ... Our growing interaction with ASEAN is critical to fulfilling the promise of the 21st century being

an Asian Century, with the main engines of the world economy emerging in the Asia-Pacific Region. We want our North Eastern States to be in the forefront of these interactions, and to reap in full measure the benefits of enhanced peace and prosperity.⁶⁵

India's north-east region was supposed to serve, in this narrative, as a 'gateway' to physically connect India to Southeast Asia and beyond. This emerging notion of India's northeast region as a land gateway to Southeast Asia gained enhanced credibility with the release of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity, a document which was adopted by ASEAN member states at the 17th ASEAN Summit in 2010.⁶⁶ This plan envisaged an ASEAN Community by 2015 that would be characterised by bringing 'peoples, goods, services and capital closer together' in the ASEAN region.⁶⁷ The plan also sought to outline the need for greater physical connectivity not only within ASEAN but between ASEAN and other sub-regions within Asia. In the case of India-ASEAN physical connectivity, the focus was on two regions of India: India's southern and northeast regions.⁶⁸ While India's southern region was meant to connect to Southeast Asia via the former's seaports, India's northeast region was the designated land link to Southeast Asia. A range of initiatives and projects have been undertaken to further this aim of linking India's northeast region to Myanmar. These include the India-Myanmar Friendship Road link, the Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project, and the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, amongst others.⁶⁹

India's NER and ASEAN: Gateway or Boundary?

The first part of this essay discussed briefly the specific manner in which Indian political leaders have historically constructed the character of India's territorial borders, while the second part discussed India's northeast region as a crucial case study of such constructions of Indian territorial integrity and the history of anxiety this entailed. The third section looked at how India's LEP in the early 1990's drove the initial discourse of 'connecting' India with Southeast Asia. However, this early discourse was vague, and largely a broad articulation of the need to build closer economic ties between India and the member states of ASEAN. However, in the 2000's, a more concrete articulation of 'connectivity' began to emerge. India's Northeast came to be increasingly viewed as India's land bridge or gateway to ASEAN. Myanmar's position as ASEAN's frontier state in this discourse of India-ASEAN land 'connectivity' meant that India-Myanmar land connectivity was crucial for the larger goal of India-ASEAN connectivity. This last section will argue that this relatively recent enthusiasm and optimism about 'open borders' and land connectivity between India and Myanmar ignores a deeper structural concern.⁷⁰

This enthusiasm and optimism needs to be tempered by an appreciation of

an inherent tension in Indian foreign policy with respect to the role of its northeast region as part of India's LEP. On a national level, greater connectivity—especially better land connectivity between India and Myanmar—is viewed largely as a positive development. In simply trade volume terms, there is broad consensus that such connectivity will help aid the India's economy.⁷¹ At the level of India's northeast region specifically, it is widely agreed in India that greater land connectivity with Myanmar will lead to the region's economic development based on the assumption that greater connectivity will lead to greater economic investment in the region, which would result in greater economic growth.⁷² Associated with such assumptions of economic growth and prosperity, both nationally and regionally, is another assumption: that such economic development and prosperity will translate into reduced levels of insurgency against the Indian state in the northeast region.⁷³

However, besides the potential benefits, greater land connectivity between India and Myanmar has potentially significant negative consequences for the Indian state. Improving land connectivity between the two countries can potentially ease the movement of economic migrants, insurgent groups, clandestine funds as well as illegal arms across the India-Myanmar border. On the migrant front alone, more recently, there is already significant disquiet in the state of Mizoram about the increasing number of Chin migrants from Myanmar engaged in crossing this border.⁷⁴ In addition to the issue of migrants from Myanmar into India's northeast region, these assumptions about the multiple benefits accruing from greater land connectivity between India and Myanmar fail to adequately appreciate the crucial role of Bangladesh in this enterprise. Given the northeast region's tenuous land link with the rest of India via the very narrow Siliguri land corridor (otherwise known as the 'Chicken's Neck'), overland transit rights for goods to move between Myanmar and India via Bangladesh is vital.⁷⁵ To overcome this hurdle, the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Facility has been designed essentially to bypass Bangladesh by linking the Indian port of Kolkata with the Sittwe port in western Myanmar, in the Arakan state. The Arakan state (formerly known as the Rakhine state) has, historically, had a very difficult relationship with the Burman-dominated polity of Myanmar.⁷⁶ Internally, in the Arakan state at the present moment, local leaders have still not arrived with the central government in Myanmar on an agreement to implement an enduring end to hostilities.⁷⁷ The Kaladan alternative is not only a more circuitous and expensive alternative to procuring overland goods transit rights from Bangladesh; it is also dependent on the tenuous and un-resolved political future of the Arakan state within contemporary Myanmar.

Beyond the specific issues related to building land connectivity between India's northeast region and Southeast Asia, specifically Myanmar, there is a larger tension

within the Indian government's LEP in this specific connectivity project. This larger tension, alluded to in the beginning of this essay, is between the discourses of cross-border 'connectivity' on the one hand, and the enduring practices of securing India's land borders on the other. Thus, while in 2004 former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh asserted publicly that India's Northeast states were India's 'gateway' to ASEAN, in January 2007—on a delegation led by India's then External Affairs Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, to Myanmar—both sides discussed the manner in which their common border could be more closely policed, with border fencing being mooted as one possible option of securing it.⁷⁸ Besides the flow of insurgents fighting the Indian state, the securitisation of India's border with Myanmar has been based on the unofficial (and thus illegal) flow of trade, arms, and narcotics across this border. This tension between the border serving as a gateway or a boundary is perceptible at two levels. The first is the tension between the central Indian state and specific northeast states. For example while road connectivity is a constant theme, and even though the re-opening of the Stilwell Road (also known as the Ledo Road) has been at the forefront of the local political agenda of the northeast states for years (specifically Assam and Arunachal Pradesh), successive central governments in India have dithered over re-opening this land connection from India into Myanmar, and subsequently to Yunnan province in China. Most recently, there are clear signals that the Indian government is still undecided on whether to re-open the Stilwell Road, even though only 61 kilometres of the road runs within India, and work is already underway to open the Myanmar-China part of this road link (which, in comparison, traverses 1,035 kilometres in Myanmar and 640 kilometres in China).⁷⁹

The second seeming tension is between the different agencies of the Indian state and their apparently divergent perceptions about the function of the India-Myanmar border. On the one hand, India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) constantly espouses the benefits of 'connectivity', including land connectivity. It relates these to the cause of stronger ASEAN-India relations as well as to the general economic improvement of the citizenry of both India and ASEAN. On the other side of the spectrum, India's intelligence agencies see open borders as a major threat to the Indian state. To put it more specifically, in the opinion of some sections of India's intelligence agencies, 'softening borders, building trade links obscures the fundamentally adversarial relationship (and) it just leaves everyone confused'.⁸⁰ This inter-agency tension at the heart of the Indian state drives, to a certain extent, the continued confusion about the role of India's border with Myanmar.⁸¹ The central tension between it being a gateway or a boundary thus remains unresolved in India's LEP.

Conclusion

At its very inception in 1947, the Indian state inherited an entrenched anxiety. This anxiety concerned the securing of its territorial borders, in particular its land borders. India's land borders in the northeast presented the Indian state with a particularly acute variety of this anxiety. This stemmed largely from the tenuous land link of the northeast to the rest of the Indian mainland, the extensive international borders India shared with three of its neighbouring states, and the varied attempts by groups within and outside India's Northeast to re-draw India's territorial boundaries. Even as the Northeast became part of India's LEP, and the seeming driving force for 'connectivity' with ASEAN, there remains a fundamental tension between the discourse of the Northeast serving as a bridge to ASEAN (via Myanmar) and the imperative to secure and police India's borders in the Northeast. As set out in the last section of this chapter, it remains unclear if attempts to improve land connectivity with Myanmar are merely the latest manifestations of this predisposition to secure the Northeast as India's frontier. For actual progress in building closer 'connectivity' between India and ASEAN, this broader tension in Indian policy needs to be understood and recognized.

NOTES

1. See Sankaran Krishna, *Postcolonial Insecurities: India, Sri Lanka and the Question of Nationhood* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); more recently, see Priya Chacko, *Indian Foreign Policy: The Politics of Postcolonial Identity from 1947 to 2004* (New York: Routledge, 2012); and Sinderpal Singh, 'Border Crossings and Islamic Terrorists': Representing Bangladesh in Indian Foreign Policy during the BJP Era', *India Review*, Vol. 8 (2), 2009, pp.144-62.
2. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, (New Delhi: Penguin, 2008), p. 531.
3. For an in-depth discussion of the economic and administrative disruptions as a result of the territorial partition in 1947, in both the Punjab and Bengal, see Tan Tai Yong and Gyanesh Kudaisya, *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 141-163 and 204-220.
4. See Articles 73 and 253 of the Indian Constitution at <http://lawmin.nic.in/coi.htm> (Accessed on November 06, 2015).
5. In all, nine million refugees entered Indian soil during this period. This figure is taken from R.K. Murthy's *The Cult of the Individual: A Study of Indira Gandhi* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1977), p. 67. Indira Gandhi compared the number of refugees who had come into India from East Pakistan to the 'population of some of the countries of Europe, such as Austria and Belgium'. This quotation is an excerpt from her speech to the National Press Club, Washington, November 5, 1971. See Indira Gandhi, *India: The Speeches and Reminiscences of Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1975), p.163
6. It cost the Indian Government US\$3 million a day to feed and house the incoming refugees. See Dom Moraes Mrs. *Gandhi* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1980), p. 187.
7. Ibid. p. 190. These were the words of the military commander in charge of East Pakistan, General Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi.
8. Pupul Jayakar, *Indira Gandhi: An Intimate Biography* (New York: Pantheon, 1993), p. 173.
9. Maya Chadda, *Ethnicity, Security and Separatism in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 87.

10. Ibid. p. 87.
11. See Joseph E. Schwartzberg, 'An American Perspective II', *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, 22(1) 1995, p. 82.
12. Sinderpal Singh, *India in South Asia: Domestic Identity Politics and Foreign Policy from Nehru to the BJP* (New York & Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), pp. 106-7.
13. 'Burma' is used in this paper in reference to the period before 1989, after which period the reference used is 'Myanmar'.
14. Alexander Mackenzie, *History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East Frontier of Bengal* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), Appendix B, pp. 395-8.
15. Ramachandra Guha, *India after Gandhi* (London: Macmillan Press, 2007), p. 173.
16. Marcus Franke, *War and Nationalism in South Asia: the Indian State and the Nagas* (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), pp. 66-80.
17. Richard Butwell, *U Nu of Burma* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1963), p. 186.
18. Dinesh Kotwal, 'The Naga Insurgency: The Past and the Future', *Strategic Analysis*, 24(4), 2000, pp. 751-72.
19. Mary P. Callahan, *Making Enemies: War and State Building in Burma* (New York: Cornell University Press; Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004), pp. 114-44.
20. See Martin Smith, *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1991), pp. 43-4, 56-7. In 1957, Indians comprised 19 percent of the population of Rangoon, Burma's capital. Figures taken from Tin Maung Maung Than, 'Some aspects of Indians in Rangoon', in K.S. Sandhu and A. Mani (eds.) *Indian Communities in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: ISEAS, 1993), p. 591.
21. The Indian state's anxieties about its territorial integrity were especially acute during the 1960's. China's perceived annexation of Indian territory in 1962, and Pakistan's seeming attempts to do likewise in 1965, heightened these anxieties about maintaining the integrity of India's territorial borders. For a very recent discussion of the 1962 border war with China, see Claude Arpi, *1962 and the McMahon Line Saga* (Frankfort, Illinois and New Delhi: Lancer Publishers, 2013). For an Indian diplomatic perspective on the 1965 conflict with Pakistan, see R.D. Pradhan, *1965 War: The Inside Story—Defence Minister Y.B. Chavan's Diary of the India-Pakistan War* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2007).
22. For details, see Renaud Eggeret, 'Instability at the Gate: India's Troubled Northeast and its External Connections', CSH Occasional Paper, No. 16, 2006. p.96.
23. Ibid. p. 96.
24. Sreeradha Datta, 'Security of India's Northeast: External Linkages', *Strategic Analysis*, 24 (8), 2000, p. 1506.
25. Ibid, p. 1504.
26. Renaud Eggeret, 'India's Ambitions in Burma: More Frustration than Success? *Asian Survey*', 48 (6), 2008, p. 940.
27. For an examination of how such inter-state agreements on boundary delimitation impacted the Nagas and their sense of home and identity, see Kekhriesituo Yhome, 'Politics of Region: The making of Nagas's identity during the colonial and post-colonial era', *Borderlands e-journal*, 6(3), 2007, http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol6no3_2007/yhome_region.htm (Accessed on November 06, 2015).
28. For details, see Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Reports, 1966-67* at <http://mealib.nic.in/reports/1966-67.pdf>, p.5. (Accessed on November 06, 2015).
29. For details of this event and its relevance in a broader comparative context, see Nick Thompson, "What makes a revolution? Burma's Revolt of 1988 and a Comparative Analysis of the Revolutions of the Late 1980's", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 22 (1), 1999, pp. 33-52.

30. In fact, by 1989, All-India Radio stabled a Burmese language program called ‘Voice of the Burmese People’, which strongly condemned the “power crazy” regime in Rangoon. For details, see David I. Steinberg, ‘International rivalries in Burma: the rise of economic competition’, *Asian Survey*, 30(6), 1990, p. 598.
31. In fact, during the late 1980’s and early 1990’s these different groups were welcomed in India’s North-east—and even Delhi—after often very dramatic treks through the jungles. For details, see Renaud Eggeret, ‘India’s Ambitions in Burma’, op. cit., p. 940.
32. Andrew Selth, ‘Burma and the Strategic Competition between India and China’, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 19 (2), 1996, p. 218.
33. In 1975, total Indian aid to Bangladesh was Rs. 299.88 crore. This compared very favorably against India’s total aid to Nepal and Bhutan since the 1950’s, which was about Rs. 305.32 crore. See Vernon M. Hewitt, *The International Politics of South Asia* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 34.
34. For details of this treaty, see S.S. Bhindra, *Indo-Bangladesh Relations* (New Delhi: Deep and Deep, 1982), p.20.
35. Harsh V. Pant, “India and Bangladesh: will the twain ever meet”, *Asian Survey*, 47(2), 2007, pp. 231-49.
36. See Yasmine Murshed and Nazim Kamran Choudhury, ‘Bangladesh’s Second Chance’, *Journal of Democracy*, 8(2), 1997, p. 75. For a detailed discussion of the changing place and politics of ‘Islamism’ within Bangladeshi politics since the early 1980s, see Ali Riaz, “‘God Willing’: The Politics and Ideology of Islamism in Bangladesh”, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 23 (1-2), 2003, pp. 301–20.
37. Vernon M. Hewitt, *The International Politics of South Asia*, op. cit. p. 36. For a more detailed exposition of the changing nature of domestic politics and identity in Bangladesh in this period of transition and beyond, see Ahmed Saifuddin, *The Roles of Religion and National Identity in Bangladesh*, Finland: Abo Akademi University Press, 2000, pp. 175–209.
38. Such migration into Assam predates even Indian independence, with one noted authority on the subject placing in-migration into Assam between 1901 and 1971 at about 7.4 million, out of a total population of about 15 million in 1971. See Myron Weiner, *Sons of the Soil: Migration and Ethnic Conflict in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); See also his, ‘The Political Demography of Assam’s Anti-Immigration Movement’, *Population and Development Review*, 9 (2), 1985, p. 283. For specific details of how this migration has led to political turmoil in the state of Assam, see Sanjib Baruah, ‘Immigration, Ethnic Conflict and Political Turmoil; Assam, 1979–1985’, *Asian Survey*, 26 (11), 1986, pp. 1184–206. On the other hand, the official Census of India, 2001, registers the number of all Bangladeshi migrants into India at 3,084,826, with Bangladeshis migrating to Assam specifically at only 114,844. The Census also notes that there are about 8.2 million Muslims in Assam, out of a total of about 26.5 million. The largest religious group was Hindu, with about 11.29 million persons. See *Census of India, 2001*, Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India, <http://censusindia.gov.in/2011-common/censusdataonline.html>. (Accessed on November 06, 2015).
39. For example, the then Indian Foreign Secretary, the late J. N. Dixit, relates that, in May 1992, in a personal meeting between the Indian Prime Minister Narashima Rao and the Bangladesh Prime Minister, Khaleda Zia, the latter flatly denied any claims pertaining to large-scale illegal migration from Bangladesh into India. See J. N. Dixit, *My South Block Years: Memoirs of a Foreign Secretary* (New Delhi: UBS Publishers, 1997), p. 158.
40. Dinesh Kotwal, ‘Instability Parameters in Northeastern India’, *Strategic Analysis*, 24 (1), 2000, p. 140.
41. Renaud Eggeret, ‘Instability at the Gate’, op. cit., p. 112.
42. The United People’s Party aim was to secure autonomy for groups in the CHT. For details,

- see M.Q. Zaman, 'Crisis in the Chittagong Hill Tracts: Ethnicity and Integration', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 17 (3), January 16, 1982, p. 78.
43. Subir Bhaumik, *Insurgent Crossfire: Northeast India* (New Delhi: Lancer Publications, 2008), p. 200.
 44. Udayon Misra, 'ULFA: Beginning of the End', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 44 (52), December 26 2009–January 1, 2010, pp. 13-16; Archana Upadhyay, 'The "Infiltrator" Issue', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40 (28), July 9-15, 2005, pp. 3002-3004.
 45. Taj Hashmi, 'Transnational Security Dynamics and Exigencies: Pakistan and Bangladesh', *Peace and Security Studies*, 4 (2), 2011, pp.5-6.
 46. Reece Jones, 'Geopolitical boundary narratives, the global war on terror and border fencing in India', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 34 (3), 2009, p. 291.
 47. For an Indian perspective of the India-China border at the point of India's Independence, see M.L. Sali, *India-China Border Dispute* (New Delhi: APH Publishing, 1998), p. 70.
 48. In fact, the occupation of Tibet by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) caused enough concern for Prime Minister Nehru to set up the 'North and North-Eastern Border Committee' under the chairmanship of the deputy Defence Minister, General Himmat Singh. See also, Steven Hoffman, *India and the China Crisis* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 31-2.
 49. Dawa Norbu, 'Tibet in Sino-Indian Relations: the Centrality of Marginality', *Asian Survey*, 37 (11), 1997, p. 1080.
 50. For an Indian view of Nehru's seeming 'naïveté' in approaching the border issue with China, see Parshotam Mehra, 'India's border dispute with China: Revisiting Nehru's approach', *International Studies*, 42 (3&4), 2005, pp. 357-65.
 51. One of the most comprehensive studies of the 1962 war is the 'revisionist' account by Neville Maxwell, blaming Nehru's rigid posture to the border issue for China's decision to initiate the border war. See Neville Maxwell, *India's China War*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1970. For a somewhat more sympathetic view of Nehru, and India's role in the conflict, see Steven A. Hoffman, *India and the China Crisis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).
 52. Swaran Singh, 'India-China Relations: Perception, Problems, Potential', *South Asian Survey*, 15 (1), 2008, p. 84.
 53. For details, see C. Chintamani, 'India-China Relations, January–February 1969', *China Report*, 5 (2), 1969, pp. 44-8.
 54. Renaud Egretteau, 'India and China Vying for influence in Burma: a New Assessment', *India Review*, 7 (1), 2008, p. 46
 55. For more details of these talks, see Sumit Ganguly, 'The Sino-Indian Border Talks 1981–1989: a View from Delhi', *Asian Survey*, 29 (12), 1989, pp. 1123-35.
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10

The Impact of Terrorism and Organised Crime on Asian Economies: Implications for India

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This chapter studies the relationship between terrorism, organised crime and the Indian economy. It identifies a pattern of ‘retro-causality’, wherein the often-assumed relationship between cause and effect can be reversed to arrive at the precisely same outcome. Focusing on the issue of cross-border terrorism, the chapter argues that the economic liberalization of 1991 created both opportunities and incentives for Pakistani jihadists and their state patrons to conduct major attacks on Indian cities. As the Indian Republic continues on its path to prosperity, it needs to acquire punitive capabilities to deal with further such attacks. Thus far, its policy of relying primarily on international institutions, so-called ‘strategic partners’, or high economic growth to keep its citizens safe has yielded poor results. There can be no security unless soft power is accompanied by hard power, and wealth by muscle.

The chapter does not examine indigenous strands of terrorism, such as Maoism or ethno-nationalism in the Northeast. It only focuses on jihadism emanating from Pakistan, because this threat is the gravest that India faces, short of a full-blown war. While the Maoists might indeed be the country’s biggest *internal* security concern, as former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh claimed, Pakistani terrorists pose a bigger problem overall. With their foreign sanctuary in a nuclear-armed rogue state, and a recruiting and funding base that extends globally, they are in essence untouchable.¹ Indigenous militants can be tolerated, because despite their depredations, they have local roots which connect with Indian societal values, even while they oppose the Indian government. Foreign jihadists on the other hand, are only committed to causing mayhem, knowing they will suffer no consequences.

The chapter begins by situating cross-border terrorism within its proper geostrategic context: that of a politically-stunted Pakistan seeking to externalize its own domestic militant problems. The chapter traces the logic that has led the Pakistani military and intelligence establishment to orchestrate attacks on Indian economic centres, and identifies the flaws in this thought process. It then explains why, despite the significant damage that state sponsorship of terrorism has caused to Pakistani civil society, the 'Deep State' continues to engage in it. A surprising portion of the responsibility rests with the United Kingdom and United States, who have indulged Pakistan's strategic fantasies as a matter of path dependency dating back from the Cold War. Finally, the chapter concludes by suggesting that India leverage its economic profile to isolate Pakistan both regionally and internationally, and also invest in military and intelligence assets to deliver a surgical response to future terrorist attacks.

Terrorism as State Policy

India is unfortunate in being pincered between two adversaries which represent dramatically different threats to its territory. To the east, we face a rising China, intent on leveraging its economic and military clout to shape the Asian security environment as per its wishes, which include containment of Indian power. But the more immediate danger lies to the west, in the form of China's virulent proxy—a weakening Pakistan in constant need of a 'hate symbol' to unite its fractured populace. China is a unitary and rational adversary in the Westphalian mode, but Pakistan is a semi-feudal rentier state rife with a variety of interest groups. Some of these are attempting under a nuclear umbrella to enact delusions of irredentism and religious conquest through asymmetric methods. While we need a nuanced policy to manage China's rise, we also need a separate policy to manage Pakistan's decline.

Since the 1980s, it has been the fractured politics of Pakistan that has fuelled terrorist violence across the Indian subcontinent. Rather than the status of Jammu and Kashmir, or India's own multifarious governance problems, the 'core issue' has always been the slow erosion of state control and civilian authority in Pakistan. To compensate for its weakness vis-à-vis the Indian Armed Forces, over three decades Pakistan's military has built up a massive jihadist militia as a tool of both domestic and international power projection. This shadow force has subverted civilian institutions, attacked religious and sectarian minorities, and conducted cross-border strikes on Indian and Afghan targets. As long as its sundry components desist from attacking their patron, they are deemed 'strategic assets'.

'Barbaric medievalism' thus presses against India's western border, while aggressive nationalism is pushing on the eastern front.² The two kinds of threat are metaphorically linked by a shared antipathy to India and to Western democratic

ideals. Physically, they are connected by the Karakoram Highway, down which Chinese nuclear technology traveled in the early 1980s, emboldening the Pakistan Army to begin sponsoring terrorism first in Punjab and later in J&K. The Indian response to these threats has been holistic—we do not want our own rise to great power status held back by either China or Pakistan. So despite provocations, we have tried to convey our benign intentions through dialogue.

Unfortunately, while Indian keenness for talks has mitigated tensions with China, it has boomeranged in the case of Pakistan. Seeking to convert its paramilitary operations into diplomatic capital, Pakistan has adopted a dual-faceted policy: holding talks while also sponsoring terrorist attacks. 26/11 occurred during a visit of the Pakistan foreign minister to New Delhi. Islamabad's much-touted desire to restart dialogue thereafter was primarily aimed at erasing international memories of that botched-up false flag operation, wherein Pakistani jihadists killed Western tourists while masquerading as Indians. To rehabilitate its image, it called for resumption of talks which had been sabotaged by its own transgression. The Composite Dialogue, meant as a vehicle for reducing bilateral tensions, instead has become an instrument through which Pakistan can escape the penalty for its terrorist actions.

Deterring Foreign Investment

This triangulation of jihadist attacks with nuclear deterrence and political dialogue goes back to at least 1993. That was when Pakistan carried out its first mass casualty strike on India, using the criminal syndicate of Dawood Ibrahim as a local front. Although the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) employed D-Company to conduct the actual bombings in Mumbai, which killed 257 civilians, ISI operatives had closely supervised the targeting and logistics aspects of the attack. The civilian deaths were collateral damage: the real aim was to hit investor confidence in India's economy, which was then in the early stages of liberalization. Having calculated that New Delhi would be averse to escalating tensions at a time when it was seeking to attract foreign businesses, the Pakistani agency picked its moment well. What should have been treated as an act of war was left unavenged.

Following the 1993 Mumbai attack, India tried to get Pakistan labeled a terrorist state by the United States government. But in a significant breach of trust, the US Central Intelligence Agency covered up ISI involvement in the attack by destroying vital forensic evidence.³ Worse, the US State Department, caught up in a triumphalist post-Cold War mindset that condoned secessionism everywhere from the Balkans to Northern Ireland, gave a boost to Kashmiri separatists by floating the Hurriyat Conference. Pakistan, observing this trend, opportunistically positioned itself as representative of the 'Kashmiri' interest vis-

à-vis India. And despite its previously steadfast refusal to negotiate over the status of J&K, New Delhi was forced by Western diplomatic pressure to begin talks with Islamabad. The cause of this final setback was our economic weakness and consequent dependence on Western goodwill.

Economic Power, or Lack thereof, Determines National Power

India's economic growth story has been closely tied to geopolitical contests not just with its adversaries, but also with its alleged 'friends'. As soon as the reforms of 1991 were announced, the ISI began planning for an urban terrorist offensive that would derail India's development. Mumbai 1993 was the first such action; others were prevented by an aggressive police response. The ISI got lucky when it recruited Dawood Ibrahim as its key logistician for long-range attacks. Having lost much of his smuggling revenue as a result of the 1991 reforms, Dawood was feeling a financial pinch. The Pakistani agency added to his worries by seizing his boats and, through a series of communal provocations in Mumbai, manipulated him into serving as a pointman for the 1993 attack.

Unfortunately, even as India was struggling to come to terms with this new threat of state-sponsored urban terrorism, the US complicated matters during 1993-95. Buying into the well-orchestrated Pakistani fiction that regional tensions were mainly a result of the J&K issue, Washington demanded that New Delhi begin talks with Islamabad. With the Americans controlling the levers of our economic development, India had no alternative but to agree. Even so, talking with Pakistan was a retrograde step. A negative precedent had been set: India could be asymmetrically attacked in its heartland, and Western intercession on Pakistan's behalf would not only ensure that the aggression was cost-free, but could potentially deliver diplomatic rewards at some point down the line. Small wonder then, that Pakistan quietly prepared to expand its proxy war from Punjab and J&K into major Indian cities throughout the 1990s. The arrests of Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) activists during the decade, as well as those of other fundamentalist organisations, revealed a constant threat of Pakistani ideological subversion. While India was free to act against terrorist networks domestically, it was internationally constrained from adopting a comprehensive containment policy towards Pakistan, of the kind adopted by the West against the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

Pakistan's Twin Goals: Triggering International Mediation, Forcing Indian Concessions

Using trans-border smuggling connections, the ISI built up an attack system within India. In 2007, elements of this system surfaced under the name 'Indian Mujahideen' (IM). Consisting of youths who had been self-radicalized by

communal violence, or had come into contact with Pakistani recruiters while working in the Middle East, the IM was a smokescreen for more spectacular attacks being planned in Pakistan. Its role was to conduct small diversionary operations that would obfuscate the origins of major offensives carried out by all-Pakistani groups, such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

Although the concept of attacking Indian cities was first developed in 1991, the ISI implemented it with renewed vigour after the 1999 Kargil Crisis and *Operation Parakram* (2001-02). Having understood that Pakistani military strength was unequal to the task of wresting Indian territory, the focus shifted onto strategic blackmail. By threatening Indian economic hubs, the Pakistani agency hoped to trigger war crises and precipitate international mediation efforts. It is not hard to see where this mindset came from: Geneva 1988. As the Soviet-Afghan War was winding down, Pakistan had bluffed and bulldozed its way to a seat at the peace conference that would decide the future of Afghanistan. Bamboozing the US, it successfully argued that as the main sponsor of the Afghan mujahideen, it was entitled to a free hand in Afghanistan once the Soviets withdrew (the ramifications of this logic only became clear to the Americans on 9/11). Today, Islamabad is trying the same antic, by insisting to Western governments that its ‘sacrifices’ in fighting the Pakistani Taliban—a wholly domestic threat to Pakistan itself—deserve some sort of reward in the form of unilateral concessions from India. Efforts to stoke tensions on the Line of Control, through shelling and raids on Indian outposts are partly aimed at forcing either the US or preferably China to take a more active interest in the J&K issue. Terrorism in the hinterland plays an ancillary role in this larger game plan.

It is not just the West that Pakistan is seeking to influence through terrorist attacks on Indian cities: it is New Delhi itself. By threatening to retard India’s economic growth, the ISI hopes to engender panic that there might be massive civil unrest if the pace of development slows. Perhaps the agency perceives India through the same analytical lens used by many Westerners to study China—as a brittle power united mainly by federal repression and high economic growth. The Pakistani elite might believe that if regime stability in China can be contingent upon Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increase, the same holds true for India. If this is the case, they have missed two important distinctions:

- 1) As a democracy, India has greater political resilience to absorb economic shocks, even if the state’s capacity for repression is much lesser than China’s. Unlike ordinary Chinese, the average Indian can replace one non-performing government with another, until macro-economic difficulties are eventually mitigated by external factors, such as falling oil prices.
- 2) The Chinese Communist Party is determined to uphold its one-party model, and thus might be prepared to make quiet compromises with

foreign powers if its domestic legitimacy is sufficiently threatened. Indian politicians on the other hand are reconciled to losing office if a popular mandate goes to the Opposition and are thus less inclined to accommodate a foreign adversary. This especially holds true if that adversary has indiscriminately sponsored terrorism against the electorate, making compromise (discreet or public) exceedingly difficult.

Both these strategic motives of ISI support to terrorism—internationalizing the J&K issue and blackmailing India—are merely cover narratives for the real motive. The ‘core issue’ is that Pakistan itself has ambiguous control over the vast paramilitary army of jihadists that its intelligence and military apparatus have spawned. From 1994, when the then Pakistani interior minister Naseeruddin Babar decided that the best way to appease Afghan Islamist refugees was to give them their own country, thus creating the Taliban, to today, Pakistan’s policy towards domestic militancy has stayed the same. Deflecting violence outward is the centerpiece of ISI strategy for combating home-grown radicalism, and India is a convenient victim due to the history of troubled bilateral relations.

Narcotics, Firearms and ‘Strategic Depth’

It is difficult to appreciate the extent of Pakistan’s internal weakness, without studying the role of organised crime in sustaining the country, and further, how such crime became enmeshed with the military’s political agenda. During the Soviet-Afghan War, the Pakistani army and ISI together constituted the world’s most powerful drug cartel.⁴ Weapons covertly shipped into Karachi for the Afghan mujahideen were trucked to the border. On return trips, the army-controlled trucks carried heroin which was then trafficked out through the country’s major airports, at times using military aircraft. The US Drug Enforcement Agency was aware of this racket being run by the Pakistani military government, but was prevented by the CIA from going after the traffickers. Apparently, the need to cooperate with Pakistan against the Soviet Union overrode American counternarcotic efforts.

The collateral damage of this drug trade was borne by Pakistani civilians from impoverished backgrounds, while the profits were reaped by the military leadership. In 1980, the country had 5000 heroin addicts. Within six years, this figure had jumped to 1.3 million. The ‘heroinisation’ of Pakistani society proceeded in tandem with the weaponisation of politics, as the military regime sought to preserve its dominance over secular civilian parties by covertly arming radical Islamists. Over time, a situation was engineered whereby it became impossible for political actors to survive unless they had the protection of an armed gang or a jihadist organisation. One of the more recent manifestations of this weaponised culture was the May 2013 general election, in which the Pakistan Muslim League

(Nawaz) came to power partly through courting jihadist organisations, notably the Jamaatud-Dawa (JuD) in Punjab. That a national party had to request support from the front organisation of Lashkar-e-Taiba, speaks to the extent to which Pakistan has silently fallen into the jihadist clasp.

Foreign aid provided by the US as a bribe for supporting the Afghan mujahideen, plus remittances from overseas Pakistanis and an influx of drug money artificially raised living standards during the 1980s. In the following decade, the first two sources of funding declined substantially and, unable to create alternatives, Pakistan sunk further into dependence on the criminal economy. By 2000 the country was partly being sustained by black money—at one point, Dawood Ibrahim allegedly provided a massive loan to the Pakistan Central Bank to help it stay solvent. The ISI for its part, used revenue from drug smuggling to heavily underwrite terrorism in Punjab and later, in Jammu and Kashmir to a lesser degree. It took a skewed view of the cost: benefit ratio of such activities, a view intended to ensure that whenever it was challenged about the strategic wisdom of its covert operations, it would have a strong counter-argument. Former ISI chief Hamid Gul encapsulated this mindset when he claimed that sponsoring terrorism against India enhanced Pakistani national security at no cost, to the quantum normally provided by having two additional army divisions.⁵

Quest for Strategic Depth in Afghanistan

To understand how the Pakistani ‘Deep State’ misinterprets current trends to serve its own interests, even at the expense of civil society, it is useful to study how narco-terrorism appeared in South Asia. As part of its efforts to manipulate international opinion once the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan, the Pakistani military couched its expansionist aims in typically defensive language. According to its narrative, Pakistan’s burgeoning ties with extreme Islamist factions of the mujahideen were only intended to create ‘strategic depth’ against India. Never mind that strategic depth as a military concept is applied to the areas *in front of* a defending army, not to its rear—the ‘Deep State’ managed to have its way. The Soviet withdrawal was followed by a displacement of opium cultivation from the tribal agencies of Pakistan into Afghanistan proper. An ISI-linked Pashtun trucking mafia took charge of the expanded drug trade. One cartel within this mafia, known as the Quetta Alliance, bankrolled the initial Taliban offensives of 1994 before the agency stepped in to take direct control of the Islamist surge.

Afghanistan under the Taliban became a narco-state. With its agrarian economy devastated by fifteen years of foreign occupation and civil war, the country anyway had no real choice but to treat opium as an emergency cash crop. Meanwhile, having outsourced drug cultivation to its neighbor, Pakistan became a centre for heroin refining and trafficking—activities which yielded

greater financial returns but were less visible and risky than cultivation. This situation persisted until 2001, when the US-led invasion of Afghanistan once again displaced cultivation into the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan. The Pakistani government attempted to combat this trend, but after the Lal Masjid assault of July 2007, had to divert its attention to counterinsurgency and counterterrorism. The result was a substantial increase in cultivation levels across western Pakistan, which was mirrored by a similar increase in Afghanistan as the US-led forces struggled to contain a resurgent Taliban.

It is estimated that by 2013, the Pakistani drug industry had a turnover of 280 billion rupees.⁶ With the ISI seeking to promote new all-Indian jihadist groups that could overturn the international sympathy that India received as a result of 26/11, one can expect that the reinvigorated narcotics trade would be a primary source of operational funding. The Indian Mujahideen has already resorted to banditry inside the country, and is even thought to have made contact with Nigerian drug traffickers through connections provided by Boko Haram operatives in Pakistan. All these steps are intended to serve one goal—obfuscate and cloud the crucial *and continuing* role that the ISI and Lashkar-e-Taiba play in cross-border terrorism. Whether the indirect costs of this role are more harmful for Pakistan than the direct costs are for India, remains to be seen—the evidence so far is quite suggestive.

A Cost-benefit Analysis of ISI Terrorism

The 1993 Mumbai attack inflicted property damage worth 270 million rupees. Fifteen years later, 26/11 had a much bigger impact—insurers had to pay roughly five billion rupees to compensate for the destruction caused.⁷ It is interesting to consider how differences in *modus operandi* shaped the economic impact of each attack. In 1993, eleven synchronized bombings took place across Mumbai, of which most were directed at street targets, where the victims were pedestrians. Although three blasts did occur in hotels, the loss of life was limited, with the main effect being to add to the general sense of panic. With 26/11, the original aim was always to hit the Taj luxury hotel and inflict a heavy death toll upon wealthy foreign visitors staying there. The addition of other targets (the Oberoi-Trident Hotels, Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus and Nariman House) did not alter the fundamental aim of striking at the Indian economy by literally driving away overseas investors at gunpoint. Central to the success of this enterprise was a deception component—a convincing effort had to be made to portray the attackers as Indian nationals from a splinter group of the Indian Mujahideen. Hence, while the attack was underway, it was claimed by a completely unheard-of group, 'Deccan Mujahideen'.

Only the lucky capture of Ajmal Kasab thwarted this design. With one of

the gunmen caught red-handed by Indian authorities, it was only a matter of time before the attack was traced to Pakistani soil. Intelligence agencies across the world would in any case, have immediately known that ISI and LeT were responsible, but in the time-honoured tradition of the spy fraternity, could be trusted to keep this knowledge secret. However, once Kasab was in Indian custody, the political reality changed as India finally had a smoking gun to prove Pakistani involvement in the attack. Furthermore, the original purpose of scaring away foreign investors from India by fabricating the existence of an indigenous jihadist movement determined to kill Westerners, was defeated. Instead, the ISI and Pakistani army resorted to their well-worn ploy of nuclear sabre-rattling in order to shake the Indian economy with threats of war. Tourism suffered heavily in the following months, although the stock market continued to perform well as a result of traders seeking to cash in on existing business opportunities.

It is tempting to cite the robust share-trading that followed the attack as a sign that foreign investors were not influenced by the threat of Pakistan-based terror. Unfortunately, this is only half-true. While international businesses did not let 26/11 itself influence their investment decisions on India, the seeming incompetence of the local police and federal security forces did adversely shape perceptions abroad. India, which was being celebrated as a potential shock absorber of the global economic crisis alongside China, suddenly looked like a quasi-banana republic with policemen and soldiers who were too poorly trained to even shoot straight. Admittedly, the Indian security forces were judged extremely unfairly at the time, since various simulations held across the world after 26/11 have revealed that even the best equipped and trained Western law enforcement agencies would not have done better in a similar situation. However, in the fickle realm of perception management, it is not substance but style that counts and unfortunately, the unrestricted TV broadcasts from Mumbai conveyed a very poor impression of the Indian security bureaucracy's competence and its ability to protect foreigners.

To the extent that 26/11 succeeded in undermining India's international image, it is worth looking at the indirect costs that Pakistan had to absorb in order to launch such an attack (estimates of the direct costs to LeT itself vary between 2.5 million and 25 million rupees). Over a thirteen year period (2001-2014), domestic instability and terrorism created losses amounting to US\$ 102 billion. In Pakistani rupees, this was equivalent to 8.26 trillion.⁸ The disruption of trading cycles meant that export orders could not be met and created not just a loss of current revenue, but a displacement of future market share as overseas customers switched to alternative suppliers. While the 'Deep State' could be perversely proud of having organised 26/11, a big jihadist attack, with relative ease, it could only do so because the slow degradation of Pakistani civil society had provided a steady supply of brainwashable recruits willing to die.

Even more important is the political context within which the attack took place: it was undertaken from a position of weakness, and was a symptom of strategic desperation. At issue was the internal cohesion of the Pakistani military itself. Since July 2007, this cohesion had come under strain as a result of the Lal Masjid assault. The deaths of many Pashtun students living on the Mosque grounds had infuriated their kinsmen within the military, leading to retaliatory strikes being conducted almost immediately. With LeT too showing signs of turmoil, the ISI chose to rally the group by helping to conduct a major attack on India. The Pakistani agency did not want LeT to turn its guns against the Pakistani state, thus indicating how vulnerable that state really is to domestic security challenges.

LeT is thought to have trained up to 300,000 cadres in combat tactics, potentially fielding a powerful threat to the state's monopoly of force. It obtained the freedom to create this private army within the general climate of complicity fostered by the Pakistani security establishment in the pursuit of strategic gains vis-à-vis Afghanistan and India. In the name of 'Strategic Depth', Pashtun insurgents from Afghanistan were allowed to shelter in Pakistan, despite the fact that their presence was radicalizing the indigenous Pashtun population. The effects of this became clear in December 2007, when the Pakistani Taliban was formed. By end 2014, the Pakistani Taliban had built pockets of influence among the Pashtuns of Karachi, effectively surrounding the city from three sides and being capable of striking at will anywhere inside. Karachi has become known as the world's most dangerous mega-city, with over 2500 homicides in 2012 compared with just 521 in Delhi.⁹ A policeman is killed every day in Karachi, either by gangsters or terrorists, and the Taliban run extortion rackets just as effectively as the local mafia. If this is the situation in Pakistan's economic capital, which accounts for half the entire country's tax revenues, one can legitimately question whether the indirect cost of the army and ISI's adventurism is really worth the returns?

The Illusion of Reward

Unfortunately, Pakistan is being held to this self-destructive policy by its own fantasies of being a lynchpin in Asian geopolitics. The country has been poorly served by its former Western allies, the US and UK, as well as by its 'all-weather friend' China. Being outside players with little responsibility for cleaning up the long-term problems caused by their meddling, the US and UK have had little compunction in opportunistically courting the Pakistani military even at the cost of civilian authority. Eager to coopt the military in their own efforts to influence Afghan affairs, London and Washington have attempted to lean on democratic India to offer unilateral concessions to its rogue neighbor. Such appeasement

stems from the earliest days of decolonization. Right from 1947, British strategists had assessed (correctly) that India was unlikely to be an enthusiastic partner in containing Soviet communism. Pakistan on the other hand, would be far more pliant. This assessment tilted the UK's South Asia policy subtly in favour of Pakistan, with the bias hidden under a guise of even-handedness.

Not only was there a lingering resentment towards India on the part of the former colonial power, which after 1945 was fast regressing into being a third-rate international player, but hard logic also militated against being fair to India. Britain was concerned that its influence in the Middle East would suffer if it were unable to win over Pakistan as a bridge to the Arab world, particularly since London had already supported the controversial formation of Israel.¹⁰ In an international system where future nation-states would set global agendas at the United Nations, it simply made more sense to cultivate Muslim nationalism as an ideological ally against communism. In contrast to the multiple Arab friends that Pakistan could potentially bring, India only offered a vague mishmash of nationalities and languages to the British who were less than convinced of the country's long-term survival anyway.

Throughout the Cold War, the UK stuck to a paradigm, which it transmitted to the US, that India-Pakistan reconciliation would help international security by allowing both countries to focus on combating external enemies (read: communist states). After the 1962 Sino-Indian War, the West pressured India to hold talks with Pakistan, much as it would later do in the 1990s. Even as Pakistan ratcheted up its territorial demands in Kashmir, perceiving that India was negotiating from a position of weakness, the British tried to further advocate on its behalf during 1963, ostensibly as an honest broker. (It was partly this Western pressure to compromise with Pakistan at the expense of Indian territorial integrity, which pushed New Delhi closer into the Soviet camp in the 1970s.) Although the Cold War has long ended, institutional path dependency has kept the British and American foreign policy establishments on their previous course. They lack the imagination and honesty to perceive that the Pakistani David whose case they are championing is more aggressive than the Indian Goliath.

Today, Pakistan continues to use terrorism as an instrument of foreign policy because it is being indulged by the West and China. Beijing has long helped Pakistani terrorist groups evade UN sanctions after 9/11, only relenting temporarily when 26/11 raised the stakes beyond a level which could be accommodated by traditional Chinese double-speak. Since mid-2015, the Chinese government has brazenly resumed its policy of protecting terrorist groups that target India. In the process, it has stretched hypocrisy to new limits by urging that New Delhi and Islamabad should work together to combat terrorism. Presumably, Beijing does not see the contradiction between calling for cooperation between the two South Asian neighbours, while at the same time providing

diplomatic protection to the very terrorist actors who prevent such cooperation from occurring in the first place.

Meanwhile, the UK after 2005 has discovered that it is heavily dependent on the ISI to help thwart terrorist attacks on the British Isles, where a restive Pakistani immigrant population poses a serious domestic security concern. With 75% of all homegrown terrorist plots in 2008 having a Pakistani connection, and 400,000 British citizens travelling annually to Pakistan, the UK has for some years been in no position to help India fight cross-border terrorism, except at the level of empty rhetoric and secret intelligence liaison. At a more substantial level, British policy remains one of appeasing Pakistan (perhaps to an extent that even the US finds difficult to accept after its own difficulties in fighting the Afghan Taliban). In 2015, the British intelligence service MI6 is suspected to have played an egregious role in Afghanistan, by brokering an agreement between Afghan and Pakistani intelligence agencies that explicitly targeted Indian interests. It now seems that the UK has taken the posture of a hostile power that can claim no further Indian goodwill or strategic cooperation, beyond the purely transactional.

At the level of academic and public discourse, subtle efforts are constantly underway by Western governments to urge endless Indian restraint and possibly even appeasement of terrorism. One favoured tactic among Anglo-American scholars of South Asian Studies is to advance the spurious hypothesis that India's rise is being constrained by its conflict with Pakistan—the inference being that if India yielded to terrorism and amputated part of its own territory, it would somehow gain in international prestige and status. (By this logic, one might be tempted to ask if the UK itself has gained in international status since 1947 when it lost its empire in India and thus, its global colonial stature, instead becoming the tail-end punctuation mark of an increasingly Germanized European continent.)

With three out of five permanent members of the UN Security Council believing that a contented Pakistan is vital for a stable South Asia, it is hardly surprising that the ISI and Pakistani army feel that the international environment is conducive to further strikes on India by terrorist proxies. Pakistan has the luxury of being courted by both the West and China, across two sides of an emerging geopolitical rivalry in the Asia-Pacific. It is quite likely that this advantage would lead the Pakistani security establishment to persist with sponsoring cross-border jihadist attacks on Indian cities, regardless of the collateral damage that such a policy may inflict upon Pakistani civil society.

The Way Forward: Policy Options for India

It is not Pakistani terrorism that is harming India's economy, but India's economy that has magnified Pakistani weakness to the point where terrorism is the only

policy option. The pattern of retro-causality needs to be understood—even as India grows more prosperous, the Pakistani incentive to strike at Indian cities will increase. This incentive is only superficially driven by the Kashmir conflict; its deeper roots lie within Pakistan's own failings as a state that is unable to find its democratic moorings. Caught in the grip of a predatory military and feudal-industrial elite, Pakistan will remain a case of arrested political and economic development, determined to drag down its neighbours with it.

India cannot be expected to compromise its vital national interests for the sake of extraneous powers, be they democratic or authoritarian. At the same time, it needs to scale down its expectations of outside support in isolating Pakistan over the issue of cross-border terrorism. As circumstances stand, India remains essentially alone in its fight against groups such as LeT and D-Company and their patrons in the Pakistani army and ISI. The cardinal mistake of Indian counterterrorism policy may have been to wait too long to acknowledge this, although a plausible argument can be made that military restraint has also helped in securing intelligence cooperation against ISI-backed terrorists.

Whatever be the final assessment of India's policy of strategic restraint towards Pakistan, the fact remains that weaknesses in domestic policing and counterterrorism capability harm foreign investor confidence in the Indian economy. There is no excuse for failing to strengthen policing, intelligence and surveillance capabilities and arm the security forces with a legal framework to pursue and detain terrorists and those who provide them with material support within Indian borders. At present, India is grossly under-policed: officers of state criminal investigation departments, which handle terrorism cases, have an average caseload of 533 investigations per head. At the level of incident response capability, the situation is equally bad: the National Security Guards, a highly competent but over-stretched force, has a shortfall of 22 per cent in officer posts.¹¹ Since the Indian Army and central paramilitary forces cannot spare more officers for deputation to the NSG, one cannot expect that this situation can be remedied by short-term measures. However, firearms training for regular policemen could be increased, to permit a more aggressive initial response to future fidayeen attacks.

In theory, the average Indian policeman or soldier should get about 38 bullets per year for shooting practice (the comparable figure for the United States is 366).¹² In reality, most policemen never fire their weapons at all, since the Indian policing culture is geared towards minimal use of force—a prerequisite to avoid systemic misuse of state power. This is normally commendable, but in the post 26/11 environment, it is certain that hesitation or inability to respond aggressively to an 'active shooter' incident, especially one involving foreign tourists as hostages, would be excoriated by the international media and business community. India can afford to be hit by Pakistani terrorist attacks; what it cannot afford is to be seen as unable to defend itself and its foreign guests against them.

Destabilizing Pakistan, in order to punish its roguish behavior, might be one attractive option. However, there are many disadvantages to such a policy. First, it would arouse international condemnation, even if conducted covertly. Second, it would make relatively little difference to the Pakistani 'Deep State', which has become inured to living amidst existential uncertainty over the last decade, if not longer. Merely detonating a few bombs in military cantonments or shooting a few ISI officials would not deter Pakistan from sponsoring cross-border terrorism, when worse attacks by domestic terrorists have failed to bring out a course correction in that country's security establishment. Third, and most importantly, large-scale political instability in Pakistan would risk a spillover effect into Indian territory. It has been conservatively estimated that the cost of defending against a civil war in a neighbouring state can reduce a country's GDP growth by 0.5 per cent.¹³ Moreover, the economic damage that even a sustained campaign of cross-border terrorism can inflict is only half that which can be caused by domestic unrest or external conflict (i.e., war). It therefore makes sense for India to take a strategic perspective and a two-pronged approach to combating Pakistan-sponsored terrorism.

First, New Delhi should not be shy about leveraging its economic ties with Western countries in order to obtain their unequivocal (and actionable) cooperation against Pakistan-based jihadist groups. While this would be less satisfactory than an outright condemnation of ISI involvement in terrorism, by systematically shutting down the transnational linkages of LeT and IM with Western assistance India can gradually limit the maneuver space of terrorists. Here, it holds a trump card: The 2008 subprime crisis and 2009 Eurozone crisis have eroded the political and psychological advantage which developed economies enjoyed in the 1990s. Although India still needs foreign investment, the West now also needs a market of India's size. New Delhi can combine its new economic heft with shrewd diplomacy, as China has done on the question of Taiwan, to frustrate Pakistani attempts to internationalize the Kashmir issue and instead, maintain the global focus on cross-border terrorism.

The second facet of India's counterterrorist effort should be to build up capabilities for covert neutralization of jihadist leaders and those select ISI officials who directly participate in terrorist planning, on a surgical and intelligence-led basis. Such a policy would not have the same destabilizing effect as an indiscriminate campaign of retaliatory terrorism against the Pakistani state or civilians, but it would also demonstrate that covert action can be a two-way process. Pakistan believes that its nuclear arsenal allows it to sponsor attacks on Indian cities at will. India can demonstrate that its own nuclear arsenal allows it to respond at will, in a manner, place and time of its own choosing. The message must be made clear: Pakistan will pay a heavy price, over many generations, if it does not

learn to act like a civilized state. India has the resources and the political capacity to outlast a country which it has already defeated in four shooting wars, despite having conceded the first blow to the enemy on every occasion.

NOTES

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THE RISE OF CHINA

India-China Relations: The Return of the Sub-Region

Madhu Bhalla

In the current context, India-China relations encompass a host of issues which are bilateral, regional and global. While both countries have to deal with territorial issues, new issues, which are a fallout of regional and global changes, and the rising expectations of two powers on the rise, also seek attention. Some of these speak to the aspiration of both to contribute public goods to the international community; some demand long term commitments to cooperation for global and regional stability, and many issues, closer home, test the ability of both to manage narrower national interests which could spiral out of control. The India-China relationship, thus, is at a complex phase of its development. This complexity indicates a maturing of the relationship, reflected in the ability of both to cooperate on issues which are likely to impact global politics and institutions as well as a pragmatic tendency to deal with strains in bilateral relations over security and trade, where differences are contained within on-going dialogues. This pattern of cooperation and difference is not uncommon in relationships; each has with other nations as well and, hence, is more a matter of policy initiative in some areas and management and need based institutionalization of interactions in others.

Belying the stability of the relationship, however, is the discourse on a “trust deficit” which posits conflict over cooperation. Any deconstruction of the “trust deficit” indicates that even as both countries find space for cooperation on global agendas, security issues in the sub-continent and the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) will define the nature of the relationship. The holding pattern of dialogues on military flash points and irritants in trade and security issues notwithstanding, the absence of any serious negotiation on the future of Tibet and the settlement

on the border, China's political and military investment in Pakistan, the failure of a serious dialogue on terrorism and the fallouts of the more recent development of a Chinese policy on South Asia and the IOR will continue to detract from cooperation in bilateral affairs, lending the relationship a strong element of competition.

In as much as South Asia is where the important bilateral security concerns are nested, neither India nor China can escape the sub-region. Efforts to relegate these issues to dialogue, and global issues to policy, indicates where the problem lies. It seems relatively easier to make policy on multilateral issues like climate change or global trade where both share views on a just and equitable world order. On bilateral issues, where both are committed to realist approaches aimed at security maximization, arriving at a consensus on policy will require both to consider why they should choose cooperation over competition. As has often been noted, India and China's strategic interests in South Asia overlap.¹

More importantly, the strategic overlap does not create consensus on policy objectives.

Major Priorities in the China-India Strategic Partnership

The major priority in the India-China relationship has always been that each contribute to the other's security and, for now, partner in economic growth and development. This is an unexceptionable agenda. Paradoxically, however, India and China's notions of how their security may be achieved pits both against each other since notions of security are intrinsic to that other objective, maximization of power. India's major priorities in its China policy can be listed as the following: a stable South Asia; a resolution of the border conflict; cooperation on terrorism; securing its interests in the IOR and the Indo-Pacific; partnering with China on economic growth and in global and multilateral institutions. Chinese policy makers identify four concerns related to its "periphery", which has traditionally included India: nuclearization, terrorism, third party disputes and internal political instability in its border provinces. These translate in its India policy to the following priorities: a stable periphery; establishing parity between India and Pakistan on the nuclear issue; opposing extra-regional powers on its South Asian periphery; cooperation on its "maritime silk route" initiative which translates into India's acceptance of its naval presence in the IOR; expanding economic interests in South Asia, including India; partnering in global regimes and resolving the border conflict. Behind the similarity of most of these priorities lies a world of divergence in meaning and objectives. Stability itself takes on different meanings in the South Asian context for India and China as does the notion of extra-regional powers and terrorism. However, it is evident that the core issues over

which there is a contest between India and China lie in the sub-region of South Asia.

The Significance of the Sub-Region: Between Neighbourhood and Periphery

Since the middle of the last century almost all the security concerns of India, and many of China, have been located in South Asia. India has viewed South Asia as its neighbourhood and China has viewed it as its periphery. For the former, the connotation of neighbourhood is a familial one, for the latter, the experience of the periphery has always been threatening. China's strategic interest in South Asia evolved as part of its periphery policy. However, neither has had a consistent policy in South Asia. A perception of their stakes in the sub-region as a whole has emerged in keeping with their economic and political rise and a view of threats from specific parts of the sub-region.

India's Neighbourhood Problem

Initially India's threat perceptions did not lie in the neighbourhood but were directly related to the removal of Tibet as a buffer and the confrontation with a large and irredentist China on its eastern flank. India's long term security concern, and perhaps its dominant one for the last sixty years, has been China. Pakistan runs a close second but because its capacity to challenge India is linked in New Delhi's security discourse to China's military and nuclear support, the chief security concern remains the People's Republic. In addition, the neat compartmentalization of security drivers into external and internal helps New Delhi define insecurity primarily in conventional terms, as a challenge to sovereign rights over territory and the security of the state. Hence, the threat from China looms large. In the conflict with China over the border, India is confronted with a larger, stronger power, with a proven ability to damage Indian interests. Leaving aside 1971, when Bangladesh seceded from Pakistan after a bitter war, it is only in recent years India has begun to define instability within states in the neighbourhood as a security concern. While this is still a lower order of concern than securing its territory, stemming as it does from weak states and from non-state actors, it has forced India to develop a view of the neighbourhood which takes into account the need to strengthen political institutions within South Asian states and to address the development deficit in the region.

The spillover effects of political instability and economic underdevelopment in the region are more quickly felt in India than elsewhere. Given the endemic poverty in the subcontinent, internal strife, civil wars and natural disasters India has been home to a stream of refugees, beginning in the 1950s with Tibet and later Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Myanmar. In 2014 India hosted

1,89,215 refugees, the largest number for a country not part of a war zone.² While this imposes economic strains, it also has implications for destabilizing domestic politics within India's border-states and creating localized conflict with neighbours. As a consequence, what were primarily regional human security issues have now been securitized, as with Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal. As a consequence while India continues to be seen as a problem, it has also become a security provider in the regional context.

The ability of disaffected neighbours to balance India in South Asia with states outside the sub-continent is a challenge. In a situation of asymmetrical power, smaller South Asian states have looked beyond the subcontinent to China and the United States in support of their positions and interests. The growing Chinese economic and military influence within South Asian states has led some Chinese analysts to argue that the region is neither India-centric nor a region at all and that, in fact, there is "potential for dynamic balance if key powers would re-define or re-think their roles in the region."³ The suggestion that key powers, presumably China and the United States, re-think their role in the region, speaks to India's greatest security nightmare. When Prime Minister Narendra Modi invited the leaders of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries to his inauguration last year he was dispelling just this idea.

China's South Asia Policy: From Periphery to Neighbourhood

China's periphery policy was almost always about securing its periphery, internal and external. Its periphery was the site of threat to the state. The concerns over the periphery have increasingly been linked to internal stability and domestic economic growth in its backward and disturbed western regions.⁴ In recent years, however, China's policy in South Asia has moved from thinking of the sub region merely as periphery to viewing it as a neighbourhood. As Chinese president, Xi Jinping, announced in his visit to Delhi last year, China has economic interests in South Asia and views the countries of South Asia as "cooperative partners" in a joint quest for prosperity.

Peace, stability, development, and prosperity in South Asia is in the interest of countries and peoples in this region, including that of China. China is willing to live in amity with its South Asian neighbors and make every contribution to the development of this region. By proposing "One Belt and One Road", China hopes to boost the interconnectivity of countries along the traditional land and maritime Silk Road, to make our economies prosperous, our trade complementary, and our peoples' hearts connected. With "One Belt and One Road" as wings, China wants to take off together with South Asian nations.⁵

This is a long way from China's earlier distance from South Asia. As Chinese analysts have noted, the PRC initially had little ambition to involve itself in the

sub-continent's affairs despite the conflict of 1962. It did little to oppose India's influence in Bhutan, did not publicly support Pakistan's position on Kashmir and had no ambitions to be a hegemon in the region.⁶ Although it established diplomatic ties with all South Asian countries except Bhutan by the 1970s, the People's Republic did not have a "regional purpose" in South Asia, as Ye Hailin notes. Its policies were limited to the traditional military and political concerns over the border and Tibet. Overall, incapacity and indifference marked its South Asia policy.⁷

In fact, between 1962 and 9/11, China's South Asian interactions have been the weakest link in its Asian and global foreign and strategic policy. While the "enduring" relationship with Pakistan took care of the India factor, China's chief security concern in the 1980s was the Soviet threat. However, turn of the century events—the war on terror, the re-emergence of the United States in the region, the rise of India, unrest in Tibet and China's own trade, investment and resource trajectories—have dictated a reorientation of its policies in the region.

The strategic value of the region emerged initially because of a conjunction of two events: *Pokhran II* in 1998 and the American attack on Afghanistan after 9/11. The Indian state's reasons for Pokhran II in 1998 placed China at the centre of India's security concerns even though early statements were later moderated. China opposed this view but was forced to notice that Indian strategic policy no longer focused entirely on Pakistan. Once again Pakistan became a frontline state for the military venture in Afghanistan, this time without China's close involvement and as a non-NATO ally of the United States. China's concerns for its western provinces and the presence of the US on its western flank meant that for the first time serious security issues were located in South Asia. Strategic and economic changes in South Asia, however, also gave Beijing an opportunity to enlarge and deepen its relationship with South Asian states making China an important factor in South Asia's strategic and economic future. Beijing's "single dimensional and limited policy" towards South Asia has therefore changed remarkably.⁸ This was reflected at the 17th Party Congress in 2007 where a major reference to periphery first appeared as a policy guideline espousing cooperation, partnership and stability. If China was to look forward to a harmonious world and region, it was argued it could do so only in the context of a harmonious periphery. Consequently, periphery policy has been reinstated as a central aspect of China's foreign policy recently. Its significance for domestic stability and foreign policy objectives are repeatedly listed.⁹ Broadly, Chinese policy makers identify four concerns related to China's periphery: nuclearization, terrorism, third party disputes and internal political instability in its border provinces. While the PRC's periphery policy is designed to look at all parts of its periphery and each applies in different ways to specific areas of its periphery all of these concerns are part of

the problems it confronts in South Asia. The PRC's policy responses to deal with these potential causes of instability are conflict reduction, crisis prevention and conflict mitigation. In the recent past it has moved from this defensive set of responses to a more assertive one of showing the flag in crisis areas. Elsewhere on its periphery China has moved to create or support mechanisms to activate these policy responses even when they have been less than successful as with the Six Party Talks (North Korea) or the Code of Conduct in the South China Seas. In South Asia only one of these responses has been tried by China, that of crisis prevention.¹⁰ However, if it is to make its South Asian periphery stable China will need to activate all three aspects of its policy responses. This will demand a radical rethinking of the premises of its South Asia policy, especially its India policy.

A consequence of the changes in the global and regional environment is that South Asia has moved from being regarded merely as a periphery to being regarded as a neighbourhood. This has implications for new policy initiatives and therefore China's responses have changed from the purely security and military to economic and strategic. India, for example, is now cast not just as a target for China's security policy but as a cooperative/competitive/strategic partner. Engaging India at both the political and economic levels is built into the new perspective. The relationship with India, it is argued, is "the core in the chain of relationships between China and South Asia."¹¹ While Pakistan still remains an "all weather friend", China now views the Indian economic relationship and Pakistan's strategic relationship as the "dual pillars" of its South Asian policy, disregarding in the process the incongruence of this policy from Delhi's perspective. China's relations with other South Asian nations have also been rejigged from a primarily military relationship to one where investments in energy and resource production and transportation imperatives are more prominent. China's efforts to deal with South Asia as a region is behind its acceptance of observer status in the SAARC. Clearly domestic economic policies and sub-regional economic connections, as much as security concerns, drive much of its new policies in South Asia.

While China has made political and economic gains in relations with most South Asian states many issues remain at dispute with India. If India is the core of the sub region as Chinese analysts note, these issues will have to deal with. As already noted, Chinese policy makers identify four concerns related to China's periphery: nuclearization; terrorism; third party disputes (read the presence of the US in South Asia) and internal political instability in its border provinces. Nuclearization, for one, splits China's South Asia policy down the middle as far as New Delhi is concerned. On the one hand, China remains clear on its opposition to admitting India into the global nuclear regime and on the other insistent on hyphenating India with Pakistan on nuclear issues. Beijing has argued

that the Indo-US nuclear accord justifies it's pushing for a similar deal for Islamabad and, in its absence, providing support for Pakistan's nuclear programme rather than influencing it to "slow the growth of its nuclear arsenal". China's security stakes on its periphery have meant that it will not confront squarely the implications of nuclear-proliferation in Pakistan when espousing Pakistan's claims to a nuclear deal. Stability on the periphery, it is argued, can only be maintained by ensuring India's strategic parity with Pakistan not by forsaking Pakistan for India, an act which will create a greater imbalance in South Asia. Further, Chinese analysts argue, what good it would do China to forsake a long term friend for the sake of a competitive and ambitious India which is likely to side with the US and other democracies against China.¹² Clearly, despite assurances to the contrary China's India policy is still about balancing India in South Asia. What should worry China, but does not seem to do so, is that Pakistan is China's nuclear Frankenstein in the region. Given the strength and influence of terror groups in Pakistan support for Pakistan's initial nuclearisation and current nuclear weapons programme pays little heed to the potential of these falling under terrorist control.

Since there is little meeting ground on nuclear issues any bilateral or sub regional dialogue on the future of these weapons could emerge out of a real dialogue on terrorism with India. While an annual dialogue on terrorism was set in place in 2002 the dialogue is meaningless unless it puts Pakistan's support for terrorist outfits on the table. In the past China has blocked the designation of Pakistan based outfits as terrorist outfits at the UN although it seems now willing to accept a UN resolution critical of Pakistan based terror out fits.¹³ While it has focused on ETIM groups in Pakistan and elsewhere it has barely commented on Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) sponsored terrorism in South Asia especially that directed at India from across the border. Its bilateral terrorism mechanism with India has been non-functional and have three joint anti-terrorism military exercises to show for its pains in terrains where there are least likely to be terrorist attacks. Clearly Beijing finds it politically inconvenient to interrogate Pakistan on terrorism related activities except where it affects Chinese interests. In some ways, therefore, it makes China less of a stake holder in South Asian stability than it professes. Ironically, the US pull out from Afghanistan have revived the anti-terrorism dialogue between the two countries but differences over good and bad terrorists remain. As well, there is little agreement on the nexus between terror outfits and institutions of the state within Pakistan and how to make Pakistan accountable for acts of terror hatched on its soil. If the problem lies in China's reluctance to critique Pakistan it also lies in the different meanings of terrorism in India and China and therefore the different policy responses to the issue.¹⁴

Third party disputes, especially the United States' presence in South Asia, are also deeply troubling for China. US military aid and presence in Pakistan,

China's traditional ally, has drawn Pakistan into a close although difficult relationship with America, and the Indo-US nuclear agreement has created a strategic partnership between India and the United States in the backdrop of American aspirations that supporting India's rise will contain China. American naval supremacy in the Indian Ocean and the increasing naval cooperation between India and the US create a new set of maritime vulnerabilities for China. US president Obama's support for Indian presence in the Asia Pacific along with a deepening of the defense and security cooperation has added to China's anxieties.¹⁵ China's strategic and economic objectives are, on consideration, broader now than they have been in the past demanding new and more dynamic policy responses in the region.

The Centrality of Tibet

The centrality of Tibet to India-China strategic relations has not diminished since the 1950s. Instead, despite rhetoric to the contrary, it has fashioned responses on the border negotiations since 1962. In the 1950s Tibet became the implicit fulcrum of India-China relations, with the Himalayan boundaries between India and China as an explicit point of conflict. This established a new strategic calculus in South Asia which led to an incipient India-China rivalry in the cis-Himalayan states,¹⁶ and set the stage for a relationship between China and Pakistan which undermines Indian security interests. For Beijing, an internally disturbed Tibet exposes China's southwestern flank to Indian "expansionist" forces, a view that is carried over from Mao.¹⁷ Recent media stories and articles in China have tended to stoke the expansionist theory by slamming India as an over-reacher, out of its league with China. The India-China border discourse in China is framed within a power oriented framework and prevents China from moving ahead on a resolution.

Internal unrest in Tibet and a Tibetan state in exile has meant that China has had to deal with the Tibetan issue as a domestic as well as an external one. The intractability of the problem has resulted in recent debates within China calling for a review of minority policies. Outside the security discourse, social sciences scholars have suggested that minority relations should not be viewed within a political but a cultural matrix which could soften the contours of the Han-Tibetan confrontation. At the least, what this has done is to shift some of the responsibility for minority disaffection from external drivers to domestic policies and actors. In some ways, this is the revival of the Hu Yaobang moment in China's view of minority relations. While the impact of this on China's stand on Tibet is not yet clear the implications of this for China's policy on the India China border might be positive. As Allen Carlson notes, changes in minority policies in the late 1980s and 90s and the focus on securing the situation in border regions led

Deng Xiaoping to open talks with India on the border.¹⁸ While India needs to track this debate within China for its security implications, for now it is still confronted with a hardening of the Chinese position on the border as a result of China's internal security interests in Tibet.

When erstwhile Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee announced that India accepted Tibet as an integral part of the territory of China, deviating from India's older position of accepting Tibet as an "autonomous" part of China it was assumed that the issue of Tibet in the border dispute was finally over. Chinese policy makers, however, continue to link the twin issues of the border and Tibet. All meetings except the last two between Indian and Chinese leaders has made the mandatory reference to Tibet underscoring Tibet as a core issue in India-China relations and the Chinese claims to Tawang and Arunachal Pradesh need to be read in that context.¹⁹

China's preference that the resolution of the border issue be left to the future should be viewed within the future that China envisages for itself. China's ascendancy to the world's foremost economic power by 2050 should allow China to press for its own terms and bring an end to any argument for Tibetan autonomy as well as the effective control of all disputed territories associated with its own authority and legitimacy in Tibet. Alternatively the economic growth and political change in Tibet could also create a new post-Dalai Han-Tibetan elite which would shift the momentum of the Tibetan movement away from autonomy to assimilation with the political economy of the Chinese state and party. In this scenario India would have lost its ability to negotiate a deal over the border in its own interests.

China's power oriented approach to the border issue also puts into doubt the efficacy of the policy on the border since 1988. The 1993 and 1996 agreements and the political guidelines (which China ignores) seem merely policies that hold India to the status quo until it can be revised in China's favour.²⁰ The most recent crisis in Debsang and Chumar merely added a new Chinese proposal to existing mechanisms: a border management arrangement. More recently, India has begun to reciprocate Beijing's directness by stating its position on Arunachal Pradesh, Tawang and the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK).

Tibet is also being viewed as important in the geo-economic sense. China's development polices in Tibet make it a bridgehead to the South Asian market. New transportation and communication infrastructure is intended to link Tibet to the cis-Himalayan states. But China's increasing economic influence in these states could also pressure these states to ignore Tibetan interests by placing restraints on the movements of Tibetan exiles across their borders as with Nepal, or gaining neutrality as with Bhutan.²¹ The expanding level of cooperation and engagement with India's periphery has so far alarmed New Delhi. Thus, India has moved

quickly to block China's generous contribution to the Lumbini complex, the birth place of Gautam Buddha. China's control over the Lumbini complex would have been a significant symbolic gain in its strategy to gain legitimacy with Tibetan Buddhists. The implications of the new transportation networks for transporting military reinforcements into South Asia are not lost on Indian policy makers.

India's policy on Tibet has not created the resolution it sought on its borders. Neither the Agreement on Trade in 1954 of which the Panchsheel was a singular aspect, nor the subsequent agreements on Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and peace and stability, political guidelines and submissions of China's sovereignty over Tibet have done so.²² Clearly one sided cooperation has not worked. It may be time to insist on reciprocity instead. Hence, India could revert to its earlier position on Tibet's autonomy unless China reciprocate by moving ahead on issues which affect Indian security interests.

Pakistan's Enduring Problem

Despite the view of Chinese analysts that Beijing's policy on using Pakistan to contain India has changed, Pakistan continues to be an element of instability. China is now caught between its strategic partnership with Pakistan and a growing economic one with a rising India.²³ India's relations with Pakistan were fraught with conflict from the outset but China's support for Pakistan since 1963 has complicated the picture immeasurably. In its South Asian policy matrix, China has used its relationship with Pakistan to balance India in South Asia, secure its own concerns along the Tibetan border as along its Xinjiang border since the 1980s, as a facilitator in its relations with the Middle East and more importantly it allows Pakistan to use its relationship with Beijing to challenge the US when under pressure, in turn allowing China leverage with Washington on security concerns in South Asia. More recently, and this speaks to India's security concerns, it has used its relationship with Pakistan to establish its military and commercial presence in disputed territories in Pakistan occupied Kashmir. Pakistan's gift of the Baltistan Gilgit region to Chinese investors now seems to have changed China's view that POK is disputed territory. The Chinese have since reduced the length of the disputed India-China border by 2,000 miles. The missing miles change the very nature of what is at dispute between India and China.²⁴ China's presence in Pakistan occupied Kashmir, therefore, threatens to move the goal posts of the border negotiations.

The development of close relations with Pakistan gave China strategic stability in South Asia but it also kept interstate relations in the region unstable.²⁵ It engendered mistrust between India and Pakistan and between India and China over Pakistan's military and nuclear ambitions. But of greater significance is the fact that China's relationship with Pakistan has made it impossible to have a

reasoned dialogue with China on nuclear issues, Pakistan's militarization and on terrorism emanating from Pakistan. A credible dialogue with China on the Afghan situation has also been crippled by China's sensitivity to Pakistan's opposition to Indian interests in Afghanistan. These are all issues that speak directly to India's strategic interests. China's reluctance to even engage on these matters indicates the wide divergences on interests between the two.

During the last decade, China has drawn Pakistan into a closer relationship with the signing of the 2005 treaty of friendship, enhanced defence cooperation, joint naval and anti-terror exercises (one ironically in Abottabad, Osama bin Laden's hideout) and established an anti-terror mechanism to flush out East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) members.²⁶ It has continued to provide military assistance to Pakistan with 36 per cent of China's arms sales in 2008 made to Pakistan alone. Wen Jiabao's visit to Pakistan inked more arms sales with China committing to sell Pakistan submarines and warships along with fighter jets to upgrade its old fleet. China's defense minister, Liang Guanjie, noted that these sales were being made to boost bilateral ties from a strategic and long-term perspective.²⁷ The *Global Times* reported that China supplied major weapons to 35 states in the past five years, mainly low and middle income countries. Almost three quarters went to just three clients: Pakistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar, all in India's neighbourhood.²⁸

However, China's now views Pakistan not only as a strategic opportunity but also as an economic one. From being a client state for military assistance Pakistan has now assumed a geo-economic role. Given the contraction of China's traditional export markets since 2008, South Asian economies hold a greater significance for China's continued economic growth.²⁹ The special relationship with China gives Pakistan an edge over other South Asian states. China's investments in Pakistan stood way ahead of all other South Asian states at US\$ 1327.99 million followed by Myanmar at US\$ 499.71 million, India at US\$ 222.02 and Sri Lanka at US\$ 16.78 million in 2008. Pakistan's imports from China lead those from all other countries to Pakistan at 14.8 per cent of total imports, with the US and India trailing at number 6 and 7 (this does not take account of its military imports) in 2011. In the same year, Chinese enterprises signed contracts worth a total of US\$ 19.87 billion with Pakistan, China's direct investment in Pakistan amounted to US\$ 1.3 billion and Pakistan invested US\$ 57.38 million in China. In 2009 the Free Trade Agreement on Goods and Services between the two became operational on the heels of the 2006 Free Trade Agreement in Investment and Trade.

A China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to be completed in 2017 will link the existing Karakoram Pass highway to Gwadar and on to the Middle East and Central Asia through Afghanistan.³⁰ While it forms an important link in

China overland silk route initiative, the Chinese commitment is modest at US\$ 11 billion and the volatile situation in Afghanistan and Baluchistan raise questions about the success of the venture. Pakistan now fits into China's broader regional strategy by reducing China's reliance on the Malacca Straits and linking its western regions with the sources of energy.³¹ If Pakistan's economic recovery is a strategic objective it is equally a commercial advantage to Beijing.

The Regional Matrix of China's South Asia Policy

China's strategic policies in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are also equally encouraged by its view of the South Asian region as one where Chinese influence can expand its strategic and economic interests. The instruments to achieve this have been military to military relations and long term military aid in training, weapons production and arms sales. While these are limited to 3 and 4 per cent of China's overall weapons sales respectively they are sufficient to meet the security needs of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka as indicated by the use of mainly Chinese weapons to defeat the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). In 2013, Bangladesh was the second largest market for Chinese arms exports behind Pakistan amounting to \$350m. China sold arms worth US\$ 10 million in 2006 to Sri Lanka and US\$ 75 million in 2008 the year of the last onslaught on the LTTE, but Sri Lanka cancelled a US\$ 200 million arms deal in 2009 indicating its reduced need for arms the following year.³²

Bangladesh's trade with China, outstrips that with India despite India's concessions under ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), South Asia Free Trade Area (SAFTA) and zero tariff policy on non-sensitive products. Thus, Bangladesh imports 17.2 per cent of its total imports from China, second only to its imports from the EU, and China remains its second largest trade partner, after the EU with 11.7 per cent of total trade conducted with it. India stands a good 1.7 per cent behind China in total trade but leads China in exports from Bangladesh by 1.6 per cent. China has also, as in other parts of South Asia moved into Bangladesh's transportation sector with investment in a road link between Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Sri Lanka is the second largest trading partner for China after India with trade quadrupling between 2000 and 2008 to reach US\$ 1.1 billion. Investments from China also saw an increase during the same period (US\$ 16.78 million in 2008) and contracted projects increased threefold between 2007 and 2008. With the end of the war they are likely to increase further. China's most high profile investment is in the port of Hambantota where China has put in 85 per cent of the financing of a total cost of US\$ 1.5 billion at concessional rates but China is also engaged in multiple projects from building hospitals to roads and putting in a coal plant in Norochcholai. Hambantota could be used as a symbol of all

that China seeks to achieve in Sri Lanka both commercially and strategically. It lies on the crucial sea lanes through which 80 per cent of China's energy resource and trade pass and because it is being funded and built in large measure by the Chinese and control for many years will lie with China. As a potential transshipment hub, a Development Zone with includes an energy component with the inclusion of a liquefied gas refinery and fuel storage facilities, it provides China with both commercial and strategic opportunity. The success of the Hambantota project has also encouraged Sri Lanka to contract other infrastructure projects with China: constructing a second international airport at Hambantota, a US\$ \$248 million expressway connecting the capital Colombo with the airport at Katunayake, a US\$ \$855 million coal power plant at Norochcholai, and a performing arts theater in Colombo, and a special economic zone at Mirigama for Chinese investors.

China has also made investments in soft power: US\$ \$1 million for internally displaced persons, technical assistance for de-mining operations in the northern and eastern provinces pushing up its aid to Sri Lanka (\$1.2 billion in 2009 more than half by the rest of the world) and supporting Sri Lanka on human rights accusations at the UN after 2008.³³ For many Sri Lankans, China balances out India although they are also conscious that peace and stability in Sri Lanka cannot be bought at India's expense.³⁴ In Myanmar, China's strategic concerns are both external and internal. Externally apprehensions over safety of SLOCs and increasing American and Indian engagement with the regime and internal apprehensions over the spillover effects of conflict between the Myanmar government and domestic ethnic groups bordering on China's southwestern border in Yunnan create a multilayered set of initiatives. On the one hand, China maintains its military assistance to the regime as well as soft loans for development projects to offset other external influences. On the other, China seeks to negotiate a settlement of ethnic disputes. For example, when the 30,000 strong Kokang refugee exodus from Myanmar into Yunnan in 2008 threatened instability on the Yunnanese border, the PRC brought both warring parties to the negotiation table. There have been reports that mediation with other rebel groups is on the anvil. Even though Chinese efforts are viewed cynically by some ethnic groups as instrumentalist, evidently China has had considerable influence with government and non-government groups to mediate between them. Since the elections and the change from a military junta to a nominally elected government, however, Chinese interests in Myanmar may not weigh in with the new regime which is keen to indicate its relative neutrality vis-a-vis China. China's efforts to get market share are also posited on interest free loans to poor countries with poor political records. Thus, apart from concessional loans to Myanmar it also gave Myanmar a 30 year US\$ 4 billion interest free loan for hydro power projects,

for roads and railway lines. China is also Myanmar's third largest trading partner after Singapore and Thailand. Pocket book economic policy gets China market share on its own conditions which include labor contracts for Chinese workers and the purchase of Chinese equipment for the project often impacting positively on the economies of Chinese provinces contiguous to Myanmar, for example Yunnan.

For all that China's economic, commercial and strategic presence in South Asia has expanded in recent years. India remains the biggest market and most significant strategic element in South Asia for China and for South Asian states as well. Thus, by 2008 despite the fact that China has the most outstanding strategic issues with India it had the largest number of contracted projects with it (420,856), with Pakistan trailing a poor second (191,586). China's trade and with India surpasses its total trade with all South Asian states in terms of absolute value as well as the pace of growth. In the last decade trade with China has reached US\$ 70 billion and is poised to hit US\$ 100 billion by 2015. In 2010 India and China signed US\$ 60 billion worth of deals in the energy sector and food and marine products overtaking the US\$ 10 billion worth of deals with the US. Xi Jinping has committed US\$ 20 billion for investment in India and 30 billion in South Asia. The more significant aspect of China and India trade in South Asian is that neither of the two competes with each other in this trade. In fact, increasing India China trade has positive implications for South Asian economies. Given this, at least one aspect of competition and anxiety in the relationship can be set aside.

China's maritime strategy and the creation of a "string of pearls" around India have often been cited as part of its policy to establish a military presence in the Indian Ocean region. Needless to say, China's commercial and construction activities in ports in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Pakistan have given rise to alarmist views. However, a closer look at many of the port related activities in which China engages indicates that economic and commercial interests trump strategic imperatives. China neither has the capability nor, therefore, the reach to be able to sustain a military presence in Indian Ocean ports. The added factor of the US naval presence, by far the most extensive, and an active Indian blue water navy would be impediments it would have to overcome if it were to seek domination and control of the Indian Ocean. Yet it is fair to say that the security dilemma paradigm has been extended to the maritime domain in the IOR. As of yet while there is a weak dialogue on piracy based on functional needs there is no dialogue that speaks to strategic interests in the IOR. US President Obama's recent statement on India's role in the Asia Pacific has sparked off concerns in China on India's strategic drift towards the US and should point towards initiating a serious dialogue on IOR security issues.

A Regional Approach to South Asia: The Case of China's Energy Strategy

China has taken a regional view of the South Asian energy sector although it deals with each state at a bilateral level. The view of the South Asian energy sector emerges from China's energy security policy and has dictated an aggressive policy of investment and aid overseas to overcome its energy needs in South Asia. Pakistan, Myanmar and Bangladesh have become important states for Chinese investment in the energy sectors. China's efforts in this area are not just to develop energy resources but also to create the infrastructure that can take these to markets hence energy sector investment is almost always backed up by Chinese investment in transportation facilities. China's investment in energy projects—from hydropower to oil and natural gas exploration and transportation and logistics hubs—are important initiatives. Often these plug into local needs as for example with Pakistan's Energy Security Action Plan (2005-2030) which dictates an expansive energy policy based on traditional and alternative sources of energy and energy infrastructure. In Bangladesh, as well, China has an interest in setting up nuclear plants, exploration for gas resources, a deep water port near Cox's Bazaar and the construction of an advance air base to protect its offshore resources.

In Myanmar, China's energy policies have taken advantage of the Junta's political isolation in the past. Here, as in Pakistan and Bangladesh energy investments and infrastructure feed into China's energy security network, linking energy exports from Myanmar to its western provinces and the energy grid in Southeast Asia. Hence, by the end of the last decade, at least 45 Chinese multinational corporations were involved in approximately 63 hydropower projects, substations and transmission line projects. 16 Chinese MNCs were involved in 21 offshore and onshore oil and natural gas projects amongst them China's largest: Sinopec, China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC). In many of these projects, China gets energy products at concessionary rate as for example in the Shwe gas field where gas is sold to China at less than the market price. Much of the power is exported out of Myanmar to the Thai energy grid. China's energy corporations are also involved in laying a pipeline from Arakan in Myanmar to Yunnan and perhaps to Chongqing as well. China is involved in mining but on a much smaller scale.³⁵

India's energy cooperation with China is as yet low key but not nonexistent. Since the middle of the last decade both have taken some small steps to jointly bid and win stakes in western oil companies such as a Canadian oil company in Syria, have signed an agreement for cooperative oil bids in 2006 and signed an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2009 to cooperate in climate change

and renewable energy resources. However, the nature of Chinese and Indian firms often preclude cooperation in bids and the resulting loss of bids for Indian companies has more to do with capital structure of Chinese firms than outright rivalry and strategic competition. On the whole, though, China's energy policies with other South Asian states are less complicated than they are with India. Security concerns abound on energy sector technology imports from China and there is also evidence of what analysts have called maritime energy nationalism with an increasing tendency by China and India to show the flag in the maritime domain, to acquire military platforms to protect assets and territories, to extend extensive surveillance and patrol activity near disputed areas and to undertake assertive posturing around offshore economic zones. India seems to be hedging on China's rising naval power by investing in maritime technology.³⁶

China's visible and extensive economic profile in South Asia has benefitted cash strapped South Asian economies but the resulting trade imbalances in all states have set off a spate of criticism. In Pakistan, China's closest partner in South Asia many now debate the wisdom of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) signed in 2006 and the Agreement on Goods and Services of 2009. Competition from China has undermined local businesses and growing trade imbalances undermine the sense of mutual gain. In Sri Lanka the military is less than unanimous on the use by China of the facilities that it is creating. In Myanmar, growing resentment at the influx of Chinese workers and the exploitation of natural resources led to the bombing of the Mysitone dam project in 2009. In India, the energy sector is split between producers and distributors on restricting China's entry into the sector. Anti-dumping allegations, especially from India, are regularly filed and domestic subsidies and other concessions to Chinese companies raise complaints of a non-level playing field. However, there seem no large scale signs of a retreat from engaging with China across South Asia. In many South Asian states, the fear of the Indian behemoth also means that the offside of trade and investment with China is tolerated for the substantial gains to local economies.

Conclusion

India's China policy confronts many of the old issues and some new ones. The older strategic issues remain and newer issues to do with the direction of the sub region present a challenge to India's premise that the region should stay India-centric. In the absence of the dynamic economic growth which can draw the neighbourhood towards it, New Delhi's options are constrained, especially given China's ability to invest in the region. If China's aim in South Asia is to create a stable periphery for its own growth and development it has been able to do just that by supporting its relationship with Pakistan and extending its relations with other South Asian states as well. Despite criticism of Chinese trade imbalances,

most South Asian states see China as a legitimate partner in development projects in the absence of other alternatives. In the short term, this wins friends for China and in the long term development projects in South Asian states benefit these economies. India's reluctance to push forward connectivity in the region, as with the Bangladesh, China, India, Myanmar (BCIM) initiative, and China's "one road, one path" initiative on connectivity further draws South Asian states into China centric economic world. What continues to drive India's policies in the region, hence, are strategic issues rather than economic ones. This places India at a disadvantage with China and the Chinese argument for cooperation seems logical. China's South Asia policy has moved from a focus on bilateral relations to one that increasingly looks at resources, opportunities and challenges in regional terms. Within this perspective, economics seems to have gained as much traction as politics although the discourse on strategic issues is still dominant.³⁷ There remains a contradiction between the Chinese argument for cooperation on the economic front and assertiveness and confrontation on the strategic front.

Given that each state is currently concerned with increasing its power and influence in the same domains and views each other as undermining its security, there is little fundamental agreement that cooperation would deliver joint gains.³⁸ This is despite the Chinese argument that cooperation with China is a "win-win" for both. Peace and stability are cited as objectives in all official documents between the two but both need to evaluate whether the process of cooperation will give them the ends they want to achieve.³⁹ The absence of an effective and accepted rule based structure for negotiation has also meant that existing institutionalized dialogues have done little to change the context in which India and China might opt for cooperation over competition. As with the *Panchsheel* in 1954, China's peace and stability and "harmonious world" discourse today is not equipped to do this. China's current emphasis on a "harmonious world" which presupposes "common interests" overlooks the fact that harmony is not cooperation. As one Chinese analyst puts it, harmony is to be pursued "within reason, to our advantage and with restraint."⁴⁰

Cooperation also requires negotiation of differences to "achieve mutual adjustment "on contentious issues. Given the strident pronouncements and hardened positions on territorial claims on both sides there seems to have been little mutual adjustment over the numerous rounds of talks on the resolution of the border. China's growing military capabilities make cooperation even less of an option for India. India's strategic partnership with the US does the same for China. Yet, as China knows from past experience in negotiating its entry into the WTO states need to think of balancing compromise with anticipation of long terms gains which entail a willingness to work within rule based institutions or regimes, not relegate negotiation to open ended "dialogues". However, as of yet

agreements rarely bind and institutions to address the competitive interests of India and China in South Asia are weak, regimes non-existent and there seems little political will to strengthen the existing institutional structure for interaction and negotiation.⁴¹

China's options as laid out by Chinese analysts try to include the old and the new: not destabilizing Pakistan while recognizing India's position in South Asia but without accepting its domination. At the functional level, they argue, China needs to establish a comprehensive strategic partnership with India with the details filled in on limits of cooperation but within the notion of South Asia as a region.⁴² The problem of the periphery still remains. Since large states are often targeted at the seams, it is prudent to exercise power at the margins/periphery. The realization on the Chinese side that the rise of India is as inevitable as that of China should provide space for a more reasoned dialogue not just on India-China relations but also on South Asian security and development. Whether this is an understanding of the Indian position within China's policy making circles situation is difficult to access and points to one of the major impediments in formulating policy: the absence of clarity on China's motives. The fact that Chinese analysts and policy officials make the effort to extricate positive interpretations of China's foreign policy positions points to a critical communication gap between China and the world.

Given that India is still viewed as the problem in the sub region, China's policy response has been partial and aimed mainly at crisis prevention. Until 2013 this has mainly worked. Despite the allegations of overstepping on sovereignty issues like stapled visas, definitions of Indian citizenship and intrusions on the border, an increase in high level meetings between heads of state led to the stabilization of the border, and again although border talks moved at a glacial pace, an important 2006 agreement on guidelines for the talks kept dialogue to a civil level. In 2013 it all seemed to fall apart when China dug in tents on the Ladakh border in a tense confrontation with Indian military. The confrontation ended on the note that a new mechanism for border management was necessary. Clearly older formats painfully constructed had fallen by the way. The incident at Chumar the following year sealed the fate of all such agreements reviving security dilemmas in New Delhi. Indian Prime Minister Modi's strenuous diplomacy since coming to office can be read both as economic and strategic outreach.

In a more realist sense, India appeals to Asian solidarity and civilisational histories have elicited few favourable policy responses. Instead, despite criticisms of India's policy of "strategic restraint" and the lack of coherence in its military preparedness, India has increased its military budget from US\$ 11.8 billion in 1990 to US\$ 30 billion in 2009. The ratio of defence budget to GDP is 2.5 per cent higher than that of China stands at 1.8 per cent indicating its "growing

latent capacity for generating military power.”⁴³ Clearly China’s crisis prevention policy is viewed as deeply flawed in India.

Yet from India’s perspective human security and its impact on neighbourhood conflict China’s investments and trade enables the objectives of Indian foreign policy: a stable and prosperous neighbourhood as long as it does not create anxieties over expanding power and influence in the region at India’s expense. Given the element of uncertainty in an India-China equilibrium since both states are rising at the same time, have an overlap of strategic interests, base their foreign policies on realist assumptions of security maximization and neither quite views the other as contributing to its security hopes for a consensus on objectives and policies are limited. Yet the stakes are too high to relegate cooperation to a distant future. India and China need to create rule based institutions which will create the context for cooperative responses on bilateral issues in the region. For this to happen bilateral interactions have to move out of the older bureaucratic mode towards greater communication, transparency and forthrightness on issues that impact security in the region. One stumbling block to this is the common view that foreign and security policies are the domain of officials and governments alone. Given the range of issues that impact security it may be time to bring in the technocrats, the specialists and the people who are most impacted by decisions.

The region, meanwhile, looks at India-China rivalry with some concern. As one Bangladeshi analyst put it, the “concerns of small states are equally relevant and smaller states in South Asia need to change the rules of the game to ensure security for themselves.”⁴⁴

NOTES

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12

China-India Relations: Objectives and Future Priorities

Pang Zhongying and Rupak Sapkota

Since the late 1990s, the argument that the “21st century belongs to Asia” or it being the “Asian century” or that it’s the “Rise of Asia” has been floating around. The continuous rise of China and India is viewed as an essential part of the argument that the “21st Century is Asian Century”. China and India have come to be known as the leading “emerging” economies and even “emerging” powers regionally and globally. India and China’s combined population accounts for more than 35 per cent of global population and both are nuclear weapons holders. China is a founding permanent member of United Nations Security Council (UNSC), while India has been eager to become new permanent member at the reformed UNSC in the future.

In September 2014, Chinese President Xi Jinping paid a shuttle visit to India and met with then newly elected Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. During President Xi’s India trip, China and India signed several agreements foreclosing China’s huge investment and cooperation promises. Chinese President Xi was the first international leader to reach out to Prime Minister Modi after his election victory. Noteworthy that, even Chinese Premier Li Keqiang made his first foreign visit to India on May 18, 2013 which demonstrated China’s imperative to have better relations with India in a rapidly changing world politics and economics. (note: Reciprocally, Prime Minister Modi visited China in mid May 2015). Diplomatically, it was viewed widely as a successful trip with emphasis on economic cooperation and the better management of non-economic issues.

China and India have long been described as geostrategic ‘rivals’ sharing a history of armed conflicts (such as repeated border tussles and a war tragedy in 1962) and contentious bilateral issues: from territorial disputes and divergent

political ideologies, to differences on Tibet, nuclear doctrines and the Asian regional groupings. While they are competitors for interests and influences in Asia, China and India also share increasingly common interests in maintaining regional stability and order (for example, combating the growing non-governmental menaces posed by terrorists and extremists), exploiting economic growth opportunities, cooperation in infrastructure investment, securing access to global energy/resources and markets and enhancing regional multilateral economic co-operation. Can China and India's parallel strategic rise to great power status revive the old '*Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai*' era? What are the major priorities in the China-India strategic partnership? Can China and India put border disputes aside and move ahead with the process of economic cooperation? These are some major ongoing questions that academics are focused on in the 21st century China-India interactions.

China is willing to promote Asian connectivity economically and humanly by a series of grand initiatives including the "One Silk Road Belt and One Maritime Silk Road" and the "Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank" (AIIB). China hopes to have India as a key partner to realize the Asian Century and improve upon Asia's relations with the rest of the world. Is it possible that India can positively respond to China's proactive 'cooperation' based foreign policy? So far, India has promised to be a most important member in the AIIB.

The objective of this chapter is to analyze the existing challenges on bilateral aspects and beyond and then discuss the future China-India priorities on which the two countries can enhance their cooperation on the areas of core mutual interests. Further it would explain the rational prospects on how China and India can engage on achieving regional stability, security, peace and prosperity. The chapter will also reflect on Modi's visit to China.

Evolution of China-India Relations

In the middle of the 20th century, the newly independent Republic of India and the "New China" People's Republic of China (PRC) were born simultaneously. The two countries have had huge legacies from their historically rich cultures and civilizations. They became major parts of the Global South as special developing countries in the era of the United Nations. India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru saw China ideally as a natural ally, close to India, as both states had just fought off Western imperialism and colonialism. So did the PRC. PRC and India mutually recognized each other politically and diplomatically in the early 1950s.¹ From the Indian side, the phrase "*Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai!*" (India and China are brothers) was coined during this time, in the light of the 1954 Panchsheel Agreement with the PRC.² With similar and even common imaginations and aspirations, the China-India relationship was based on the fragile

“peaceful coexistence” principle. But, such a shared principle of the 1950s was seriously disrupted and damaged by the induction of the Dalai Lama issue in 1959 and the fiercely fought border war between the two in 1962. The border disputes and the Dalai Lama issue have been thorny issues since then. In regard of the border issue, China and India have made series of serious attempts to negotiate but unfortunately it remains a constant source of tension in the relationship, and this is probably where the neo-realist perspective most accurately interprets the relationship between the two countries.³ Hence, the last six decades since 1955, the core challenge confronting China-India relations has been to build sincere mutual trust and respect. The trust deficit or distrust created by both sides has delayed the improvement of other dimensions of the bilateral relations and China-India cooperation multilaterally.

There are other big factors that lead to China-India problems. An Indian China expert writes:

There are also security concerns of India about the transfer of nuclear intelligence to Pakistan by China as China is helping to construct two nuclear power plants in Pakistan. This kind of activities makes India suspicious. So we see, that the multilateral cooperation has not impacted the bilateral relations. With the result that there is mutual distrust, so called ‘Chindia’ is working only in some areas. We have ‘Chindia’ in A, B, C, but not in X, Y, Z.⁴

On the other hand, some of China’s India experts deeply worry that with the “rise of India” to great power status, it is almost impossible to reclaim Chinese sovereignty over Southern Tibet; China has to face this reality in the China-India border areas.⁵ India, with a new political leadership has as its foreign policy focus the vigorous pursuit of geo-political influence through projecting its greater maritime power. India’s quarter century of ‘looking East’ is set to be followed by a long-term period of “acting East”. Further enhanced security cooperation with Japan, South Korea, Outer Mongolia, Australia, and the United States are the prime indicators of the new doctrine. Also, strengthening existing security ties with Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) as a regional security community and expanding cooperation with islands in the South Pacific and the Indian Oceans are other dynamics underpinning this doctrine.

From the political realist point of view, one can assume China and India are both competitive and conflictive for greater economic and political sphere of influence and even regional leadership in the greater Asia.⁶ China’s military security concerns *vis-a-vis* South Asia’s largest and most powerful state, India, coupled with territorial disputes and the need to protect its ‘soft strategic underbelly’, i.e. Tibet, provide a key to understanding Beijing’s South Asia policy.⁷ With an increasing military build-up and a frequent-nationalistic rhetoric in both nations, some of the analysts see the risk of a China-India military conflict to be a real

possibility. These contradictory processes are complicated by some degree of asymmetry between the two Asian giants as China's political and policy elites do not appear to feel threatened by India or intentionally neglects/belittles the India threat while the Indian elites and over-sensational media seem to project a sense of insecurity with regard to China's rise to superpower status in a globalized world system.⁸ China-India bilateral relationship is often characterized more by competition than cooperation because 'the issues that bind them are also the issue that divide them'.⁹ Both China and India want a stable Asia that will allow them to sustain their economic growth, but they perceive threats very differently and thus have divergent priorities of foreign policies. The bilateral initiatives of China and India are driven by both economic and political factors, including the so-called 'domino effect' or 'fear of exclusion'.¹⁰

Nevertheless, both countries are experiencing high economic growth in the last three decades, and building a more substantial economic relationship and pursuing cooperation in international forums on financial governance, global growth promotion, environment and climate change negotiation, multilateral trade rounds, human rights and others. Parallel developments between the two countries have turned into an interesting opportunity to cooperate in several industrial and urbanized sectors. Tensions on their disputed border have considerably decreased.

One of China's revised foreign policy doctrines under the new political leadership chaired by President Xi Jinping is the revised new security concept.¹¹ After the end of the Cold War, during security dialogues in the greater Asia, China has been advocating the new security concept, which opposes the traditional military alliance-based security and confrontational zero-sum game security. China's revised security concept stresses the importance of regional security challenges and regional security solutions as follows:

One cannot live in the 21st century with the outdated thinking from the age of Cold War and Zero-sum game. We believe that it is necessary to advocate common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security in Asia. We need to innovate our security concept, establish new regional security cooperation architecture, and jointly build a road for security of Asia that is shared by and win-win to all. We all live in the same Asian family. With our interests and security so closely intertwined, we will swim or sink together and we are increasingly becoming a community of common destiny. It is for the people of Asia to run the affairs of Asia, solve the problems of Asia and uphold the security of Asia. The people of Asia have the capability and wisdom to achieve peace and stability in the region through enhanced cooperation.¹²

Beijing has adopted a more pragmatic but more proactive approach to the management of offshore territorial disputes, such as those over the Nansha islands in South China Sea and Diaoyu islands in East China Sea. However, China has

repeatedly ensured the region and the world that China will not use force in the settlement of such maritime territorial disputes but peaceful dispute settlement and maintains the freedom of navigation (a global China supports the freedom of navigation) in the China Seas for all international actors in the common global economic system.

China is willing to develop a good relationship with India as a crucial part of its friendly neighborhood policy. Chinese President Xi Jinping made the following remarks during a meeting with the former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on the sidelines of a summit of BRICS countries in South Africa on March 28, 2013.¹³ In that occasion, President Xi described China and India, as the world's two largest developing nations with a similar historic mission to boost their social and economic development. "China, which regards its ties with India as one of the most important bilateral relationship, commits itself to pushing forward the two countries' strategic cooperative partnership".¹⁴

On the border issue, President Xi further said:

China and India should improve and make good use of the mechanism of special representatives to strive for a fair, rational solution framework acceptable to both sides as soon as possible.¹⁵

In the same meeting, then Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh said India recognizes that the Tibet Autonomous Region is a part of the Chinese territory and that India will not allow exiled Tibetans to conduct political activities against China in India.¹⁶

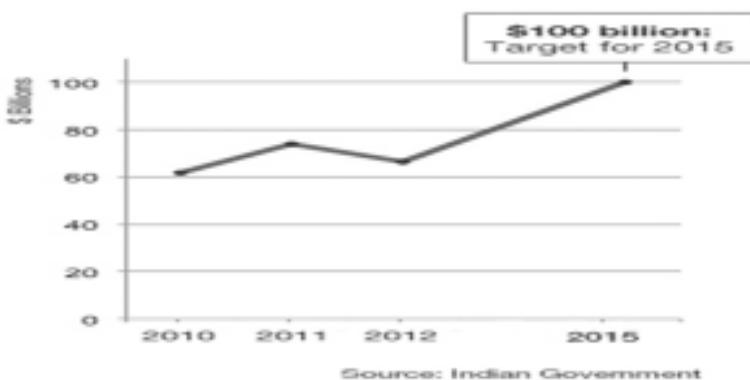
Economic Prospects

The world's economic balance of power is shifting rapidly and will shift dramatically and continuously as China and India maintain their economic growth. Although slowing down its economic growth to enter into so-called "a new normal", China remains on a historic path to formally and completely overtake the United States as the world's "largest economic power", and India's economic growth is rapider prominently. According to an influential London-based British think tank, Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) unveiled annual "World Economic World League Table" indicated that China will overtake the US in 2028 to become the world's largest economy.¹⁷ It also forecasted that India would beat Japan to grab the position of the world's third-largest economy in 2028.¹⁸ China and India have sustained the world's highest annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates over the past decade—9 per cent for China and 6 or 7 per cent for India.¹⁹ More importantly, the two countries have been among the world's most successful in weathering the challenges of the global recession since the 2008 financial crises in the US and EU.

Likewise, the rapid growth of both China and India, after the liberalization,

marketization and privatization of their economies, has proven to show a new potential in terms of bilateral trade, and both markets offer elements missing in the respective country. A dramatic increase in trade between China and India in recent years has led to significant changes. China and India officially resumed trade in 1978. In 1984, the two sides signed the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) Agreement. China-India bilateral trade was only few millions dollars till mid 1990s but reached US\$ 51.8 billion in 2008. By the end of 2009, as a result of the world economic slowdown, bilateral trades dropped to US\$ 43.27 billion. However, in 2010 bilateral trade reached US\$ 61.74 billion, a growth of 43 per cent compared to the same period last year. In 2011, bilateral trade stood at US\$ 73.9 billion (+20%). India's total exports to China for 2011 were US\$ 23.41 billion (+23%) and China's exports to India reached US\$ 50.49 billion (+24%). Trade deficit for India for year 2011 stood at US\$ 27.08 billion.²⁰ The first nine months of the current fiscal statistics shows that India-China trade has reached \$49.5 billion with 8.7 per cent share in India's total trade, while the US comes second at \$46 billion with 8.1 per cent share and the UAE third at \$45.4 billion with 8 per cent.²¹ The UAE was India's biggest trading partner in the 2012-13 fiscal year. The bilateral trade between the two countries is steadily increasing and set a target of US\$ 100-billion bilateral trade expected to be achieved by 2015.²² (Figure 1) Although, India has huge trade deficit with China and is concerned on how to tackle the rising trade deficit which currently stands at US \$40 billion.

Figure 1: China-India Bilateral Trade on graph²³



China and India have gradually started to comprehend the importance of interaction and cooperation, if they are to achieve the status of global powers. They also realize that the model of aggression and colonization are outdated objectives in order to become a dominant regional and global power in the international arena. Although existing border disputes are thorny but it should

not become an obstacle to the increase of economic interaction between the two countries. Can China and India put that aside and move ahead with the process of economic interaction?

Future Priorities of China-India Relations

Multilateral Cooperation

Interestingly, China and India have more cooperation multilaterally than bilaterally. It appeared that China and India are using multilateral structure to facilitate their bilateral relations.²⁴ They have sound cooperatiton in multilateral forums including Russia-India-China (RIC), BRICS, and G20. China shares a great deal of common interests and goals with India in global and regional issues, especially those related to promote the interests of developing countries, economic development, trade regimes, climate change, and human rights. The voting behaviors of the two countries in these issue areas are similar in many international organisations/institutions and settings. However, China is particularly concerned with its regional security situation, which is closely related to its relationships both with India and the United States.²⁵

China is particularly sensitive to any new security and military relationship established between United States and India, as many in China's defense establishment view US actions as designed to strategically encircle China in Asia and the Pacific region. Along with the military presence in Afghanistan, bordering China, since 2001, the United States has strengthened its military ties with Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Singapore, Australia and other regional players. Recently, the United States has enhanced security cooperation with India and Vietnam that once fought border wars with China and have existing territorial disputes with these countries. India's increasing military ties with the US and Japan can be seen as more of a precaution against China than an outright anti-China move.

India's UN Security Council Bid

In the late 1990s India showed its strong desire to occupy a permanent seat on a reformed United Nations Security Council. Seeking China's support thereafter became an important element of India's China policy and main topic at meetings between the two nations' leaders.²⁶ Both China and India have vowed to work together to promote reforms to the UN Security Council and enhance representation of the developing countries.²⁷ In the April 2005 joint statement, China and India reemphasized the importance of the UN in global peace, stability and common development and expressed their determination to continue their efforts together with the international community to strengthen the UN system

and develop a sound multilateral basis from which to address global issues. India is continuously reiterating its aspirations towards permanent membership of the UN Security Council. China has acknowledged India as an important developing country which has a growing influence in the international arena and supports India's aspirations to play an active role in the UN and international affairs. In May 2015, during Prime Minister Modi's visit to China, both China and India vowed to support a comprehensive reform of the UN, including recognizing the imperative of increased participation of developing countries in UN affairs and governance structures. Although, China's attitude toward India's interest in seeking a permanent Security Council seat has never been explicitly announced. On the one hand, Beijing confirms that it would like to see India play a more important and active role in Asia and in global affairs. On the other hand, Beijing has to take into consideration the interest of its close ally Pakistan, which vehemently rejects India's bid for a permanent seat.²⁸

Beijing and Delhi are stepping up their engagements on multilateral issues. For instance, Delhi's position is closer to Beijing's when it argues against the use of force to prevent or roll back the spread of nuclear technologies, as in the cases of Iran and North Korea.²⁹ Chinese and Indian multilateral policies are evolving, as per circumstances. Over the past few years, cooperation between China and India has increased in a number of regional and global forums, the most prominent of which being the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which will help the two countries cooperate on a broad range of both security and economic issues.³⁰ China has already become an observer in SAARC and India also enjoys observer status in the SCO. China welcomed India's application for full membership for SCO. Additionally, working with China in other organisations such as the G20 and BRICS further encourages mutually beneficial growth both in terms of diplomatic and economic strength. India's desire to strengthen its tie with APEC has been explicit, and China has acknowledged India's important role in driving the global economic growth. These various multilateral frameworks also provide an impetus for strengthening understanding and mutual trust among them.

China will host the 2016 G20 summit—a most important diplomatic event that will boost the transformation of Chinese foreign policy—to play its role as a global great power. The Chinese presidency of G20 will be an India's opportunity to strengthen China-India coordination for global governance issues.

Regional and Sub-Regional Cooperation

China does not openly contest India's political prominence in South Asia. China's policy towards South Asia has limited aims, it has no ambition/intention to get involved deeply in South Asian regional issues unless it identified the issues as

pertaining to China's security and economic interests. China did not expand its relations with South Asian countries to all fields, even in the last two decades of the 20th century. After China's "open up and reform" strategy came under way, China ranked economic interests as the main issue in its relations with many countries and regions, such as Southeast Asia, Europe and Africa. China has used its stronger trade/investment ties with some countries to reduce the fundamental political disputes between them, such as the US and West Europe, but the relationship between China and South Asia was still quite traditional and focused on military and political issues.

After the beginning of 21st century, China's economic and bilateral engagements with South Asian countries including India has grown. China has deepened cooperation in the field of trade, investment and agriculture within the SAARC framework since it gained observer status in 2006. Thereby, from 2013, every year, China has started to organise 'China-South Asia Expo Fair' to enhance and promote regional cooperation with South Asian countries. No doubt, the trade between China and the member-countries of the SAARC at the bilateral level are likely to increase manifold if China becomes a full member of the bloc and plays a greater role in the South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA). China is willing to participate and make significant contribution on progress of economic integration of South Asia as part of Beijing's multilateral diplomacy. Additionally, it is understandable that China's diplomatic pragmatism has allowed for a gradually changing economic status quo in South Asia.³¹ The changing relationship between China and India have big impacts in their neighborhood too. The growing interest in economic security will reduce rivalry between China and India in their neighborhood.³² What is clear is that Sino-Indian relations have a significant effect upon geopolitics in the South Asian region, and thus upon peace and stability of South Asia.

Pakistan Factor in China-India Relations

For the last four decades of the 20th century, China's South Asian policy was based on a single strategic pillar—its "all-weather friendship and all-dimensional cooperation" with Pakistan, the number two power in the region. The strong relationship between China and Pakistan was formed after the Indo-China border conflict and the second Indo-Pakistan War in 1965.³³ To some extent, China's friendly relations with Pakistan helped to maintain some sort of regional balance of power, but this balance came at the price of long-term confrontation with India. China's relationship with Pakistan is a critical impediment that prevents the fullest normalization of China-Indian ties. Moreover, China-Pakistan relationship has had some implications against India during the Cold War. This kind of implication can be seen from China's attitude towards India-Pakistan

wars in 1965 and 1971, when China took measures of strategic containment against India. But China demonstrated fair neutrality in the 1999 Kargil conflict.³⁴ China's position during the period of India-Pakistan Kargil conflict and later should be seen as a watershed shift in China's policy in South Asia.³⁵ In recent years, Beijing has invested heavily over operation of Gwadar port which serves an important role in the projection of China's naval prowess in the region. Pakistan has suggested that the port could be upgraded to a naval base for Chinese use. China, however, immediately rejected this offer, not wanting to antagonize the United States and India with the formal establishment of a base in Pakistan.³⁶ Hence since the mid-1990s, the relationship has undergone a certain kind of essential transformation.

The ongoing uneasy relation between India and Pakistan has not only affected China-India relations but also has affected the entire SAARC's success. The strategic value of Islamabad is irreplaceable to Beijing; Pakistan plays a crucial role in China's counter-terrorism struggle and acts as a bridge to the Middle East and Islamic world, as well as a potential energy corridor to realize Chinese energy diversity strategy. Meanwhile, China and India are the biggest trading partners in this region and support each other to lead the Global South to realize a new world economic order. India and Pakistan still oppose each other. By excluding Pakistan in BIMSTEC.³⁷ India has started a new paradigm on regional economic integration. Hereby it's inevitable that China would face a new dilemma. China and India should think trilaterally to setup a mechanism of mutual trust among the three countries.

Indeed, before the 1980s, China was not able to create a good network of relations with its neighbor countries nor to make an integrated regional policy or to promote economic cooperation. China's foreign policy was focused on big powers rather than focus on neighboring Asian countries. Now China's diplomacy has become more advanced. China's comprehensive national strength have given its new leaders more confidence in dealing with the international community. China is adhering to its own theories, systems and path of development; that this "self-confidence" has enabled China's leaders to be "very firm" in safeguarding sovereignty and territorial integrity while simultaneously being flexible in dealings with neighboring countries. But, it's policies towards Vietnam, the Philippines and Japan, are uncompromising on the issues of sovereignty and territorial integrity. The growing economic and trade ties will not translate into good bilateral political relations unless China's "core interests" are acknowledged. It is clear that while China's new leaders could show flexibility in formulating the framework for a bilateral relationship, there will be no willingness, or concession, on matters perceived as impinging on China's sovereignty or territorial integrity.³⁸ China pursues cooperative relations with all major powers and aims to discard Cold

War mentality and hegemonic policies. China believes that major powers shouldn't depict a country as a "strategic competitor" and seek to "contain it", but to show more kindness and less hostility and respect each other's core interests.

China's is demonstrating an innovative approach on relations with neighboring countries: it needs to be viewed in the larger perspective of the new Chinese leadership's grand thinking on foreign policy. Two years before Chinese president Xi Jinping floated the idea of reviving the New Silk Road, stated as "Belt and Road" initiative, which later translated as China's new foreign policy initiatives aimed at boosting international cooperation and joint development throughout Eurasia, Southeast and South Asia. This "Belt and Road" initiative consists of a "New Silk Road economic belt" (yidai) and "21st Century Maritime Silk Road" (yilú) perceived to be attempts on enhancing economic relations with China's neighboring countries.³⁹ More worthy, Chinese idea of revealing the new Silk Road is to further stimulate its good neighboring policy. China's neighbors including India are generally positive on the proposal to jointly rebuild a New Economic Silk Network; let the ancient trade and cultural routes be integrated in the new century. It is clear that the Maritime Silk Road programme sponsored and dominated by China is in India's interests.

Earlier, China and India had taken several significant initiatives for regional economic integration. China raised the proposal of building a regional economic corridor among Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar during Chinese Premier Li Keqiang's visit to India in May 2013. Furthermore, China and India agreed to establish an inter-governmental mechanism and signed a joint research plan on constructing the economic corridor as Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) economic corridor. The BCIM economic corridor which aims to be revived as a 'Southern Economic Silk Road' could be the nodal point of three emerging regional blocs: South, East and Southeast Asia. The "Kunming to Kolkata" highway, part of the BCIM economic corridor could vibrate the bilateral and even regional trade. China and India need to engage to build the roads, ports and other infrastructure needed to improve regional network of connectivity. At the same time, China and India both perceives this kind of regional economic integration as potential issuance for stability and prosperity in the future. Likewise, China led 26 Asian nations⁴⁰, incorporating India, to form a multilateral financial front in the form of the AIIB. China and India agreed to work together with relevant parties to accelerate on operating the AIIB to promote regional infrastructure and economic development.

China-India Relations under the New Political Landscape in Beijing and New Delhi

The leadership of the Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister

Narendra Modi appears entrepreneurial; both being transformational leaders reshaping their own domestic and global identities. China and India are fast developing countries with growing global influence. It is natural that more and more attention is being attached to their leaders and decision-makers. We have watched closely that both Chinese and Indian leaders are aware of their differences and despite that have realized the importance of bilateral cooperation to avoid conflicts. Both leaders hope to find common ground for their countries despite strategic tensions and a long-standing border dispute.

In their foreign policies, both have shown pro-active pragmatism on good neighbourly relations. Apart from this, Prime Minister Modi has repeatedly emphasized that in the foreign-policy sphere, his priority lies in economic diplomacy. He is intensely conscious of the fact that his mandate in the last parliamentary elections emanates out of the pledges he made with regard to steering India's economic development and good governance. Consequently, during President Xi's visit, economic edge has been sustainably exposed. The Chinese government has committed US \$30 billion, including some business deals signed by Chinese companies to import products worth US \$3.6 billion from India, the setting up of two industrial parks and in developing a fast train corridor and a new strategic road. And this implies an enormous increase in Chinese investments in India so far. Moreover, Modi government's emphasis is on infrastructure development and building up India's manufacturing industry. As China-India has agreed to consider cooperating on a prestigious High Speed Rail project, the railway system in India has been identified as a major area of cooperation with China assisting in introducing faster trains on lines connecting the big cities. China is providing training for Indian railway officials, engineers and is also assisting in the redevelopment of existing railway stations and as well the establishment of a railway university in India.

Conclusion

Both India and China expect a peaceful rise and both countries are finally interlinked through globalization. The common social, environmental and security threats China and India are facing are forcing them to work together for bilateral, regional and global solutions. Cooperation is the only rationale that both countries can choose for their fundamental and long-term mutual benefits. There are also several key areas of economy and security in which both countries, if they cooperate, can achieve mutual gains.

China and India have already emerged as the two largest economies in the global economic system. In many serious predictions such as Global Trends 2030 by US National Intelligence Council, China and India will surpass the US separately to be the two dominant leading economies. The "economic

interdependence” or “economic cooperation” between China and India at various levels would be a key to secure the China-India domination in the global economy.

Globally, with common grounds in multilateral diplomacy by strengthening the new frameworks such as the BRICS, China and India would support each other to lead the Global South to realize a new world economic order. Regionally, the progress of economic regional integration in Asia is not up to China-Japan or China-ASEAN cooperation, but up to China-India cooperation. Currently, several fresh significant initiatives sponsored by China and in which India has participated including the AIIB, New Silk Road, BCIM and others continentally and on the seas, will further escalate the realization of the dream of the Asian Century. China is offering India a decent role in such non-Western dominated international institutions, and it appears India would eventually incorporate Chinese efforts to rebuild the world economic order.

The enhanced relations between India and China can best be characterized as one of global cooperation on transnational issues especially vis-à-vis the West’s geostrategic rivalry at the regional level, in the form of growing commercial exchange and in some cases bilateral trade, investment and competition.⁴¹ Of course, nobody ignores the harsh realties of China-India relations. Even someone who cheers China and India’s new approaches to improve and advance the relations admits privately or even publicly the difficulties involved. However, no matter the difficulties, it is clear that the relationship will be a crucial strategic partnership of Asia and the Global South.

Overall it is quite clear that there is much cooperation rather than just trade and investment between China and India. What is hindering cooperation between China and India is lack of mutual strategic trust, historical disputes and ‘perceived threat’ of China by India. It is high time that both China and India start emphasizing on resolving the real border issues so that the relationship gets a boost and which ultimately would forge a greater and friendlier cooperation. China and India need to see and acknowledge existing changes, so they can deal with the changes in the new situation by using a rational attitude and by truly grasping the new opportunities of historical development in order to achieve ultimate “win-win” objectives.

NOTES

1. India recognized the People’s Republic of China as the legitimate government of China on April 1, 1950.
2. During September 1959, India’s Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru tabled the First ‘White Paper’ on India-China relations. It contains notes, memoranda and letters exchanged between India and China in April 1954 and August 1959.
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 6. China helps Sri Lanka to build a naval port. China also plans to establish different ports and a military base from the Island of Hainan in the South China Sea to the Persian Gulf in the Middle East called "String of Pearls". At the same time India has also increased and strengthened its naval presence in the Indian Ocean and in the Persian Gulf. India conducts joint exercises with Vietnam in South China Sea and occasional naval exercises with Sri Lanka, the Philippines and New Zealand.
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13

China's Military Modernisation and its Impact on India

Gordon G. Chang

In December 2014, Indian Defense Minister Manohar Parrikar approved the sea trials of INS *Arihant*, his country's first indigenously built nuclear-powered submarine. "Arihant," appropriately enough, means "annihilator of enemies." The boat is designed to launch ballistic missiles carrying nuclear warheads, and the first test firing is scheduled for late 2015.¹ India is going all-in on nuclear submarines. Shipyards are already building two other "boomers" of the INS *Arihant* class, even before the 6,000-ton INS *Arihant*'s sea trials are completed, and the boat begins service, now scheduled for late 2016.

Moreover, the USA, the UK, France, and Russia—four of the five nations with nuclear submarines carrying ballistic missiles—are not considered threats. However, Beijing—also an operator of boomers—is particularly on the minds of Indian political leaders and defense planners. "There is no doubt about the reason for India's determination to add nuclear-armed submarines to their military: China," wrote analyst K.R. Bolton in 2012.²

Currently serving naval officers are hesitant about specifically naming the Chinese state, but retired ones are more forthright. "We should be worried the way we have run down our submarine fleet," says Arun Prakash, former head of the Indian navy, to Reuters at the end of 2014. "But with China bearing down on us, the way it is on the Himalayas, the South China Sea, and now the Indian Ocean, we should be even more worried."³ "Bearing down" in the Indian Ocean is apt. China's activity in that immense body of water has increased "exponentially,"⁴ Admiral R.K. Dhowan, India's Navy Chief, told New Delhi Television in December 2014.

The Admiral's assessment is correct. In December 2013, China's Ministry of National Defense informed the Indian military attaché in Beijing of the deployment of a nuclear submarine in the Indian Ocean.⁵ In the following September, a Chinese diesel-powered Song-class boat docked at Colombo, the Sri Lankan port facing India, along with a sub tender, the *Changxing Dao*, from the North Sea Fleet. The Song's passage through the Indian Ocean was a first for China's conventionally powered boats, and the stopover was the first foreign port of call for a diesel Chinese submarine.⁶ Early in the following month, Beijing announced that a Shang-class nuclear-powered sub would join anti-piracy patrols off Aden, a clear indication (as Jayadeva Ranade has pointed out), that Beijing intended its subs to maintain a continuous presence in the Indian Ocean.⁷ Also, in October, the *Changxing Dao* returned to Colombo with another submarine, which may have been the same Song-class boat or, according to some reports, it could have been a nuclear-powered one.⁸

Chinese officials now boast that the Indian Ocean is no longer India's alone, and they have reason to be proud. "Chinese forays have graduated from diplomatic port calls, training cruises, anti-piracy operations, search and rescue missions, to underwater operations," writes Vijay Sakhija of the National Maritime Foundation in New Delhi. "Further, the choice of platforms deployed in the Indian Ocean has qualitatively advanced from multipurpose frigates to destroyers, amphibious landing ships, and now to submarines."⁹

India finds itself outnumbered. Until the Annihilator of Enemies joins the fleet, the country will have only one nuclear-powered sub, and that one is on loan. *INS Chakra*, commissioned in April 2012, is a Russian Akula-2, leased for 10 years from Moscow. The "attack" boat is designed primarily to kill other submarines. China, on the other hand, is far ahead. The People's Liberation Army Navy, known as "PLAN" in defense circles, is thought to possess 10 nuclear-powered submarines.

Three of these submarines, Jin-class boats, are boomers. The Pentagon's 2015 Annual Report to Congress predicts that China "sometime in 2015" will begin "deterrence patrols"¹⁰—a bland-sounding phrase for long deployments of submarines carrying the ultimate weapon strapped to the top of long-range launchers. The Jin boats, carrying JL-2 missiles, will probably stay in the South China Sea at first, and then venture into the Pacific to deter the USA. For the moment, they are unlikely to patrol the Indian Ocean.

However, Indian planners are worried about China's nuclear weapons nonetheless. As a result, the Indian navy appears to be rushing *Arihant* into service. Some Indian analysts even believe its first patrol could change their country's relations with China overnight. For instance, Admiral Arun Prakash, the former Naval Chief, implies that New Delhi will have to use diplomacy to keep the

Chinese “in check” until the country rebuilds its underwater fleet,¹¹ suggesting that his country will then be able to employ sterner measures. Why is that? When the INS *Arihant* sees service, some of India’s nukes will be carried in the deep, largely invulnerable to preemptive attack. Moreover, for the first time, India will be able to bring all of China within the range of its most destructive weapon.

Admiral Arun Prakash may or may not be correct about the effect of nuclear weapons on diplomacy; but his comment highlights an important aspect of New Delhi-Beijing ties. Indian leaders have gone to great lengths to avoid angering China because they are intimidated by its military might. Many say the trepidation can be traced back to the thrashing the Chinese administered during the 1962 border war, when Indian policymakers overestimated their own military.

In any event, today New Delhi remains cautious in its dealings with Beijing. As Kanwal Sibal, a former Indian Foreign Secretary, told the Associated Press in September 2014, “We rarely speak frankly to China.”¹² Thus, the main impact of China’s military modernisation on India is psychological. And so it should come as no surprise that Indian planners place great importance on an event rich in symbolism—that is, the INS *Arihant* going out on its first deterrence patrol.

Competition in the Indian Ocean

INS *Arihant* will ply contested seas. In August 2012, the then Indian Navy Chief Admiral Nirmal Verma said his country’s “primary” area of strategic focus was the stretch of water between the Malacca Strait in the east, and the Cape of Good Hope in the west.¹³ It would be natural for an Indian naval officer to think that way. However, these seas have preoccupied Chinese planners as well—and they have been looming larger in importance in recent years. For one thing, as China’s navy has grown larger and more capable, its admirals have been able to realistically think about operating in the Indian Ocean on a regular basis. Yet, there is a more practical reason for Beijing’s interest: about four-fifths of China’s oil passes through that body of water. In short, Chinese planners feel an increasing urgency to protect their country’s critical supply line.

In a speech to the Indonesian parliament in October 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed his 21st Century Maritime Silk Road initiative in response to the need to defend sea lanes.¹⁴ The Maritime Silk Road (the companion to the land-based Silk Road Economic Belt) connects China’s ports—which are on the South China, East China, and Yellow Seas—to Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. Needless to say, the Silk Road maritime route runs through the waters surrounding India. Kanwal Sibal, the former Indian Foreign Secretary, views Beijing’s proposal as a Trojan horse: “It is a precursor to [the Chinese] eventually positioning themselves more permanently in the Indian Ocean ...They are building pockets of influence”.¹⁵

In setting up infrastructure in place along the route, Beijing is indeed building deep relationships with—most notably from India’s perspective—Bangladesh, Pakistan, Seychelles, and Maldives. These are all on or in the Indian Ocean. Also of concern are possible Chinese bases in Namibia, in the South Atlantic, and Djibouti on the Gulf of Aden.¹⁶

Chinese diplomats say New Delhi should not be concerned. While discussing the Maritime Silk Road in September 2014, the Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Liu Jianchaohas said that China “has never, and will not, use so-called military or other means to try and hem in India....There is no strategic competition between China and India in our relationship, and there is certainly no such word as ‘surround’”.¹⁷

No doubt, the chain of facilities across the Indian Ocean looks like a line of Chinese naval bases—what some analysts call Beijing’s “string of pearls.” However, newly built berths can be used for warships as well as container vessels and tramp steamers. But, who has complained about ports for Chinese commercial traffic? India has. However, the Chinese submarines that docked in Sri Lanka in September and October 2014 pulled into the Chinese-funded Colombo International Container Terminal.

From New Delhi’s perspective, this raised “enormous concerns” with regard to the policies of the then Sri Lankan President, Mahinda Rajapaksa.¹⁸ Sri Lanka permitted the Chinese to dock even after India’s National Security Adviser, Ajit Doval, issued a warning to the Sri Lankan Defense Secretary, Gotabaya Rajapaksa, that New Delhi considered the presence of a Chinese submarine unacceptable. It was seen as a violation of a July 1987 agreement providing that “Trincomalee or any other ports in Sri Lanka will not be made available for military use by any country in a manner prejudicial to India’s interests”.¹⁹

The New Delhi-based defense analyst Brahma Chellaney has attributed Sri Lanka’s defiant decision to the erosion of India’s strategic position over the previous decade. “At a time when India is facing increasing Chinese strategic pressure from the north, a new military challenge is opening up from the south,” Chellaney has noted.²⁰ And he is right. The apparent deterioration of India’s position in the ocean named after it is matched by the deterioration across its land borders.

Chinese Activity on India’s Land Borders

In terms of land borders, China’s anti-Indian initiatives are especially evident in Pakistan, China’s “all-weather friend.” At the end of November 2014, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif broke ground on a section of the Hazara Motorway. This will connect the outskirts of the capital city of Islamabad to China through the fabled Karakoram Highway. The ceremony was no ordinary event. As China’s *Xinhua News Agency* proclaimed, the ground breaking signaled “the

implementation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor agreement.”²¹ In April 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Pakistan and formally inaugurated the Corridor.²²

The Corridor—perhaps the most instructive case study of China’s economic-military initiatives—is indeed ambitious. The transport and communication links—roads, railways, cable, and oil and gas pipelines—will stretch 2,700 kilometers from Gwadar, a strategically located port on the Arabian Sea near the Iran border, to the Khunjerab Pass, where the Karakoram Highway leaves Kashmir and enters China, not far from the Chinese city of Kashgar.²³

Furthermore, Islamabad is expected to establish special economic zones in the Corridor where Chinese companies will locate operations. As Tarique Niazi of the University of Wisconsin has observed, Beijing is trying to “integrate Pakistan into the Chinese economy by outsourcing low-tech, labor-absorbing, resource-intensive industrial production”, and the Corridor initiative makes it easier to transform the client state “into a giant factory floor for China”.²⁴

Beijing has obviously decided to make a special commitment to Pakistan. Almost all Corridor projects will be on China’s tab, which means it will, one way or another, own resulting cash flows from profit-making projects. Chinese companies will participate in the building of the infrastructure, and Chinese banks, especially the China Development Bank and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, will be providing financing.²⁵ The Beijing-sponsored Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, when it opens its doors for business, will probably support the Corridor projects as well.²⁶ The tide of Chinese cash could effectively turn Pakistan into a Chinese dependency.

The Gwadar Port reveals Beijing’s designs on Pakistan. China last decade provided about 75 per cent of the funding for the strategic port’s first phase of development. In February 2013, Islamabad transferred the operations of the port to Beijing—specifically to the state-run China Overseas Port Holding Co.²⁷ Many believe the Chinese navy will one day use the facility, eventually turning it into a formal base close to India.

For now, Beijing is building additional facilities in the port area so that vessels can offload oil there, and send it across the Himalayas to Xinjiang in China’s northwest. The overland route eliminates the need to ship crude through the easily blocked Malacca Strait, thereby eliminating a critical vulnerability in the Indian Ocean.

The Corridor enters China through an area India claims as its own. Beijing says it does not take sides in the territorial dispute over Kashmir. However, at the beginning of December 2014, it abandoned its asserted neutrality. In a release, *Xinhua News Agency* stated that the Khunjerab Pass was “on the China-Pakistan border.” China’s official media outlet stated, “The pass, is a strategic point on the

Karakoram Highway, which links China's Xinjiang with Pakistan's Gilgit-Baltistan region.”²⁸ New Delhi, however, maintains Gilgit-Baltistan is part of India. In 2010, the Chinese government issued a similar statement, but withdrew it after New Delhi's protest.²⁹

Thus, when Corridor projects are completed at the turn of the decade, Beijing will be able to use the new transportation links to faster deploy its forces to areas disputed by Pakistan and India. To Indian analysts, therefore, the Economic Corridor looks like part of a “pincer strategy”³⁰ of China and Pakistan closing ranks to confront their country. Moreover, it does not ease Indian concerns that in the months preceding the Hazara Motorway groundbreaking, Beijing apparently increased the number of its ground troops in Pakistani-controlled regions that are claimed by India.³¹ As the Pakistan Corridor example shows, Beijing's economic assistance has crucial military implications.

The same pattern is evident elsewhere along India's land borders. For instance, at the end of December 2014, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi arrived in Kathmandu for a three-day visit to deliver help to Nepal—especially assistance in generating electricity. Beijing pledged to increase official annual aid five-fold, from US\$24 million to US\$128 million.³² Wang then traveled to Bangladesh, offering a free trade agreement and stating, in the words of the *Dhaka Tribune*, that “China would always remain beside Bangladesh in its development needs.”³³ Beijing has been attempting to pry the country [away] from India's embrace by ramping up assistance.³⁴

China's regional initiatives have been so successful in recent years that New Delhi now plays defense, even on home ground. For instance, in late November 2014, Indian diplomats found themselves in the uncomfortable position of fending off Beijing's attempt to gain admission to the eight-member South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which India as the biggest member has traditionally dominated.

At the organisation's 18th Summit held in Kathmandu, Beijing allies—Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka—pushed to upgrade China from observer status to full membership. India sought to defeat the initiative because SAARC, as the grouping is known, operates on consensus, and New Delhi feared Beijing would block its initiatives in the future.

Across what it considers to be its region, New Delhi sees increasing evidence of Chinese involvement. Beijing's officials first build relationships with small states on India's periphery with aid and trade, and then establish military ties. “China's strategy toward South Asia is premised on encircling India and confining her within the geographical coordinates of the region,” writes Harsh Pant of King's College London. “This strategy of using proxies started off with Pakistan, and

has gradually evolved to include other states in the region, including Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal.”³⁵

Thus, Beijing has been building the infrastructure for war in countries surrounding India. And, of course, it has been busy constructing such infrastructure on its own territory close to the Indian border. At the end of October 2014, Xinhua News Agency announced that the National Development and Reform Commission had approved a new rail line running from Lhasa, the capital of the Tibet Autonomous Region, east to Nyingchi.³⁶ Toward its eastern end, the line (part of the Sichuan-Tibet railway) will come close to India’s state of Arunachal Pradesh.

Beijing claims most of Arunachal as its own, calling it “South Tibet”, and China has been pressing its claim with special vigor in recent years.³⁷ Thus, although Xinhua implied the new 402 kilometers of rail between Lhasa and Nyingchi will increase tourism and spur economic development, Indian analysts and officials are suspicious. One of the fears in Indian circles is a full Chinese attack. “If there is instability in Tibet after the death of the Dalai Lama, the Chinese army would not hesitate to launch a pre-emptive strike and occupy Tawang, if not the whole of Arunachal Pradesh,” wrote B. Raman, an Indian intelligence official who became a widely followed commentator on security matters, almost a decade ago. “They are preparing themselves for such an eventuality by strengthening themselves militarily in the Tibet area”.³⁸

China’s most important military preparation for fighting at high altitude involves the building of transport links to bring its forces to tomorrow’s front lines, necessitated Today, India is playing catchup in the Himalayas, necessitated by “a wide asymmetry in infrastructure” as *India Today* puts it. “Our projects were in hibernation in the last 15 years,” said Minister of State for External Affairs, Lieutenant General V.K. Singh (Retd.), to that weekly magazine.³⁹ Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has promised to accelerate overdue infrastructure building. At the same time, he is thinking both short-term—reinforcing Indian forces in disputed areas—and far into the future—planning civilian settlements there.⁴⁰ For the moment, however, China is ahead in this race and already using its new infrastructure to great effect.

Chinese Incursions in Indian-Controlled Territory

China and India have two major territorial disputes. In addition to the claim to Arunachal Pradesh in the east, there is one in the Ladakh region of the state of Jammu and Kashmir in the west. Both these disputes bring two large armies into close proximity in the Himalayas.

Each year, there are dozens of Chinese incursions south of the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the temporary and ill-defined border between India and China

along their western boundary. The provocations appear to be on the rise, not only in number but also in scope. Beijing is able to launch and sustain these thrusts because it has, over the course of decades, built transportation links and bases at high altitude on the Tibetan Plateau.

These incursions into Indian-controlled territory have had consequences, as the incursions in September 2014 illustrate. Around September 10 of that year, Chinese troops crossed the LAC in the Chumar section of eastern Ladakh. Although the Sino-Indian boundary there is ill-defined, it was clear China's commanders intended to create a provocation as they advanced several kilometers on the Indian side of the temporary line in battalion strength—approximately 1,000 soldiers.

While meeting Prime Minister Modi in Ahmedabad on September 17th, President Xi Jinping said he had ordered his forces to return to the Chinese side of the border. On the following day, Chinese officials told their Indian counterparts that the troops had been directed to return to their original position. In fact, China's commanders added soldiers late on the 17th or early the following morning. The tense standoff, perhaps the worst in years, continued Friday, when Xi Jinping ended his three-day visit. The incident—actually a series of intrusions—lasted into the weekend. At the same time, there was a “civilian confrontation” at Demchok, a village also in Ladakh. There, Chinese yak and pony herders set up tents about a half kilometer on the Indian side of the LAC, clearly at the direction of Chinese authorities—most probably the army.

In the words of the *Times of India*, Indian government officials were “pretty sure” that the incursions “were timed to coincide” with Xi’s visit to India.⁴¹ If so, who timed the provocations? Some believe it was Xi Jinping himself, engaging in a particularly duplicitous form of diplomacy. As leading Indian scholar Madhav Nalapat noted, Xi Jinping was initially blamed for “this apparent show of bad faith”.⁴²

Although Xi Jinping is known to be assertive, it is hard to see how he thought the intrusions would advance his country’s cause at that moment, or how he could gain by being perceived as disingenuous. Then, Beijing seemed particularly anxious to develop warm relations with New Delhi, something the Chinese leader attempted to do with his many goodwill gestures during the symbolism-rich trip. Moreover, he had no interest in being seen as not in control of China’s troops. Thus, visiting Chinese officials were undoubtedly speaking the truth when they told their hosts that elements of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) were acting on their own. The Chinese words were not, as the Indians initially took them to be, a “feint”⁴³ because, in all probability, Xi Jinping did not then control his army’s movements in the Himalayan regions.

As Nalapat reported at the time of the incursion, “informed sources in Beijing

say that President Xi was unaware of the operation, and was as much taken by surprise as Prime Minister Modi by the PLA's muscle-flexing in Ladakh".⁴⁴ Indians policymakers came around to the same conclusion, and Xi Jinping's publicly reported remarks on the following Monday after his return to Beijing, in which he demanded loyalty from the military,⁴⁵ is an indication he did not order the foray in the disputed border area.

So, what are the implications for India of the September 2014 incursions? For one thing, New Delhi's hoped-for settlement of the long border with China is undoubtedly elusive. During his September trip, Xi raised the possibility of an agreement "at an early date"⁴⁶—something his foreign minister Wang Yi had talked about in June during his visit to New Delhi. According to Nalapat,⁴⁷ in the wake of Xi Jinping's visit, the Indian government decided to "fast-track" a border deal. However, when Prime Minister Modi went to China the following May, there was no border settlement and no progress on substantive matters.⁴⁸ The best the two leaders could do was to agree on was taking measures to cool tensions in the disputed areas.⁴⁹

The question, therefore, arises whether Xi Jinping has the power to compromise with India. As an initial matter, Beijing has not been able to sign a treaty to settle a territorial dispute in more than a half decade, and its recent publicly announced no-compromise approach to sovereignty issues makes meaningful discussions with New Delhi unlikely. An increasingly insecure Communist Party is in no position to explain to the Chinese people that it will cede tens of thousands of square kilometers of claimed territory when it had previously vowed not to give up a speck. The matter of border issues is especially complicated in India's case because Chinese soldiers spilled blood in the 1962 border war.

The People's Liberation Army as a Power unto Itself

It certainly looks as if someone in the Chinese army—probably in the Lanzhou Military Region—which is responsible for the Indian border in Ladakh—wanted to derail relations with India by timing incursions to coincide with Xi's visit.⁵⁰ This means that there are generals who will almost certainly oppose any territorial deal the civilian leadership strikes with the Modi government.

Moreover, the assertiveness of the Chinese army means that relations between China and India will remain troubled in the indefinite future because generals can, at will, create distrust between the two capitals. It appears no one in Beijing seems able to control them—not even Xi Jinping.

Analysts assume Xi Jinping controls the military tightly. His two predecessors, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, eventually gained command of the officer corps with reshuffles, retirements, promotions, and demotions. Analysts say Xi Jinping

was able to do so faster than them. They have taken both the continuing purges of generals and admirals and the series of flag officer loyalty oaths to Xi Jinping as proof of his consolidation of authority over the military. However, these events have shown continued dissension as both the purges and the oaths would have been unnecessary if Xi Jinping had been in firm control.

We should not be surprised that the PLA acts independently. Beginning as early as 2003, flag officers were drawn into civilian power struggles; and once in, they have remained political players. This process of the remilitarization of politics and policy has gone so far that the PLA now looks to be the most powerful faction in the Communist Party. The military has, from all accounts, retained its cohesiveness better than other Party factions. As a result, senior officers are often acting independently of civilian officials, sometimes openly criticizing them, and occasionally making pronouncements on areas once considered the exclusive province of diplomats.

Xi Jinping became the Party's general secretary in part because he appealed to all factions as he was not closely identified with any one of them. China watchers say he heads the "Princelings". However, that term merely describes the sons and daughters of either former leaders or high officials. These offspring have views that span the political spectrum, and do not form a cohesive group. And because he still has no identifiable faction, Xi Jinping cannot afford to offend the generals and admirals. Some analysts—like the veteran Willy Lam—even suggest that the military, or at least part of it, is becoming the core of Xi Jinping's political support.⁵¹

Because Xi Jinping looks to the PLA to serve as his faction, he has become dependent on the top brass. Flag officers may not formally make policy, but they are nonetheless gaining wide latitude to do what they want because Xi Jinping needs them to form his base. This dependency has started a dangerous dynamic. "The Chinese are making exactly the mistakes we made in the 1930s", said an unnamed Japanese official in 2013 to the *Financial Times*. "They are allowing the military to break free from civilian control."⁵²

While the military gains influence, the ranks are pushing the country in troubling directions. "China's military spending is growing so fast that it has overtaken strategy," says Huang Jing of Singapore's Lee Kwan Yew School of Public Policy to London's *Telegraph*. "The young officers are taking control of strategy, and it is like young officers in Japan in the 1930s. They are thinking what they can do, not what they should do".⁵³

These trends mean that optimistic Indian officials are bound to be disappointed. In September 2014, Ajit Doval, India's National Security Adviser, said his country's ties with China were set for an "orbital jump".⁵⁴ However, that now looks unlikely, even though the two countries since 2005 have taken every opportunity to say they have a "strategic partnership".

For the moment—and perhaps many moments to come—Xi Jinping does not exercise full command of the PLA. Chinese soldiers along a tense border answer to no civilian, and apparently have the final say on their country's relations with India.

Sustainability of Chinese Military Budgets

The PLA can continue to call the tune on Indian policy as long as it remains politically powerful, and Beijing is able to pay for its ever-widening ambitions. In March 2015, when Premier Li Keqiang announced that China's military budget would increase 10.1 per cent to 886.9 billion yuan (US\$144.2 billion) for that year,⁵⁵ almost no analyst expressed concern about Beijing being able to pay for its army. “China is no Soviet Union, and defense spending increases of this magnitude appear sustainable, at least in the short-term,” write Andrew Erickson and Adam Liff, both at Harvard University's Fairbank Center.⁵⁶

There are reasons to doubt the sustainability of China's military expenditures, however, especially over the long run. The economy grew 7.0 per cent year-on-year in each of the first two quarters of 2015 according to the official National Bureau of Statistics, and that meets the country's growth target for that year of “approximately 7 per cent”.⁵⁷

Yet, underlying indicators suggest China's economy is expanding far slower than the reported pace. For the first half of that year, rail freight was down 10.1 per cent year-on-year; construction starts by area were down by 15.8 per cent; and trade volume down by 6.9 per cent. Electricity consumption was up, but only by 1.3 per cent, and this figure is widely thought to have been inflated upwards. Manufacturing surveys point to the contraction of the crucial sector, with producer prices down in June 2015 for the 40th straight month. Other year-on-year statistics also suggest either stagnant growth or contraction.

Yet, even if the country were growing as fast as claimed, its growth would be insufficient to pay back debt. To stimulate the economy, China is now accumulating debt at least twice as fast as it is growing.⁵⁸ And it is not only the rapid accumulation of indebtedness that is of concern; it is the stock of debt that is of concern. Today, total country debt is probably more than 300 per cent of gross domestic product when GDP is properly stated—dangerous territory for a developing economy like China's.

Beijing accumulated much of that debt to avoid the effects of the 2008 global downturn.⁵⁹ Incredibly, in the five years starting with 2009, the country created credit roughly equal to that in the US banking system. At some point, there has to be an adjustment in China, just as there was an adjustment in the rest of the world in 2008, or in Japan beginning at the end of 1989. That adjustment can

take the form of a crash, decades of sub-normal growth, or both (as Japan demonstrated); but, in any event, the adjustment is inevitable.

Wealthy Chinese obviously think so. A Barclays study released in September 2014 shows that a stunning 47 per cent of China's rich plan to leave their country within five years,⁶⁰ and capital is already fleeing China, as is evident from the fall in the country's foreign exchange reserves. Those reserves tumbled US\$ 299.4 billion in the last half of 2014 and the first half of 2015. There are indications that the outflow of funds—much of it “hot money”—is accelerating.⁶¹ Some estimate total outflow in the 12 months ending June 2015 to have been as much as US\$ 800 billion.⁶²

Because of the impending downturn, China will probably not be able to meet even low forecasts—like those of the Conference Board, predicting 3.9 per cent growth between 2020 and 2025,⁶³ and former Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers and co-author Lant Pritchett who, coincidentally, believe China will experience 3.9 per cent annual growth over the next two decades.⁶⁴ Yet, however China grows—or, more appropriately, doesn't—it is unlikely the country will be able to afford its military ambitions over the long term. Predictions of indefinite Chinese military dominance, therefore, seem premature.

India's trajectory, on the other hand, is up, with analysts soon expecting “a world-turned-upside-down moment.” That is when “India, always the laggard” passes China to become “the fastest-growing of Asia's giants.”⁶⁵ Analysts used to predict 2016 as the crossover point; but now some say 2015, as the Chinese economy stumbles badly and India roars ahead.⁶⁶

There is no mystery for the impending role reversal. In a five-week-long election ending in May 2014, most of the 541 million voters demanded fundamental change and, rejecting the socialist policies of the then-ruling Congress Party of the Gandhi family, they embraced the charismatic Narendra Modi of the Bharatiya Janata Party. Modi's party won an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha, the lower house of Parliament, for growth-friendly, pro-business “Modinomics.” As the *Wall Street Journal*'s Geeta Anand and Gordon Fairclough reported, the election, changed the mood across the country.⁶⁷ The economy has responded, even though the liberalization Super Modi promised has not proceeded as fast as many had hoped. The “Modi wave,” therefore, has the potential to change growth patterns in the foreseeable future, with the country entering a period of fast expansion powered by, among other things, surging investment, both domestic and foreign.

While growth patterns are changing in India's favor, so is something more permanent—demography. In China, adverse population trends have been accelerating in recent years. The country as a whole will not peak in 2028, as the most recent UN statistics indicate;⁶⁸ nor in 2026 as the US Census Bureau

predicted a half decade ago;⁶⁹ nor in 2025 as leading demographer Li Jianxin estimated.⁷⁰ Speaking at the Asia Global Dialogue in May 2012, senior official Liu Mingkang admitted that China's population would top off in 2020.⁷¹ The rapid bringing forward of the estimated peak is largely a consequence of China's total fertility rate—essentially the number of children born to each female who has attained childbearing age—falling to a “dangerously low” at 1.4⁷²—which is well below the 2.1 needed for replacement; it is the same as that of Japan, a nation said to be in a demographic “death spiral.”

The Chinese, who take great pride in their country ranking as the world’s most populous, will soon be relegated to second place—behind India which will, according to the United Nations,⁷³ grab the crown in 2022. That is, six years earlier than previously estimated, in 2013. According to the UN, India’s population will peak at 1.75 billion in 2068. That year, China is projected to have 541 million fewer people and, in all probability, the gap will be even larger as these numbers do not reflect the accelerated Chinese demographic decline evident today. Where it counts—in terms of workers—China will be a distant second. India’s workforce will overtake China’s within a decade. By mid-century, there will be 1.049 billion Indians of working age, 375 million more than the Chinese in the same age group. In 2050, the median age of India will be a young 37.3 versus China’s 49.6. Then, the percentage of people 65 and over will be 27.6 per cent in China, and only 13.7 per cent in India.

“India has close to ideal demographics,” said Credit Suisse’s Robert Prior-Wandesforde to CNBC. “It’s in a sweet spot.”⁷⁴ China, on the other hand, has one of the world’s most unenviable population profiles at this time; and its government, by insisting on maintaining its coercive one-child policy, appears relentlessly determined to make its situation even less advantageous. Demographic trends in India, on the other hand, mean New Delhi will be able to field more soldiers, pilots, and sailors than Beijing—and because of a larger economy, will have a bigger pool of resources to buy increasingly expensive instruments of war. In a decade, India could have both the world’s biggest population and the fastest-growing major economy.

Many Chinese think this era belongs to their nation, but Prime Minister Modi talks about “India’s century”.⁷⁵ China looks to be the more powerful now; however, demographic and economic trends suggest that it will have to leave center stage soon. Soon, the Indian prime minister’s assessment will look much closer to the truth.

India’s Period of Vulnerability

In the last decade, the Chinese have begun to notice their slipping position. The Chinese academic, Xue Yong, has asked: “What are the factors that can propel

India past China?" His answer: "Number one is demography."⁷⁶ And, at least among Chinese demographers, there is a mood of long-term pessimism. Li Jianxin, the author of *The Structure of Chinese Population*, has noted that for demographic reasons, China would be overtaken by "our biggest competitor, India",⁷⁷ which could end up dominating the middle of this century.⁷⁸ Chinese economists agreed. "When you see a country's population decline, the country will definitely degrade into a second-rate one," says Yao Yang, the Vice Director of Peking University's China Center for Economic Research.⁷⁹

Some Chinese analysts have thought Beijing should act while it can. In August 2009, the Chinese strategist connected to the Ministry of National Defense, Zhan Lue even suggested that Beijing try to break up India into as many as 30 states.⁸⁰ Widely circulated in Chinese policy circles, the article, appears to have represented increasingly hardline views in that country. And those views have mattered. If nothing else, it is possible that they have been responsible for the number of incursions by China's troops into Indian-controlled territory being on the rise, and the incidents are involving larger concentrations of Chinese forces. Moreover, China also seems to be behind the increase in separatist violence in northeast India.⁸¹

When Beijing has viewed India as a rising power, it has resorted to force—the 1962 war. Now that India is poised to pass its rival and stay ahead for decades, the window of opportunity for the Chinese state is closing. Beijing may decide that its strategy for hemming India in is ultimately not sustainable. At the same time, as the *Economist* reports, China's "senior commanders...are spoiling to show what their shiny new stuff can do."⁸²

Thus, the next decade promises to be especially consequential. Indian planners have to be concerned about a falling China as well as a rising one.

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14

China and its Territorial Disputes: An Increasing Security Dilemma

D.S. Rajan

It is natural that in a country like China, which has enjoyed five thousand years of civilization and history, the roots of the present can be traced to the past. A prominent instance of this is the influence of China's founding Emperor Qin Shihuang, on the thinking of Mao Zedong, the architect of the People's Republic of China (PRC).¹ Similar is the linkage between China's traditional *Tian Xia* (Under the Heaven) concept and its stand on 'territorial sovereignty' as a modern state. The concept considers that all people, and the areas in which they have lived, belong to the Chinese Emperor who is considered the Son of God, and who is in possession of a mandate from heaven. As for those areas which are not under the control of the Emperor, their rulers derive their power from the Emperor.² Thus, the biggest political unit for the Chinese is the framework of 'world/society', and not the 'country or nation state'.³ One can clearly see the connection between the concept of *Tian Xia* with China's current sense of its borders. China has been:

Grading all other states at various levels of tributaries based on their approximation to Chinese cultural and political forms, and treating the borders between it and surrounding peoples as not so much political and territorial demarcations, but as cultural differentiations.⁴

Reflecting such a tendency are authoritative maps published by the PRC in end 1980s and in first decade of the current century which, while defining China's modern borders as that which existed during the Qing Dynasty period (1644–1911), describe the extent of the country's "historically lost" territories. The maps show that these encompassed vast areas belonging to neighbouring countries,

including parts of India's Northeast and the Andaman Islands. At the same time, the maps include clarifications that the PRC has no claims to these territories in a contemporary sense.⁵ Also worth mentioning in the context of historical boundaries is Mao's description of Tibet as China's "palm" and of Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, NEFA, and Ladakh as China's "five fingers".

In any study of China's border claims, what should not be missed is the country's tendency to put its modern borders in a psychological comparison with those that existed prior to the perceived 'historical losses' of territories. An authoritative article⁶ (in Chinese) which was noticed in 2005 is a case in point. It reiterates what the Historical Atlas of China (mentioned above) says about China's modern borders as existed during the Qing Dynasty period (1644-1911) and affirms that the borders of contemporary China must be seen in continuation with and in succession from the historic borders of the country. It further states that the evolution of the country's land and sea border areas was due to a multiplicity of factors—politics, military, geography, history, economy, and culture. It asserts that "[u]nless a composite view based on all factors, is taken, it may not be possible to correctly comprehend the nature of China's borders". Notable also is the article's contention that the central government had exercised absolute control over certain border territories even though these territories had enjoyed political autonomy sometimes. The article also says that the border areas are of strategic importance to China, especially to counter military threat or armed aggression from abroad. This may go to justify China's current stand on Tibet and Xinjiang which were not formally a part of imperial China sometimes. With respect to sea boundaries, the article recognizes the existence differing current viewpoints internationally, but argues that it is necessary for the concerned nations to recognize China's historical sea boundary in the background of its traditionally advanced coastal areas. This position may have a meaning with respect to China's continuing claims over islands under dispute in the South China Sea and the East China Sea.

In the current context of China's land and sea territorial disputes, it is important to carefully examine this article in order to draw certain meaningful conclusions. The PRC shares 22000 kilometres long land borders with 14 neighbouring nations: the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK); Russia; Mongolia; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Tajikistan; Afghanistan; Pakistan; India; Nepal; Bhutan; Myanmar; Laos; and Vietnam. India's contention is that China and Pakistan have no common border; China's border with Kashmir is with that part of India which is occupied by Pakistan. In this context, the following key questions arise:

- Why is China still unable to resolve land border issues with its neighbours India and Bhutan (the PRC is not making the border with the DPRK

an issue which needs to be understood in the context of special but complex ties existing between the two communist states) while it has been successful in settling disputes with others?

- Which of the contending neighbours gave border concessions to China during negotiations, and why did they do so? What are the cases when China had to yield to territorial demands from others during talks, and what was its motivation in doing so?
- Why has China, in recent years, chosen to be assertive towards its territorial claims and how is this impacting regional security?

The three unresolved land border issues, and the fourth question of sovereignty claims relating to maritime borders in East China Sea and South China Sea, merit a close scrutiny. Taking the Sino-Indian boundary problem first, India's official stand is as follows.

In the Eastern Sector, China claims approximately 90,000 square kilometres of Indian Territory in the State of Arunachal Pradesh. Indian Territory under the occupation of China in Jammu & Kashmir is approximately 38,000 sq. kilometres. In addition, under the so-called China-Pakistan Boundary Agreement signed between China and Pakistan on 2 March 1963, Pakistan illegally ceded 5,180 sq. kilometres of Indian territory in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir to China. India and China are engaged in discussions to arrive at a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution to the boundary question at an early date.⁷

On the other hand, China's official border position⁸ is as follows: "the China-India border has never been demarcated and that the Chinese government does not recognize the illegal 1914 Simla Convention agreement over McMahon line", reached by the British, Indian and the local Tibetan representatives behind the back of the Chinese government. The total length of China-India border is about 2000 kilometres. The border falls into three sectors: Eastern, Middle, and Western. The total area of the region disputed by the two sides is about 125,000 sq. kilometres: about 90,000 sq. kilometres in the Eastern sector; about 2000 sq. kilometres in the Middle sector; and about 33,000 sq. kilometres in the Western sector. In 1959, India formally made its territorial claim on the Aksai Chin region of China's Xinjiang. In February 1987, it established the so called Arunachal Pradesh state comprising Chinese territory south of so called McMahon line illegally occupied by it. Many times the Chinese side has made solemn and just statements that it absolutely does not recognize the illegal McMahon line and the so-called Arunachal Pradesh state. China's formula for a border solution with India is that it, along with India, is committed to seek a "fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution", proceeding from the overall interests of bilateral relations.⁹

It is obvious from the two positions that the border viewpoints of China and

India are diametrically opposed to each other, and that the Tibet factor looms large in their differences. If China is able to effectively deal with the question of the Dalai Lama—who is in exile in India with a large Tibetan ethnic refugee population—the atmosphere can, perhaps, ultimately become conducive to a resolution of the China-India border issue. However, this seems difficult at this time. But it also cannot be denied that, at the same time, the two nations have been able to achieve some progress on the border issue. Among the important agreements reached by them are: the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas (1993), and the Border Defence Cooperation Agreement (2013). Also, so far, there have been seventeen meetings of Special Representatives of the two countries to discuss the disputed border—the last one being in New Delhi in February 2014. In general, the efforts made by the two countries to diffuse border tensions deserve recognition. They need to be understood in the context of an apparent China-India understanding that the boundary problem is complicated, requiring a long time to solve and that, in the meanwhile, bilateral ties should be promoted in other fields, particularly on the economic front.

Needing attention next is the unresolved China-Bhutan border issue. The two nations have no diplomatic ties, but bilateral negotiations to settle the nearly 470 kilometre long border shared by them are in progress since the 1980s, under the guidance of the agreed Guiding Principles of 1988 as well as the Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity in the Bhutan-China border of 1998. The last 22nd round of negotiations was held in Beijing in July 2014. There are three territorial areas of dispute between China and Bhutan: the Jakarlung and Pasamlung valleys in the north-central border; and the Doklam plateau in Eastern Bhutan.¹⁰ While the two territories to the north are of interest to China due to their proximity to Tibet as well as because of its “historic claims” to the areas, the Doklam Plateau is important to it strategically. If China establishes control over that plateau, it can challenge India¹¹ as “the Doklam Plateau lies immediately east of Indian defences in Sikkim. This piece of dominating ground has not only a commanding view of the Chumbi Valley but also overlooks the Siliguri Corridor further to the east.” Reports¹² suggest that China has proposed to Bhutan to cede the area close to Chumbi valley—a tri-junction abutting Bhutan, Tibet, and the Indian state of Sikkim—in lieu of which Beijing would give up its claim over Bhutan’s central areas.

China’s third unresolved border is with the DPRK; for reasons cited in above, the two sides are not making it a bilateral issue. Their disputes concern the area surrounding Mount Paektu (referred to as the Changbai Mountain in China), islands and rights of navigation in the Yalu and Tumen rivers, and access to the East Sea or Sea of Japan.¹³ This is so despite their agreement to split the land

surrounding Paektu in 1962, and the current sharing of administration over the mountain and the lake surrounding it. In recent years, China has been rapidly developing the area, including building an airport and ski resort. Some believe that these steps are aimed at bolstering its claims of sovereignty over the area. The PRC created a further controversy in 2008 when it applied for the region to be considered a UNESCO World Heritage Site. There are also other reports regarding the DPRK's bid to host the 2018 Winter Olympics on the contested Paektu area.¹⁴

The unsolved maritime border issues are serious for China because of the competing claims of several littoral nations and the emerging regional order. China finds itself against 8 littoral parties: Japan; South Korea; the Philippines; Vietnam; Malaysia; Brunei; Indonesia as well as Taiwan. The PRC shares maritime borders with four countries: Japan and South Korea in the East China Sea, and with the Philippines and Vietnam in the South China Sea. In the East China Sea (1,249,000 sq. kilometres), China is currently in dispute with Japan over the Senkakus Islands (called Diao Yu by the Chinese), and with South Korea (the Socotra rock submerged in the Yellow Sea). The disputes are over the extent of their respective exclusive economic zones, and each are resorting to different parts of the UN Conventions on the Law of the Sea to justify their claims. The eight uninhabited islands and rocks in the Senkakus Islands have a total area of about 7 sq. kilometres, and lie north-east of Taiwan, east of the Chinese mainland, and south-west of Japan's southern-most prefecture, Okinawa. They are controlled by Japan, provide rich fishing grounds, and lie near potential oil and gas reserves. The islands are also in a strategically significant position in the context of the rising competition between the USA and China for military primacy in the Asia-Pacific region. China's creation of a new air-defence identification zone (ADIZ) in November 2013—which requires any aircraft in the zone (which includes the Senkakus Islands) to comply with the rules laid down by Beijing—assumes significance in this context. The move is being seen as one meant for China's assertion of sovereignty over the Senkakus Islands.

In the South China Sea (3,500,000 sq. kilometres)—one of the world's busiest waterways with a huge potential of oil and gas field exploitation—China claims most of the waters 'based on historical facts and international law'. In its maps of the South China Sea, it shows them within its 'nine dotted' imaginary line. All littoral nations—Vietnam; the Philippines; Malaysia; Brunei; Indonesia as well as Taiwan—have officially challenged these Chinese claims. They also do not accept Chinese claims on the Paracel Island (known as Xisha in Chinese and Hoàng Sa in Vietnamese), the Spratly islands (Nansha in Chinese and Truongsa in Vietnamese), and the Macclesfield Bank (the Zhongsha Islands in Chinese). The ASEAN has attempted to resolve these disputes through multi-lateral talks;

but China prefers to deal with each country on a bilateral basis. China has also expressed concern at the USA's Asia-Pivot policy, and questions the latter's intentions behind its call for freedom of navigation in the South China Sea. China has constructed an island (with room for an airstrip) at Fiery Cross Reef, West of the Spratly Islands. There is a belief that the proposed air strip is symbolic of China's plan to create an ADIZ in South China Sea also.

A broad pattern emerges regarding China's land and sea boundary disputes; this pattern could facilitate the search for answers to the questions raised in above. Firstly, the total number of countries/territories with which China has territorial disputes as of now is 11: India, Bhutan and the DPRK through land; Japan; South Korea; the Philippines; Vietnam; Malaysia; Brunei; and Indonesia as well as Taiwan through sea). Secondly, China has not resorted to wars to settle disputes; its last wars were with India in 1962 and with Vietnam in 1979. Thirdly, the Tibetan ethnic issue appears to be the main cause behind the continuation of the Sino-Indian and Sino-Bhutanese land border problems; no such ethnic factor seems to prevail in other areas of China's disputes.

At the same time, to be noted is the PRC's motivation involving the ethnic separatism factor in settling borders with Central Asian nations. China either made territorial concessions or provided economic benefits to the latter for reaching border settlements with an eye on enlisting the support of the governments of these nations in combating a perceived security threat from the exiled Uighur separatist groups. An additional motivating factor for the PRC was gaining access to Central Asia's energy reserves. Examples of China's such territorial or economic concessions are the dropping of its claim over 80 per cent of disputed land with Kazakhstan; its investment in the 3000 km long gas pipeline project across Kazakhstan; and its dropping of claims (of over 70 per cent and around 95 per cent respectively) of the disputed territories with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. On the reverse, Tajikistan ceded 386 sq. kilometres of the Pamir mountain range to China. As per the agreement with China in July 2008—reached after about 40 years of border talks and apparently in the interests of overall bilateral strategic ties—Russia returned to China two territories stretching 174 sq. kilometres: one was located at the confluence of the rivers Ussuri in Russia and Heilong in China, and occupied by it since 1929; the other two were the Tarabarov Island (called Yinlong by the Chinese) and half of the Bolshoy Ussuriysky Island, (called Heixiazi by the Chinese). Some Chinese scholars¹⁵ feel that the issue of 'Southern Tibet' (called Arunachal by India) can be solved through a "Heixiazi"-type formula which settled the Sino-Russian border dispute.

China's assertiveness on territorial issues and its regional impact (last question in Para 3 above) requires in-depth analysis. A new dimension of China's unresolved land and sea territorial disputes is being noticed ever since national security interests

have begun to dominate China's external policy in 2008. Its 'core interest' based foreign policy which is all for making no compromises on any issues concerning the country's territorial sovereignty have resulted in the PRC's territorial assertiveness. This is giving rise to fears among neighbouring nations about China's intentions. In this regard, the words of the CCP leader Xi Jinping are significant.

China will never pursue its development at the cost of sacrificing interests of other countries ... We will never give up our legitimate rights and will never sacrifice our national core interests. No country should presume that we will engage in trade involving our core interests or that we will swallow the 'bitter fruit' of harming our sovereignty, security or development interests.¹⁶

The 18th CCP Congress document echoed the same spirit. It proclaimed that China's 'banner is to forge a win-win international cooperation'; at the same time it laid emphasis on making 'no compromises' on issues concerning 'national sovereignty and security of core interests'. Most significant has been the document's clarification that "the two aspects are pillars of Chinese diplomacy and do not conflict with each other."¹⁷ The mention in the document that China "will never yield to outside pressure", and "will protect legitimate rights and interests overseas" has also been noticed for the first time in a CCP congress material. On his part, the Chinese Foreign Minister explained his country's new foreign policy direction by saying that the PRC "will play the international role of a responsible, big country".¹⁸ This signalled a firm shift in the direction so far existed of the PRC's external course: 'hiding one's capacities and biding one's time' (veteran leader Deng Xiaoping's famous 24-character maxim of *taoguang yang hui*).

The post-2008 assertive international behaviour of China can be attributed to a variety of factors. The change seems to have come about mainly due to: (i) China's confidence gained through its ability to achieve a sustained growth leading to a build-up of the country's 'comprehensive national strength'; (ii) China's feeling that an opportunity has arisen for itself to increase its influence globally as the world balance of power shifts from the West to the East and a multi-polar world gradually emerges; (iii) the PRC's growing need to protect land and sea trade routes in the interest of the much needed import of resources from abroad; (iv) the deepening Chinese fears concerning sovereignty over Tibet and Xinjiang; and (v) rising suspicions on the purpose of the US Asia-Pacific strategy.

At this juncture, China's introduction of certain new foreign policy formulations look significant diplomatically as they seem to symbolize some efforts on its part to correct the existing unfavourable image for the country internationally which obviously resulted from an assertive external approach. The first is the "New Type of Great Power Relations" concept—promoted by President Xi Jinping in his meetings with his US counterpart Barack Obama in June 2013, July 2014, and November 2014—primarily addresses Sino-US ties. It has three points:

(i) major powers should have no conflict or confrontation, should emphasize dialogue, and should treat each other's strategic intentions objectively; (ii) they should have mutual respect, including for each other's core interests and major concerns; and (iii) they should conduct mutually beneficial cooperation, abandon the zero-sum game mentality, and advance areas of mutual interest.¹⁹ The US is reluctant to endorse the proposal because it feels that such endorsement would imply its recognition of China's 'core interests'—which is not in its own strategic interests.

The second formulation is the "Establishment of a Network of Partnership with Neighbours". Its stated objective is to forge Asian prosperity and stability through the cooperation of Asian nations, open regionalism, and the constructive involvement of outside countries.²⁰

The third is the "Community of Shared Destiny" concept, which figured in the address of the Xi Jinping at the party Foreign Affairs Work conference in November 2014. The concept, provides for realizing Asia's economic potential and durable security, and stipulates that the community of destiny will be based on deep economic integration, but will also go beyond trade. It will be a vision of a political and security community in which economically integrated countries in the region will support and defend one another from outside threats/intruders as well as manage internal threats together through collaborative and cooperative mechanisms.

Eyebrows were raised when, at the CCP's Central Work Conference on Foreign Relations, held in November 2014, China brought its relationship with its neighbours to the list of top foreign policy priorities. Ties with Great Powers and Developing Countries figured respectively at No.2 and No.3 positions. The conference also saw the characterization of a new subcategory within Developed Countries—they were called major Developing Powers. Analysts see it as comprising of countries like Russia, Brazil, South Africa, India, Indonesia, and Mexico. For comparison, it would be appropriate to note that the order of priorities in the 18th CCP Congress in 2012 consisted of Great powers (understood to include principally the USA, the EU, Japan, and Russia), Periphery (all countries along China's borders), Developing Countries (all lower income countries in the world, including China), multilateral organisations (UN, APEC, ASEAN, etc.), and public diplomacy. The move reflected Beijing's assessment that relations with Asian nations and with rising powers are becoming more and more important than ties with developed countries.

Confirming this new Chinese thinking is Xi Jinping's declaration that "Asians have the capacity to manage security in Asia by themselves".²¹ Experts²² assess that the first priority given to the periphery reflects what the Chinese perceive as being long-term economic and geo-political trends. Beijing has come to recognize

that the periphery is becoming increasingly vital to China's future. China's Vice Foreign Minister stated (April 2014) that the country's trade with East and Southeast Asia totalled "US\$1.4 trillion, more than China's trade with the United States and European Union combined."²³ He noted that "half of China's top ten trade partners are in Asia." Moreover, China realizes it must secure its geostrategic flanks to prepare the country's ascent into the upper echelons of global power. Will the shift of priority to ties with neighbours lead to China's growing less tolerant of Western interference in PRC interests? Does the shift suggest that China is more confident in consolidating the control of its core interests and pressing demands to reform the international order? These are questions which only time can answer.

All new Chinese foreign policy formulations have one thing in common: they contain an emphasis that the countries concerned should accommodate the 'core national interests' of each other. This makes clear that, for China, the protection of 'core interests' will remain a key objective and, as such, the country will not give up its approach of territorial assertiveness. Thus, there seems to be no immediate scope for reducing regional tensions.

It cannot be denied that changing regional power equations are giving rise to feelings of a security dilemma in Asia. The reasons for such a condition are twofold: firstly, a rapidly rising China is challenging the existing international system. This conforms to beliefs of Realist international relations theorists (for example, John J. Mearsheimer)²⁴ regarding the likely behaviour of rising powers in general; secondly, the region lacks a regional security mechanism. The situation of the security dilemma—particularly affecting those countries involved in territorial disputes with China—needs no emphasis. It can also be said that China itself has its own dilemmas.

Japan's security dilemma needs a special mention. It has to choose between two unwelcome possibilities: one concerning more security threats coming from an assertive China, and the other in the form of emerging uncertainties over USA's role in the region. Concerns regarding the likely impact of China's military modernisation and its sovereignty claims over the Senkakus Islands are creating doubts in Japan about the PRC's intentions in the East China Sea and South China Sea as well as the adequacy of Japan's security. To deal with such a situation, Prime Minister Abe has envisaged the "security diamond" concept, whereby Australia, India, Japan, and the US state of Hawaii form a diamond to safeguard the maritime commons stretching from the Indian Ocean region to the western Pacific. The concept appears to reflect Japan's growing desire not to depend too much on the US alliance, and to look for partners within the region. It is possible that Japan is uncomfortable with the somewhat neutral stand of the USA on the Senkakus Islands issue, perceives the US as a declining power, and feels the need

to build independent military capabilities against the uncertainty about the USA coming to its aid in the case of a conflict with China. Japan may also be wary of the negative impact of growing US-China relations on its own alliance with the USA.

Also of interest here is Prime Minister Abe's desire to get closer to Southeast Asian nations. In the Shangrila Dialogue (Singapore 2014), he expressed his country's intention to play a bigger and more proactive role in ensuring peace and security in the region, and pledged support for South-east Asian nations in their efforts to protect their territories.²⁵

The ASEAN nations also face a security dilemma similar to that of Japan. More importantly, divisions exist among them on how to respond to China's policy on the South China Sea. The failure of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers to agree on a final communiqué in their meeting in 2012, and their not naming of China in the corresponding document of the 2014 session, illustrate this point. China has alleged that Vietnam and the Philippines, with US support, are 'hijacking' and isolating China from the ASEAN to achieve their purpose of enlisting the support of the regional organisation for their South China Sea claims.²⁶

China's security dilemma also comes out clear. It wants to protect the country's 'core interests' through a policy of assertiveness. However, China's neighbours are becoming concerned about this policy. At the same time, the PRC considers ties with neighbours as very important, and is accordingly wooing them through extending economic benefits. Thus, it has come to face the question of how to balance its two requirements: the need to be assertive towards neighbours on the one hand, and promote friendship with them on the other.

India's security dilemma also looks similar to that of Japan and the ASEAN. It wants to engage with China and, at the same time, considers its ties with powers like the USA and Japan important, quite irrespective of the latter being China-wary. Strategically, India is required to make counter balancing efforts against China's assertiveness, especially in the context of the latter's moves to forge economic, political and security partnerships with countries falling under the Indian traditional sphere of influence—like Myanmar, Indian Ocean states, the Persian Gulf and the east coast of Africa.²⁷ India has chosen a 'multi-vectoried' foreign policy, providing for simultaneous engagements with all countries irrespective of the fact that the latter have their own differences. This policy allows India to convey its own critical views to China. The reference to maritime security and freedom of navigation in the South China Sea in the India-US agreement on "Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia Pacific and Indian Ocean region" (signed at the time of President Obama's visit to India) proves this point.

On the whole, Asian nations are searching for a regional security architecture

in which a militarily strong China does not dominate. These nations face the question whether (or how) to involve the USA in such an exercise since it is a power challenging China through its Asia-Pivot policy. At the same time, they are being compelled to take into account the likely negative impact of such efforts on their ties with the PRC. They are aware that China may perceive in these efforts the following: a symbol of an anti-China gang up in the region which is aimed at encircling it; that this can make the PRC assert more and increase its military capabilities; and invite other powers to retaliate, thus resulting in an arms race in the region. Thus, it appears that the regional powers are caught in a security dilemma. On one hand they want a security relationship amongst themselves to resist a rising China; on the other, they find themselves in no position to ignore Chinese sensitivities on the same.

In conclusion, it can be said that the security dilemmas in Asia may not end soon. This is because no let-up can be expected in China's assertive behaviour in the region in the near future. Much would depend on the question whether or not the rise of the PRC, marching along the road to accomplish full modernisation of the country by 2050, will be peaceful. China says 'yes' as an answer. Let us hope it comes true.

NOTES

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MARITIME SECURITY IN ASIA

15

Indian Maritime Doctrine and Asian Security: Intentions and Capabilities

Gurpreet S. Khurana

India's engagement in Asia is driven both by its self-interest to meet its national objectives and its normative responsibility as an emerging regional power. Many regional countries have been hopeful of India's prominent role towards Asia's security and stability across the spectrum ranging from delivering 'public goods at sea'¹ to playing a hedge against major powers.² The United States (US) has been particularly keen to elicit India's role as "partner and net provider of security in the Indian Ocean and beyond".³

Given the emerging significance of the Asian rim-land and oceanic space in the global power shift to Asia, the maritime component of India's regional role becomes conspicuous. In May 2013, the then Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh emphatically stated that "We have also sought to assume our responsibility for stability in the Indian Ocean Region. We are well positioned, therefore, to become a net provider of security in our immediate region and beyond."⁴ In the India-US joint statement released during the visit of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the US in September 2014, the two sides reaffirmed "their shared interest in preserving regional peace and stability (including)...safeguarding maritime security and ensuring freedom of navigation and over flight throughout the region, especially in the South China Sea."⁵

These statements may be considered as a reflection of India's intent at the national-strategic level. However, given the lack of a national strategy document, it is not very clear how India would achieve its stated intent. In the generic sense, it would necessitate the employment of all elements of state power—politico-diplomatic, economic, military, informational, and so on. In the specific context of maritime-configured Asia, the employment of India's maritime-military power

would be very crucial. India's maritime doctrine provides valuable pointers on how India aims to achieve the national intent. These doctrinal provisions are contained in the *Indian Maritime Doctrine, 2009 (Doctrine-09)*⁶ and the *Freedom to Use the Seas: India's Maritime Military Strategy, 2007 (Strategy-07)*.⁷

This chapter aims to examine the genesis of India's maritime-military doctrinal articulations and identify the applicability of their relevant provisions to India's emerging role as a security provider in the region. In this regard, it attempts to identify the capability constraints, and addresses the prospects for India's maritime power projection in peace-time.

Genesis of Maritime Doctrine

India's national aim, derived from its Constitution, seeks the unhindered economic progress and socio-political development of its people, and the fulfilment of their legitimate aspirations.⁸

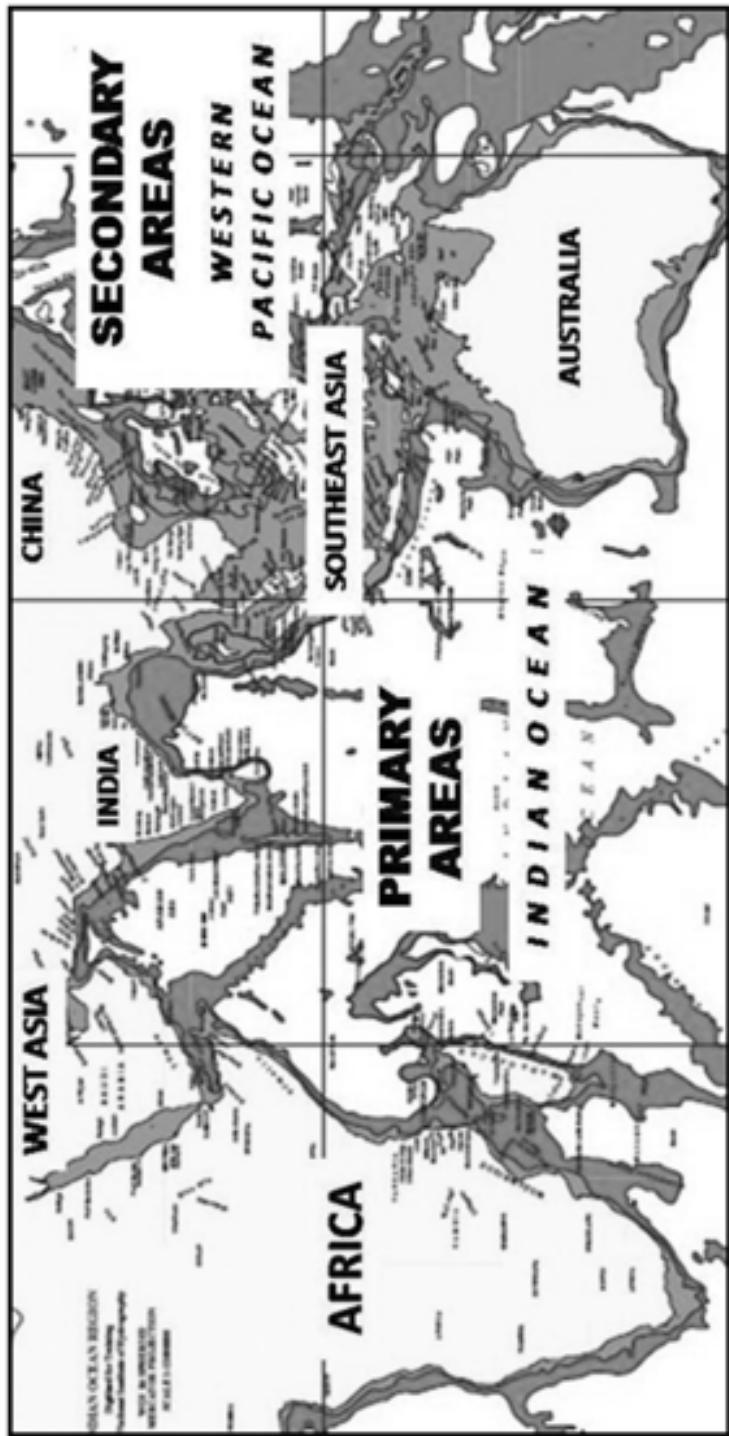
Towards this end, after attaining independence, India laid out its developmental agenda. Due to India's geographic centrality in the Indian Ocean, its virtually insular disposition due to geo-physical barriers in its north, and its long coastline, the agenda was closely related to its maritime and overseas interests. The need to provide a conducive and secure environment for economic development made it necessary for India to develop maritime-military power commensurate to its maritime and overseas stakes. However, landward threats severely constrained New Delhi to lay adequate emphasis to develop its maritime security forces.

Since the late-1990s, however, India began to emerge as a more self-assured nation-state, primarily on account of its 'national security' and 'economic growth'. The former followed its attainment of the status of a nuclear-weapon state in 1998 and the decisive attainment of its political objectives in the 1999 Kargil Conflict against Pakistan. The latter led to it achieving significant strides in terms of its developmental goals, and paved the way for a progressive geographic dilation of India's maritime and overseas interests.

India's civilizational roots and the consequent evolution of its statecraft always precluded alliance relationships. Hence, New Delhi needed to fend for itself to preserve these vital interests. Nonetheless, India's multi-vectored foreign policy began to yield dividends in the forms of strategic convergence with most stakeholders in India's maritime neighbourhood. For India, the convergence lay in its imperative to nourish its vital interests in a secure and stable environment; and thereby the compulsion to shed its erstwhile 'continental baggage', and step in to play the role of a factor of regional stability.

For enabling such role, it became contingent upon India to revive the process of augmenting its maritime-military power, which is largely represented by the

Figure 1: India's Areas of Maritime Interest



Source: Author/ National Institute of Hydrography, Goa.

Indian Navy (IN). A concurrent need was to lay down the principles governing the use of maritime-military power. These principles emerged in 2004 in the form of India's first ever *Indian Maritime Doctrine*,⁹ which was revised in 2009 (*Doctrine-09*). The Doctrine 'charted the course' for India to elucidate its *Maritime-Military Strategy (Strategy-07)*, which complemented the former by providing the contextual framework for employment of maritime forces in the medium-term timeframe of about 15 years.

Areas of Maritime Interest

India's maritime doctrine—that circumscribes its maritime-military intent – is underpinned by an articulation of the areas of its maritime interest (See Figure 1). Based on their relative importance, the primary areas of India's maritime interest comprise its own maritime zones, the maritime and littoral areas of the northern Indian Ocean—including those of its contiguous Persian Gulf—and the principal International Shipping Lanes (ISLs) and choke-points of the Indian Ocean.

The secondary areas include maritime and littoral areas of the rest of southern Indian Ocean, the Red Sea and the Western Pacific.¹⁰ In addition, *Doctrine-09* deliberately leaves the scope for inclusion therein of other areas where India's significant interests lie (or would so in future) in terms of overseas investments and Indian diaspora.

It is evident that the areas of India's maritime interest encompass the entire maritime space of Asia, East Africa and Australia; in other words, the Indo-Pacific region.¹¹ While the primary areas of India's maritime interest broadly lie in the Indian Ocean, the secondary areas are broadly coincident with the Western Pacific. The areas of maritime interest provide the backdrop to examine the salient provisions of India's doctrine relevant to its security role in these areas.

At the outset, it is important to note that regional security is predicated upon the security and stability of India, good order in its maritime zones and friendly relations with its Asian neighbours. India's ability to play a regional role, therefore, needs to be contextualized with that of its overarching national security imperatives.

National Security Imperatives

Strategic Deterrence

The concept of 'strategic deterrence' operates at the national-strategic level. It synergises and leverages all elements of national power—diplomatic, economic, informational and military—and international influence.¹² As an instrument of foreign policy, the *IN* plays a key role through its *Presence and Surveillance Missions*

(PSM) in the areas of India's maritime interest. The 'Forward Presence' component of PSM reinforces strategic deterrence, including through 'shaping the environment'.

'Forward Presence' is reinforced by *Constructive Maritime Engagement* (CME), a concept introduced by *Doctrine-09*.¹³ As part of CME, combined naval exercises with major powers constitute the most effective element of strategic deterrence. In this regard, *Strategy-07* states that

...When dealing with a more capable adversary, deterrence can also be achieved by the formation of partnerships or coalitions/alliances, thereby combining capabilities of partner maritime forces, or presenting a picture of solidarity. While the option of formal coalitions/alliances outside the ambit of United Nations¹⁴ is presently not available to the Indian Navy due to our national policies, we can however reach out to our maritime partners or collaborate with friendly nations to build deterrence.¹⁵

The intent may be exemplified by *IN*'s participation in the multi-nation *Malabar* exercises in 2007, which attracted the attention of not only the Chinese political leadership, but also that of the Chinese media.¹⁶

Nuclear Deterrence

'Nuclear deterrence' is a part of 'strategic deterrence'. With three nuclear weapon states—China, India and Pakistan—sharing political boundaries, Asia is uniquely risk-prone. The effectiveness of India's nuclear deterrence is critical for nuclear-weapons stability in the region. Notably, neither India's draft nuclear doctrine of 1999,¹⁷ nor its 2003 version to operationalise the doctrine¹⁸ mention the underwater component of its nuclear weapon triad. The first official articulation of the need for sea-based nuclear deterrent was done through the 2004 *Maritime Doctrine*. It said, "To achieve strategic deterrence...it is vital for a nation to possess nuclear submarines capable of launching missiles with nuclear warheads."¹⁹ *Strategy-07* amplified the need, stating that:

"...sea-based leg of the nuclear triad enables a survivable second strike capability and is, therefore, a critical enabler for the nuclear doctrine of 'No First Use (NFU)' to attain credibility..."

(Furthermore)...arms control stability, is best achieved at the lowest arsenal levels so as to improve the cost-effectiveness of deterrence. Here again, the most 'credible' of all arsenals in a second strike is the nuclear-armed missile submarine."²⁰

Therefore, India's maritime doctrine conveys its deterrence posture, and through 'strategic communications',²¹ serves as an essential component of nuclear deterrence. However, suitable capabilities are yet to be developed to make the triad of nuclear deterrence credible.

Conventional Deterrence

'Conventional deterrence' is another 'sub-set' of 'strategic deterrence'. Since 1971 Indo-Pakistan war, a full-scale armed conflict has not been thrust upon India, indicating the effectiveness of conventional deterrence. However, such deterrence has been ineffective against Pakistan's proxy war, which led to the Kargil Conflict in 1999, and subsequent intrusions by Pakistan-based terrorist groups into India. Al Qaida's announcement in September 2014 to carry its 'Jihad' to the Indian sub-continent is likely to encourage Pakistan-based state-sponsored terrorist outfits to target India, including through a repeat of the November 2008 Mumbai terrorist strike (26/11) via the sea. Until India is able to deter Islamabad's proxy war strategy, the Indian subcontinent would remain a weak link in Asian security, with India compelled to focus on its internal and coastal security rather than on a regional security role.

So far, India's resort to 'deterrence by denial' (passive deterrence) against Pakistan's proxy war has not yielded the desired results. *Doctrine-09* provides for 'active deterrence', which includes the concept of 'compellance' (deterrence by punishment). It entails infliction of escalatory punishment upon the opponent (through use of precision strikes) by effecting damage and destruction, with the threat of continued use of force till acquiescence to the demands made." Given its inherent attribute for controlled escalation, naval power is inherently suited for compellance.²² Hence, the *IN* provides the option to its political leadership to shift from 'passive' deterrence against Pakistan to 'deterrence by punishment'. However, this necessitates political will and an attendant politico-military posture, which India is yet to demonstrate. It also requires suitable retaliatory capabilities.

Regional Security Missions

Constructive Maritime Engagement

In support of India's foreign policy,²³ the *IN* conceives a major regional role for itself. It contributes to security multilateralism in the region through CME, a concept mentioned earlier. The concept is exemplified by the *IN*'s initiatives such as the *Milan* (congregation) of regional navies at Port Blair (Andaman and Nicobar Islands) since 1995 and the *Indian Ocean Naval Symposium* (IONS) launched in 2008.

CME is also essential to reinforce the existing multilateral structures. In September 2014, under the banner of the *Indian Ocean Rim Association* (IORA), India hosted the first *Indian Ocean Dialogue* (IOD) at Kochi. The key takeaway from IOD-14 was that "IORA members should address security issues themselves rather than relying on international forces".²⁴

This necessitates IN's enhanced engagement with the maritime security forces of the IOR countries. Beyond maritime security, such engagement could even contribute to the foreign policy objective of shaping the political behaviour of regional states. Since long, for example, India has been nudging Myanmar towards democracy and an enhanced integration with the international community. In 2006, ending decades of self-imposed maritime isolation, the Myanmar Navy corvette participated in *Milan* at Port Blair. It was the first time in four decades that a Myanmar warship visited any foreign port.²⁵

Notwithstanding the IORA's desire of 'security self-reliance', an 'inclusive' approach to regional security is necessary—implying a role for all stakeholders—until the IOR countries develop adequate capacity. Given that India's strategic interests broadly converge with those of a 'majority' of the extra-regional powers, CME seeks to encourage the security role of these stakeholders and to reinforce India's strategic partnerships with them.²⁶

There may be stakeholders—particularly extra-regional powers—with whom, India's interests may not always converge. CME is necessary to engage with such players, and to manage strategic competition and de-conflict military operations. It is well known that the present multilateral structures are grossly inadequate to address such issues. Even with regard to conduct of naval forces, the code developed in the Western Pacific²⁷ is legally non-binding and too feeble, given the seemingly irreconcilable and hard positions adopted by the parties to maritime disputes. In the IOR, no such code of conduct presently exists.

A key component of CME is 'Technical Military Assistance' to friendly regional states to build their capacity and capability.²⁸ As compared to other major powers, India's indigenous defence industry is at a nascent stage of development. In 2014, India ranked 29th among the world's largest arms exporters.²⁹ Nonetheless, its potential role towards regional maritime capacity building is not insignificant. India is increasingly providing naval hardware—including machinery and equipment spare-parts—and professional training to the Asian countries.

India's maritime doctrine does not make an explicit mention of the kind of maritime-military hardware that India intends to transfer, but does indicate a 'constructive' intent by stating that such hardware "would enable them to better manage their own security related problems, which in turn enhances the overall security and stability in the region".³⁰ Notably, the naval hardware that India has transferred to the regional countries has been suited to ensure good order at sea, rather than high-end lethal arms that could potentially lead to regional instability. In 2003-04, India gifted two of its new naval patrol vessels to Seychelles and Maldives. In December 2014, India delivered a patrol vessel Barracuda to Mauritius Coast Guard. This was the first warship ever built in India specifically on a foreign order.³¹ Even as the Indian defence industry seeks to further develop

its maritime-military hardware across the entire spectrum of operational employment—including high-end offensive weapons—through indigenous Research and Development (R&D) and joint-ventures (such as the BrahMos missile), regional stability is likely to be a major consideration in New Delhi's defence export policy.

Low Intensity Maritime Operations

Strategy-07 lays down the following “likely scenarios” that could require it to “ensure good order at sea (through undertaking) *Low Intensity Maritime Operations* (LIMO)” in its areas of maritime interest:

- To combat asymmetric warfare, poaching, piracy, and trafficking in arms/drugs.
- Anti-terrorist operations—conducted multilaterally or unilaterally.
- Ensuring safety and security of ISLs through the Indian Ocean... (and)
- Actions to fulfil international bilateral strategic partnership obligations.³²

The *IN*—as part of its ‘constabulary role’³³—has long been contributing to good order at sea in the Indian Ocean. The 1999 rescue of hijacked Japanese ship MV *Alondra Rainbow* are cases in point. Since the dawn of the new millennium, however, India regional security role has become more palpable. It began with the *IN* assisting the ‘over-stretched’ US Navy in 2002 by providing escort to the US high-value vessels in the Malacca Straits against terrorism. In October 2008, the *IN* began its counter-piracy mission in the Gulf of Aden in consort with the other multinational naval forces.³⁴ The mission necessitated enhanced focus on peace-time *Visit, Board, Search and Seizure* (VBSS), a term that was first used in the *Doctrine-09*.³⁵

Both *Doctrine-09* and *Strategy-07* predict that maritime terrorism in the IOR will remain a major security concern in the foreseeable.³⁶ Hence, among many forms of disorder at sea, the *IN* would need to cater for the emerging threat by mapping the activities of the terror groups in partnership with other stakeholders, sharing intelligence and developing appropriate response capabilities. The ISLs transiting through Asia’s maritime choke-points are particularly vulnerable to maritime terrorism.

Freedom of Navigation

Towards meeting the foreign policy objectives, an important responsibility of the *IN* under its diplomatic role is to uphold the tenets of international maritime law, particularly in terms of preserving the right to freedom of navigation and over-flight in the international space. *Doctrine-09* enunciates the dictum that “notwithstanding the attendant restrictions, UNCLOS continues to uphold the traditional principle of *Mare Liberum* (freedom of the sea).”³⁷ The intent is amply

reflected in the title of *Strategy-07*, “Freedom to Use the Seas”. The document adds that “India’s maritime military strategy is underpinned on the freedom to use the seas for our national purposes, under all circumstances.”³⁸

The July 2011 incident of Indian warship INS *Airavat* being interrogated in international waters off Vietnam is well known. The caller identified himself as the “Chinese Navy” stating that “you are entering Chinese waters”.³⁹ Unlike in case of some major powers, India’s current doctrine does not stipulate ‘military assertion’ of navigation and overflight rights and freedoms by its naval forces.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, the realisation of the imperative for naval practitioners to be fully conversant with the tenets of international maritime law led the *IN* to take various measures including the promulgation of its first ever *Handbook on the Law of Maritime Operations*.⁴¹

Being maritime choke-points, the international straits in Asia are vulnerable to use of asymmetric means by state actors. Even low-technology inexpensive sea-mines present a credible risk to shipping in these areas. This necessitates adequate doctrinal emphasis on Mine Countermeasures (MCM). In this direction, *Strategy-07* states that, “Augmenting our mine-sweeping and mine-hunting capabilities is an ongoing priority area”.⁴²

Stability Operations

Strategy-07 lays down the following “likely scenarios” that could require it to undertake *Stability Operations* in its areas of maritime interest:

- “Operations...in response to a request for assistance from a friendly nation...”
- Peacekeeping operations, under the aegis of the United Nations (UN), independently or as part of a multinational force...(and)
- Actions to fulfil international bilateral strategic partnership obligations.”⁴³

India’s security assistance to regional countries has always been premised on their request. In 1986, the *IN* played a major role—albeit a secret one—to assist Seychelles to thwart a series of coup attempts through an operation codenamed *Flowers are Blooming*.⁴⁴ In 1988, India responded to a similar request by Maldivian President to quell a coup attempt by Tamil mercenaries (Operation *Cactus*). While the Indian paratroopers carried by Indian Air Force aircraft to Hulule airport was the first responders, the *IN* was involved apprehending the mercenaries who were escaping via the sea.⁴⁵ Between 1987 and 1990, the *IN* supported the Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka to enforce a negotiated settlement following the civil war (Operation *Pawan*).⁴⁶ In 2003-04, the *IN* assisted Mozambique in offshore policing off Maputo during the African Union (AU) Summits. It has also been regularly policing maritime zones of some Indian Ocean Island states.

UN peace-support operations, particularly those under Chapter VI of the UN Charter, have long been undertaken by land forces of contributing nations, with limited participation of their navies. Even in case of India, which is among the largest contributors to such missions worldwide, the *IN* has participated only on a solitary occasion to support Indian peacekeepers in Somalia in 1994 (UNOSOM II), wherein its role was limited to de-induction of troops, albeit in hostile environment. It is now being realised that given the emerging challenges of peacekeeping, the inherently versatile naval forces provide a suitable and cost-effective option to the international community. The *IN*'s participation in such missions is thus expected to increase in the coming years.

While India has traditionally preferred undertaking stability operations under the aegis of the UN, the provision of the *IN* "fulfil(ling) international bilateral strategic partnership obligations" indicates the possibility of its participation in other multilateral coalitions. This provision is not without political mandate. In 2007 (the same year *Strategy-07* was published), during his address to the Army Commanders, the then Indian Defence Minister explicitly acknowledged the possibility of "involvement of (Indian) Armed Forces—not necessarily under the aegis of the UN—in resolving ongoing conflicts and defusing international tensions".⁴⁷ However, the political decision for involvement in such missions would be guided by the accepted international norms.

Humanitarian Missions

Strategy-07 lays down the following "likely scenarios" that could require it to undertake humanitarian missions in its areas of maritime interest:

- Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)... (and)
- Actions to assist the Indian diaspora and Indian interests abroad."⁴⁸

In the wake of the December 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, the *IN* evoked its Benign Role to undertake a *Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response* (HADR) mission in concert with the navies of Australia, Singapore and the US. Notably, despite the fact that India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands and its mainland coast were among the worst affected by the disaster, and its naval platforms were ill-equipped for a humanitarian response of that scale, the *IN* was the first to reach the affected neighbouring littorals. The *IN* also seeks to enhance its regional humanitarian role through medical missions. In 2006, it undertook a joint medical mission with the US Navy with *IN* doctors embarked onboard USNS *Mercy* for a five-month long humanitarian assistance tour to Southeast and South Asia.⁴⁹

The *IN* is also tasked to operate in close coordination with the Indian Coast Guard for maritime search and rescue (SAR).⁵⁰ Lately, airline disasters at sea have added to the humanitarian insecurities. To effectively respond to such

contingencies, the *IN* could contribute to enhancing maritime SAR capacities and coordination among regional states.

The safety and security of India's overseas diaspora living in countries beset by instabilities is a major national interest. As part of its Benign Role, non-combatant evacuation operations (NEO) is an important task entrusted to the *IN*. This is exemplified by the Lebanon mission in 2006 (*Op Sukoon*). During the NEO mission, the *IN* ships evacuated not only Indian citizens, but also more than 500 nationals of Nepal, Sri Lanka and Lebanon.⁵¹

Capability Constraints

Doctrine-09 elucidates the concept of 'distant operations',⁵² which is an essential prerequisite for LIMO, stability operations and humanitarian missions. The term 'distant' has not been quantified. However, the intent is clearly to play a role in both the primary and secondary areas of maritime interest. At present, in the Western Pacific, India's humanitarian role may be more conceivable. However, in the medium and longer-term time frame, LIMO and Stability operations by the *IN* cannot be discounted.

By laying down the broad principles and intent, *Doctrine-09* and *Strategy-07* only seek to indicate the 'direction' to India's maritime-military forces. Realising some of the doctrinal provisions would not be easy due to significant challenges, primarily in terms of capabilities. The salient capability voids and constraints on the *IN*'s regional security role are identified below.

Force-Level Plans

Although the *IN* is progressively enhancing its 'blue-water' capabilities, the Mumbai terrorist attack in 2008 was a major setback, which compelled the *IN* to shift its emphasis to coastal and offshore security. Following the attack, the *IN* was compelled to revise its force-level plans. The earlier planned ratio of long-legged platforms versus littoral/ policing vessels was thus altered from 60:40 (1.5) to 40:60 (0.67). This represents a daunting challenge to the implementation of *IN*'s 'distant operations' concept, and constrains its blue-water force planning. Nonetheless, the ongoing capability augmentation of the Indian Coast Guard and the marine police, and recourse to technological force-multipliers to enhance littoral MDA may lead to a revival of the *IN*'s 'blue-water' plan.

Sustenance for 'Distant Operations'

'Distant operations' denotes the ability of the *IN* to undertake sustained operations without the support of home bases. Considering that India does not possess overseas bases, *Doctrine-09* emphasises logistics as integral to the naval force.⁵³ The former is envisaged through the planned induction of Fleet Support Ships

(FSS) that would cater for all conceivable logistic-technical stores and services, not merely fuel and fresh water.⁵⁴ However, the development of such capability is still at its nascent stage. *Doctrine-09* also provides for logistic agreements with regional countries. Towards this aim, India has forged some bilateral agreements. However, *Doctrine-09* states that this is only a secondary option since overseas replenishment entails delay that may be operationally unacceptable.

Increased Distant Commitments

The above constraints are aggravated by the *IN*'s increasing commitments to undertake 'Distant Operations'. With regard to its constabulary role, the *IN* does not possess adequate low-cost vessels optimised for distant low-end missions. Hence, the counter-piracy missions in the Gulf of Aden were undertaken by high-value frigates, leading to a trade-off with regard to exercises and training for their primary role, while also degrading their highly specialized weapon and equipment fit.

With regard to its diplomatic role, the long-range extended deployments of *IN*'s principal warships for missions such as PSM and CME are also increasing. This is stretching the available resources further, besides adversely affecting their primary missions. To offset these adversities, the *IN* is 'multi-tasking' its deployed ships for both PSM and CME missions, and conducting multi-nation combined exercises, rather than on a bilateral basis.

Sealift and Integral Airlift

A conspicuous capability-deficit is in the form of adequate sealift and integral airlift capacity. Large amphibious platforms are indispensable for effective conduct of stability operations and humanitarian missions. The 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami made India realise this gaping void, which paved the way for the *IN* to buy the Landing Platform Dock (LPD) INS *Jalashwa* (ex-USS *Trenton*) in 2006. More such platforms are likely to be inducted. While the Air Force could provide the quickest response to distant contingencies, in case an airfield is not available in the host country or if the payload necessitates it, sealift would be the preferred option. During the Tsunami relief operations, the *IN* had resorted to innovative measures such as rapid conversion of survey ships into hospital ships. The *IN* still awaits arrival of a dedicated hospital ship.

The non-availability of a standing Marine force integral to the amphibious platforms is another shortcoming. Such a dedicated force is critically essential for a timeliness and effectiveness of stability operations. Together with enhanced sealift and integral airlift capacity, a Marine force would enhance India's options to contribute to UN peace-support operations.

Mine Countermeasures

Another grey area in *IN*'s capability pertains to mine countermeasures (MCM), which is highly relevant to India's regional security role. However, since MCM is not considered 'glamorous' enough among other naval specializations, such capability is usually neglected, particularly so in aspiring blue-water navies like the *IN*.

Prospects for Power Projection

Doctrine-09 states that "Sea Control is the central concept around which the Indian Navy is structured (which is) a pre-requisite (*inter alia* for) power projection".⁵⁵ Since sea control is purely a wartime mission, power projection in this context is clearly lawful and legitimate. However, *Strategy-07* says that "during the long years of peace, we need to project power...".⁵⁶ The document expounds on this by stating that 'peacetime' power-projection for "middle powers" (like India) is "mainly cooperative".⁵⁷ However, the latest document (*Doctrine-09*) introduces the concept of 'expeditionary operations' as "another form of maritime power projection".⁵⁸

These articulations have led the strategic community—both in India and abroad—to labour hard to enquire whether India intends to resort to 'hard' power projection in peacetime, and if this could translate into it turning into a regional hegemon. An analysis deduces that:

the idea that India (as the land of 'Mahatma Gandhi') has rejected and will continue to reject military power projection is untenable.....(nonetheless), in the medium term, the limitations of political will and military capacity will prevent India from achieving some of the more ambitious power projection goals.⁵⁹

The "limitation of military capacity" has already been addressed. Although India's economic progress over the years may enable the *IN* to overcome these constraints, the "limitation of political will" is likely to be key restraining factor for India, and in the constructive sense. This may be attributable to the traditional stand of India's political leadership. Over the years, the views of the naval leadership have reflected the same stand. While assisting Seychelles to quell the coup attempt in 1986, for example, the then Indian Naval Chief Admiral RH Tahiliani had commented,

We must take the responsibility that size imposes on us, without having any hegemonic aspirations. Coming to the help of a small neighbour is a responsibility, but we have no intention of spreading our influence.⁶⁰

However, this does not present the 'complete picture'. The naval practitioners well understand that "help to a neighbour" cannot be provided without the capability of 'hard power projection'. This is best exemplified by the Seychelles

case itself. To avert a coup attempt, during the critical period, the Indian warship *INS Vindhyaigiri* positioned at Port Victoria made “great use of its Sea King (helicopter) to provide public displays of helicopter commando ‘slithering’ and assaults (and) regularly trained its 4.5 inch gun on power mode as a demonstration to the coup plotters.”⁶¹

Hence, beyond the “medium term”, *IN*’s ability for ‘hard’ power-projection would only enhance its range of operational options to better serve the regional cause. It is important to note that besides deterrence and shaping the environment, crisis management is the primary peacetime role of navies.⁶² *IN*’s ability to control and contain crises through a calibrated approach could prevent a violent conflict in the region. Today, notwithstanding the military-strategic ‘overreach’ of the US, even its avowed critics acknowledge that the presence of the US Navy in Asia is a major contributor to regional balance of power and stability.

Furthermore, India’s regional role is unlikely to overstretch beyond the limits of international norms of conduct for good reasons. In the foreseeable future, India is unlikely to be the predominant global, or even regional, military and economic power. This would ensure checks and balances against India’s possible overreach. Besides, *sans* the support of a military alliance, India is unlikely to possess sufficient military and financial wherewithal to resort to unilateral interventions against opposition from the international community.

Conclusion

The formal articulation of India’s maritime-military doctrine in its various forms since 2004 has been necessary as a medium of ‘strategic communications’ to reinforce strategic deterrence, which lends to regional peace, *albeit* indirectly. The Indian maritime-military forces are also being guided by the doctrine to enable India to directly contribute to Asian security and stability. The doctrine highlights *IN*’s intent to do so through its constabulary, diplomatic and benign roles.

The difference between intentions and capabilities is a rather universal reality that besets all countries, at all levels of their policy-making and policy-implementation. The same is true for India. Alike at the national level, India’s maritime-military forces continue to grapple with the void between expectations and what is attainable with the available resources. Even while the *IN* leadership is cognisant of the gap—and thus aware of the ‘work yet to be done’—the decision to articulate India’s maritime-military doctrine through written publications has been apt.

The *IN*’s increased commitments to coastal and offshore security since the November 2008 Mumbai terrorist attack via the sea translates into a major constraint for its fledgling ‘blue-water’ capability to play a more proactive regional role. Some other specific capabilities also need to be developed in this direction.

As a result, a few doctrinal provisions contained in the Indian maritime doctrinal articulations are not yet implementable to some extent. Nonetheless, while proactive measures are afoot to overcome the capability constraints, the doctrine provides a valuable indicator for Indian policymakers to chart the correct course for India's naval power to play a seminal role towards peace and stability in Asia.

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12. 'Freedom to Use the Seas: India's Military Maritime Strategy', n.7, pp. 73-77.
13. Indian Maritime Doctrine (INBR 8), n.6, p.108.
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16

The Indo-Pacific and the Growing Strategic Importance of the Bay of Bengal

David Brewster

The Bay of Bengal is fast growing in economic and strategic importance and indeed may be on the way to becoming a prime zone of strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific.¹ The Bay of Bengal has considerable strategic importance from its role as the principal maritime connection between the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The bright economic prospects of many Bay of Bengal states—perhaps a new set of economic “Tigers”—is also making the region a cockpit for Asian economic growth and a key economic connector between East and South Asia. This essay looks at recent strategic developments in the Bay of Bengal and their implications for our understanding of the Indo-Pacific. The essay contends that the Bay of Bengal is increasingly becoming central in the Indo-Pacific strategic dynamic as its economic significance grows, and major powers compete to control connections with the region.

Is the Bay of Bengal a Region?

An important threshold issue in seeking to understand developments in the Bay of Bengal area is whether it is useful to see the Bay and its surrounding states as a “region” with its own particular dynamics and interplay of relationships. What would that mean for longstanding conceptions of South and Southeast Asia as regions, which are traditionally defined by a line running through the middle of the Bay of Bengal? Should the Indo-Pacific concept change the way we look at the Bay of Bengal?

Up until the 1940s, the territories around the Bay of Bengal were closely interconnected in security, political administration and trade and, as a result, the area had a considerable degree of strategic coherence. Britain became the

predominant power in the Bay of Bengal in the early nineteenth century after which it became the colonial power over most of the surrounding territory, including the Indian subcontinent, Ceylon, Burma and Malaya. British India's huge population, resources, and economy overshadowed the region and, up until 1942, it held virtually complete military, economic, demographic, and political dominance over the area.

However, these connections were badly disturbed in 1942 when the Japanese army conquered Malaya, Singapore, Siam, Burma, and the Dutch East Indies in quick succession, isolating the Indian subcontinent from its eastern neighbours for several years. The process of decolonization after the war then effectively led to a strategic fragmentation of the area. As historian Sunil Amrit put it:

The Bay of Bengal was once at the heart of global history. It was forgotten in the second half of the twentieth century, carved up by the boundaries of nation-states, its shared past divided into the separate compartments of national histories.²

The Independence of India in 1947, and its inward turn for the next 40 years, was the biggest single factor that altered the strategic dynamics of the region. The newly-independent India pursued policies that promoted economic autarky, severely damaging economic links with its eastern neighbours. India also turned its back on imperial traditions, refusing to take on Britain's mantle as the main security provider to the region. India's perceived indifference to its eastern neighbours severely undermined its strategic role in the Bay of Bengal, which it is still trying to rebuild. The partition of India also profoundly changed the dynamics of the region. The separation of East and West Bengal destroyed longstanding economic networks, cutting off East Bengal's agricultural producers from commercial and industrial relationships in West Bengal.

The effects of Partition were nowhere better displayed than in Calcutta (now Kolkata) which, for much of the colonial era, had been the effective political capital and commercial hub of the entire Bay of Bengal region. In 1947, Calcutta's industries and commercial establishments were cut off from much of its economic hinterland in a single stroke, and the process of de-industrialisation continued under a series of Communist-led governments. In comparison to Mumbai, which thrives as India's financial capital and busiest port, modern day Kolkata remains a virtual dead end in terms of regional economic linkages. The locus of India's modern-day engagement with the Bay of Bengal has shifted south to cities such as Chennai.

In the years following decolonisation, the other states around the Bay of Bengal also went their own ways, leading to a disconnection of strategic relationships. National governments pursued quite divergent strategic paths. Although some paid lip service to the rhetoric of pan-Asianism that was so loudly proclaimed at Bandung in 1955, there was little practical cooperation among

them. Each had its own problems. For Bangladesh, the impact of a ‘double’ partition—from India and Pakistan—left it impoverished, inward looking, and resentful of India’s strategic dominance. An independent Sri Lanka sought to hedge against what it perceived as India’s hegemonic tendencies through forming relationships with extra-regional powers, including Britain (in the 1950s), the USA (in the 1970s and 80s), and more recently with China. In the 1950s, Thailand, concerned about China and the impact of Communist insurgencies in Indochina, invited the USA to establish a large military presence under the cover of SEATO. Malaya fought a Chinese Communist inspired insurgency as well as infiltration from Indonesia during the Konfrontasi, mostly relying on British and Australian forces. Burma was an extreme case, fighting Chinese forces on its northern border as also its own numerous ethnic-based insurgencies. Its internal preoccupations led it to increasingly turn its back on the world, and retreat into a prickly neutralism.

The strategic fragmentation of the Bay of Bengal in the years after World War II was reinforced by the redrawing of the mental maps of Asia. Decolonisation required the creation of new geographical concepts where they had not previously been necessary. On the one side, most of the newly-independent states (other than Burma) that had comprised the British Indian Empire were now grouped into a region called “South Asia.” (The term “Indian subcontinent” was apparently not acceptable to the new state of Pakistan, and this terminology apparently remains a sensitive issue for Islamabad).³ The concept of “South Asia” as a region has now been legitimized through the creation of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation in 1983.

A new region called “Southeast Asia” was also created to group the southern Asian states that lay from Burma eastwards. The term first gained prominence in 1943, when the Allies established a South-East Asia Command headquartered in Ceylon to coordinate the fight against Japanese forces to the east of India. The term was again used in a strategic sense when Washington sponsored the establishment of the South East Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO) in 1954 as a ‘regional’ alliance against the spread of Communism.⁴ The concept of Southeast Asia was given further legitimacy through the formation of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967 which, more than anything else, formalized the division of the Bay of Bengal. ASEAN now has 10 members, with its western border ending at the borders of India.

The conceptual division of the Bay of Bengal was further cemented by the creation of the “Asia Pacific” as a new economic and political “region” in the 1980s which was generally understood to extend as far as the western border of ASEAN. As a result, Asia-Pacific institutions such as APEC excluded India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, and reinforced the low level of trade connectivity between the eastern and western sides of the Bay of Bengal. Although BIMSTEC⁵

was established in 1997 as a regional “Bay of Bengal” grouping to promote economic integration, it has had few concrete achievements.

The Idea of the Indo-Pacific and its Significance for the Bay of Bengal

The re-emergence of the Bay of Bengal as a strategically important region reflects the same forces that are causing the Indo-Pacific to be understood as an interdependent strategic space. The Indo-Pacific is, in effect, a proposed new mental map that would transcend the traditional mental divisions between the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean regions. The concept reflects the growing economic and strategic interdependence of states along the eastern and southern Asian littoral. Of particular importance is the expansion of the interests of both China and India into the others’ area of core interest. India is expanding its economic and strategic interests into the Asia Pacific as reflected in its Look East/Act East Policy. China is simultaneously expanding its economic and strategic interests into the Indian Ocean region, as reflected in initiatives such as the Maritime Silk Route project. As will be seen, other East Asian states, such as Japan, are also expanding their interests into the Indian Ocean region.

The idea of the Indo-Pacific as an interdependent strategic system has considerable implications for our mental map of the Bay of Bengal. In a new Indo-Pacific strategic map, the Bay of Bengal moves from the periphery of East Asia where it was considered a backwater, to closer to the centre of strategic concerns. The Bay not only physically connects the Pacific and Indian Oceans but has the potential to act as an economic hub for interaction between the East Asian and Indian Ocean economic systems. As Akihiko Tanaka, head of Japan’s International Cooperation Agency, commented:

The Bay of Bengal is centrally located within this tectonic change as it can function as a key junction between the two oceans. Unfortunately, we are often bound by outdated geographic divisions. We still draw a dividing line at the Arakan Mountains to separate South Asia from Southeast Asia... perhaps it is high time for the Bay of Bengal to be considered as a coherent strategic region within the broader framework of the Indo-Pacific.

This author has previously argued that there are good grounds to see the Bay of Bengal as a coherent strategic region for certain purposes.⁶ The conceptual reunification of the Bay of Bengal area would emphasize the shared security and developmental issues that exist across the area, along with the intra-regional dynamics among the littoral states—while also taking into account that these intra-regional issues may be exacerbated by growing competition among the major powers. Alternatively, one could conceptualise the Bay of Bengal in terms of a zone of competition—perhaps as a geostrategic “impact zone” between the separate

tectonic plates of South Asia and East Asia which are coming into increasing contact. This alternative analysis would give primary focus to competition among the major powers in terms of the security issues and tensions that exist in the area.

In either case, as will be argued below, there are good grounds to see the Bay of Bengal as an area of considerable and growing strategic significance to the entire Indo-Pacific. The perception of the Bay of Bengal as a strategic backwater, one that could be safely divided up on maps, may have been to some extent justified in the second half of the twentieth century. But this is making much less sense now. As Robert Kaplan recently noted: "The Bay of Bengal is starting to become whole again and is returning to the centre of history... No one interested in geopolitics can afford to ignore the Bay of Bengal any longer."⁷

Thus, the Bay of Bengal now has growing strategic significance for the entire Indo-Pacific. One immediate reason is the relatively good economic prospects of India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Myanmar that are giving these countries much greater economic importance to Asia and the world. The potential for these countries to massively expand into low-cost, high quality manufacturing means that the Bay of Bengal area is increasingly seen not only as the main physical connection between the Pacific and Indian Ocean regions but also as a key economic connector. This is exemplified by the economic corridors that China hopes to develop between its southern provinces and the Bay of Bengal (including the so-called BCIM Economic Corridor that would run between Kolkata and Yunnan province) as well as the economic corridors planned by Japan that would run from southern India, Bangladesh and Myanmar, across the Bay of Bengal, and through Indochina to the South China Sea. These corridors would host value chains of relatively low cost component manufacturers that would ultimately feed production back to China, Japan or elsewhere.

The economic prospects of the Bay of Bengal states and the potential for them to be part of a value chain linking East and South Asia is contributing to a new type of competition in the Bay of Bengal among major powers whose expanding areas of interest intersect there. China, India and Japan are now scrambling to develop new infrastructure connections in the Bay of Bengal that will connect the region with (and, perhaps, lock the region into) their own economies.

The Rise of the Bengal Tigers

An important factor in the growing strategic importance of the area is the relatively bright economic prospects of many Bay of Bengal states. Indeed, it is possible that, in coming years, the area could become a new cockpit for economic growth in Asia. To a considerable extent, the conceptual division of the Bay of Bengal during the latter part of the twentieth century reflected a divide between the

ASEAN “Tiger” economies of the eastern side of the Bay (including Thailand and Malaysia), and the less developed economies on the western side (including India, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri Lanka) largely missed out on the economic miracles experienced in East Asia. However, this is now changing: economic growth for 2015 is projected at 6.4 per cent for Bangladesh, 7.5 per cent for Sri Lanka, and 8 per cent for Myanmar, with similar rates projected for following years⁸. Recent World Bank forecasts give India’s economic growth for 2015 at 7 per cent.⁹ Much of this projected growth, particularly for the smaller Bay of Bengal states, is based on their potential for low-cost export manufacturing. Indeed, while growth prospects for many of these countries remain somewhat fragile, including due to political instability and infrastructure problems, it is possible that, over the next decade, they could experience breakout growth based on manufacturing exports similar to that experienced by the core ASEAN states in previous decades.

The development of a major energy industry in the Bay of Bengal could provide an important underpinning for the economic development of the region.¹⁰ The Bay of Bengal is believed to have significant gas reserves, whose exploitation could be used to help fund urgently needed infrastructure and human development. Some unofficial estimates have put Bangladesh’s reserves alone at 200 trillion cubic feet, which would make it the largest supply in the Asia-Pacific.¹¹ These reserves have remained largely unexplored and undeveloped, but the dropping of sanctions and the resolution of maritime boundary disputes could mean that the Blue Economy becomes a major economic driver for the region.¹²

However, the economic potential of the region is constrained by the low level of regional economic integration and a dearth of infrastructure: especially transport connections within those countries, to neighbouring states, as well as to the rest of the world. This has prompted a scramble to build new ports, roads, pipelines and railways throughout the region, largely sponsored by China, India and Japan. Some of these are intended to better stitch the region together, and others to better connect the region to the world. These projects have been accompanied by considerable competition for political and strategic influence over the Bay of Bengal states as these powers seek to structure infrastructure connections and production chains to benefit their own economies. In broad terms, this competition might be seen as reflecting the intersection of growing areas of the strategic influence of the major powers in Asia: India, China, and other East Asian powers such as Japan.

India’s Strategic Role in the Bay of Bengal

For much of the period since 1947, India has not played an active strategic role in the Bay of Bengal beyond its immediate South Asian neighbours such as

Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, India aspires to be recognised as the predominant power in the Bay of Bengal, and has viewed any naval or security presence of other major powers in the Bay as illegitimate intrusions—which some have called India’s “Monroe Doctrine”.¹³ The sortie of the USS *Enterprise* into the eastern Bay of Bengal in the closing days of the Bangladesh War in 1971 triggered a strong reaction by Delhi against the USA. Also, since the early 1990s, Delhi has regarded Chinese political and economic influence in Myanmar, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka as matters of great concern.¹⁴

However, while India’s role in the Bay of Bengal has often been more rhetorical or aspirational than real, its rise as a major regional power is now allowing it to gradually transcend the confines of South Asia, and spread its strategic influence further around the Bay of Bengal. Writers such as Raja Mohan see this as a partial return by India to the role it played under the British Raj,¹⁵ while others may see it in terms of a natural expansion of India’s strategic space as its economic interests grow. New Delhi adopted its Look East Policy in the early 1990s with the intention of rebuilding India’s economic links with the thriving economies of Southeast Asia. In the Bay of Bengal, India along with Thailand sponsored the establishment of BIMSTEC as a “regional” grouping of the Bay of Bengal littoral states (other than Malaysia and Indonesia) to promote economic integration. Although BIMSTEC has had few concrete achievements, it is gaining greater traction, particularly as India now seeks a more active political and economic role through its Act East Policy.

New Delhi’s strategic interests in the Bay are driven by several imperatives. The Bay represents a key defensive space against threats that may emanate from or through the Southeast Asian archipelago. The ability to control the sea lines of communication that pass through the Malacca Strait and cross the Bay of Bengal would also provide India with considerable strategic leverage. The Bay is also affected by numerous security issues (including ethnic conflicts, refugee flows, religious extremism, and maritime crime) that may directly threaten India’s interests, or otherwise require it to act as a security provider.

India has by far the most powerful military of any of the Bay of Bengal states, and it is in the process of further reinforcing its military resources committed to the area. Previously, India’s Western Fleet, based in Mumbai, was its largest naval fleet, but resources are now being effectively “rebalanced” to its Eastern Fleet in the Bay of Bengal. A major new fleet base is being constructed at Rambilli, south of Visakhapatnam, intended for India’s new nuclear submarine fleet, and at least one aircraft carrier.¹⁶ This will likely reinforce India’s naval dominance in the Bay. India’s dominant position in the Bay is also underpinned by its possession of the Andaman and Nicobar islands, an archipelago running north-south near the western end of the Malacca Strait. Over the past two decades, India has

developed extensive military facilities in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, including port facilities and air bases. This has a considerable impact on the balance of power in the eastern Bay of Bengal and the Malacca Strait.

In recent years, India has also sought to improve defence relationships in the Bay which, for a long time, were extremely thin. Delhi has developed close relations with the Sri Lankan Navy despite periodic strains in the bilateral relationship. India has also focused on developing closer relations with the Myanmar armed forces, including agreements on coordinated actions against cross-border insurgents, the supply of patrol vessels, and training. In the east of the Bay, New Delhi has developed a close defence relationship with Singapore. However, relationships with Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand still lack much substance.¹⁷ This reflects a degree of caution on both sides—among other things Indonesia and Malaysia guard their territorial rights in the Malacca Strait jealously, and are yet to be convinced that India should play a direct security role in those waters.

An important expression of India's leading maritime security role in the Bay of Bengal is its biennial MILAN naval “gathering” held in the Andaman Islands. Exercise *Milan 2014* was the largest ever, with representatives from all states from the extended Bay of Bengal area (Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore), elsewhere in Southeast Asia, Australia, and the western Indian Ocean. Exercise *Milan* is primarily an exercise in Indian naval diplomacy and, since its inception in 1995, has become an important and highly successful part of India's growing ‘soft’ military power.

India now aspires to play a much more active security role in the Bay and, as former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh commented in 2013: Delhi sees itself as a “net security provider” to the region.¹⁸ How this will be expressed in practice is still uncertain. However, in the coming years, India may seek to create multilateral maritime security groupings with other littoral states modelled on its existing trilateral maritime security arrangements with Sri Lanka and the Maldives.¹⁹ Delhi is currently seeking a coordinated approach to defence and commercial relationships in the Indian Ocean, with an initial focus on the Bay of Bengal.²⁰

India is also gradually starting to play a more active economic role in the region, seeking to better connect the Bay into India's economy. This is being spurred on by strategic competition with China. Raja Mohan argues that Delhi's “dithering” in developing economic ties and connectivity means that India is in danger of ‘losing’ the Bay of Bengal to China. According to Mohan, India must recognise that the Bay of Bengal “is no longer a backwater but a strategic hub connecting the Indian and Pacific Oceans as well as China.”²¹

One of the most important projects being promoted by Delhi is the Trilateral Highway Project that would build road connections from Kolkata to Thailand

via Bangladesh, India's northeastern states, and Myanmar. East-West land connections between India and Southeast Asia through the Bay of Bengal region are virtually non-existent due to the impoverishment of India's eastern neighbours, ethnic insurgencies, and political problems over transit rights. The new overland connections being promoted by Delhi to some extent compete with the essentially north-south connections between the Yunnan province and the Bay of Bengal being promoted by Beijing. However, the political disconnect among Bay of Bengal states is likely to delay or limit the economic significance of this project.²²

India is also sponsoring the renewal of shipping connections across the Bay. Up until the 1940s, Calcutta (Kolkata) was a hub for a dense intra-regional shipping network connecting India and the territories around the Bay, and which made considerable use of rivers such as the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and the Irrawaddy to provide direct connections into the hinterlands. These connections were allowed to wither away in the decades following decolonisation so that goods being transported from India to Myanmar, or from Myanmar to Bangladesh, now need to be transhipped via Singapore. Delhi sees the resurrection of the old oceanic and river shipping routes as a much simpler and more cost effective method of connecting the region, without the political complications associated with land routes.

In October 2014, the Indian state-owned shipping line restarted direct connections between Chennai, Colombo and Rangoon, and began trialling connections between ports in India and Bangladesh.²³ India is also sponsoring the development of a new port at Sittwe in Myanmar, as well as associated road links which will allow the transhipment of goods up the Kaladan River to India's northeast Mizoram state. Delhi is also keen for Indian companies to participate in the proposed new port project near Chittagong in Bangladesh that would not only help develop trading connections with Bangladesh but could also potentially be used to connect with India's northeast Tripura state via road.

Connecting the Bay of Bengal to China

China's economic and political influence in the Bay of Bengal has been the single most important factor in the growing strategic competition in the region. Beijing's aspirations are primarily expressed in economic terms, although (as will be discussed later) a security element is visible. China is currently sponsoring the development of overland connections between southern China and the Bay as part of its national "Bridgehead Strategy", and the development of maritime infrastructure through its Maritime Silk Route initiative. These projects are an attempt by China to break away from the constraints that have kept it historically isolated from the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean. Historically, links between China and the Bay have been extremely tenuous and, indeed, until well into the

twentieth century, there were no major transport routes connecting China with the Indian Ocean. Through these new connections, China is reaching for the Indian Ocean through the Bay of Bengal.

China is sponsoring several grand projects to create overland connections between China's landlocked southern Chinese province of Yunnan with the Bay of Bengal region and the Indian Ocean through Myanmar. This is part of its Bridgehead Strategy of turning its landlocked Yunnan province into a gateway for engagement with the Indian Ocean and China's manufacturing base facing South Asia and Southeast Asia.²⁴ These include a road-river route from Kunming to Yangon, oil and gas pipelines from Kunming to the Indian Ocean at the port of Kyaukpyu in Myanmar, and a proposed new road/rail corridor that would follow the same route. Another project, the so-called BCIM Economic Corridor, would involve the creation of a transport and manufacturing corridor running from Kunming in China to Calcutta through Myanmar and Bangladesh at a claimed cost of another US\$20 billion. Although many in the region are keen to see the BCIM project proceed, Delhi has considerable reservations about it, particularly the implications of a massive increase in China's economic role in India's northeast states. For this reason, along with perceived political risks in Myanmar, China is likely to push the project only slowly.

Map 1: One Proposed Route of the BCIM Economic Corridor Linking China with India

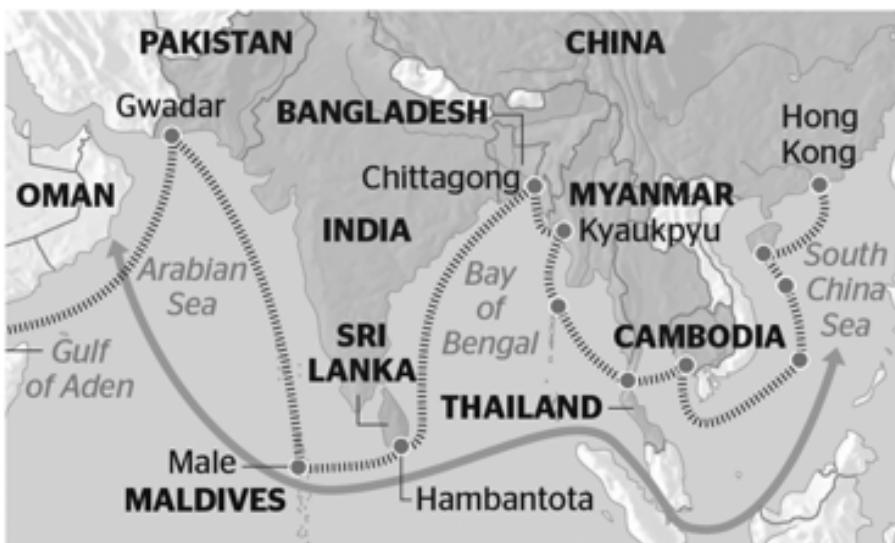


Source: <http://www.asiabriefing.com>

Beijing is also undertaking its Maritime Silk Route (MSR) initiative in the Bay of Bengal as an oceanic complement to its overland Silk Route projects in Central Asia. The MSR envisages a system of linked ports, infrastructure projects,

and special economic zones across the northern Indian Ocean. While much of public discussion to date has focused on ports and transport infrastructure, of greater overall significance is the intention to develop new production and distribution chains across the region with China at its centre—perhaps something akin to Japan’s “Flying Geese” strategy in the 1970s. This would bind the Bay of Bengal much closer to the Chinese economy. Several states in the region have indicated their wish to participate in the MSR, while India has been much more circumspect about the proposal pending further details. Sri Lanka, in particular, has been an enthusiastic partner in this project, which includes China’s high profile development of Hambantota port and new port facilities at Colombo (see Map 2).

Map 2: A Possible Configuration of China’s Maritime Silk Route



Source: <http://www.thetimes.co.uk>

The security implications of these projects are as yet unclear. China claims that its activities in the Bay of Bengal area are purely commercial, and that it has no intention of establishing any military bases in the Indian Ocean region.²⁵ China has security links with several states, including acting as the major arms supplier to Myanmar, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.²⁶ However, despite the claims of some commentators, Beijing has had only limited success in creating reliable security partnerships that would give its military direct access to the Bay of Bengal.

Myanmar has long been seen as China's closest security partner in the region. However, it is increasingly being seen as presenting a high degree of political risk for China. Although the regime became close to Beijing as an arms supplier and economic partner after 1988, Myanmar has never allowed China to use its military facilities and, in recent years, its political dependability in the eyes of China has

also become increasingly open to question. In recent times, China's relationship with Sri Lanka under the Rajapaksa regime also gained a security element, and there were indications that Beijing may have sought to develop a small-scale military presence in Sri Lanka. Visits of a Chinese submarine to a Chinese-built port in Colombo in 2014 were taken by many as a signal that China intended to develop a regular submarine presence in the area. China also proposed to establish an aircraft maintenance facility near Trincomalee, ostensibly to support Sri Lanka's air force.²⁷ These developments appeared to contravene Sri Lanka's longstanding policy of not allowing itself to be used by other powers to threaten India's security interests. Although the ouster of the Rajapaksa regime in January 2015 represented a significant setback for Beijing, there remains a good chance that Chinese influence in Sri Lanka will be revived. In any event, there is a significant risk that Beijing will act opportunistically in the future by working with friendly regimes to gain military access or support in or near the Bay.

Connecting the Bay of Bengal to Japan

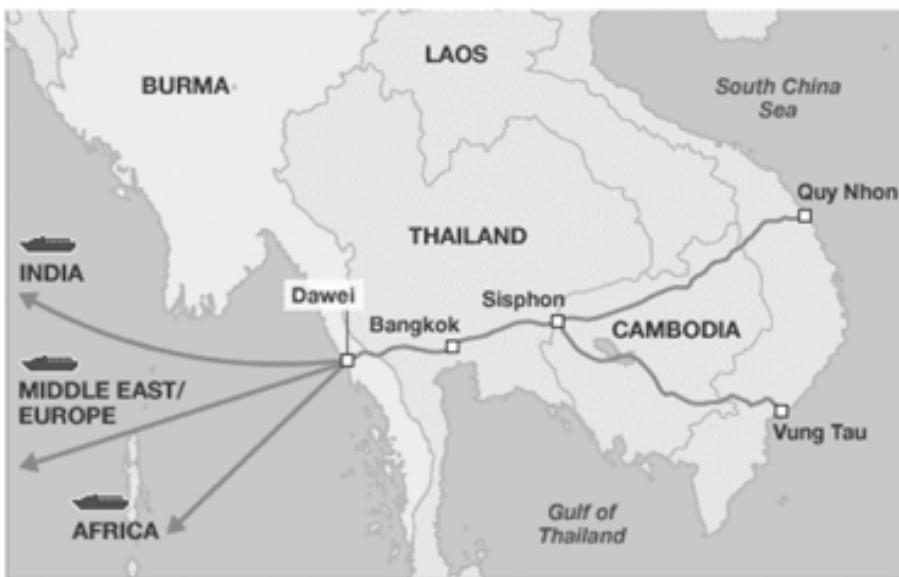
Japan is also becoming a significant factor in strategic competition in the Bay of Bengal. While its overall strategy towards the region is evolving, Tokyo appears to have elevated the importance of the Bay of Bengal as a key growth area as well as the economic connector between the Pacific and Indian Ocean regions. In many ways, Japan's plans are analogous to China's MSR initiative in terms of developing new production networks (and related infrastructure) within the region that would feed back to Japan. Although strategic competition with China may be less overt than for India, it is likely to be a significant factor in Tokyo's calculus. Prime Minister Abe's visit to Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in September 2014 was reportedly closely aligned to Xi Jingping's visit to the region when he was promoting China's Maritime Silk Route.²⁸

In September 2014, Japan announced its "BIG-B" (Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt) initiative that would involve developing Bangladesh as a "lynchpin of the Indo-Pacific" and a "node and hub" of the regional economy.²⁹ The plans include the development of an economic corridor between Dhaka and the sea at Chittagong and Cox's Bazaar, and new deep-water port facilities with an initial investment of US\$6 billion. Many observers believe that the development of a new port at Matabari has trumped China's plans to develop a new port at Sonadia.³⁰ A key objective is to develop the Bangladesh economy through better connecting it to the Indian Ocean, and to promote improved "solidarity and unitedness" in the Bay of Bengal region.³¹

While the BIG-B initiative has been expressed in terms of Bangladesh, it may well be expanded into a coherent plan to encompass similar Japanese investment activities in Myanmar, Sri Lanka as well as southern India. Japan is

also by far Sri Lanka's largest aid donor and a major investor in the country.³² Although Tokyo carefully calibrated its relationship with the former Rajapaksa regime, there were perceptions that Chinese projects were being given special preference over Japanese ones, and Tokyo hopes this will change under the Sri Lanka's new government.³³ Japan has also long been a major contributor of development aid and private investment in Burma/Myanmar.³⁴ In recent years, its importance in Myanmar has been renewed through the cancellation of almost US\$3 billion in foreign debt, and pledges of US\$900 million in new financial support. Japanese companies are developing a Special Economic Zone at the port of Thilawa, south of Yangon. Japan has also been heavily involved in plans to develop a new port and industrial area at Dawei in the south of Myanmar, which would include overland connections to Bangkok and onwards, through Indochina to the South China Sea. This would facilitate the development of a series of economic corridors that would start in southern India/Bangladesh/Myanmar and extend across the Bay of Bengal, through Indochina to Japan (See Map 3 below).

Map 3: Proposed trans-Indochina Corridor to the Bay of Bengal



Source: <http://news.bbciimg.co.uk>

It is not clear to what extent Tokyo coordinates its activities in the Bay of Bengal with Delhi. But Japan's role in the Bay of Bengal is generally seen favourably by India as assisting in the development of the region and helping to provide a useful counterbalance to Chinese influence. In December 2014, Chandrababu Naidu, the Chief Minister of the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh (which has a coastline of more than 1,000 km on the Bay of Bengal) indicated that his state

wished to join the BIG-B project to encourage the development of an industrial agglomeration extending from Chittagong in Bangladesh to Andhra Pradesh. This would help link India much more closely with East Asian production chains.

Conclusion

For decades, the division of the Bay of Bengal between South Asia and Southeast Asia reflected its status as a relative strategic backwater. However, this is becoming increasingly untenable as the Bay of Bengal grows in strategic importance. It is an area with great economic potential and is increasingly an arena for strategic competition among the major Asian powers. In some ways, it is also the epicentre of the Indo-Pacific concept—the place where the strategic interests of the major powers of East and South Asia intersect.

A new mental map that recognises the greater strategic centrality and importance of the Bay of Bengal can be of considerable benefit in understanding the strategic dynamics and potential of the area. It can help us better understand the intra-regional dynamics between states such as Bangladesh, Myanmar and Thailand. It may also help us better understand the impact of China's and Japan's initiatives in the region. A more complete perspective of the Bay of Bengal can also be particularly useful for India as it seeks to develop a coherent and effective policy towards the region as part of its goal of transcending the constraints it faces within South Asia.

NOTES

1. For the purposes of this essay, the term Bay of Bengal includes associated waters of the Andaman Sea and the western approaches to the Malacca Strait. The core states of the Bay of Bengal “region” include India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, and, perhaps, Malaysia and Indonesia.
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3. In 1999, a Pakistan Foreign Ministry spokesman objected to the use of the term “Indian subcontinent” by an Indian Minister, stating: “As India is only one of the countries of Asia, the term ‘Indian subcontinent’ is entirely inappropriate as a description for the whole region. Its use betrays India’s long-cherished dream of exercising hegemony in the region, a dream that India has failed to realise and which it will never succeed in achieving...The government of Pakistan, therefore, hopes that use of the term ‘Indian subcontinent’ to refer to South Asia will be avoided”, *Reuters*, “South Asia is not “Indian subcontinent”—Pakistan”, June 26, 2000.
4. See Donald K. Emmerson “Southeast Asia: What’s in a Name?”, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 1984), pp. 1-21. Although its membership hardly corresponded with current ideas of Southeast Asia (including as it did the USA, Australia, New Zealand, France, Britain and Pakistan as members). Sri Lanka also considered joining SEATO, but declined from a combination of pressure from New Delhi and domestic political reasons.
5. The Bay of Bengal Initiative for MultiSectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation includes India, Thailand, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan as members, but not Malaysia,

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 14. C. Raja Mohan, *Samudra Manthan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo-Pacific* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp.168-181.
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 16. The Bay of Bengal may in future also be used as a so-called "nuclear bastion" where India's nuclear ballistic missile submarines targeted against China could be deployed in relative safety. See also, Iskander Rehman, *Murky Waters: Naval Nuclear Dynamics in the Indian Ocean* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment, 2015), p. 44.
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The Indian Navy's Security Role in Littoral Asia

Abhijit Singh

Over the past few years, there has been growing focus on India's political, economic and military rise in the international state system. The breath and pace of India's development has led many regional countries to view India as a stabilising force in Asia. Observers of international politics acknowledge New Delhi's capacity to leverage influence and contribute substantively to critical issues concerning regional security and stability. There is a growing sense that India has achieved the capability and confidence to use its military power for greater regional good. Consequently, India's maritime security role in the Indian Ocean has grown. A plethora of challenges in the nautical arena, and the rising demand for India to play a larger role in Asian maritime security affairs has resulted in an expansion of the Indian Navy's (IN) operational mandate. The IN has also been involved in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, as well as aid and capacity-building efforts in its near neighbourhood; but increasingly, it is being seen as a useful tool in extending India's geopolitical influence.

Notwithstanding its growing utility, however, the Indian navy has been facing structural and operational constraints that have prevented it from playing a part in the geopolitics of Asia. The navy's chief shortcoming has been the inability to project power in the wider Indo-Pacific, thereby limiting India's geopolitical sway in littoral-Asia. This chapter evaluates the IN's effectiveness in advancing India's strategic interests in its near and extended neighbourhood. It principally argues that while the Indian Navy has performed commendably in providing regional security, it has been unable to secure national strategic interests in the wider Indo-Pacific region. The maritime dynamic has been further complicated by growing Chinese assertiveness that has resulted in greater Indian defensiveness vis-à-vis the Indian Ocean.

The Regional Context

To understand India's security role in Asia, it is necessary to appreciate the strategic context in which maritime shifts have occurred across the oceanic space. In the past few years, piracy off the coast of Somalia has been in rapid decline.¹ This has been the result of a robust collaborative effort by international maritime task forces, with the Indian navy playing a significant role in fighting pirates and escorting convoys in the Gulf of Aden. Strategic security in the IOR, however, has continued to be a source of concern. Three factors have contributed to strategic uncertainty in the region: the growing People's Liberation Army-Navy (PLA-N) presence; greater extra-regional involvement in combating non-traditional threats in the region; and the continuing presence of western forces in the Arabian Gulf.

A survey of the recent events reveals that piracy in the Indian Ocean has been replaced by a set of new challenges. Since early 2014, there has been a sudden increase in the number of Chinese naval visits in the Indian Ocean. These include forays by PLA-N submarines, including one involving a nuclear powered submersible.² While China denies it has intentions of a long-standing naval presence in the IOR, Indian observers cannot help but notice growing Chinese interest in operational security in the Indian Ocean. At the same time, hybrid other threats in the region have also been on the rise, as evidenced by alleged attempt by the Al Qaida to hijack two Pakistani frigates in the Karachi port in September 2014.³ According to media reports, retired Pakistani naval personnel were involved in the meticulously planned attacks. Fortunately, timely action by Pakistani security forces foiled the attacks. However, the interrogation of captured militants revealed that Al Qaida intended to launch strikes on US and Indian naval ships with the hijacked ships.⁴ To add to the vexed security scenario in the IOR, drug trafficking incidents in the Northern-Western Indian Ocean as well as cases of human smuggling in the Andaman Sea have been growing at a rapid rate.⁵ These threats make the region a deeply vulnerable nautical space.

Indian Ocean security challenges, however, pale in comparison to the maritime threats in the Pacific. Amidst a host of geostrategic entanglements characterised by the US rebalance to Asia, maritime sovereignty contests in the East and South China Sea, as well as aggressive military posturing by the PLA-Navy, the Western Pacific is a maritime conundrum that has constantly defied all diplomatic efforts to find a creative solution. Beijing's uncompromising pursuit of core maritime interests, its unyielding commitment to reunification with Taiwan, and the urgency with which it has modernised its military has convinced many East and Southeast Asian countries of a hidden Chinese agenda to dominate the region. With China's expansion of its reclamation drive around disputed features in the Spratly⁶ and Senkaku⁷ chain of islands, it has become clear that China will stop at nothing in its bid to dominate its near waters. As a result, regional states have opted for a

hedging strategy in concert with the USA, hoping to deter Beijing from undertaking any further provocative moves.

Predictably, Indian analysts portray China's maritime activity in the Indian Ocean Region as a spill-over of the fraught maritime geopolitics of the Pacific.⁸ By some accounts, China's Maritime Silk Route (MSR), and the PLA-N's string of long naval deployments in the region—including one with the 20,000 tonne amphibious ship,⁹ and another involving a submarine docking in Colombo—is a reaction to the US Pivot and its attempts to contain Chinese maritime power to its near-waters. Its creeping expansion of maritime activity in the Indian Ocean is also clear evidence of increasing interest in the geopolitics of the IOR.

The MSR promises to create infrastructure on an unprecedented scale, presenting Indian Ocean states with the prospects of vast economic gains. In a little more than a year since it was first proposed, the Silk Route proposals have successfully persuaded many regional states, such as Maldives and Sri Lanka. Economic outreach, however, is just one component of Beijing's larger regional plan. China has also been expanding its diplomatic ties and naval linkages in the Indian Ocean, giving the PLA-N a growing presence in the regional littorals. Increasingly, Chinese anti-piracy task-forces visit Indian Ocean ports, also taking part in bilateral maritime exercises with friendly Asian and African navies. Meanwhile, transnational crime continues to pose a challenge for regional navies, with growing cases of drugs and arms smuggling, and a sudden rise in instances of human trafficking.

In this complex scenario, the Indian navy has found its core missions challenging, particularly since it has had to balance many competing imperatives. Since 26/11, the IN's principal focus has been on securing India's territorial waters and near-seas. Being the central agency charged with coastal security—despite territorial waters being the specific preserve of the coast guard and the civil police—the IN has devoted much energy and effort to the near-seas missions. Consequently, much of the IN's critical operational resources have been used to improve the effectiveness of patrolling, surveillance, and communications. The bottom-line objective has been to ensure that India's coastal regions are protected from ingress by any anti-national forces, and that no acts of terrorism are ever perpetrated from the seas.¹⁰

Simultaneously, the IN has had to play a wider security role in the IOR, where it has striven to provide aid and assistance to smaller littoral nations. A case in point is the prompt intervention during the Maldives water-crisis in December 2014, when Indian naval assets were pressed into service with a rapidity that surprised many regional states.¹¹ The importance of the IOR littorals was further highlighted during the Indian Prime Minister's visit to Seychelles, Mauritius, and Sri Lanka in February 2015, and in the many announcements concerning maritime cooperation and development made then.

In themselves, these developments have been encouraging as they clearly highlight India's regional priorities. And yet, India's Indian Ocean focus has, to a degree, compromised its larger commitment to security in its distant-neighbourhood. Notwithstanding the steady pace of maritime interaction with ASEAN states, India's maritime efforts in Southeast Asia have been peripheral to its diplomatic initiatives. In the main, the success of nautical initiatives has been dependant on the existence of a favourable political climate. Since New Delhi's diplomatic traction in the region remains limited, naval cooperation also has not yet crossed a critical threshold.¹²

India's modest diplomatic sway in Southeast Asia contrasts with Beijing's deep and entrenched geopolitical influence in the region.¹³ China has enormous investments in its neighbouring countries, and has planned massive infrastructure projects in the region. With the "One-Belt-One-Road project" (OBOR)—an undertaking of supreme ambition aimed at integrating Asia, Europe and Africa—China has shown it is the single most consequential power in the region.¹⁴ Consequently, Beijing's maritime leverage in the IOR has grown with increasing naval forays, including with conventional and nuclear submarines.

Many Indian strategic experts suspect China's maritime moves in the Indian Ocean are part of a broader economic and military strategy.¹⁵ They point out that it is no coincidence that the increase in the frequency of counter-piracy deployments and bilateral naval exercises in the IOR has come with the concomitant expansion of China's commercial investments in the region. According to many Indian maritime experts, Beijing's plan to dominate the Indian Ocean littorals is dependent on logistical hubs and dual-use bases—both crucial in securing energy and resource flows from Africa and the Middle East.¹⁶ Beneath the rhetorical pronouncements of shared economic gains of the Maritime Silk Route (MSR), the real objective is the security of China's Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs) that need to be protected at all costs.

A Security Provider in the Indian Ocean

China's geopolitical moves and economic investment in the IOR worry India, not least because the Indian Ocean is at the core of New Delhi's maritime conceptions, and a key factor in its regional security calculations. Over the past three decades, New Delhi's security establishment has displayed a consistent commitment to providing a security cover to smaller nations in the Indian Ocean. India's enduring security partnerships with smaller IOR states have underscored the importance of the near-neighbourhood in its overall maritime strategy.¹⁷ Not surprisingly, the Indian Navy's key mandate has been to pursue a proactive engagement with "countries in the Indian Ocean region", and ensure peace and stability in pursuit of India's wider security interests.

Accordingly, the maritime effort has been focused on India's proximate neighbourhood—especially the small island nations in the Indian Ocean. With a continuing assistance program to Seychelles, Maldives and Mauritius, the IN has been a key factor in providing maritime security, maritime surveillance, hydrographic surveys, training, as well as maritime military equipment and repair.¹⁸ In Mauritius, for instance, not only is the IN robustly involved in the running of the local coast guard, it is helping with the installation of a network of coastal radars. India is considering supplying two naval offshore patrol vessels and other military equipment to Colombo, and enhancing the delivery of advanced military hardware to Maldives.¹⁹ A maritime security trilateral between India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives is soon to be expanded to include Seychelles and Mauritius.²⁰ In fact, buoyed by the success of the security trilateral in the Western theatre, India is said to be even considering replicating the model in the Bay of Bengal.²¹

India's contribution to the security and well-being of smaller Indian Ocean states is best illustrated by the "fresh-water" assistance rendered to Maldives in 2014. The Indian navy was quick to respond to the crisis, with ships being dispatched within hours of the first reports of the failure of a major fresh-water plant in Male. However, the IN also plays a significant role in SLOCs security in the Indian Ocean, even assisting with the security, capacity building, and training of smaller island states to undertake security patrols in their near-waters.²² Indian naval ships have escorted over 3000 ships in the North-Western Indian Ocean since 2008 and, in the process, developed operational synergy with other international task-forces.²³ New Delhi has also gradually assumed a bigger role in Indian Ocean institutions, such as the Indian Ocean Rim-Association (IORA) and the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), wherein it has been instrumental in evolving a consensus among member nations on key issues of maritime security.

However, while its efforts in the Indian Ocean have been robust, the IN's impact in the Pacific theatre has been limited. In many ways, the primary impediment in adopting a more proactive posture has been the lack of political interest in operational power-projection beyond India's near-seas. India's strategic elite accept the essential logic of the Indo-Pacific, but still treat the Indian Ocean and the Pacific as two distinct theatres.²⁴ Their central argument is that the diverse nature of challenges in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific precludes a conceptual framework that treats the two theatres as a single coherent strategic space. The IOR is challenged by threats of an irregular kind, and must be dealt with through a process of region-wide consensus building and multilateral collaboration. The Pacific, on the other hand, is perceived to a domain of political dissonances and intractable conflict. India's unwillingness to be involved in the conflictual dynamic of the Pacific has prevented the Indian Navy from playing a strong role in the maritime security of the wider region.

However, India's assessment of its security role overlooks over some crucial facts. Today, it is more obvious than ever that India's prominent maritime status in the Indian Ocean is the result of a unique security climate that does not pit the Indian Navy against an equal regional competitor. Not only is the IN the most powerful indigenous maritime entity in South Asia, it is also the principal security provider in the Eastern and Western Indian Ocean. With no real challenge to its strategic primacy in the region, the Indian navy has the latitude and luxury of focussing on cooperative security and irregular threats. However, as a consequence of its cooperative strategy, the navy is also wary of operating in theatres where a strategic dialectic does exist.

Unfortunately, Indian Ocean geopolitics is fast undergoing a shift. As the PLA-N gears up for a larger role in the IOR, India is bound to come up against an acute security dilemma: cooperate with China on Beijing's terms, or prepare to compete with its superior naval might in the Indian Ocean region. In the event, there are no guarantees that the Indian Ocean's future strategic dynamic would be any less adversarial than the one that attends the Pacific today.

While there is no imminent threat to India's Indian Ocean stakes presently, the situation could change considerably once the PLA-N succeeds in establishing a more durable presence in the region. The Maritime Silk Route (MSR) heralds the beginning of that process. From developing maritime infrastructure in South Asia, to building and revitalizing port facilities on the East Coast of Africa, Beijing appears to be well on track to achieve its objective of creating a Chinese trade-corridor in the Indian Ocean.

Maritime Outreach in the Asia-Pacific

In many ways, India's maritime outreach to the Asia-Pacific has been a function of its economic interests. Over the past two decades, the Look East Policy (LEP), with its clear economic focus, has been the prime policy framework of India's economic engagement with Southeast Asia.²⁵ In line with the basic agenda outlined, the canvas of cooperation between India and Southeast Asia has focused on initiatives like the India-ASEAN Free Trade Area, Mekong Ganga Cooperation, Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), and rudimentary defence cooperation.²⁶ Even today, despite a newly invigorated approach characterised by the rechristening of the LEP to "Act East" policy, India's essential approach remains tilted in favour of economic and cultural reintegration with South East Asia.

This is not to deny the existence of a security-dimension of the LEP. Since 2010, there has been a concerted effort at augmenting maritime security cooperation in Southeast Asia.²⁷ With regular forays by Indian naval ships to the Western Pacific and regular exercises with regional navies, the IN has displayed

a clear commitment to the security of the Southeast Asian littorals. India has been steadfast in its support to ASEAN states, recently even offering to help Myanmar build offshore patrol vessels,²⁸ and a US\$ 100 million credit line to Vietnam for the purchase of military equipment. In fact, India surprised many in October 2014 when it announced its decision to supply four naval patrol vessels to Hanoi, leading to speculation that New Delhi's bid to modernize the Vietnamese military and expand its own involvement in Vietnam's energy sector, was a strategic signal to China. Meanwhile, shared concerns over Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea have also resulted in growing regional interest in the Indian Navy's biennial MILAN multinational exercises.²⁹

Another significant turn with regard to India's Asia-Pacific policy has been the recent outreach to Japan and Australia. In 2014, two prime ministerial visits to Tokyo and Canberra revealed a desire for greater synergy with the big maritime powers in the Pacific. While geared towards mutual economic development and prosperity, the security dimension of the aforesaid interactions was conspicuous. The visit to Japan yielded a number of strategic agreements, including one to supply the US-2 amphibious aircraft to India. In Australia, Prime Minister Narendra Modi secured a framework agreement for bilateral defence cooperation that envisaged regular maritime exercises.³⁰

The clearest evidence of India's re-orienting geopolitical posture is contained in the recent Indo-US joint vision statement concerning the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean Region. It was during the Indian Prime Minister's visit to Washington in September 2014 that a joint statement first mentioned the imperative for freedom of navigation in the South China Sea.³¹ But the issue was reiterated in unambiguous terms in the joint vision statement issued during President Obama's recent visit to New Delhi.³² The language and tenor of the statement showed that not only was India willing to explicitly state its concerns about Chinese maritime aggressiveness, but it was also now open in supporting the US rebalance policy.

However, while the political symbolism has been getting progressively explicit, the operational picture still remains fuzzy. Last year, the Indian Navy took part in the RIMPAC³³ and MALABAR³⁴ exercises, displaying a close operational relationship with the United States Navy (USN) and the Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF). About the same time, however, the IN also participated in a maritime exercise in Qingdao with the PLA-N³⁵, and a bilateral exchange with the Russian navy.³⁶ While the IN's maritime interactions served to locate it within the strategic environs of the Pacific, the operational signalling was decidedly mixed.³⁷ With the navy engaging with its many strategic partners, the "balance of narrative" did not point in any single direction.

For many observers, India's preferred maritime policy of low-profile

engagement appears strategically unambitious. Lest it's growing maritime engagements with nations in the Western Pacific are seen as tacit alliance-building against China, the Indian Navy believes it must focus on its bilateral engagements with other regional navies.³⁸ Such an approach, though likely to succeed at a smaller tactical level, may be incommensurate with India's strategic stakes in the broader Asia-Pacific.

While India's policy elite routinely stress India's commercial interests in Southeast Asia—and also express their concerns over “navigational access”—larger operational imbalances caused by the US Pivot to Asia, increasing Chinese aggressiveness in the South China Sea, and greater military assertion by other regional countries are not adequately addressed in official pronouncements. As regional maritime observers point out, the fact is that the middle-path approach between military pro-activism and non-intervention in the Pacific has ensured India's defence cooperation remains rudimentary—that is, geared primarily towards low-grade maritime engagement, port calls and diplomatic visits, and the provision of basic defence equipment.

Apart from a lack of political will in adopting a functionally assertive maritime posture in the Pacific, there has also been the problem of operational capacity.³⁹ The navy still does not have a dedicated land attack capability—a crucial factor in projecting hard power. It is also logistically challenged in undertaking sustained distant operations. The advanced land-version of the 290-km range Brahmos missile (test fired in July 2014) has not yet been installed on-board warships,⁴⁰ and a proposal for the construction of five new fleet support ships (FSS) for far-seas replenishment is still pending approval.⁴¹

Increasingly, the Indian Navy tends to convey the impression of being a benevolent force, with limited offensive and benign-support capability.⁴² This is mainly on account of its declining force levels in key areas like undersea and amphibious capability. But, the lack of combat prowess and operational sustenance needed for power-projection in the far-seas, leads regional states to underestimate the IN's relevance to security in maritime-Asia.⁴³ In part, this is also an outcome of India's own ambivalence towards hard-power projection. The inability to procure critical assets for littoral operations and land-attack has prevented the navy from developing the substantive capacities for sustained operations in the far-seas. This, despite the existence of a force development programme meant expressly to expand operational presence and maritime reach. Moreover, an excessive focus on benign and constabulary missions in the Indian Ocean Region has created the impression of a navy disinclined to play a strategic role in the Indo-Pacific.

By most accounts, the India's naval modernisation drive has been in support of a regional outreach strategy. India has sought to raise its maritime profile in

the Indian Ocean Region, without having to project power in the wider Indo-Pacific. Unfortunately, in the face of a creeping Chinese advance into the strategically vital Indian Ocean littorals, the Indian Navy has lacked the strike power and sustenance to pose a counter-challenge in the Pacific theatre.

Maritime Challenges

India's security role in the Asia-Pacific is affected by maritime challenges that have not attracted adequate policy attention. The first, concerns the interpretation of the navy's security mandate. In recent times, the policy elite have tended to highlight the navy's role in protecting national economic interests. The navy's contribution to the anti-piracy effort and the protection of sea-lanes has been a constant refrain, but the emphasis on an economic security role has tended to detract from the broader imperative of defending national strategic equities.

To be fair, in the prevailing regional geopolitical environment, maritime planners do not have the latitude to interpret 'forward operations' as expansively and purposefully as would be deemed ideal. Yet, the emphasis on the practical limits of conceptual ingenuity and doctrinal innovation does not conceal the fact that India's maritime policy is essentially 'apolitical'. The maritime strategy frames the naval mandate in territorial defence and economic-security terms to avoid treading on politically sensitive grounds.⁴⁴ Unfortunately, with limited resources available, the navy ends walking a tight-rope between India's core economic and coastal security needs and larger strategic interests.

Another conceptual hurdle is posed by the compromise between creative solutions and credible responses. As a matter of professional practice, maritime planners need to think out-of-the box, and come up with innovative ideas that compromise neither national positions nor operational credibility. Some of their recommended solutions are a product of creative thought that does not lend itself to black-and-white interpretations. Unfortunately, qualified positions and strategic nuance sit uneasily with maritime practitioners, many of whom are more accustomed to seeing firm lines on the operational slate and neatly outlined policy perspectives. Maritime strategists must also contend with the fact that a cooperative maritime strategy thrives on a shared cause that evokes an urgent response. But a decline in piracy levels off-Somalia has meant that the trigger for international maritime cooperation has ceased to exist. Navies must now operate in an environment where there may not be a compelling reason for them to come together in greater regional good.

In expanding its maritime reach, the IN also faces material challenges. With a number of projects in the pipeline, and a few still to be ordered, the navy needs an enhanced capital budget. But the naval budget outlay for the past two years has not given much reason for cheer. In 2013, the navy's original allocation of

capital budget was cut by nearly US\$ 1.2 billion, primarily on account of the slippage of delivery of the aircraft carrier *INS Vikramaditya* by almost one year.⁴⁵ In 2013-14, the navy's allocation fell by 2.82 per cent over the previous year's budget.⁴⁶ With the share of resources declining, acquiring and maintaining the desired level of power-projection assets will be a challenging proposition.

A critical deficiency lies in the undersea department. While recent submarine inductions—*INS Chakra* (an Akula class submarine from Russia) and *INS Arihant* (an indigenously produced nuclear powered submarine with ballistic missile)—are significant strategic assets, the emasculation of the IN's submarine fleet has been stark. With only 13 ageing diesel-electric submarines—only half of which are operational at any given time—and planned acquisitions some distance away, the navy is in a near-crisis situation.⁴⁷ However, for effective far-seas capability, the navy needs submarines to perform land attack and special-forces insertion. To be fair, the central government has moved to clear proposals that would add strength to the navy's combat arsenal.⁴⁸ Yet, it is unlikely the capabilities sought will materialise in the next few years.

Conclusion

While the Indian Navy has been a key player in maritime Asia, its security involvement has been limited to the Indian Ocean littorals. Driven primarily by coastal security requirements, non-traditional challenges and the need to preserve regional stability, the IN has chosen to spend its energy and effort on the near-seas. India's strategic calculus, however, has been complicated by the scope and scale of Beijing's maritime activism in the Indian Ocean, particularly its growing investments in maritime infrastructure, and increasing submarine deployments. With an urgent need to preserve its geopolitical influence in the IOR, India has been considering opening up its theatre of operations to the wider littorals where it could challenge Chinese dominance.

While India is aware of the need to countervail China's maritime power in the wider Indo-Pacific, it is yet to act in the Pacific theatre. Given that its principal challenge remains the defence of national strategic stakes, remedying power asymmetries that undermine regional stability is a core imperative. For this, the IN must consider playing the role of a gentle 'stabilizer' in the Indo-Pacific.

For a more durable strategic presence in maritime Asia, the Indian Navy will need to interact on the higher-end of the operational spectrum, and gain institutionalized access to refuelling and resupply facilities in the Pacific littorals. Logistical arrangements with friendly Southeast states as well as new littoral warfare assets will provide the Navy with the vital tools it needs to undertake strategic missions. Most importantly, the Indian Navy will need a new doctrinal framework that would give the military-security function as much emphasis as the benign

and constabulary role which is presently soaking up the most of its operational energies. The key would be to enhance its strategic capabilities to enable a credible distant-seas presence. For maritime planners, the critical challenge will be to formulate creative strategies and approaches that balance tactical aims with strategic objectives, and help establish narrative dominance in the nautical realm.

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18

Deciphering Oriental Mysteries of Silk, Pearls and Diamonds—Trios, Quartets and Quintets: Maritime Dimensions of India's Strategic Dilemmas in the Changing Asian Power Balance

Francis A. Kornegay, Jr.

This chapter was unknowingly prepared against the backdrop of US President Barack Obama's impending January 2015 state visit to India resulting in the 'US-India Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean region'.¹ The intention was to conceptualize a continental-maritime security equation in exploring India's approach to advancing its interests in the Indian Ocean – and, in so doing, influence an evolving Asian power balance toward equilibrium. It involves analysing challenges facing India in leveraging its capacities and strategic imagination to influence this evolution amid, first and foremost, the rise of China and US rebalancing (as reflected in the Obama visit), but also factoring in the regional roles and potential of Japan and Indonesia along with the growing 'federalist' importance of regional economic communities (RECs). Concluding on an 'architectural' note, it is suggested that a creatively assertive Indian diplomacy is required in structuring a more clearly resolved and inclusive 'Zone of Peace' multilateralism in the Indian Ocean.

Scoping the Landscape: The Continental-Maritime Equation

An overriding consideration in this context is how India's complicated geography affects maximizing Delhi's strategic latitude. This complexity is a function of India's southerly Gondwanan origins. It has given rise to a semi-insular sub-continental peninsular reality in relation to the rest of Asia. As such, India is

situated within the Eurasian northern hemisphere bordering the Afroasiatic global South perimeter of the Indian Ocean Rim heading into the Asia-Pacific.

The resulting claustrophobic semi-insularity, in all its contradictions, conditions the complexities facing the Indian continental-maritime equation. Thus situated in the northern hemispheric continental cusp of the geopolitical ‘global South,’ the Indian Ocean provides India its anchoring maritime leveraging potential for achieving two goals: assumption of regional and interregional leadership in southern Asia while influencing geopolitical, economic and strategic developments in northern Eurasia.

This north-south terrain and leveraging potential, in effect, constitutes India’s continental-maritime calculus. As such, a maritime-focused strategic diplomacy emerges as a critical factor in Indian geostrategy and as a basis for analyzing its multidimensional calculus. Taken into account is India’s evolving doctrinal and capability dimensions influencing its approach to the Indian Ocean interacting with its continental domain and issues of competitive pressures generated by other actors and concerns relating to the regional security environment.

Exploring this multi-factoral interplay involves analysing interlinked dynamics involving China’s rise as mainland Asia’s regional hegemon and global economic force and America’s readjustment under the Barack Obama administration of the US global posture emphasizing its much debated Asia ‘pivot’. Sino-American interdependence, fraught as it is with contradictions and accompanied by attendant regional dimensions, forms the backdrop of the transitioning global strategic environment in its Asian setting.

This involves, among other things, a more assertive Japan with increasingly close relations with India. It also includes the emerging prospect of Indonesia as a maritime power leading a consolidated ASEAN economic community at the end of 2015. While this context relates to India’s ‘Look East’ emphasis, the lack of a strong South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)—and by inference, the India-Pakistan confrontation—detracts from the policy’s leveraging potential in factoring in an evolving Asian balance interacting with regional strategies of other state actors.

India’s evolving approach to its strategic dilemmas is complicated by historically shaped geopolitical constraints advantaging China as first among equals in the greater Asia power equation. Whereas India and China are simultaneously natural partners as well as rivals, India remains strategically undermined by the 1947 partitioning by the Raj. This is central to its strategic vulnerability. It accentuates the importance of the Indian Ocean as India’s escape-hatch from Sino-checkmate potential on the Asian chessboard.

It is suggested that only by prioritising regional integration and interregional cooperation can India overcome this predicament. Yet, what effectively amounts

to an unending civil war of partition between India and Pakistan and lack of bilateral will to resolve it cast a shadow over such prospects. When factoring China into this picture, these circumstances underline the critical importance for India in controlling its Indian Ocean sea lanes of communications (SLOCs) in complementing the mainland strategy and tactics of geopolitical positioning.

This China-related element of Indian strategy interacts with an evolving US global posture of what can be termed *strategic devolution*.² Whether or not such a pattern, with its origins in the post war containment thinking of George Kennan, matures into a full-blown American geostrategy, it entails a repositioning of forces with intent to encourage global security ‘burden sharing’ at regional levels by other powers along with a shrinking global military footprint. This could enable India to avoid direct entanglement in any Sino-containment initiatives that could compromise strategic autonomy. Yet, India remains an outlier in the East Asia-Pacific and marginalised in northern Eurasia pending China making good on supporting its full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

This could, in turn, enhance the Russia-India-China (RIC) ‘triangle’ within BRICS, thereby reinforcing the maritime dimension of security strategy as a hedge against strategic isolation—though this should factor in the India-Brazil-South Africa Maritime Exercises (IBSAMAR) dimension of what seems an increasingly moribund India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum. Overall, it thus seems that India’s challenge is one of balancing competitive US and Sino-Russian Eurasian economic union—‘Silk Route’ agendas in Asia while manoeuvring itself into becoming a major actor in shaping a new inter-Asian subsystem in its transcontinental and maritime dimensions. Thus, a new Indian Ocean ‘world order’ might well be Delhi’s vocation about which more will be addressed later.

India and the Changing Global Landscape: Multipolarity Regionalized

Understanding India’s approach to its continental and maritime security interests requires examining its positioning as an emerging power within the larger context of a changing global strategic landscape. Samuel Huntington, in a 1999 *Foreign Affairs* essay, described a transitioning world order as *uni-multipolar* (as opposed to the conventional misconception of ‘unipolar’), one trending increasingly toward multipolarity amid the relative decline of the United States and the West in general.³ Whereas the US would maintain overall full-spectrum military-strategic dominance, the global economic distribution of power was reflecting an ever more multipolar pattern—an insight increasingly borne out by what now passes as conventional wisdom in acknowledging the global west to east shift in the world’s economic centre of gravity.

This shift defines the overall rise of Asia, with particular focus on the re-

emergences of China and India as major regional powers following on the heels of the 'Asian Tiger' phenomenon alongside the advanced G7 economic status of Japan. Asia has indeed arrived. But here it is important to go further in delving deeper to make sense of the global multipolar landscape, relating as it does to Asian security generally and India's security interests in particular. Multipolarity in the 21st century is markedly different from the power dynamics of rivalries associated with the outbreak of the First and Second World Wars.

In the half century up to the current era, in the wake of World War II, there began a European recovery that, in effect, commenced the evolution of a supranationalist regionalization of multipolarity. This was in the launch of the European Coal and Steel Community, precursor to today's European Union (EU). Alongside the post war recovery of Japan, these developments dialectically commenced the relative decline of hegemonic America, the US having sponsored these recoveries as bulwarks within the strategic bipolar context of its rivalry with the Soviet Union.

The salient feature of this evolution, in spite of the defensively nationalist resurgence currently underway in the EU, is its post-Westphalian character. This was captured by *Financial Times* columnist Philip Stephens observing that the "powers that once resided in nation states have been lost to *global economic integration*."⁴ (italics added) This point was reinforced recently in an address by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, asserting that whereas globalization has delivered humanity many benefits, "it has also eroded the capacity of societies to determine their own destinies."⁵

At trans-continental and regional levels, the interdependencies and hyper-connectivities of global economic integration place constraints on the latitude great powers have to unilaterally pursue geopolitical and economic agendas without factoring in their neighbourhoods. Such constraints have increasingly become institutionalized in the emergence of multilateral RECs, trans-continental associations of cooperation like the SCO and mini-plurilateral platforms of strategic utility. This later is most prominently reflected in the emerging powers pre-eminence of the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) forum.

Contemporary multipolarity, therefore, involves an interplay wherein powerful state actors are compelled to balance unilateralist strategic compulsions within a multilateral calculus of regional, transcontinental and global considerations. Such imperatives carry within it a welter of contradictions as such multi-country formations bring together countries that may reflect natural alignments as is more or less the case in RECs and among states with similar political systems as in the case of IBSA or where rivalries abound as within BRICS, RIC and the SCO and in what might be characterized as an incipiently tacit Sino-American G2.

Within such alignments of strategic utility there is to be found a co-existence

of simultaneous competitive and cooperative relationships. These exist in cohabitation within the same groupings which, for purposes of analysis, reflect geopolitical-economic realities of *coopertition*. 'Coopertition,' in many respects, defines the post-alliance quality of contemporary international relations within a uni-multipolar structuring of a strategic landscape tilting ever more toward multipolarity and its regionalization. Major powers, whether strategically aligned or not, tend to cooperate and compete simultaneously depending on differentiated geopolitical and economic interests.

On historical reflection, the evolution of the EU is the forerunner of this increasingly regionalized but currently hotly contested reality; it reflects the global economic integrationist dynamic restructuring the geopolitical-economies of trans-Eurasia from Euro-west to Asiatic east, from global North to global South. Countervailing trends spawned by globalizing integration have, however, unleashed dialectically interrelated tendencies toward anti-integrationist resistance and violently sectionalist and sectarian conflicts of disintegration. These push-backs in different forms occur at national and sub-national levels in Europe, the Middle East and Africa as well as in parts of Asia.

What are essentially reactionary disintegrative tendencies seem unlikely to cancel out integrationist momentum altogether although they will define its limits. To be sure, the dialectical interplay between such countervailing trends are manifestly shaping geopolitical security challenges confronting state actors, big and small, landlocked and littoral. The prognosis ventured here is that ultimately the regionalized character of global integration will, over time, restructure a world order in post-Westphalian transition into an international system of quasi-supranationalist economic federalism.⁶

Given how this macro-dynamic is playing out in greater Asia, this brings us into the complicated realm of having to decipher how India is attempting to cope with a multiplicity of security challenges both on-land and offshore. This involves a critical analysis and assessment of New Delhi's continental and maritime security diplomacies against rapidly changing global and regional strategic environments.

India's Changing Strategic Environment in Global and Regional Perspective

The global context in India's security calculus is conditioned by New Delhi's regional threat perceptions and how it responds to these challenges, in terms of geostrategy, amplify and link to the global scenario. India can be perceived as a sub-continental maritime nation astride sea lanes converging the western and eastern Indian Ocean. This reality has been integrated doctrinally. It is undergoing continual refining both strategically and economically in terms of an emerging

'blue economy' agenda. This can serve as a basis for regional and interregional cooperation.⁷

In economic and security terms, given India's geography, the interplay between global and regional dimensions compels an approach that interactively brings into play a continental-maritime equation pointing in three interrelated directions: north into the Eurasian heartland, east into the Indo-Pacific and south-by-southwest via the Persian Gulf into the greater Indian Ocean and along its Afroasiatic rim.

The changing strategic environment in this interregional on-land/offshore nexus relates to the earlier observation at the outset referring to the growing geopolitical-economic and strategic prominence of China interacting with strategic adjustments underway in Washington's Asia-centric global posture influenced by China's rise. This Sino-American dynamic is, in turn, closely tied in with the emergence of a more assertive Japan accompanied by a looming Indonesian leadership potential in tandem with movement toward the ASEAN economic community. All told, this picture presents India with a dynamic strategic environment fraught with dilemmas—but not without options.

These possibilities relate to overcoming threat perceptions of seemingly perennial insecurity and vulnerability due to China's economic and strategic dynamism. It is a predicament reinforced by India's comparative outlier status in relation to the East Asia-centric gravitational pull of Asian power-balancing dynamics. This predicament, within a fluidly dynamic Asian strategic environment underlines all the more, the importance of the 'Look East' turned 'Act East' thrust of regional strategy in compensating for India's comparative 'out-of-area' status within it.

However, while 'Act East' is intended to redress this deficit and, in the process, enhance its regional influence in relation to China, it is suggested here that this emphasis may need reinforcing through an interregional linkage; this would have to involve a more proactively dynamic South Asia regional integration focus as pre-conditional to South-Southeast Asian inter-regionalism in the greater Asian equation. This might be informed by a broader Indo-Pacific (as opposed to a purely Indian Ocean) dimension in Delhi's geo-strategy. In other words, 'Look East' may need to factor in a broader global South maritime diplomacy complementing an equally proactive northern Eurasian agenda.

On this northern end of the continental-maritime equation, India's marginality runs up against China's regional 'Silk Route' agenda. Beijing, thus far, has kept India dangling on the end of prospective full membership in the SCO. Equally important, in spite of 'Indo-Pacific' strategic tendencies in Delhi's calculus, India remains outside the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) where China, Russia, the US, Japan and Australia among other important regional

actors (i.e. Indonesia and South Korea) are members. To some extent this is compensated for by membership in the East Asia Summit.

To an important extent, India's bilateral relations within the ASEAN and membership in BRICS and other formations where China is not a member prevent marginalization. These include the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (where China is an 'observer'), IBSA, the Indian Ocean Rim Association (where China is a 'dialogue partner' along with the US, Britain, France and Japan), the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) and MILAN exercises offset its exclusion from these strategically important Asian organisations. But all of these organisations or mini-lateral platforms (with the possible exception of BRICS) are either 'fledgling' or underdeveloped in their capacity to generate important diplomatic and economic clout in the Asian power sweepstakes—yet it would seem that India could potentially strengthen each of these platforms and, in the process, elevate its Asian leadership profile overall.

Much would seem to hinge on how India navigates its strategic autonomy in relation to the cross-currents of Sino-American coopertitionist dynamics. The aim would be for Delhi to carve out its own niche as a major fulcrum around which Asian power balancing evolves. In this regard, the question is whether indigenous geostrategic dynamics interacting with US retrenchment toward a more *devolutionary* offshore balancing posture in Asia might not open up more space for India to maximize a stabilizing role for itself within greater Asia in the interplay between continental and maritime balancing pressures impinging on its calculus.

For it is within this context that a new Asian power balance may be discernible and where Indian naval-cum-maritime geo-strategy interacting with its continental diplomacy may illuminate New Delhi's options in how it approaches its challenges. Here, it is necessary to look more closely at the cross-currents of the tacit Sino-American 'G2' in terms of India's options in optimally balancing its continental-maritime equations. India, after all, is also a major factor in coopertitionist dynamics with devolutionary power potential in the Asian 'great game'.⁸

Sino-American Nexus

If—and this may be a big 'if'—Chinese Vice Premier Wang Yang's December 27th 2014 speech in Chicago is a barometer of the Chinese mind-set on US-China relations, India's geostrategic environment is set to become even more interesting and pregnant with possibilities. The question is whether a speech by the Vice Premier titled "The United States is the guide of the world, China is willing to join this system" falls in the same league as 'Hindi-Chini bhai bhai' or signals a more enduring trend in the Sino-American bilateral relationship and its conditioning implications for the Asian strategic landscape.⁹ Perhaps it is

Beijing's attempt to downplay systemic revisionism even as it bids to unilaterally alter the maritime strategic landscape in the East and South China seas. Whatever the case, Delhi will have to consider its options and latitude against the backdrop of interplay between US and Chinese regional strategies in Asia. Therefore, a brief look at Chinese and American strategies may be instructive in illuminating India's continental-maritime equation.

China's trans-Eurasian Integrationist 'Silk Route' Vision

Beijing's aspirational global superpower status reflects a consolidation and leveraging of its regional bid for dominance in East Asia into a trans-Eurasian 'co-prosperity sphere' linked to resource diplomacies in Africa and the Middle East.¹⁰ Taking a page out of ancient history in seeking to re-establish the 'Silk Route' between Asia and Europe, this is as much if not more a geo-economic as a geopolitical one. The 'maritime silk route' (MSR) is the offshore complement to this transcontinental agenda of infrastructural development, economic integration and energy interdependence.¹¹

In its expanse, it will not only network a linkage between Europe as far as Germany to greater Asia. It is also intended to foster integration between Central and South Asia into and along the Indian Ocean littoral, extending into the Asia-Pacific.

As such, the heritage pathway of the 'Silk Route' and the incorporating of the East and South China seas into Beijing's maritime domain form part and parcel of the same integrated geo-strategy. Given the unresolved border issues between India on the one hand and China and Pakistan on the other (within a conflict system linking Afghanistan and Pakistan's northern frontier district harbouring insurgent groups from throughout South and Central Asia), it is not unreasonable for India to feel encircled when factoring in Beijing's offshore maritime diplomacies along the Asian Indian Ocean perimeter, extending into the ocean's island states and along the African littoral.

China's transcontinental strategy of regional and interregional integration hinges closely on Beijing structuring its own uni-multilateral system of interdependencies in which the SCO figures prominently. This is backed up by a fledgling diplomacy of development finance institution-building in which the BRICS 'new development bank' (BRICS-NDB) and especially the prospective Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) will play major roles in underwriting this new system (with the idea of an SCO development bank having succumbed to unresolved issues on its terms of reference between Russia and China). The seeming challenge confronting China is that it has apparently not, thus far, figured out how to simultaneously accommodate both Russia and India within the same interregional Eurasian configuration—their minilateral RIC triangle as well as BRICS notwithstanding.

Could it be that this might change with China reportedly supporting full SCO membership for India and Pakistan?¹² This is at a time of heightened Russian vulnerability due to converging Ukrainian crisis-induced western sanctions and a plummeting oil price collapsing Moscow's security of demand-supply energy export equation (though Turkey might at least partially redress this while Russia supports its entry into the SCO as well). The fact that this could also include full membership for Iran (and possibly Afghanistan) as well at a time when the US wants to lower its military and 'nation-building' footprint in the region carries major implications for revamping of regional and interregional security architecture.

The missing piece in this mosaic for China is its maritime equation. For there is no real trade-off between India as a full SCO member and China moving from observer to full membership in the SAARC given the outstanding territorial issues between Beijing and Delhi intertwined with the benefit China receives from playing off Delhi and Islamabad. At the same time, China's contentious claims to the East and South China seas burden its relationship with the ASEAN.

Both SAARC and ASEAN are strategically key to China complementing its continental 'Silk Route' geostategy with a compelling maritime dimension. In compensation, what Beijing seems to be managing to achieve through its bilateral diplomacies is a leveraging of its capabilities in offering to develop maritime infrastructures in South Asian, Indian Ocean and African littoral states that are willing to accept its offers (though there may be limits in this regard as Sri Lanka's recent electoral 'regime change' attest).

However, what applies to China applies to India as well—especially given Delhi's ever present need to bolster its position in the Indian Ocean and its current revisiting of the ocean's status as a 'zone of peace' which is elaborated on later. This consideration, in turn, begs questions about the transition underway in America's regional posture and its implications for Asian security generally and India's security interests in particular.

Foreign Policy at the Obama 'Improv': Devolutionary Offshore Balancing

As America's first black president, Barack Obama has leveraged his unique background in the service of a very deft gambit of geopolitical identity surfing. Yet, in the course of proclaiming himself as first US president of 'Asia-Pacific' vintage, his rebalancing so-called 'pivot' to Asia seems not to have generated much understanding of what he is trying to achieve within the wider context of an American foreign policy under multiple stresses of transition. Absent an integrated grand strategy, the African-American cultural capacity for improvisational creativity emerges as the leitmotif of Obama diplomacy.

This was likely dictated by Obama having to redress inherited Mideast ‘imperial overstretch’ merging into circumstances of extreme volatility in domestic and foreign affairs—all convergently unfolding at such a clip as to make processing a ‘long view’ in charting grand strategy a luxury. The absence of bipartisanship in Washington and, along with it, a coherent post-cold war consensus has also bedevilled statecraft. In its bare essentials, Obama’s diplomacy entails a foreign policy of ‘nation-building at home’ placing a premium on disengaging from costly overseas military adventures in the Levant, accompanied by a rebalancing, not to, but *within* Asia: between east-west Asian land and seascapes.

As a fledgling posture it has been dismissively misinterpreted into a propagandistic narrative portraying an embattled superpower in decline and retreat led by a weakling president lacking resolve, thereby abandoning allies and creating uncertainty. Further confusing matters, parts of this narrative are replicated by elite opinion overseas. This occurs in countries where there may be vested interest either in encouraging an unsustainable US over-reach while given powers strengthen themselves economically or where there is fear or reluctance in a given country to proactively assuming the lead in addressing challenges in their national and/or regional security interests in keeping with a ‘strategic devolution’ calculus.

Nevertheless, a majority of American public opinion has gravitated toward favouring a more *non-military* interventionist (as opposed to purely anti-interventionist) overseas posture with emphasis on resources being channelled to domestic socio-economic and infrastructural renewal priorities. Neoconservatives and critics on the right tend to disingenuously conflate this with ‘isolationism’ when, in fact, what is being scripted is a strategy that will allow the US to enhance its international competitiveness amid the rise of China and new emerging power entrants into the global geopolitical-economic arena.

In a recent interview, Obama put the case for such a refocusing of the US posture when asked whether he would use his last two years in office to help rebuild war-torn countries: “We can help, but we can’t do it for them...I think the American people recognise that. There are times here in Washington where pundits do not; they think you can just move chess pieces around the table.”¹³ He went on to reject the idea of “devoting another trillion dollars” in major troop deployments when “We need to spend a trillion dollars rebuilding our schools, our roads, our basic science and research here in the US.”¹⁴

Strategic Devolution: Toward a New Security Paradigm?

Here, it is important to recognise that such thinking, ideologically contested on the right as it is, reflects a rapidly changing American demographic amid an emerging majority-minority electorate and a shrinking white majority – and with that shrinking majority, an eroding constituency for aggressive global

interventionism. Moreover, Obama's opening to Cuba may signal an hemispheric 'pivot.' If this is indeed the American trend-line, what becomes salient in global and Asian security terms and, by extension, how India might navigate its equations, is a need to discern what new security paradigm might emerge as the global security new normal.

By inference, linked to 'burden sharing,' strategic devolution reflects a return to aspects of the containment strategy associated with George Kennan¹⁵. It answers a warning about 'imperial overstretch' first raised by Kennan but now especially relevant in a regionalizing multipolar environment reconfigured by global economic integration and the rise of China. However, this is a concept that may contain more universal utility beyond a transitioning US national security posture.

It might also be viewed as a process (as well as a strategic policy) with an independent logic embedded in the dynamics of relative decline. As more mature centres of power emerge, new actors inevitably become positioned to assume local and regional leadership and responsibilities; this is as it should be. This, in turn is suggestive of how the multilateral institutional logic of the global system may also need to evolve as well. Its implications can be said to be profoundly 'federalist' in tracking the evolving multipolar configuring of global economic integration.

Hence, the potential for a 'federalizing' of the global military-strategic system. This could well be in the interest of regional powers and governing institutions (RECs and related peace and security mechanisms) assuming primacy over determining their own destinies rather than fates being orchestrated in Washington or Brussels – perhaps in partnerships involving the US and/or EU but more preferably in relationships of subsidiarity with a reorganised United Nations system; emphasis would need to prioritize regional leadership and initiative within a global cooperative security community rather than one based on a declining American global hegemony (not the same as an abdication of US leadership!).

By implication, this regionalizing imperative in a changing multilateral framework of global governance—and the need for radical reform in the post-war institutional order—places a premium on RECs becoming the foundational pillars upon which to construct regional and interregional security communities within an evolving global economic federalist system. Against the backdrop of an incipiently tacit Sino-American 'G2,' some tentative assessments on the evolving Asian security landscape can be attempted in terms of how this might inform the Indian calculus.

Asian Dynamics-Indian Dilemmas: Toward a Balancing Equilibrium?

At a time of resurging competitive nationalisms in Asia, the logic of multipolarity

applies as much to China's unfolding regional dominance as it does to America's declining hegemony globally. It thus may be possible to discern an evolving equilibrium in the Asian power balancing dynamic revolving around the China-India relationship. It may then be ventured that if China is emerging into superpower dominance within continental Eurasia via its unfolding 'Silk Route' pathway to Europe, India has the potential to consolidate its pivotal maritime positioning as the leading regional power astride the sea lanes of the Indian Ocean nexus.

Why this is so has to do with a balancing maritime reality favouring more cooperation and coordination between Beijing and Delhi as opposed to strategic competition in the Indian Ocean which, by extension, could well benefit their continental relationship as well. But this also has to do with the emergence of other Asian powers accompanied by institutional regional economic community possibilities as mediating factors reinforcing India's pivotal maritime positioning in the Indian Ocean scenario: namely, the increasing importance of Japan and Indonesia in Delhi's calculus joined by the potential interregional possibilities of a SAARC-ASEAN linkage reinforcing India's Indo-Pacific oriented 'Look East' strategy.

Navigating these dynamics in the Asian strategic environment (interacting with the vagaries of democratic electoral politics in key Indian Ocean states such as Sri Lanka) may provide India with a capacity for leveraged hedging in its dealings with China as a means of overcoming 'string of pearls' encirclement anxieties along pathways into a silky future! Moreover, Beijing's more contentious East Asian relations revolving around its bid to territorialize dominance in the East and South China seas has generated its own countervailing dynamic reinforcing India's strategic advantage in the Indian Ocean relative to China. This has been reflected in Tokyo's assertiveness in pushing back against Beijing's claims accompanied by outreach to India and resistance within the ASEAN.

Apart from the comprehensive debunking of the 'string of pearls' and 'places not bases' narratives of China's alleged encroachment on Delhi's Indian Ocean domain by analysts like David Brewster (which will not be recapitulated here), it is useful to consider how Japan and Indonesia fit within the Sino-Indian equation as prelude to factoring in a SAARC-ASEAN interregionalism scenario.¹⁶ These two nations, one an established advanced economy within the G7, the other, an emerging market economy and regional power within the MIKTA (Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, Turkey, Argentina) alternative to BRICS, are critically strategic to discerning a more activist Indian regional posture. Why this is so is more or less obvious in the case of Japan. Hence, a brief summary of Indo-Japan implications under the 'second coming' premiership of Shinzo Abe.

Shinzo of the Quadrilateral: Diamonds are not just a girl's best friend

Among Japan's recent prime ministers, Shinzo Abe stands out as the most animated and assertive on Tokyo overcoming the parameters of postwar 'self-defence' pacifism in adopting a more robust engagement in the security affairs of the eastern Asia-Pacific. Hell bent on reversing Japanese declinism amid the rise of a rapidly modernizing China as regional leader, Abe, during his first stint as prime minister was creatively proactive in launching the Quadrilateral Security Dialogues (QSD) with India, Australia under the conservative Liberal administration of John Howard and the United States under the George W. Bush administration. Given his own nationalist projection as a leader exhibiting a passionate vigilance toward China, the hard-line foreign policy profiles of the Howard and Bush administrations contributed to a widely held perception of the Shinzo quadrilateral advancing a thinly disguised Sino-containment agenda —that is, until Sinophile Kevin Rudd of Labour unseated Howard followed by the exits of Abe himself and Obama succeeding Bush.¹⁷

Delhi, meanwhile, under the Congress-led UPA government of Manmohan Singh was intent on India striking its civilian nuclear deal with Washington. This was a priority of such magnitude that it fed perceptions of 'strategic autonomy' taking a back seat on crucial neighbourhood energy security priorities like a 'peace pipeline' with Iran and Pakistan accompanied by indulging US-friendly alignments in Asia like the quadrilateral. While such a perception may be open to debate, by 2009, India's posture had shifted noticeably as it joined the new Sino-inclusive quadrilateral of BRIC which became the BRICS quintet 2011.

While the geopolitical and economic environment has evolved beyond a revisiting of a QSD during Abe's second premiership, the four sides of the diamond remain strategically instructive in his vision of a coalition of Asian multiparty electoral democracies aligning themselves as a force in shaping the inter-Asian order.¹⁸ Its maritime implications are unmistakable in Abe's Project Syndicate opinion piece in 2012 when he asserted that "I envisage a strategy whereby Australia, India, Japan, and the US state of Hawaii form a diamond to safeguard the maritime commons stretching from the Indian Ocean to the western Pacific."¹⁹

Apart from Abe alluding to Tokyo being "engaged in regular bilateral service-to-service military dialogues with India," a more recent report on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's September 2014 visit to Japan noted that Modi's summit with Abe had been "widely seen as part of an effort to counterbalance rising Chinese influence in Asia," stressing that "personal ties between the two men are unusually close..."²⁰ There may be, however, a 'dark side' to the Abe connection about which more will be said later. Modi, on the other hand, values India's global economic governance reform relationship with China in the BRICS context and

pragmatically encourages Chinese investment in India's urgently needed economic development.

Thus, even as Modi and an equally nationalistic Xi Jinping manoeuvre around one another with respectively competitive strategic agendas, economic interdependence and cooperation provide a countervailing dynamic. Were Russia factored into this triangular RIC mix, it has the potential for blossoming into a strategic pole of interregional integration within the northern Eurasian context of the SCO—provided, that is, India is facilitated into full membership by Beijing. None of these intra-BRICS prospects contradict the defence diplomacy hedging of strategic imperatives underway between Delhi and Tokyo at a time when both India and Japan are under competitive continental and maritime pressures from China.

Jakarta's 'Global Maritime Axis'

In Indian maritime strategic and economic terms, Indonesia injects a much less contentious but perhaps no less complex and sensitive set of calculations into Delhi's Indian Ocean considerations. This may, however, underestimate the immensely creative potential in what, to date, appears to be an ignored and underdeveloped relationship in relation to India's 'Look East' strategy. If the Modi administration can manage the sectarian dynamic in India's domestic affairs interacting with its regional diplomacy, a strengthening Delhi-Jakarta connection could be a game changer in the security prospects of southern Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

Only now does it appear that this potential is dawning on the strategic and policy communities in both capitals. In remarks reported in the *New York Times*, an adviser to newly elected Indonesian president, Joko Widodo observed that while the country, as an archipelagic state, is ideally positioned geographically to practice maritime diplomacy, "you can't eat an international image," stressing that diplomacy must be for economic benefit, adding that "we have a strategic partnership with India, but the relationship has not reached half its potential."²¹ Yet while Delhi sees itself and is widely perceived as the central pivot within the Indian Ocean between its western and eastern rims, Indonesia sees itself as the 'axis' between the Pacific and Indian Ocean (maritime) region (PACINDO).²²

For India's part, although there is recent acknowledgement of Indonesia's emerging role in regional maritime diplomacy (as Jakarta assumes chairmanship of IORA later in 2015) and that there is much for India to learn from how Jakarta is approaching maritime affairs, there is yet to surface an articulation of the importance of prioritizing the bilateral and region-to-region relationship in India's regional and maritime diplomacy.²³ As such, it would be a pity if Indian and Indonesian leadership aspirations in the Indian Ocean and Indo-Pacific were to

come to resemble that old adage of ‘ships passing in the night’ as both navigate parallel universes in Asian waters!

To some extent this may be a reflection on Indian critiques of India’s insufficient maritime awareness as articulated in the current analysis being cited which concludes by noting: “Despite its natural endowments, India has demonstrated a benign neglect of the emerging concept of ‘Blue Economy’” which, as this related to Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing ironically involved a situation where “it is the waters off Andaman and Nicobar Islands that are plagued by IUU fishing by nationals from Indonesia.”²⁴

The Jokowi administration, meanwhile, in implementing its ‘global maritime axis’ doctrine is placing major strategic emphasis on enhancing inter-island connectivity amongst its staggering 17,508 islands comprising its archipelagic domain.²⁵ This would simultaneously enhance intra-Indonesian national integration while projecting Indonesia as a major regional maritime hub within the eastern Indo-Pacific interacting with China’s MSR which it supports as complementary to the axis role it sees for itself. Beyond that, Indonesia is concerned about what it perceives as rivalries between the US and China and China and India with an articulated vision of itself having a chance to “play a central role in preventing and managing conflict potentials between the US and China in the Pacific Asian region.”²⁶

This potential mediating role is articulated in *Toward 2014-2019: Strengthening Indonesia Amidst a Changing World* which implements a Law of 2011, No. 17 regarding “State Intelligence whose purpose is providing a prediction concerning Indonesian future image within the next 5 years.”²⁷ Regarding the publication’s perception of “Indian-Chinese rivalry,” there is no comparably articulated mediating role envisioned for Jakarta.

The importance for India of integrating itself into the regional ASEAN economic space is acknowledged (which begs a question about Indonesia integrating itself into the SAARC economy). But this is not accompanied by a sense of bilateral connectivity between Indonesia, seeing itself as it does, as the leader of ASEAN and India as the putative leader of SAARC. This especially holds from the standpoint of jointly structuring an environment for “preventing and managing conflict potentials” not just between the US and China but more crucially between competing regional actors.

This neglected bilateral potential between India and Indonesia and, by inference, SAARC and ASEAN is key to imagining a scenario of strategic equilibrium. This could become a joint initiative both might undertake in squaring the Asian security continental-maritime equation which, from India’s vantage-point, has to be predicated on its vision of the Indian Ocean future.

Toward a Geopolitical Improv? An Indian Ocean ‘world order’ Ensemble

From a devolutionary perspective in imagining a regionalizing global governance order as it might evolve in Asia, for India’s purposes, Japan and Indonesia are critical partners for different but complementary reasons. Apart from the economic rationale attending relations with both countries, there are important distinctions to be made in what they bring to a security partnership. Given Japan’s status as effectively Asia’s leading naval power, a close Indo-Japan security partnership is an important hedge against potentially aggressive Chinese contingencies in the maritime realm although there is convincing scepticism regarding the Indian Ocean constituting a serious strategic dilemma for India in ‘string of pearls’ terms.

Otherwise, there are concerns that have been raised about what are perceived to be expansive territorial claims by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his party motivating desire to amend Japan’s constitution in a manner that would obligate citizens to ‘*defend the nation’s inherent territory, inherent seas and inherent skies.*’²⁸ This is the *Ryodo* (“inherent territory” of Japan) dark side to Abe’s quadrilateralist strivings underpinning a coalition of democratic ‘diamonds’ policing the Indian and Pacific Oceans against China’s perceived expansionism. As such, resurgent Japanese nationalism potentially constitutes a challenge to the strategic devolutionary implications of US rebalancing geopolitical-economics and security aims in the Asia-Pacific.

India, under Modi, may not be marginal to such a contingency even given the centrality of the Indian Ocean in Delhi’s maritime calculus. Modi is reported to have expressed interest in reviving Abe’s quadrilateral within the context of Washington expressing interest in India joining APEC.²⁹ Indian involvement in a strategically competitive Indo-Pacific scenario cannot, therefore, be ruled out. However, such a contingency remains to be seen.

On a more positive note, a closer and more comprehensively strategic partnership with Indonesia would seem to offer immense peace and security potential for mitigating against an escalating scenario of tension emanating from either Japan or China (as opposed to China vs. India) while possibly reinforcing constraints against the latter eclipsing India in its neighbourhood. This is where Indian National Security Advisor Ajit Doval’s call on Sri Lanka to recall and renew its ‘Zone of Peace’ (ZoP) declaration made in 1971 deserves serious policy focus and elaboration.³⁰

It would appear to take considerably more than recalling and renewing the 1971 ZoP declaration for great powers crowding into the Indian Ocean to cooperate in its demilitarization; that is, unless a more elaborated ‘peace and cooperation’ architecture along the lines of the still fledgling Zone of Peace and

Cooperation in the South Atlantic (ZPCSA) could be undertaken. Moreover, such a companion ZoP on the Indian Ocean side of the African continent could link with the ZPCSA in elaborating a southern oceans governance and security system via Delhi's IBSA/IBSAMAR trio with South Africa and Brazil. Indeed, a special IBSA summit might be warranted for deliberating on such a possibility.³¹

This is where joint leadership by India and Indonesia in fostering interregional cooperation between SAARC and ASEAN could provide the core of a multilateral platform entrenching a *Zone of Peace and Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific*. It would need to be inclusive of the extra-regional 'dialogue partners' in IORA—UK, France, US, China, Japan—as well as providing an interactive networking umbrella for IORA and related initiatives, including IONS, MILAN, the Galle and Shangri La dialogues, etc. Central among its guiding principles should be joint development of a Blue Economy in the spirit of the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS).³²

For India, such a strategy would add 'strategic depth' to 'looking east,' especially if reinforced with a national integration focus on developing its northeast as a potential 'Chindian' convergence with Beijing's focus on opening up its western Yunnan provincial region.³³ At the same time, this would flesh out Indonesia's 'axis' role within the context of ASEAN within its neighbourhood of the Indo-Pacific nexus. ASEAN has a maritime forum and an extended maritime forum as well as its Regional Forum (the ARF).

Delhi, however, has additional considerations in improvising a ZPCSA-like structure for the Indian Ocean given concerns over the second coming of the UK's 'east of Suez.' Britain's return to the Persian Gulf appears more symbolic than substantial enough to significantly complement the US naval presence. The Royal Navy's return is reportedly being underwritten by mostly by Bahrain.³⁴ This, in turn, infers the need for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to form part of an all-Asian tripartite REC ensemble with the SAARC and the ASEAN.

The more fundamental consideration is low-profiled seeming weakness of the SAARC itself which, in turn, implicates India's calculus in terms of how strong it wants this REC to be interacting with its unresolved civil war of partition with Pakistan.³⁵ Whether or not converging US-China interest in stabilizing the Hindu Kush will help nurture a security environment conducive to resolving the Indo-Pakistan-Kashmir conundrum is a major imponderable.³⁶ Perhaps full membership for India and Pakistan in the SCO could form part of a regionally stabilizing formula which might be further reinforced if NATO and a full-membership SCO were able to move toward a strategic dialogue and/or partnership as the basis for evolving a trans-Eurasian security community.³⁷

Beyond mainland Eurasia and Asia's Indian Ocean rim, the African littoral and its mega-free trade area comprising the COMESA-SADC-East African

Community (EAC) trinity where South Africa figures as a leading actor, implicates the importance of the IBSA trilateral calculus in Delhi's maritime diplomacy. Here, the strategic objective would be no less than the fleshing out of the China-India-Middle East-Africa (CHIMEA) 'Indian Ocean Nexus' envisioned by Woodrow Wilson scholar at large, Martin Walker and, in so doing, improvise the 'Indian Ocean World Order' imagined by Robert Kaplan.³⁸ Thus elaborated, such a melodious ensemble of trios, quartets and quintets might well constitute just the Delhi-Jakarta assembled maritime orchestra needed to anchor an Indian mainland integrationist vision within its RIC trio with China and India as members of BRICS.³⁹ All in all, an Indian geopolitical-economic-strategic improve unravelling the oriental riddle of silk, pearls and diamonds will call on all the proactive ingenuity Delhi can muster in calibrating a role for its bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral engagements and instruments for realizing its great power aspirational strivings.

NOTES

1. "US-India Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean Region", Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, January 25, 2015 at http://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/24728/USIndia_Joint_Strategic_Vision_for_the_AsiaPacific_and_Indian_Ocean_Region (Accessed on October 7, 2015).
2. This term attempts to conceptually capture in updated and amended form a principal enunciated by George Kennan in his strategy of containment against the Soviet Union as articulated by John Lewis Gaddis in *George F. Kennan: An American Life* (New York, Penguin, 2012): "...containment meant contracting American aspirations, not expanding them. The resources available to the United States—material and intellectual—were more limited than anyone had understood them to be at the end of the war. As a result, a serious gap had developed between intentions and capabilities...That interest lay in balancing power within the existing international system. If the United States was to avoid the overextension that was already afflicting the Soviet Union, then it should bolster the strength of allies in such a way as not to deplete its own." (pp. 278-279)
3. Samuel Huntington, "The Lonely Superpower," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 1999, pp. 35-49. Companion essay with "Bully of the Free World," by Garry Wills under the thematic heading: "Is American Hegemony Working?" pp. 50-59 in the same issue: *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 1999.
4. Philip Stephens, "A transatlantic tale of paralysis," *Financial Times*, April 19, 2012. Print edition.
5. Kofi Annan, "Reshaping existing order to meet new challenges," *The Straits Times*, December 27, 2014 at <http://www.straitstimes.com/st/print/3245893>. (Accessed on October 07, 2015).
6. Francis A. Kornegay, Jr. "Laying the BRICS of a New Global Order: A Conceptual Scenario," in F.A. Kornegay, Jr. & N. Bohler-Muller, Eds., *Laying the BRICS of a New Global Order: From Yekaterinburg 2009 to eThekwini 2013*, (Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2013), pp. 1-32.
7. The Blue Economy dimension has emerged as a major recurring theme in the published outputs of India's National Maritime Foundation, especially via its 'Varuna Alert' service. This in line with a similar focus that has emerged as a priority among other members of the Indian Ocean Rim Association. It is motivated by a convergence in thinking aimed at exploiting

- marine resources for economic development while maintaining and enhancing the health of the oceans, thereby, opening up new avenues for regional and interregional cooperation.
8. With regard to Sino-Indian ‘coopertition,’ see: “NMF and Regional Institute of Indian Ocean Economics (RIIO), China Round Table Discussion, 19 Dec 14,” *Varuna Alert*, January 03, 2015 by the National Maritime Foundation (NMF) Team. In reporting on this meeting, among other things, it came out that “It was also accepted that *cooperation and competition would always coexist in India-China relations* but the larger aim should be to stop the possible negative spirals due to sharpening of strategic narratives from both sides.” (italics added)
 9. Francesco Sisci, “Beijing chums up to Washington,” *Asia Times Online*, January 5, 2015: <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/CHIN-01-05012015.html> (Accessed on October 07, 2015). ‘SINOGRAPH.’ There seems little detailed information on what appears to have been an important speech by one of China’s top government officials. However, the exact audience of the speech in Chicago and lack of an English translation of it provides little more than the Sisci report to go by.
 10. There has been much written on China’s revisionist ambitions. Illustrative is an National Maritime Foundation (NMF) analysis, Shikha Aggarwal “Asia Pacific Dream’: China’s push for a new regional order,” *Varuna Alert*, December 24, 2014. It is suggested that Xi Jinping’s call for ‘Asia for Asians’ aims to establish a “new regional order with Beijing as its centre of gravity.” The focus is on the ‘Asia Pacific Dream’ and ‘One Belt, One Road’ initiatives as the fulcrum of Beijing’s Asia policy via promotion of a Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP) linked to the prospective establishment of the Asia Infrastructure Investment bank with the FTAAP seen as countering the US Trans-pacific Partnership (TPP) trade initiative whereas the infrastructure investment bank would finance silk route proposals. A more polemical analysis is ventured by Pepe Escobar, “Go west, young Han,” *Asia Times Online*, December 17, 2014 with a trans-Eurasia focus at <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/CHIN-01-171214.html> (Accessed on October 07, 2015); or, among the Indian Punchline critiques of M.K. Bhadrakumar: “China’s regional strategy outshines India” Rediff, May 31, 2013 at <http://blogs.rediff.com/mkbhadrakumar/2013/05/31/chinas-regional-strategy-outshines-indias/> (Accessed on October 07, 2015). M.K. Bhadrakumar, “China hypes connectivity, India balks,” Rediff, October 28, 2014 at <http://blogs.rediff.com/mkbhadrakumar/2014/10/28/china-hypes-connectivity-india-balks/> (Accessed on October 07, 2015). From any number of western perspectives, illustrative is Claire Groden “Don’t be fooled by China’s cooperation lately. Xi Junping wants to reform the international order,” *The New Republic*, December 18, 2014 at <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/120587/chinas-ignores-international-arbitration-south-china-sea-dispute> (Accessed on October 07, 2015).
 11. See for example, see Rajeev Ranjan Chaturvedy, “Reviving the Maritime Silk Route,” *The Hindu*, April 11, 2014 at <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/reviving-the-maritime-silk-route/article5896989.ece> (Accessed on October 07, 2015): “The Maritime Silk Route emphasises on improving connectivity but more importantly, it aspires to improve China’s geo-strategic position in the world.” This terminology is borrowed from the creative improvisationalism that characterizes the American musical genre of jazz. This is an artistic phenomenon that has given rise to the notion of ‘The Improv,’ and is therefore adaptable to conceptual improvisational compulsions for rethinking basic assumptions during the current transitional period in US foreign policy and national security strategy, especially against the backdrop of domestic imperatives.
 12. “China backs India, Pakistan SCO membership,” *China Daily*, September 18, 2014 at www.chinadailyasia.com/news/2014-09/18/content_15168059.html (Accessed on October 07, 2015).
 13. “Iran has chance to get right with the world, says Obama,” *Business Day*, December 29, 2014: <http://www.bdlive.co.za/world/mideast/2014/12/29/iran-has-chance-to-get-right-with>

- (Accessed on October 07, 2015).
14. Ibid.
 15. See: *George F. Kennan: An American Life*, by John Lewis Gaddis (New York: Penguin, 2012), especially chapter 13 ("Policy Planner: 1947-1948"), pp. 276-308.
 16. David Brewster, "Beyond the 'String of Pearls': is there really a Sino-Indian security dilemma in the Indian Ocean," *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, Volume 10, Issue 2, 2014 pp. 133-149. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19480881.2014.922350> (Accessed on October 07, 2015). "It examines the strategic positions of India and China in the Indian Ocean and concludes that India has an overwhelming strategic advantage that China cannot realistically mitigate in the foreseeable future. This advantage precludes any real security dilemma arising between them. In fact, both China and India have good reasons to keep strategic competition under control while they each broaden their regional influence."
 17. Ankit Panda, "Shinzo Abe's 'Quadrilateral Initiative': Gone and Forgotten?" *The Diplomat*, May 7, 2014 at <http://the-diplomat.com/2014/05/shinzo-abes-quadrilateral-initiative-sone-and-forgotten/> (Accessed on October 07, 2015).
 18. Shinzo Abe, "Asia's Democratic Security Diamond," *Project Syndicate*, December 27, 2012 at <http://www.project-syndicate.org/print/a-strategic-alliance-for-japan-and-india-by-shi...> (Accessed on October 07, 2015).
 19. Ibid.
 20. "India's Narendra Modi chides China as he embraces Japan," *Financial Times*, September 2, 2014, preceded by a quote by in Shinzo Abe "Asia's Democratic Security Diamond", Project Syndicate, December 27, 2012 at <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/a-strategic-alliance-for-japan-and-india-by-shinzo-abe> (Accessed on October 07, 2015).
 21. "Indonesian Leader in Global Spotlight: Many hope Joko Widodo, Indonesia's new leader, will raise country's regional stature," *New York Times*, October 21, 2014. The point being made is that Jakarta's maritime diplomacy will prioritize an economic rather than a geopolitical agenda in terms of the practical needs of Indonesians.
 22. Captain Gurpreet S. Khurana, "The Maritime 'Rise' of Indonesia: Indicators, intentions and inferences," *Varuna Notes/NMF*, January 16, 2015. P. 2.
 23. Ibid. Emphasis is on Indonesia's focus on 'economic connectivity,' 'marine resources,' 'maritime security' and 'inferences' in terms of "prominent takeaways" for India without reference to bilateral maritime cooperation in spite of the observation that "the commonalities between Indonesia and India are striking."
 24. Ibid. p. 5.
 25. Ibid. p. 3.
 26. Muhammed Hikam, ed. *Toward 2014-2019: Strengthening Indonesia Amidst a Changing World*. Jakarta, rumahbuku (for the Indonesian State Intelligence Agency) 2014 pp. 317-318
 27. Ibid. p. 5. Statement by Wassalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb. Chief of State Intelligence Agency and Marciano Norman, Lieutenant General (retired) of Indonesian National Army in: *Toward 2014-2019: Strengthening Indonesia Amidst a Changing World*. Jakarta, rumahbuku (Indonesian State intelligence Agency) 2014.
 28. Alexis Dudden, "The Shape of Japan to Come," *The New York Times*, January 16, 2014 at http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/17/opinion/the-shape-of-japan-to-come.html?_r=0 (Accessed on November 13, 2015).
 29. Ellen Barry, "Modi and Obama, hugging for India's security," *The New York Times*, January 27, 2015 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/28/world/asia/modi-and-obama-hugging-for-indias-security.html> (Accessed on November 13, 2015).
 30. Vijay Sakhua, "Indian Ocean: Why India seeks demilitarization," Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, Article No. #4779, 15 December 2014: http://www.ipcs.org/print_article-details.php?recNo=4807 (Accessed on October 07, 2015).

31. Such possibilities were raised at the November 17-19, 2014 international symposium on "The Blue Economy and the Challenge of Maritime Security for South and Southern Africa: South Africa's leadership dilemmas in promoting a global south dialogue on governance in the Indian and South Atlantic oceans" jointly convened by the Institute for Global Dialogue associated with the University of South Africa and the Policy Research and Analysis Unit (PRAU) of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation.
32. Alexis Dudden, op.cit. Cites how, under UNCLOS, Japan and China had agreed to jointly explore four gas fields in the East China Sea in a project that was scuttled "after China went at it alone" whereas "Mr. Abe's maximalist policy only undermines the prospects that this development project could be revived, or that new ones involving Japan might be struck."
33. This is in line with the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) initiative discussed as a 'win-win' at the NMF-RIIO meeting and mention in the NMF report. It also addresses the issue of northeast India raised in the following articles: Namrata Goswami, "Northeast India needs a Yoda," *Asia Times Online*, December 11, 2014 at http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/SOU-01-111214.html (Accessed on October 07, 2015) and by the same author in an IDSA commentary: "China's Second Coast: Implications for Northeast India," June 19, 2014 at http://www.idsia.in/idsacomments/ChinasSecondCoast_ngoswami_1906143af9.html (Accessed on October 07, 2015) and Rajiv Dogra "To look East, India must transform its Northeast first," DNA, June 19, 2013: <http://www.dnaindia.com/analysis/column-to-look-east-india-must-transform-its-nort...> (Accessed on October 07, 2015).
34. See Brian Cloughley, "British Empire's symbolic return," *Asia Times Online*, January 9, 2015 at http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/MID-01-090115.html (Accessed on October 07, 2015). Also M.K. Bhadrakumar "Britain returns to east of Suez," *Indian Punchline*, December 7, 2014 at <http://blogs.rediff.com/mkbhadrakumar/2014/12/07/britain-returns-to-the-east-of-suez/> (Accessed on October 07, 2015).
35. See: M.K. Bhadrakumar, "A picture we've seen before," *Indian Punchline*, December 2, 2014, reproduced from *India Abroad* magazine on the 18th SAARC summit, 26-27, 2014.
36. M.K. Bhadrakumar, "India should read Afghan tea leaves," *Indian Punchline*, December 9, 2014 at <http://blogs.rediff.com/mkbhadrakumar/2014/12/09/india-should-read-afghan-tea-leaves/> (Accessed on October 07, 2015).
37. See Zbigniew Brzezinski "An Agenda for NATO," *Foreign Affairs*, Sept./Oct. 2009, pp. 2-21, especially the section, 'Reaching Out to Asia,' where it is envisioned that "Turkey, given that it is a NATO member and has a special interest in Central Asia, could perhaps play a key role in exploring a cooperative arrangement between NATO and the SCO." Brzezinski also advocates a NATO-Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) outreach which has also been raised by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.
38. See Martin Walker "Indian Ocean Nexus," *Wilson Quarterly*, Spring 2008, pp. 21-28 and Robert Kaplan "The Indian Ocean World Order," April 10, 2014 at http://www.realclearworld.com/articles/2014/04/10/the_indian-ocean_world-order.html (Accessed on October 07, 2015).
39. Nandan Unnikrishnan, Samir Saran, Uma Purushothaman, *A Roadmap for RIC*, New Delhi, Observer Research Foundation, February 2014. ORF Policy Perspective.

CYBER, SPACE, BIOLOGICAL,
CHEMICAL AND NUCLEAR
SECURITY IN ASIA

19

Cybersecurity, Global Governance and New Risk

Sean S. Costigan

With each advancing year, more novel information technology is brought online, simultaneously advancing societal capabilities and dependence on new and legacy systems in areas as diverse as healthcare, finance, entertainment, defense and critical infrastructure. Despite seemingly unceasing news of cyber-attacks and various exploits that appear to strike into the nervous system of modern society, many in the private sector continue their long pattern of outsourcing information technology risk, since—it is thought—building technology with security first in mind may make it harder to bring to market or less profitable.

Yet, it is not only new information technology that is laden with obscure troubles. By now it should be apparent to anyone reading the news that legacy computer systems on which global communications depend have fundamental weaknesses waiting to be discovered by hackers, whether of the ethical variety or not. Consider, for example, the “Heartbleed” and “Shellshock” vulnerabilities that just recently came to light, both of which exposed decades old problems that could still have very serious results on critical networks.¹

Today there is a constant dynamic at play of researchers finding vulnerabilities and acting to plug them or criminals exploiting them best exemplified in so-called zero-day attacks. To put this in cybersecurity terms, the *attack surface* of our information-technology dominated society is vastly expanding and the gains in security—particularly of the technical variety—are too few to cover us. The reasons for this situation are varied and will be explored in this chapter.

Laws and Control

Cyberspace poses significant challenges to states for several reasons, notably: its development moves at a rapid pace (Moore’s Law); there are few international

regulations; it ignores borders; and it does not recognize a difference between public and private spheres. At the commercial level, where the speed of change is understood and most of the critical infrastructure and research and development resides, there are clear reasons for not wanting to address cyber risk: admitting to risk may be akin to accepting legal responsibility and shareholders and customers may not be keen on your wares. The outsourcing of risk has become the norm.

Additionally, at the legal level, both domestic and international laws across the globe simply are not set to deal with today's rapid technological change. This should come as no surprise, since the law is often reactive. At the national level, even for those countries that are updating their laws, the best that could be said is that they are in a state of flux and playing catch-up with change. In the U.S. laws written in the 1980s are being used to deal with novel and massive crimes, often to throw the book at diverse actors such as hacktivists and cybercriminals alike in one broad stroke.² While such generic or broad-based laws as the United States' Computer Fraud and Abuse Act (CFAA) of 1986 may occasionally assist with apprehension and prosecution of criminals, such laws also imperil the ability of ethical hackers to do their work on behalf of society. A review of the updated proposal³ to the CFAA suggests that even ethical, so called "White Hat" hackers would come under its purview and run the risk of potentially decade-long prison sentences for finding security vulnerabilities.⁴

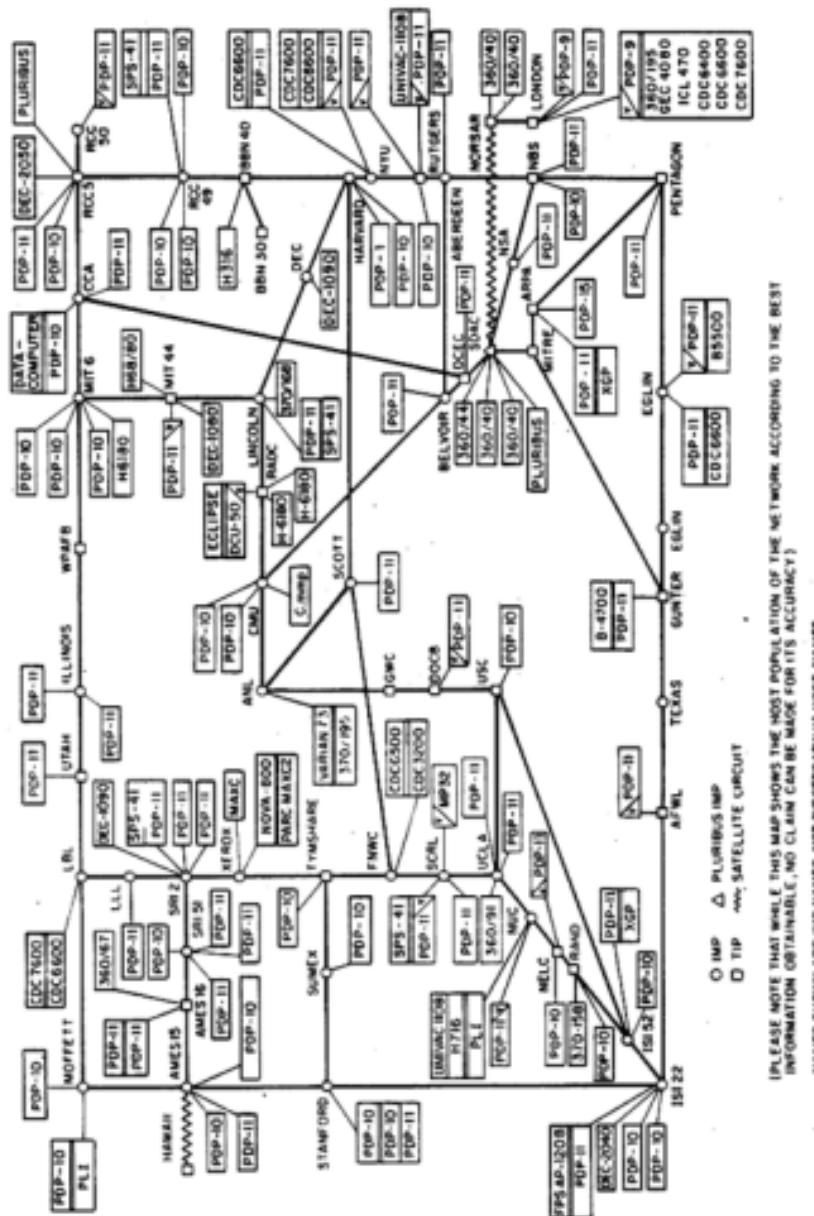
Internationally the situation is markedly worse, though in some regions halting progress is being made. At the geopolitical level, many countries hide behind difficulties in attribution (who is doing what in cyberspace) to help accelerate their economies through espionage or seek to use proxies to conduct attacks based on nebulous foreign policy objectives. Still other countries do not have the capacity or desire to police their own people. So criminality continues essentially unabated and security flaws continue to crop up, while new technologies are rolled out and outdated or inadequate laws are applied.

Yesterday's Thinking and Today's Problems

Beyond concerns about law and governance, there are considerable cognitive and path-dependency-related obstacles to surmount if cyberspace is ever to be more secure. In terms of the rapid technological shifts of the last couple decades—the advent of the Information Age—one might reasonably wonder how so many new security risks could be allowed to proliferate. The unsatisfying answer is that in many cases the original design was never built with security in mind. Consider that the Internet, as Alexander Green put it "was originally intended for a few thousand researchers, not billions of users who don't know or trust each other. So, the designers placed a higher premium on ease of use and

Figure 1: Arpanet 1977⁶

ARPANET LOGICAL MAP, MARCH 1977



decentralization over privacy and security.”⁵ The designers simply did not foresee that the Internet would ultimately be used for commercial and military purposes, or become a haven for criminality.

While these concerns are a higher priority for companies now, there is a perpetual tradeoff between gaining users, dollars and data and locking down the technology and user data. Unsettling news such as corporate or celebrity hacks may temporarily increase vigilance in some cases, but there also appears to be a sense in some quarters that individual action to improve security is becoming a hopeless cause. Even Bruce Schneier, among the most noted computer security experts, has said “Security is out of your control.”⁷ For certain, private corporations and the public continue to regularly compound problems by allowing and making considerable security tradeoffs for convenience.

At a macro-perspective, the threats amassed against modern, IT-dependent society are an admixture of hacking, terrorism, espionage and cyberwar. Consider these data points:

- In 2011, the Kroll annual Global Fraud reported that the preceding year marked a milestone as it was *the first time ever that the cost of electronic theft topped that of physical theft*.⁸
- In Snowden’s wake, there has been a renewed focus on the efforts of intelligence agencies in cyberspace. Under that cover, many countries are thought to be exploiting loopholes and taking advantage of grey areas for *industrial espionage* while claiming that the U.S. does the same.
- North Korea, Iran, China and Russia are among countries that have cyber military units that many experts suspect are moving into offensive disruption and destruction. This short list is being augmented with countries some might think less likely to be interested in offensive cyberwar, such as Denmark⁹ and others that still might surprise, such as Australia¹⁰, Japan and Israel.¹¹ Not to neglect the United States.¹²
- Politically oriented hacking groups like Anonymous continue to operate, despite significant law enforcement activities against them.¹³
- Criminals are more prolific than ever, getting away with bigger heists, some of long duration—as in the Target and JP Morgan cases¹⁴.

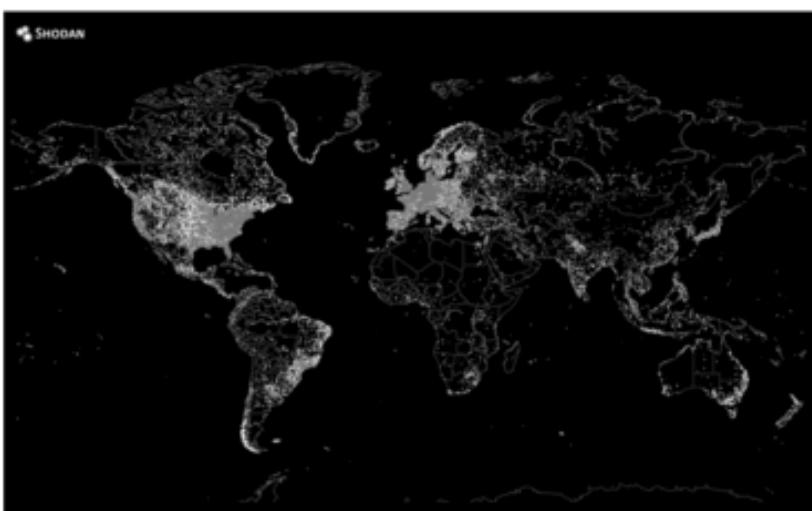
With cybersecurity measures being essentially tacked onto now critical infrastructure and risks proliferating, it is no wonder that the idea of a new, more secure, attribution-enabled, Internet keeps cropping up in policy circles. In February 2010, former head of the National Security Agency and Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell wrote, “we need to reengineer the Internet to make attribution, geolocation, intelligence analysis and impact assessment—who did it, from where, why and what was the result—more manageable.”¹⁶ A National Academy of Sciences report concluded that the attribution challenges

are not primarily technical or engineering concerns: “[T]he most important barrier to deterrence today is not poor technical tools for attribution but issues that arise due to cross-jurisdictional attacks, especially multi-stage attacks. In other words, deterrence must be achieved through the governmental tools of state, and not by engineering design.”¹⁷

Figure 2: Map of the Internet in 2005¹⁵



Figure 3: Map of all devices connected to the Internet in 2014¹⁸



Emerging Challenges: Merging the Virtual and the Physical Worlds

Today's technologies appear to move at speeds beyond human evolution. In his "What Technology Wants" Kevin Kelly refers to what he sees as this globally interconnected, rapidly evolving technological development as the "Technium," which some have criticized as neo-mysticism.¹⁹ Others, most popularly Raymond Kurzweil, have suggested that accelerating change—or what, in his essay by the same name, he has called the Law of Accelerating Returns²⁰—will lead to ever more rapid and disruptive technological change. Regardless of one's preferred framework or point of view, into today's unstable and dynamic cyber mix more disruptive and largely unanticipated change is surely coming. One such technology—or grouping of technologies—stands out against the backdrop of rapid change: the Internet of Things, which promises to bring about a merger of the virtual and physical.

The Internet of Things (or IoT) refers to uniquely identifiable physical objects and virtual representations in a network.²¹ Sometimes the IoT is described as a "thingaverse." Importantly the Internet of Things is not people talking to people or people talking to things, but *things* communicating with *things*. (Some argue that people—through their always-on and ubiquitous smart devices—are among the first real mobile nodes for the IoT, as their devices constantly update other devices about location, speed, etc.) At a conceptual level, the IoT is networked, automated, machine-to-machine awareness for processes such as data collection, remote monitoring, decision-making and taking.

The IoT is not a new concept, but rather one with a relatively long history in information technology circles that is now being enabled by numerous IT advances. As with many technological and scientific innovations, there are several people who can rightly claim to have a stake in its creation. Individually in 1999 Bill Joy of Sun and Kevin Ashton of the Auto-ID Center at MIT proposed ideas that would become the Internet of Things, though the phrase itself is attributed to Kevin Ashton. At the domestic household end of the spectrum the IoT initially was a solution looking for a problem—people had been looking to figure out how best to run their households with computers since the advent of the home computer industry. Today the Internet of Things is a term that encompasses many new Internet-connected everyday objects in daily life, including household objects, even our cars, and many more industrial-scale processes. Another, more generic term of art Machine-to-Machine (M2M) is sometimes also used interchangeably.

How Will the IoT Work?

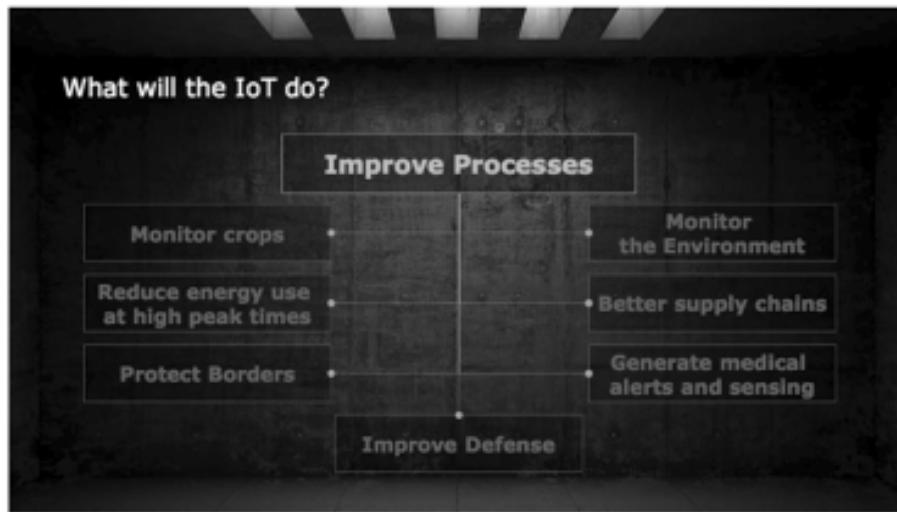
Broadly, it's thought that the Internet of Things will make things smarter by connecting devices and improving processes. This will be brought about through a variation on Metcalf's Law that states that the "value of a telecommunications

network is proportional to the square of the number of connected users of the system.” Likewise with the IoT the idea is that increased connectedness will also result in increased value and usefulness.

With the IoT, technological convergence and a variety of force multipliers are all coming into play. These include short-range communications technologies such as RFID²², NFC²³, Bluetooth and WiFi, sensors, awareness algorithms, cloud storage and computing, big data and analytics, among other technologies. MEMS (microelectromechanical systems) are crucial for the IoT to have the ability to collect and act on data²⁴. According to a recent McKinsey study there has been 80-90% reduction in prices for MEMS and sensors over the past five years.²⁵

The IoT also depends on unique object IDs and so would be dashed without a new Internet Protocol to deal with the problem of Internet address exhaustion. Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6)—the latest revision of the communications protocol that provides an address system for computers on networks and routes traffic across the Internet—was developed by the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). Given IPv6's address space size it will be effectively impossible for it to ever reach its limitations.

Figure 4: What will the Internet of Things do?



Source: Author.

In less than a decade estimates of the economic value of M2M and the IoT have moved from billion to trillions of dollars. In 2004, *Business Week* predicted that M2M would be a \$180 billion market by 2008. Two recent estimates may help induce perspective: General Electric estimates that the IoT will add \$15 trillion to global GDP over next 20 years.²⁶ McKinsey's Global Institute May 2013 report suggests an economic impact of \$2.7 trillion to \$6.2 trillion annually by

2025—mainly in health care, infrastructure, and public sector services.²⁷ Likewise, CISCO recently estimated that 50 billion to 1 trillion things will be connected to the IoT across industries such as manufacturing, healthcare and mining in ten years.

So, the IoT has strong forward momentum from leading companies, significant financial projections and investments and various novel technologies working in its favor. What it doesn't have—and likely will not bring about without significant government and private sector partnership—is a forward-thinking set of protocols for security that broadly encompasses known and future risk.

Risks and Security Concerns Proliferate

At present, it generally falls on government to consider cyber risks and fend off colossal disasters. Public-private partnerships are certainly crucial, given that so much critical infrastructure is in private hands. Commonly, however, few outside of cybersecurity fields want to seriously consider technological risks, particularly since considering such risks is often thought of as anti-progressive or pro-regulatory. But, as the examples above have shown, society currently faces daunting challenges because too few people considered risks.

Cybersecurity concerns have now been featured at the highest political levels, to include in the United States most recently President Obama's 2015 State of the Union speech:

No foreign nation, no hacker, should be able to shut down our networks, steal our trade secrets or invade the privacy of American families, especially our kids. If we don't act, we'll leave our nation and our economy vulnerable," he continued. "If we do, we can continue to protect the technologies that have unleashed untold opportunities for people around the globe.²⁸

So, there appears to be increasing recognition at least at the political level that the current Internet of People is massively troubled by security concerns and that something must be done. But are such risks taken seriously by those in intelligence and investigatory institutions?

Overcoming Bias in the Security Professions

Despite the trends detailed above that indicate the physical and virtual worlds are merging, many in the security professions remain in denial about cyber risk and cyberterrorism in particular. Their critiques typically fall into three main groups, each of which has the benefit of appearing to be based in sound reasoning, however the rationales for each are fatally flawed.

The first—the (lack of) Expertise Fallacy—is based on outdated knowledge and is typically articulated in defense circles by those with markedly limited technical understanding. The facts are these:

- Sufficient technical knowledge for physically damaging and terrorizing attacks can be rented—the criminal underworld is awash in reasonably skilled for-hire hackers.²⁹
- Custom malware can be purchased on the open market and Dark Web.³⁰
- Free courses in hacking are available to anyone with an Internet connection.
- Entire gratis hacking suites are available for download, and technical support is never more than a forum away.³¹
- Information technology has grown in power, security often remains a poorly executed afterthought, and technical complexity for exploits has been reduced.
- Younger, more tech savvy terrorists and hacktivists are coming of age at a time of substantially increased societal connectedness and vulnerability.
- States are actively engaged in weaponizing code and are all too willing to hide behind the challenges of attribution—many will be apt to share code with proxies in furtherance of their objectives, just as states continue to support terrorism in the “physical” realm.³²

The second critique, a sort of “Nothing to See Here” position, rests on the suspect notion that terrorists aren’t quick to change and will just keep using cyberspace for intelligence, communication, recruitment, fundraising and movement of monies, as they did for the attacks of 2001 in the U.S. and 2008 in India. Yet, adding the delivery of weaponized code to the terrorist arsenal does not alter terrorists’ continuing use of the Internet for other purposes. Reduced technical complexity, lowered costs and most importantly the continued push to connect the virtual and the physical—think of the growth of the Internet of Things or Machine-to-Machine connectivity—is making for new, enticing physical targets worldwide.

For those who doubt that the physical and virtual worlds are merging, evidence is mounting to the contrary. Last month Reuters reported that computers at South Korea’s nuclear power operator had been compromised.³³ Korean officials were quick to assert that there is no chance of a direct hack against the reactor’s control systems since they are air-gapped (think of that as not connected to an outside network) but stealing “non-critical” data has been shown to enable deeper penetration of systems in the past, whether through social engineering or the generation of intelligence about specific technical systems. This is the dynamic: steal a little here, come back to do harm later. Such was the case, as reported by the BBC, in a recent attack on a steel works in Germany purportedly caused catastrophic damage to a blast furnace.³⁴ These attacks are indicative of an unsettling trend, as there is now little difference between the physical and the virtual. Cyber-attacks will run the gamut from loud and obvious to the more abstract, relying on stealth and a chain of events to extract maximum damage.

Finally, the ‘Doubting Thomas’ view is a regular contender for most often heard critique of anything in the security realm that might be considered new. The challenge here is one of sussing out what is likely from unlikely, the perceived unknown from the possibly unknowable, and clearly evident biases from requisite openness to the new. It is crucial to have critical, but not dismissive, voices in emerging security challenges. History teaches skepticism, but it also shows how vulnerable humans are to cognitive bias, and how this substantial limitation often precedes disaster.³⁵

In 2007 I noted that while cyberterrorism of the sort that causes major damage or death through computer attacks has apparently not yet materialized, terrorists had clearly taken advantage of the strengths of the Internet and Web to gather intelligence, communicate, plan, recruit, fundraise, and—as in the case of beheading videos—frighten. And whereas just a few short years ago it seemed that terrorists would remain unlikely to engage in cyber-attacks—due in part to the complexity involved in creating software—times have changed.

Those responsible for security should now know that objects under computer control or accessible via the Internet can be hacked, and that those hacks expose new risks. Hackers, whatever their motivation, can get into corporations and governments, households, cars³⁶, and small businesses, in effect anything “smart” and connected is a target. On the IoT’s home front, we have already seen hackers accessing poorly secured baby cameras³⁷, refrigerators³⁸ and even lights and thermostats³⁹. Given these realities, targeted digital hijacking and espionage is apt to be a growth business for criminals and unscrupulous governments. As ever, greater risks will be seen in some areas as more devices are connected to the Internet, especially critical infrastructures and services. Hacking with criminal intention will increase, as there will be more interesting targets everywhere and the ability to monetize hacks is apt to remain the same.

The more things we see connected in this space, the more likely the sheer concentration of value will attract cyberterrorists, too. Swarming attacks, of the sort that the FBI has been concerned about for years, may be among the most devastating threats. In such a scenario, a physical terrorist attack and a virtual attack would take place simultaneously to kill people and, say, bring down the public emergency response networks at just the time when they are most needed or disabling a city’s street lights, which is apparently and unfortunately quite easy to execute.⁴⁰ Eugene Kaspersky, the co-founder and chief executive of global IT security firm Kaspersky Labs recently told CNBC: “It’s not easy to predict what will happen, but the worst terrorist attacks are not expected. So I am afraid that if we face this cyberterrorism, it will be very unpredictable in a very unpredictable place, but with very visible damage. Unfortunately, there are many possible victims.”⁴¹

Short of terrorism, merging the physical and virtual worlds will create ugly failures that play out in the real world. To make matters worse, when connected smart objects go bad, retry and restart functions of the sort that one might try on their personal computer may be difficult or perhaps even impossible to implement in a networked environment. By comparison, the Flash Crash of 2010 that affected stock markets could be corrected, but how about when the impact is on actual a multitude of things in the physical universe? And what would a “reset” button actually do?

Whatever the scenario, it is crucial to grasp the likelihood that countries are going to experience real cyberterrorism of the sort that kills and frightens people, not simply virtual defacement of websites or downed banking systems or media companies that cannot deliver their wares. Such attacks are likely to come about through the increased reliance on cyber as a tool of state power, the continued ability to obfuscate in cyberspace, and the use of terrorist groups as proxies. Globally, we need to contend with a massively changed risk landscape.

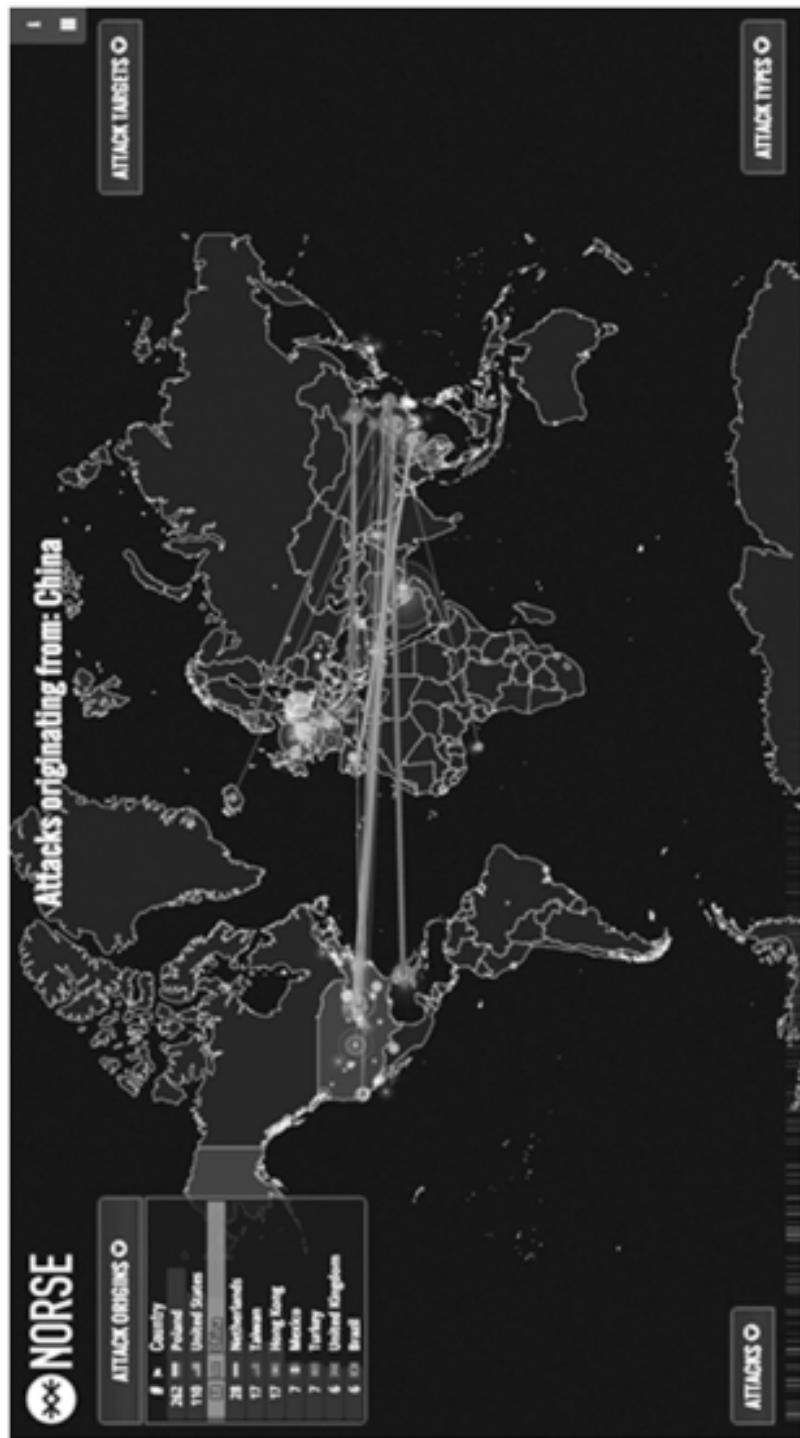
Regional Risks and Global Developments

Tip O’Neill, the former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, famously quipped that “All politics is local.” For cyberspace, however, nothing is simply local. All cyberpolitics are global. A change to one country’s laws or some technological development in another is likely to have an effect elsewhere in the system.

To that end, efforts to control Internet governance have been ongoing since the advent of the Internet.⁴² At the governance level, in 2011 Russia, China, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan put forward a proposal called the International Code of Conduct on Information Security, which, according to the Chinese Ambassador for Disarmament Affairs, was “a view to launching an open and transparent process for developing, within the framework of the UN, international norms and rules for information and cyberspace security, which, we hope, will prompt countries to act responsibly and constructively in information and cyberspace and address concerns of all parties in a balanced way.”⁴³

Unsurprisingly, from Western countries there was little interest in the proposal, as it was seen largely as an attempt by the proposing governments to control content and the flow of information to their peoples. The focus is on “information security” not on cybersecurity as understood by the West. Information—it is argued—is seen by these governments as a threat to their legitimacy and power.⁴⁴ Recently, an updated version of the same International Code of Conduct has been circulating at the United Nations, taking into account a purported post-Snowden shift in perceptions.⁴⁵ This updated International Code of Conduct continues to assert that “information security” is the preferred term of art, while

Figure 5: China is always in the cyber news—and for good reason.⁴⁸



it scrupulously avoids discussion of cybersecurity. Territorial concerns and regional power relations are certainly important, but there has to be a recognition that cyberspace is both global and local. Such top-down governance efforts will do little to stem the fundamental security vulnerabilities described in this chapter unless they address espionage, law enforcement and international cooperation on cybercrime.

In the wake of the Snowden scandal,⁴⁶ China has pressed for advantages against U.S. technology companies, most recently laying down new requirements that technology companies must share code and use Chinese encryption algorithms—essentially creating backdoors to foreign technology.⁴⁷ On the face of it, such requirements might seem like a logical response, but these moves also assist China to gain ground and accelerate its technology economy.

China is also pressing for the United States to stop publicly noting when Chinese state-backed hackers strike against the U.S. government or U.S. companies.⁴⁹ China often takes the brunt of allegations for cyber espionage and hacking, however Russia is also known to be the source of considerable attacks and exploits, but is largely ignored in the news. The rationale for this apparently odd bias in reporting, as suggested by Gartner, is as follows:

It is fairly well known by most security professionals that the best hackers on the planet often originate from Russia, however it is more newsworthy to talk about a country such as China whom we trust with many of our manufacturing facilities and research and development activities and have greater resources at their disposal if they intended to inflict harm.⁵⁰

Additionally, as the cases of Georgia and Estonia showed⁵¹, Russia is willing to use the tools and attributions challenges of cyberspace to get its way, either directly or through proxies, regardless of whether there is kinetic warfare or not.⁵²

No matter where the point of origin for attacks, there is a very real risk of escalation in cyberspace, as a recent Center for Security Policy report points out it is difficult to determine symmetry in cyber warfare⁵³. Consider this statement:

What will the U.S. do if a country like North Korea attacks NASDAQ or shuts down the New York Stock Exchange? The U.S. cannot shut down the North Korean stock exchange—such an entity doesn't exist. Will the U.S. drop a bomb that takes human lives because financial damage cannot be inflicted? Where is the line that other nation states recognize they must not cross or risk retaliation? Where is the policy that defines what that retaliation will comprise?⁵⁴

States that intend to continue using the attribution challenge to conduct operations against other countries are also further weaponizing cyberspace. Code used in one place may find its way into the hands of others outside of the original operation, and may boomerang. So there are risks beyond being accused or found out.

Of late, India has made considerable cyber policy strides, most notably the National Cyber Security Policy of India 2013. Many critics have noted that India had no cyber policy prior to 2013, however a survey of the policy literature shows that the single most common critique is that the 2013 policy has not yet come into real effect. Last year the Government of India Department of Electronics and Information Technology made a policy announcement⁵⁵ for the IoT, which focuses on following objectives:

1. To create an IoT industry in India of US\$ 15 billion by 2020. It has been assumed that India would have a share of 5-6 per cent of global IoT industry.
2. To undertake capacity development (Human & Technology) for IoT specific skill-sets for domestic and international markets.
3. To undertake Research & development for all the assisting technologies.
4. To develop IoT products specific to Indian needs in all possible domains.

Others contend that India remains behind the curve on cybersecurity⁵⁶ and suffers from a vast shortage of skilled cybersecurity expertise.⁵⁷ But there is momentum. As of 2014, India had four agencies to deal with cybersecurity. India and Israel have also signaled willingness to cooperate on cybersecurity matters.⁵⁸ Additionally, in 2010, the United States and India signed a Counter Terrorism Cooperation Initiative to provide cyber security and critical infrastructural protection that was strengthened most recently through the Obama-Modi Defence Framework Agreement.⁵⁹ Additionally, the Unites States and India have held four productive “Cyber Dialogues” that have detailed substantive ways the two countries can work together on cybersecurity.⁶⁰

The Role of Government

Clearly, modern and global IT-dependent society needs a massive thinking upgrade to help understand risk, plan for the future and keep harm to a minimum while continuing to enjoy the remarkable benefits of information technologies. When corporations are reckless with security, it's often not till much later that society finds out about the risks that were run. As William Jackson of *Government Computer News* noted “industry and private sector companies have a vested interest in maintaining adequate security and that regulation should be kept at a minimum. But companies have always had that interest, and to date it has not translated into adequate security.”⁶¹

Certainly, the current global computing and cybersecurity predicament is a far cry from an idealized and desired state of computing articulated by Mark Weiser and John Seely Brown's as their concept of Calm Technology: “*that which informs but doesn't demand our focus or attention.*” However distant that such a

goal seems now, the concept may be an excellent way to plan for a more secure world with the principles of Calm Technology in mind:

The purpose of a computer is to help you do something else.

The best computer is a quiet, invisible servant.

The more you can do by intuition the smarter you are; the computer should extend your *unconscious*.

Technology should create calm.⁶²

Executing on such a plan would require government leadership and willingness to change and compromise across the board. While this might seem a tall order for government, the alternative appears to be tacitly accepting worsening security for all. Enlightened government has a responsibility to help create calm.

The realities of sovereignty in a globalized world and the concomitant challenges of cyberspace will not easily abate. For government the tasks of keeping up with technological change and risk are squarely on thinly stretched forces and too often there has been a willingness to accept corporate decisions and leadership in lieu of government oversight. In turn, corporations have also come to count on remediation and protection services from government, as when Google sought help from the NSA.⁶³ What we are left with is the knowledge that government and industry must redouble their efforts to understand risks, improve services and monitor technologies, and that in particular with the IoT, standards and controls must be well understood to limit unintended consequences. Pursuing such an agenda would best be achieved by working internationally with other governments and with multinational corporations and NGOs, as each have a stake. Dealing with these persistent, international threats and novel risks means having to cooperatively create and enforce standards, advance new laws, and pursue negligence and criminality across borders.

Education may help bridge the technical-policy divide. To address the mounting skills gap that is evident between government and cybercriminals, and the wider legal and governance issues that continue to bedevil cyberspace, a new cadre of technologically savvy analysts is needed to press the case for deeper understanding of today's challenges and tomorrow's looming surprises. This cadre should not be made up of primarily technical people, but rather should be representative of a mix of disciplines to help keep minds open to the possibilities of strategic surprise and to help alert those in power in government and in the corporate boardroom. The sooner we work together to overcome biases, outdated thinking and misguided conservatism, the better apt we will be to plan for what is probable and prepare for resilience.

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20

A Perspective on Space Security

Ranjana Kaul

Outer Space and cyber space systems have been critical in enabling modern warfare, including—for strike precision, navigation, communication, information gathering. Undoubtedly, outer space-cyberspace is the new, combined military high-ground of the 21st century. Both are vigorous arenas for international competition, the outcomes of which will affect the global distribution of power. It is no coincidence that aspiring powers are building space programmes at the same time that they are building advanced cyber programmes. Space and cyberspace both break the historical constraint of domination through control of physical territory. Therefore, while there is a general common interest to work cooperatively in peace, inevitably there has been a militarization in both domains.

Admittedly, dominance in outer space and the mastery of cyber space are the acknowledged primary tools in the quest for global economic power. Specifically, in context to outer space, every country around the world, without exception, understands the seminal importance of the safe, secure and sustainable access to, and use of outer space, its natural resources, including the celestial bodies and the Moon. This understanding of the outer space environment, also necessarily includes the freedom from space-based threats, the physical and operational integrity of manmade objects in space and their ground stations, as well as security on Earth from threats originating in space.

On this global canvass, foremost among the seven continents is Asia, host to four major space powers: Russia, India, Japan and China; several regional space powers including South Korea, Israel, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Australia, Iran, and North Korea and others with space programmes.

This chapter explore the concept of a ‘common Asian Space Code’ based on seeming points of convergence and divergence among the Asian space powers. In

this overall context, the focus will remain on India's approach on ensuring continued access and use of outer space, within the framework of the international space law regime, as much as the ability to leverage its indigenous capability to strengthen national and regional security within geopolitical constraints.

A discussion on the possibility of a Common Code for Space Activities for Asia, as a means to enhance Asian Security, necessarily brings to mind the European Union Draft Code of Conduct for Space Activities, June 2008 circulated off CD (Conference on Disarmament).¹ EU Code was clearly in response to the Draft Treaty on the Prevention of Deployment of Weapons in Outer Space and of the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects² (PPWT) introduced in the Conference on Disarmament in February 2008 by Russia and China together with Indonesia, Vietnam, Syria, Belarus and Zimbabwe. It is important to note that five of the seven sponsors were Asian. The PPWT was introduced a few days after the US conducted an ASAT, from a sea platform, to intentionally destroy its US193 spy satellite, essentially a show of strength, a reaction to the 11th January 2007, ground based, direct ascent anti-satellite test by China to intentionally destroy its inactive weather satellite FY-C1 by a 894 km. above the Earth.

It is indisputable that the approach and discourse on global and regional security underwent metamorphosis consequent to the cathartic 2007 Chinese ASAT. Geopolitical compulsions, if any, notwithstanding, by conducting the ASAT to destroy its weather satellite, as a country which has signed and ratified the Outer Space Treaty, 1967 (OST, 1967), China intentionally introduced over 3000+ pieces of debris of over 10 cm length, across the Low Earth Orbit (LEO) between 300-2000km in the Polar orbit, usually preferred for weather satellites, without due consideration of the interest of other states and without prior seeking consultation disregarding the requirement under provisions of Article IX of the Outer Space Treaty 1967³. The sharp increase in space debris could impugn peaceful and sustainable use of space by other countries, at any given moment.

Consequently, 'security' as set forth in the EU Code was firmly fixed on the prevention of use of 'aggressive' ground to space interception capabilities by countries. While the attempt was legitimate, it must be viewed in context to the fact that overall space capability is being increasingly integrated into national security architecture by countries across the globe. Viewed from the prism of the EU Code, the Russia/China PPWT, referenced to PAROS, is firmly focused on the prevention of deployment of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against space objects. Thus, with hindsight, it would appear that The EU Code and PPWT are two sides of the same coin.

The PPWT is premised on paragraph I, Article IV of the OST, 1967 which states, *inter alia*, that (State Parties) "Undertake not to place in orbit around the Earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of

mass destruction, install such weapons on bodies, or station such weapons in outer space in any other manner”⁴. It is noteworthy that unlike the OST 1967, the PPWT does not restrict itself to “nuclear weapons” and “any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction”. The PPWT formulation of “space weapon” is all encompassing and subject to the UN Charter, specifically Article 51 exception. If accepted, PPWT will be a legally binding treaty. US opposition to PPWT includes (i) absence of a verification mechanism; and (ii) excludes ground based capabilities that can target space assets. The US believes that the OST, 1967 provides an adequate legal regime, and that PPWT does not contain anything significant that calls for a binding legal regime.

In the first instance, the EU Code was designed as a legally binding multilateral arrangement to prevent countries from creating ‘new’ debris’ by means of an intrusive disclosures mechanism, supported by detailed justifications requirement regarding a proposed space launch, far beyond the contemplation of the Registration Convention, 1974⁵. In fact, the first version of the EU Code did not provide a caveat for circumstances involving national exigencies (i.e. Article 51 UN Charter) and was subjected to sharp criticism from the UK. The EU effort to gain US support for the Code found itself confronted with US approach to national security and its national space policy which clearly rejected any idea that may impugn or compromise in any manner whatsoever, US freedom to defend itself and its allies. As such, the EU Code was morphed into the International Code of Conduct for Space (ICoC), a voluntary set of best practices for countries to follow in *good faith*.

We will recall that the organising legal principle of outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, is the prohibition of ‘*national appropriation through claims of sovereignty, by means of use, occupation or any other means*’ (Article II, OST, 1967). By that logic, even if Asian countries were to agree to and abide by an Asian Code in *good faith*, would non-Asian countries do likewise with ICoC? The answer is obviously negative. How and why, then, would Asian countries find any motivation to reconcile this essential dichotomy, particularly in respect of perceived non-Asian and/or Asian rivals? Would Asian space security be enhanced, in such circumstances?

Thus an idea of Code of Conduct for Space for Asia, as yet another set of voluntary best practices akin to ICoC, would be redundant and may not find favour with Asian countries. Admittedly, among the major Asian space powers, Russia and China have demonstrated ASAT capabilities; while India is, in the words of the outgoing Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) Chief Avinash Chander has “all the building blocks necessary for ASAT”. Nor can we assume that other Asian countries do not have similar plans to enhance their national security infrastructure. That being said, it is important to recognize

that it is the military use of outer space which has advanced development of new and innovative space technologies and applications, which are later introduced for civilian use. In the final analysis the conflict between international treaty obligations and supreme national interest, is and will remain eternal.

Amidst this ongoing whirlpool of global concern for space security, on December 02, 2014, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted Resolution 69/32 on '*no first placement of weapons in outer space*' (reiterating the provisions in paragraph 1 of Article IV Outer Space Treaty, 1967). Only four countries voted against the Resolution: Georgia, Ukraine, Israel, and the USA. Geopolitical conflicts and contradictions among Asian countries are well known, yet the recent development in the UN is instructive.

The Preamble to the Resolution 69/32 is important to note. It recalls Articles III (which links space activities to the UN Charter and international law) and IV OST, 1967; the effort of Russia and China to prevent weaponization of outer space through PPWT; the deadlock in CD over PAROS; and urging CD to urgently take up work to formulate a binding treaty. In this context, we will recall that the CD has been paralyzed chiefly on account of US opposition to the PAROS Resolution (Prevention of Arms Race in Outer Space). Having said that, we must also recognize that PPWT excludes, from its purview, ground based capability to intercept space assets, demonstrated by /under development in several Asian countries.

According to the Space Security Index 2014, the commonly accepted definition of space security is "The secure and sustainable access to and use of outer space, including the Moon and celestial bodies and the freedom from space based threats."⁶ From a national perspective, space security must also necessarily include the safety and security of national ground assets and supporting links relevant to national space assets, including electromagnetic spectrum. Furthermore there can be no doubt that 'space debris'; 'space situational awareness'; and 'active debris removal' mechanisms will remain centre stage in the years ahead, making the development of appropriate technology capability imperative.

Civil Space Cooperation and Economic Cooperation for Space Security

In this overall scenario, major space powers around the world have recognized the value of engagement in common civil space programmes: UN sponsored, regional, multilateral and bi-lateral, as an indirect, unobtrusive yet robust means of enhancing space security, through contribution in dealing with common challenges including poverty, climate change, disaster management, education and piracy. It is important to remember that although only eleven countries have space launch capability, over 60+ countries around the world access space. The

private enterprise in outer space and the exponential growth of the global space economy (estimated in 2013 at US\$ 230 bn.) and the global utilities driven by space enabled services cannot be discounted as a potential common platform also focused on advancing space security. A common vested interest in keeping space secure, for the safe operation of commercial and civil space assets, is a powerful tool. With this in mind, an overview of regional space cooperation programmes in Asia is pertinent given that the region hosts developed, developing and very poor countries. It is important to note that such engagements may be focused only on outer space or may be economic and trade forums. In sum, such engagements advance security in the region through interdependence.

Asian Countries with Space Programmes

The Emirates

The Emirates embarked on a National Space Program in 2009, investing in excess of US\$ 5.4 bn. for developing space technology and related infrastructure. In addition to developing indigenous space launch capability, UAE proposes an unmanned Mars Mission 2021

Led by Dubai to establish the Emirates Institution for Advanced Science & Technology (EISAT) to engage in strategic partnerships programmes with South Korea and Russia, UAE has developed specific capabilities including building satellites. UAE proposes to build a spaceport at Al Khaimah from which to launch its own satellites, tap into the global launch market and take advantage of the emerging space tourism sector. Abu Dhabi has been tasked to formulate a UAE national space law.

Gulf Coordination Council (GCC)

The GCC does not have a space cooperation programme, although it is engaged in UN Programme on Marine Scientific and Technological Capability that uses space technologies.

Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)

The first time that the ASEAN Regional Forum addressed 'space security' was by hosting the Space Security Workshop in June 2013⁷. The following proposition in a scholarly presentation is a telling commentary on the general perception mood on the way ahead for ASEAN: "The member states should develop indigenous space technology, reduce the reliance on the non-ASEAN space-faring nations, and carry out collaborative research, so as to eliminate the dependency on non-member states and put the space applications projects into practice as

anticipated by 2020.”⁸ The proposition is self explanatory and at the very least indicates the urge to be self reliant by developing indigenous space capability. That being said, ASEAN members, Thailand and Indonesia are members of the China led the Asia Pacific Space Cooperation Organisation (APSCO) while others are members of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF) led by Japan.

Major Space Powers

Russia

Russia is engaged in bilateral space cooperation with China, India, Japan and South Korea. In 2014 Russia and China established a joint high-level working group for strategic Russian-Chinese space cooperation projects (for) “tapping Russia’s transit potential, cooperation in navigation systems and joint projects in the aluminium industry.”⁹ Russia has also pledged to support the Chinese initiative for creating an Asia-Pacific Free Trade Zone within the framework of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) by 2025.

The recent Russia, China, India (RIC) alliance seeking as it does to support a greater role for emerging market countries’ in the global economy’s governance and the quickest reform of the International Monetary Fund; the proposed gas pipeline running from Russia through China to India and the Russian and Chinese support for India to become full member of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and APEC are important developments for all three countries, particularly to facilitate India into inclusive regional cooperation.

China

China has been the most proactive in forging multilateral space cooperation programmes around its sub-region, as much as bilateral and multilateral engagements. The Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organisation (APSCO), headquartered in Beijing is an inter-governmental organisation with full international legal status. APSCO has 14 members including Bangladesh, China, Iran, Mongolia, Pakistan, Thailand, Indonesia, Turkey and Peru. The organisation space science; technology applications; R&D; joint developments; industrialization aimed at peaceful use of outer space. In addition, APSCO is engaged in ten projects for designing; building and launching small multi-mission telecommunications, Earth Observation (EO) remote sensing; research satellites; disaster monitoring satellites of 500-600 kg.

The SCO is an additional important Eurasian political, economic and military organisation founded in 2001 by China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Belarus, Sri Lanka and Turkey are Dialogue Partners;

India, Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Mongolia are Observers; and ASEAN, CIS and Turkmenistan are Guests to SCO. In 2014 India applied for full membership of SCO and has the support of Russia and China.

China will leverage the Beidou Regional Navigation Satellite System (Beidou) which consists of a constellation of 30 dual use satellites expected to be fully deployed by 2020. China proposes to reserve 60 per cent of Beidou for commercial use to tap into the 400 bn. yuan market and also to provide completely open technology and services to its Asian neighbours.

40 per cent of Beidou will be reserved for military use to provide Chinese armed forces with an accurate, independent navigation system that provides vital technology for guiding missiles, warships and attack aircraft. Presently, 16 satellites have been successfully deployed, such that China no longer needs to depend on Global Positioning System (GPS) for its ground movement. Ground stations are being built in Pakistan to improve service in that country.

Sino-Indian relations entered a new phase in September 2014 when for the first time China and India entered into a Space Cooperation Pact which "...enables both sides to encourage exchange and cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, including research and development of scientific experiment satellites, remote sensing satellites and communications satellites".¹⁰ This engagement is an important and welcome step ahead.

Japan

Japan has lifted the self imposed ban on the use of outer space for national defence. The Japanese National Space Policy (referenced on the Basic Space Law, 2008) states, *inter alia*, that "policy on space development and utilization is to be addressed national strategy in relation to strategic priorities, such as industrial development, foreign affairs and national security, and science and technology..."¹¹

Early February Japan added to its existing fleet of reconnaissance satellites, under the classified Information Gathering Satellite program. Furthermore, Japan's four satellite constellation 'Quasi-Zenith' regional time transfer system and satellite based augmentation system for GPS, (space based augmentation navigation system) for civil aviation to be operational by 2017.

Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) have energetically promoted the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF). The Forum, unlike APSCO, is open to governmental bodies, non-governmental entities, and international organisations attracted 400 participants from 28 countries and 8 international organisations at its 2013 Annual Meeting. APRSAF has established 4 Working Groups: EO, communication satellite applications, space education and awareness, and space environment utilization, in addition to cooperation

projects on disaster management, space applications for environmental issues, climate change, utilization of the international space station, and education. India is a regular participant to APRSAF as is China.

India

Up until now, India appears to have confined its ‘space’ engagements to participation in the UNESCAP “Regional Space Application Programme for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific” [RESAP].¹² Recognizing the importance of reliable geo-referenced information and the importance of early warning systems based on the use of ICT, space technologies and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for addressing issues relating to sustainable development: disaster risk management; disaster management, the programme concentrates. The programme also supports capacity building required and has for that purpose set up regional centres, affiliated to United Nations Office of Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) with an International Board of Governors pursuant to UNGA Resolution 45/70, 11th December 1992 ‘to enhance space science and technology education in the developing countries’¹³. Related to the RESAP, India is host country for the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific (CSSTEAP), Dehradun, which is affiliated to the Andhra University. It provides educational and training opportunities for scientists and engineers from participating states in operating remote sensing and meteorology systems leading to post graduate, doctoral and post doctoral studies. Students come from across the Asia-Pacific including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Fiji, Indonesia, Iran, Republic of Korea, LAO PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

Furthermore, in context to climate change and disaster management, India proposes to make a concerted bid to win the coveted position as the global disaster forecasting hub at the September 2015 Meeting of Heads of Global Space Agencies, held under the auspices of the International Academy of Astronautics. India will leverage its national expertise in space sciences by ISRO and advancements by the Indian National Centre on Ocean Information Services, for the benefit of the international community.

Yet, India has remained insular, choosing not to engage in civil space cooperation partnerships under its leadership, either within the immediate sub-region or in the larger Asia-pacific region. It has kept itself restricted to enabling commercial satellite launches through the Antarix Corporation, the commercial arm of ISRO. The importance of space diplomacy, as an important tool for strengthening regional security remains an untapped potential. The creation of long term linkages through civil space cooperation programmes, allowing

participating countries part to become invested in combating/achieving common challenges/objectives impacts overall national security, of which space security is an inherent component.

The dramatic shift of gear in Kathmandu by Prime Minister Modi has directed focus, energy and drive to leverage India's considerable civil space capabilities. For the first time, India will take the lead to engage in civil space collaboration with SAARC member countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka). This is, in fact, equally applicable to SASEC (South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation) between Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Bhutan, overlapping, as it does, several SAARC members.

In overall context, therefore, the SAARC proposals for the (i) SAARC satellite; and (ii) increasing the footprint of Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System—IRNSS—from the present 1500 km and GAGAN (GPS Aided Geo Augmentation Satellite) are excellent. Hopefully, receivers certified compatible with IRNSS and GAGAN (for non-civil aviation use) will be 'made in India' thus setting nascent building blocks for a space economy in India.

The availability of IRNSS and GAGAN, will provide essential value addition to the SASEC proposed road links (Nepal-India-Bangladesh Corridor; Bhutan-India-Bangladesh Corridor; Imphal (India/Myanmar border—Nepal; and Manipur—Myanmar-ASEAN), as much as for the recently concluded Multimodal Connectivity Agreement (*Motor Vehicles Agreement & Regional Railway Agreement*) between India and several SAARC Members, following SAARC endorsement of Multilateral Agreements. Furthermore, increased footprint of IRNSS and GAGAN will enable India to engage with African countries along Indian Ocean Rim and further inland as well. To this list ought to be added improvement of the SAARC Disaster Management Centre, currently operating at 30 per cent of optimum observation network, additionally leverage CSSTEAP for capacity building to accelerate capacity and capability to manage climate change.

Most SAARC/SASEC members, albeit with low exposure to international space cooperation, and keen or interested in easier access to space technology and applications. Only four SAARC members India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan operate communications satellites, neither do SASEC Members (except India), although the INSAT satellites have their footprint over this region and signals are being used. India should show tele-education and tele-medicine modules could be adapted to assist in socio-economic development. Perhaps, also build and launch satellites, with arrangements for soft loans and the leasing excess transponder capacity.

Finally, India must engage in bilateral civil space cooperation with Japan, as it has done recently with China, in areas of common interest including building capacity and providing training in security and safety to significant population

dependent on the sea for livelihoods. The reach of the India-Japan space cooperation, together with Australia, could well extend to cover Asia and the Pacific, through to the Oceanic islands, to combat common challenges including safety of navigation, piracy, management of marine environment, managing climate change and disaster management. As India looks to position presence on the Asian stage, civil space cooperation provides a critical tool. India's approach should actively participate in regional trade, commerce and economic forums; take the lead to engage in civil space cooperation on all aspects of 'Space Sustainability'. This should include collaboration in information sharing on Space Situational Awareness; Active Debris Removal mechanisms; and Transparency and Confidence Building Measures. In the final analysis, everything that happens in outer space, starts and ends on the Earth.

NOTES

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21

Chemical and Biological Dimensions of Jihadi Terrorism

Animesh Roul

The threat of chemical and biological terrorism emanating from non-state actors, including the Islamic Jihadi organisations, which control large swathes of territories and resources, remains a major concern for nation states today. Historically, no organised terrorist groups have perpetrated violent attacks using biological or chemical agents so far. Over the years, the capability and intentions of Islamic jihadist groups have changed. They are evidently preferring for more destructive and spectacular methods. This can be very well argued that if these weapons systems, materials or technologies were made available to them, they probably would use it against their enemy to maximize the impact and fear factor. Even though no terrorist group, including the *Al Qaeda*, so far has achieved success in employing these destructive and disruptive weapons systems or materials, in reality, various terrorist groups have been seeking to acquire WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction/Disruption) materials and its know-how.

Much of the literature focused on these speculations and debates during the last decade have shed enough light on the unlikelihood or impossibility of chem-bio terrorism inflicted by Islam-centric Jihadist groups. The argument against the possibilities of such terrorism mostly centered on the premise that technological challenges would be a hindrance for Jihadist groups to weaponize the chem/bio materials (or pathogens) and deliver them to cause a catastrophic event. This is also somewhat substantiated by the lack of real terrorist events involving chemical or biological weapon materials. Besides events like 2001 Anthrax scare and the 1995 Japanese Subway attacks by Aum Shinrikyo cult, so far chemical or biological weapons have not played a major role in jihadi operations.

However, many Islamic ideologues and jihadists have accepted the use of

biological and chemical weapons as legitimate act of war for mass killings of non-believers. In 2003, Saudi cleric Nasir bin Hamd al-Fahd brought out a treatise on the legal status of using weapons for mass killings, especially against non-believers.¹ Anti-west Islamic clerics like Kuwaiti Professor Abdullah Nafisi² reignited the debate on the possibility of chem-bio terrorism events by non-state actors or Islamic Jihadists thereby forcing the naysayers to rethink their conclusions regarding the WMD terrorism event.

There are also newer evidences that suggest that groups like *Al Qaeda* and its most violent offshoot, the Islamic State (formerly ISIS), are more than capable of using chemical and biological weapon materials targeting civilian population or military. Their intentions to use these types of weapons have been made clear through available jihadi literatures. The religious extremists, whether in Pakistan or in Syria, want to take over the State and its military arsenals, industries and infrastructures. Such a mindset amongst the extremists has increased the specter of chem/bio terrorism scenarios in multitude in recent years.

Moreover, the looming threat is no more based on fear or imagination. The changing jihadi strategy on weapons of war, credible evidences of their focus to seize or acquire WMDs and their willingness to use these weapons to inflict mass fatality or injury make this issue urgent for policy discourse.

Jihadist Perspective

Various Jihadist ideologies (e.g. *Takfir*³ or *Salafis*) reveal that there is no authoritative religious or moral doctrine behind the jihadist struggle, their attacks or operations. It has been subject to varied and sometimes conflicting interpretations of Islam, jihad and violence. And most successfully, the ideologies are interpreted and reinterpreted to serve a specific cause (e.g. anti-western or anti-Hindu targets or anti-Shia Muslims) only to perpetrate indiscriminate violence for their so-called cause against the non-believers.

A close scrutiny of jihadist groups such as *Al Qaeda*'s effort to acquire chemical and biological weapons suggests that there is the intention and an ongoing effort to poses chemical and biological weapons. Even though there is no evidence that *Al Qaeda* or its franchises (e.g. *Al Qaeda* in Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) or *Al Qaeda* in Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) have developed any sort of chemical or biological weapon capability, a few examples would suffice to show ample motivations and effort behind their possible acquisition and ultimate use.

The slain leader of *Al Qaeda*, Osama Bin Laden, had said in one of his rare interviews with Pakistan journalist, Rahimullah Yusufzai, in late 1998 that acquiring weapons for the defense of Muslims (in this case as asked by the journalist—nuclear and chemical weapons) was a “religious duty” for Muslims. He further underscored that “If I have indeed acquired these weapons, then I

thank God for enabling me to do so. And if I seek to acquire these weapons, I am carrying out a duty. It would be a sin for Muslims not to try to possess the weapons that would prevent the infidels from inflicting harm on Muslims.”⁴

Similarly, Bin Laden’s second in command and now the leader of *Al Qaeda*, Ayman al Zawahiri, planned to undertake a program known as “Yogurt Project” or ‘Project al-Zabadi’ to develop chemical and biological weapons. This program reportedly had a proposed start-up budget of US \$2,000 to \$4,000⁵ and was handled by Abu Khabab al-Masri, an *Al Qaeda* commander and former scientist in the Egyptian chemical weapons program. This can be seen together with *Al Qaeda*’s “Encyclopedia of Jihad,” which provides early insights into the strategy and operational aspect of the group and its network.⁶ The 11th volume of the *Encyclopedia* offers guidance on how to disperse potentially lethal biological organisms and poisons, ranging from botulinum toxin, anthrax and ricin. This volume also details targets such as water and food supplies and how to maximize panic and fear by poisoning medicines. The other treatise, which is considered to be Jihadi chem/bio manual, is Abu Hadhifa al-Shami’s ‘A Course in Popular Poisons and Deadly Gases.’⁷

However, the most dreadful insights has come from another *Al Qaeda* leader, Anwar al Awlaki, member of the *Al Qaeda* in Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) who was chief war strategist for the group. He rationalized the option citing classical Islamic scholars primarily to remove moral and Islamic legal barriers on the use of these weapons against civilians (non-combatants). He observed, “The use of poisons of chemical and biological weapons against population centers is allowed and strongly recommended due to the effect on the enemy.”⁸ He cited the Islamic scholars to prove that it is allowed to use poison or other methods of mass killing against the ‘disbelievers’ in a war. Awlaki noted this piece of his advice and thoughts in the eighth edition of the *Al Qaeda*’s magazine ‘Inspire’. In the article entitled “Targeting the Populations of Countries at War With Muslims” (*Inspire*, Vol. 8, 2011)⁹ al-Awlaki justifies the killing of women and children and the use of chemical and biological weapons in addition to bombings and gun attacks.

Al Qaeda and Chem/Bio Weapons

There may be a mismatch between *Al Qaeda*’s intent and its actual capability until now. These information and statements by Islamists or Jihadist ideologues are certainly significant and worrisome. That certainly indicates a clear Jihadist strategy, intent and possible effort to build an arsenal of chemical and biological weapons. Past allegations and evidences suggest that *Al Qaeda* has attempted to build a CBW capability. The report on Jalalabad camp and videotape that recorded experiments involving dogs using cyanide or crude nerve agents remain the most plausible testimony of *Al Qaeda*’s CBW effort.¹⁰ The first stream of

information came from Ahmed Ressum, an Algerian *Al Qaeda* member, who revealed that during late 1990s he had undergone training in chem/bio warfare in Afghanistan and learned techniques to use poisonous substances.

With regard to biological agents, most of the allegations are centered on its effort to acquire or develop an effective capability. Again reports in the 1990s informed that associates of *Al Qaeda* leader Osama Bin Laden attempted to purchase anthrax, plague and other agents from Kazakhstan and Czech Republic. Even there are confirmed reports about the *Al Qaeda's* interests in acquiring crop dusters to disseminate biological agents over cities or population centers.¹¹ The examples of Abdur Rauf and Menad Benchellali's interest in Anthrax and Ricin are also imperative to examine how *Al Qaeda* pursued and trained its network members to carry out chem/bio operations.

Islamic State and Chem-Bio Weapons

The present day ISIS or the so called Islamic State has strong roots in the ideals of Abu Musab al Zarqawi of Jordan and Jihadi ideologue like Ibn Taymiyyah who propounded the logic of 'Book' for guidance and 'Sword' for victory. IS also adheres to guidelines noted by Abu Bakr Naji about extreme retaliatory violence to deter enemies in a jihadi manual titled (translated) "Management of Savagery."¹² Abu Musab Zarqawi and his lingering influence as a founding father of IS leads us to believe that the violent group won't hesitate to use chem/bio weapons against the enemy. He was identified as *al Qaeda's* chief biochemical engineer,¹³ before his death in 2006 and it was widely believed that Zarqawi imparted training to a special terror cell in Afghanistan and Iraq on the use of bio/chem agents for possible attacks in Europe and the Middle East.¹⁴ There are evidences to suggest how Jordan's secret service establishment foiled a plot to detonate a chemical weapon capable of killing thousands of people and to attack the US Embassy and Prime Minister's office with poison gas in April 2004.

Latest findings, especially a seizure of IS laptop and purported attacks using seized chemical weapons, have brought the world's attention towards Islamic State's intention and capability.¹⁵ The information on the laptop of a Tunisian IS militant suggests their interest to acquire or develop a biological weapon capability, even if they can be used effectively. A 19-page document in Arabic found in that laptop was on how to develop biological weapons and how to weaponize the bubonic plague from infected animals.¹⁶ The instruction found on the laptop describing the benefits of biological agents indicated IS approval on the work to weaponize the bubonic plague and other viruses that would have an even greater affect than that of a localized chemical attack.

What is more alarming is that the laptop information had a message of religious approval for the use of such weapons. It reportedly read, "If the Muslims

can't overwhelm the infidels in any other way, they are allowed to use weapons of mass destruction to kill everyone and erase them and their descendants from the earth.”¹⁷ The 26-page *fatwa* was issued by the Saudi jihadi cleric Nasir al-Fahd, who is currently imprisoned in Saudi Arabia. To note, this could be a May 2003 *fatwa* written by Nasir al-Fahd and endorsed by Ali al-Khudair, another radical cleric. Following al Fahd’s arrest (on May 28, 20003), Saudi intelligence agency found cyanide in an *Al Qaeda* safehouse in Riyadh. Al-Fahd is the author of a book that approved the use of Weapons of Mass Destruction against the non-believers.¹⁸

As the IS is advancing for territorial gains in Iraq and Syria at present, it can be speculated that sooner or later it will capture secret labs and factories that can facilitate to pursue chem/bio activities. Last June (2014), there were reports suggesting that IS had captured Saddam Hussein era chemical facility at Muthanna, near the city of Samarra.¹⁹ By mid October last year, there were unconfirmed reports from Kobani where Kurdish minorities are fighting against IS forces that unidentified chemical weapon was used by the IS militants.²⁰ Various informations are still flowing from the war theaters about the use of Mustard gas by the IS forces in Iraq and Syria.²¹ And while ISIS may not yet have the most potent chemical agents, they will ultimately possess them in future as they advance towards their objectives.

Taliban and Chem-Bio Weapons

Taliban groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan are not totally averse to the idea of chemi/bio war. Past investigations and reports suggest that *Al Qaeda*'s Abu Khabab al-Masri (also known as MidhatMursi) and his knowledge and training of chemical and biological weapons had helped Taliban groups in the region. Al-Masri provided Afghanistan Taliban poisons and explosives training in his hideout at Derunta camp, near Jalalabad (Afghanistan).

Taking pride in Al Masri's body of works and contributions, *Al Qaeda* leader Mustafa Abu al-Yazeed once issued a statement warning that al-Masri had “left behind [...] a generation of faithful students who will make you suffer the worst torture and avenge him and his brothers.”²² The CB weapon threat continues even after Masri's still mysterious death.

There were reported use of non-lethal chemical weapons by Afghan and Pakistan Taliban groups in the past against both military and civilians. In April-May 2009, Afghan Taliban, who have been campaigning against female education, had targeted several girl schools located in north of Kabul in Kapisa and Parwan provinces. These attacks involved use of poisonous chemical gas and the victims complained of headaches, nausea, vomiting and itching in the eyes.²³ Nearly 200 students and teachers were affected in these attacks. Though the specific type of

gas used remains mysterious, it is suspected that Taliban and *al Qaeda* elements must have experimented with either chlorine or white phosphorus. Same year, the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) had threatened to unleash a chemical warfare against Pakistan and planned to use the age old tactics of mass disruption by poisoning Multan, Karachi and Rawalpindi water supplies²⁴

Is South Asia Vulnerable to CBW Terror Event?

South Asia or the Indian Subcontinent has been always vulnerable to jihadist violence, mostly from the above-mentioned groups. Also the common theme of these jihadi groups is to unleash the battle of the apocalypse, as per the Islamic end-of-time prophecies. And the jihadists believe that *Khorasan* (major part of Central Asia, Pakistan and parts of India) is the region from which they will inflict a major defeat against their enemies—in the Islamic version of Armageddon. Both *Al Qaeda* and ISIS promote this concept of Islamic Eschatology to recruit, indoctrinate and motivate cadres in their operations.

South Asia, especially India, has not faced a single CBW related terrorism incident involving non-state actors so far, be it the *Al Qaeda* or *Lashkar-e-Taiba*. However, in October 2010 a purported threat letter from Indian Mujahideen group's Assam wing threatened to launch a biological war in the northeast state. Their demands were to (1) free all jihadi leaders held at the Guwahati central jail; (2) end operations against jihadi forces in Assam; and (3) stop all ongoing development projects in Assam.

The Indian government has recognized chemical and biological weapons terrorism threat as real and imminent. Both the Defense and Home ministries have given high priority to this issue although so far India has not experienced anything remotely related to chem/bio terrorist events. *Al Qaeda* has recently renewed its efforts to gain a foothold within South Asia's teeming Muslim population with the establishment of AQIS (*Al Qaeda* in Indian Subcontinent). Similarly, the Islamic State has expanded its influence in the region and already has made inroads into India, Pakistan, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.²⁵ With the changing dynamics of jihadi engagements with state actors and their perturbed intention to acquire WMD capability that would give them advantage over their enemy, psychologically and militarily, it won't be difficult to speculate the future evolution of the chemical and biological terrorism threat in India and South Asia at large.

NOTES

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22

The Emerging Asian Nuclear Order and India

Rajiv Nayan

As the twenty first century is considered the Asian century, the global attention is focused not only to the Asian growth story but also to the emerging Asian order, which is intrinsically linked to the emerging Asian nuclear order. All the last five nuclear weapons countries are located in Asia. In other words, all the new nuclear weapons countries are Asian. China, Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea are the five Asian nuclear weapons countries. China was the first country to nuclearize Asia and North Korea is the last. Israel has an ambiguous status. It neither denies nor confirms its nuclear weapons.¹ However, the international community acknowledges it as a nuclear weapon country. Iran and Saudi Arabia are suspected of exploring the nuclear weapons option.

The Cold War nuclear order was centered on Europe, and the general fear was that any nuclear disorder in Europe will have spillover effects in other continents. When international nuclear order is viewed dependent on the Asian nuclear order, it is assumed that any disturbances in the Asian nuclear order will have an adverse impact on other parts of the world. The international and Asian policy communities are discussing different aspects of the Asian nuclear order. Some writings are on the general Asian order², some are on individual countries and regions³ such as East Asia, and by analyzing the specific region, broad generalization on the Asian nuclear order has been drawn.

In some analyses, the Asian nuclear order is considered *de facto* international/global nuclear order⁴ where the real action is taking place in the twenty first century in particular and in the post-Cold War world in general. These writings have analyzed finer points involved in the Asian nuclear order. The scholarship is not uniform and different perspectives analyses the same issue from different angles. One of the works on the subject maintains that nuclear weapons are influencing security thinking, practice and interaction of Asia which has moved

from a subordinate security region to a core world region.⁵ Yet another work looks at the Asian nuclearisation as a danger to the West in the long-term.⁶

Most of the writings underline stability-instability paradox, deterrence, proliferation and so on. These issues are still relevant, but the need is to situate the Asian nuclear order in the light of new developments and do a realistic analysis. Some of the important questions for an analysis could be: What are emerging trends of the Asian nuclear order in the next 10-15 years? Is the Asian nuclear order autonomous? Can India play a role? If yes, what could be that role for India? The chapter argues that in the next decade, Asian nuclear order will be shaped by the presence of nuclear weapons countries engaged in a deterrent relationship seeking for stability. India is increasingly playing a stabilizing and crisis mitigating role and needs to increase its constructive presence through different institutions and regimes.

Trends

Nuclear Arms Build-up Without Race

All the four non-Asian countries are modernizing their nuclear arsenals and have made the size of the arsenals public. Asian countries have not declared the size of their nuclear arsenals publicly. Asia that houses all the new nuclear weapons countries is also witnessing development of nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles. However, the Cold War type arms race is not visible in Asia as in the world. The action reaction phenomenon is not evident so far in nuclear weapons acquisition in Asia. Generally, the countries are developing nuclear arms at their own speed and most likely, on the basis of their own threat perception—genuine or false. Even if the size of the stockpile is not announced, the nuclear weapons tests are generally announced. Only notable exception is Israel which has not done any announcement. After the tests, the countries generally declare the yield and nature of their tested nuclear weapons.⁷ As the Asian countries do not declare the size of their nuclear weapons stockpiles, some intelligence agencies and public institutes are active in giving estimates of the number of nuclear weapons and fissile materials stockpiles of the Asian countries. Reports indicate that China is also modernizing its nuclear warheads with data collected from previous nuclear tests.⁸

All the five nuclear weapons countries also declare the tests of their ballistic and other missiles capable of carrying nuclear weapons. These countries are developing ballistic missiles of different ranges depending on their security requirements. The countries are also replacing the old missiles in the same range with more sophisticated systems. Mobile, solid-fuelled and better navigated ballistic missiles are being inducted in the arsenals of the Asian countries. Ballistic

missiles are tested by a country like Iran. These ballistic missile tests are used to substantiate the theory and argument that Iran indeed has a plan for nuclear weapons development. Submarine-launched ballistic missile, is one of the legs of the strategic triad, which found place in the missile stockpiles of most of the nuclear weapons countries.

Asian countries are developing submarines of all categories. The development of submarines are being called the Asian submarine race by media⁹ and some study reports. However, after designating the development as the submarine race, many of these reports underline that these developments are not basically race. Some consider the Asian phenomenon part of the global phenomenon.¹⁰ The Asian countries are developing these weapons as part of their naval build-up. Not merely nuclear weapons countries India, China, North Korea and Pakistan but also Japan, South Korea, South East Asian countries and Taiwan are developing or have plans to acquire submarines. Quite expectedly, some of the writers find the development 'potentially destabilizing'.¹¹

The proliferation network has been a predominant source of nuclear weapons development in Asia. Nuclear materials to technology to even the full-fledged weapons systems circulate in this network. The countries involved in the network are not only from different regions of Asia but also from other continents. The famous Pakistan/A.Q. Khan network revealed the involvement of even European and African entities.¹² An impression has been created by a country like Pakistan and some analysts and officials of other countries that the proliferation network stands dismantled. However, on several occasions, officials and analysts of the same countries testify that the network still exists and the old and leading proliferation actors are active and contributing to its health. One of the most frightening features of the proliferation network is the involvement of large number of non-state actors. People involved in organised crime, money laundering, human trafficking, drug trafficking and other such activities are also participants of the proliferation network.¹³

Although there is no credible proof that terrorist have already acquired nuclear weapons in Asia, and even the global understanding about its probability in Asia is low¹⁴, yet hardly any analyst rules it out that the possibility of nuclear terrorism in Asia is zero. The possibility of nuclear terrorism in Asia exists because a large number of terrorist organisations are operating in Asia. *Al Qaeda* and its leadership have shown an interest to acquire nuclear weapons. And quite importantly, as Bob Graham noted, 'Were one to map terrorism and weapons of mass destruction today, all roads would intersect in Pakistan'.¹⁵ Even writings and reports¹⁶ sympathetic to Pakistan acknowledge the stark reality that its army and the nuclear physics departments are badly infiltrated by the Jihadi elements

Some countries like South Korea and Japan are feared to go nuclear if the regional security situation changes drastically. In this context, one question that

is generally being posed is: Does Japan have technological capabilities to assemble weapons and their delivery systems quickly? This question has been answered by different analysts in different ways. For a long period, Japan is being called a “para nuclear state”.¹⁷ The Japanese plutonium reprocessing capability, time and again, has been coming under the limelight in the context of the hidden nuclear weapon development ambitions of Japan, and the Japanese Government has been repeatedly denying that with the kind of nuclear material Japan has, it cannot develop nuclear weapons. It is generally understood that if Japan decides to develop nuclear weapons, in a very short period, it may have more weapons materials than some of existing nuclear weapon countries. Of course, Russia and the US will be the exceptions. In 2011, William J. Perry, Chairman, Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States testified in one of the US Congress committees, “Turkey, and especially Germany and Japan, have the potential to become nuclear weapons powers rather quickly were they to decide to do so.”¹⁸ The consensus is that Japan has the capability, and it may produce a plutonium-based bomb, but it will take time as it may have to overcome several hurdles other than technical.

The international strategic community is divided on the capability of South Korea to assemble nuclear weapons at a short notice as well. Generally, it is acknowledged that at least since the early 1970s, South Korea has developed its capability to develop nuclear weapons. It has mastered key technological steps such as enrichment and reprocessing. And it can adapt the existing institutions or build new institutions to support its bomb-making project. Some may argue that as an NPT country and a country which has signed the safeguards agreements with the IAEA, it will find the task extremely difficult. However, though the task may be difficult, it is not impossible. South Korea may come under serious pressure to develop nuclear weapons when Japan does so. Considering the ethnic mistrust, South Korea is neither going to trust Japanese nuclear umbrella nor the Chinese umbrella. Some policy analyst even advocated a ‘tailored proliferation’¹⁹ supporting Japan and South Korea.

Asian nuclear chain reaction may really take place if Japan goes nuclear in East Asia and Iran goes nuclear in West Asia. Because of the historical reasons, South East Asian countries like Indonesia are expected to develop nuclear weapons if Japan goes nuclear. Nuclear South Korea and Japan may not be good for strategic stability for the Asian nuclear order. Other than causing uncertainty in East Asia a Nuclear Japan may cause cascading effects in the neighbouring South-East Asia. Similarly, in West Asia, nuclearisation of Iran is expected to force several Arab countries choosing the nuclear weapons option. However, the international policy community seems divided on the issue. Some writings maintain that some Arab countries are involved in the nuclear weapons development programmes. Several reports about Saudi Arabia’s involvement with Pakistan have come.²⁰ Yet another

stream of writings rules out any scenario of the Arab countries going nuclear after the nuclearisation of Iran. Certainly, the nuclear deal signed by the IAEA and the three European countries, the US, Russia and China with Iran has the potential of shaping the Asian nuclear order.

Multipolar/Multilateral/China-centric

Asian nuclear weapon countries do not demonstrate the bipolar character of the Cold War nuclear order. In fact, the nuclearisation of China is heralded as the advent of the multipolar nuclear order in the world. China and North Korea have communist regimes and Pakistan is associated with China. India is quite independent from them and Israel too has quite an independent existence. The US provides extended deterrence to its allies. This situation may give an understanding that the Asian nuclear order is multipolar in nature. India, Israel, the US and the friends of China do have interactions but very limited and not enough to shape the Asian nuclear order. The emerging nuclear Asian order is multipolar and multilateral²¹ in appearance, but is centred on China—the first Asian nuclear weapon country. Generally, China is predominantly the source of security concern and proliferation.

China is considered a source of threat for most of its immediate neighbourhood. North Korea may be a new problem for East Asian countries, but in the post-Cold War period, gradually China is a dominant security challenge for East Asian countries²² as it is for South East Asian countries. Since early 1990s, Chinese growing nuclear arsenals made the ASEAN countries worried.²³ This worry has further aggravated after China's active hostility in South China Sea. Though officially India maintains that its nuclear weapon is not country-specific, yet it is a common knowledge that India developed its nuclear weapons to deter China. China's military modernisation, especially its nuclear modernisation, is becoming a major concern for all these countries.

China is projected as a stakeholder of the non-proliferation order, its centrality in the proliferation network has been surfacing time to time. Pakistan appears the principal coordinator of the proliferation network. In reality, China has been the lynchpin of the Asian nuclear proliferation Bazar. Despite giving public commitment that China would not be involved in nuclear weapons and missiles, the US State Department Compliance report 2014 found Chinese organisations continued involvement in the missile programmes of the countries seen as 'countries of concern' by the US.²⁴ The report noted that activities continued even in 2014. The PPG Paints Trading Company of Shanghai illegally supplied high-performance coatings to the Pakistani Chasma-2 till 2007, but even in 2012, the Chinese companies illegally supplied items procured in the US to Chasma-2.²⁵ The continued Chinese cooperation with Pakistan is raising a big question mark

to the very spirit of the Chinese commitment to promote the goal of the NSG. The A.Q. Khan network demonstrated the Chinese involvement as well. China supplied enriched uranium to Pakistan and is strongly suspected to transfer enriched and natural uranium procured from third countries. Pakistan also procured missiles such as M-9 and M-11 along with spare parts, components and technology from China.

When Chinese organisations are found involved in clandestine proliferation activities, China shifts the blame on the private non-governmental organisations to save the Chinese government. China is the source for nuclear materials, transfer of knowledge, different kinds of equipment and component to the assembled rockets and ballistic missiles. In West Asia, American allies like Saudi Arabia also purchased ballistic missiles from China. A US government committee notes:

The proliferation of missile technology, raw materials, and parts remains our most significant proliferation concern with China. During our discussions with the Chinese government, China has reaffirmed its position that it opposes such proliferation and that it forbids Chinese firms and entities from engaging in transfers that violate its commitments to the United States. Nonetheless, we have seen numerous pledges given by the Chinese government to curb the proliferation of missile materials, only to be followed by transfers of these items by Chinese entities. In response, the U.S. has imposed, or threatened to impose, sanctions on these entities.²⁶

Indeed, despite the Agni-V's range being a clear signal of intent for Beijing, it was Islamabad that gave the firmest response. While Pakistan's fraught history with India provides some explanation, the Pakistani reaction to the testing of a missile that can exceed Pakistan's depth many times over has for many merely endorsed the thinking that an unstated nuclear alliance exists, with Pakistan acting as a third party in the dual Sino-Indian deterrence relationship. This interconnection may have disturbing implications for future regional security.

Institutions and Rules/Regimes

The Asian region has a number of security related institutions, but the emerging Asian nuclear order is without an Asian security architecture. Interestingly, Asian nuclear politics is regulated in multiple global institutions and forums. There are different regional organisations and institutions which discuss Weapons of Mass Destruction, including nuclear issues, but there is absence of a pan-Asian body. Furthermore, many of the regional bodies like the Six Party Talks have some extra-regional presence. The ASEAN has been passing resolutions and issuing joint statements along with its partners, but it is not capable to maintain the Asian nuclear order. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and East Asia community are emerging as important bodies but are not so effective to lay down rules and constitution for the orderly nuclear arrangement in Asia. A relatively

larger institution like the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is proposed as the body which may take up security related issues as well. West Asia hardly has security institutions where existing and potential nuclear weapons countries can discuss how to coexist without escalating the situation.

Nuclear terrorism, which is considered a new source of instability of the Asian nuclear order, has seen Asian countries participating in existing Asian institutions and forums, yet the idea and the inspiration for nuclear security to counter nuclear terrorism are coming from the global forums and institutions such as the Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) process and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The NSS process has generated a momentum for centers of excellence. Some countries mooted the idea of training personnel from Asian countries in their centers of excellence. Despite the willingness of Asian countries to cooperate, even an Asian nuclear security center has not emerged. Considering the willingness of the countries to cooperate on the issues, and the existence of some centers of excellence, with a little effort, these centers may be integrated under one Asian umbrella institution.

The Asian nuclear order does not have its own Asian constitution consisting of rules, norms and treaties governing the Asian nuclear order. There are bilateral agreements, regional treaties and ideas of regional nuclear weapons free zones. The 1995 Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, which entered into operation in 1997, has all the 10 ASEAN countries as its signatories. This treaty has a protocol that requires signature of China, the US, the UK, France and Russia, but none of them have done so yet. The signatory of the protocol has to undertake 'not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against any State Party to the Treaty'. The protocol signatory country is also not supposed 'to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons within the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone.'

The 2006 Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, which entered into force in 2009, has Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan as its members. Even its protocol with the same restrictions to be signed by the same countries is without a single signature. If the Pacific Asia concept is accepted, the region has the 1985 South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty consisting of the countries such as Australia and New Zealand. However, the Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone is struggling and the very idea of South Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone is considered irrelevant and unrealistic.

Actually, the international institutions and regimes as well as the countries located outside Asia are predominantly managing the Asian nuclear order. The Asian countries are predominantly guided by the hierarchical NPT in which different rights and obligations exist for nuclear weapons and non-nuclear weapons countries. India, Israel and Pakistan refuse to accept the NPT hierarchy, and

North Korea later came out of it. However, it does not mean that the countries are against non-proliferation norm. All the countries, including nuclear weapons possessors champion global nuclear disarmament. However, the emerging nuclear order will not have an Asian nuclear disarmament or nuclear weapons free zone idea because of the variegated security articulation of different nuclear weapons possessors.

Quite importantly, except North Korea all the nuclear weapons countries prefer integrating to the global nuclear regimes. As discussed, nuclear disarmament is a cherished goal of all the Asian nuclear weapons countries, but it is a common understanding that global nuclear disarmament is not going to take place in the near future. All the non-NPT members would like to join the treaty as a nuclear weapons states. However, this preference too has serious complications and practical difficulties at least in the near future. In the transition phase, the countries are integrating themselves with non-NPT non-proliferation initiatives and measures keeping in mind their national interests. The UNSCR 1540 resolution implementation has emerged one such initiative. The countries are also showing inclination to join different multilateral export controls regimes. The membership criteria of some regimes are putting some constraints on the entry of the new members.

China's aspirations for playing a global role and its security perception may not allow Asian nuclear order to exist independently at least in terms of accepting constraints in China's nuclear capabilities and activities. Similarly, the centrality of China in the Asian nuclear order will prevent the affected parties such as Japan and India to allow China to play the dominant role in the Asian order. These countries would like a global connect to the Asian nuclear order. Even these countries may prefer to see the Asian nuclear order part of the international or global nuclear order. Some crisis mitigating bilateral or regional working arrangements may keep coming, but there may not be any drastic modification of the nuclear order.

Stability

The Asian order has demonstrated strategic stability despite frequently facing forces of disturbances and instability. At times, it appears as facing crises but it overcomes it soon. Interestingly, in Asia, two nuclear weapons countries fought a war without introducing nuclear weapons into the conflict. However, use of nuclear weapons as a posture is taken by the countries such as Pakistan and North Korea. These two countries do not have 'no first use' in their nuclear doctrines. No doubt, these provocative policies or doctrines have the destabilizing tendencies. However, the possibility of reprisal restraints and rationalizes these countries. Thus, deterrence as a stabilizing factor is relevant for the Asian nuclear order as well.

Yet another kind of deterrence—extended deterrence has been a dominant feature of the Asian nuclear order. Two types of extended deterrence operate in Asia: one provided by the US and NATO to the Asian allies²⁷ such as Japan and South Korea and the second operated by the proliferation network in which the countries involved in the network help each other's capabilities to develop nuclear weapons. After the nuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula extended deterrence or nuclear protective umbrella is projected as a source of stability through assurance to the US Asian allies. A common understanding is that if the nuclear protective umbrella is withdrawn, it may result in South Korea and Japan going nuclear. On this issue, too, there is disagreement. Many find that extended deterrence is a source of instability of the Asian nuclear order. It is worse in the case of the extended deterrence operated by the clandestine proliferation network.

Should it be concluded that there are no disruptive forces or tendencies in the Asian nuclear order? Of course, there are several destabilizing tendencies existing in the region and in the policies and the practices of the countries which may lead to the destabilization of the order. Some we have already discussed and there are a few more. First, the waging of proxy wars may have a follow up action from the victim country. Second, the logic of asymmetrical deterrence under which a country that is conventionally inferior justifies the use of nuclear weapons to deter a conventionally superior country. It becomes more complex and dangerous when the conventionally inferior country shields terrorism with the logic of asymmetrical deterrence. Third, the tendency of the overwhelming power like China to turn aggressive in behaviour and modernisation of nuclear and other arsenals may lead to matching aggressive realignment and alliance formation. China's neighbours have already started moving in this direction. Fourth, the misuse of the existing hierarchical legal order to perpetuate and exploit unequal security situation and fifth, the uncontrolled and blatant use of the proliferation network.

India's Role

India is an important stakeholder of the Asian nuclear order. It values responsible nuclear behaviour. It has always considered nuclear weapons a global issue; so, it advocates that any solution to nuclear weapons should essentially be a global solution. A section of the non-proliferation community and some western countries try to analyse Indian nuclear weapons in the South Asian framework, but India and an overwhelming section of the Indian strategic community reject this framework. South Asia is not considered an appropriate security category for India because of its size. India's nuclear weapon was not primarily meant for Pakistan with which it enjoyed and still enjoys conventional superiority, though a nuclear Pakistan is to be deterred through nuclear weapons by India. India also

rejected the South Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone and associated ideas like the strategic restraint regime.

India maintains that ‘security assurances in the narrow strait-jacket’ NWFZs would be unfair to ‘the wide variety of concerns that emanate from the global nature of the threat posed by nuclear weapons.’ The Indian position is:

As a responsible state possessing nuclear weapons, India has stated that it does not intend to use nuclear weapons to commit aggression or for mounting threats against any country. India respects the sovereign choice exercised by states not possessing nuclear weapons in establishing NWFZs on the basis of agreements freely arrived at among the states of the region concerned.²⁸

India considers that NWFZ in South Asia “not only borders on the unreal, but also calls into question one of the fundamental guiding principles for the establishment of nuclear weapon free zones, namely that arrangements for such zones should be freely arrived at among states of the region concerned. This principle was again endorsed by consensus in the UNDC Guidelines.”²⁹ The regionalization of this would simply obfuscate the issue. As both India and Pakistan went nuclear, the very concept of South Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SANWFZ) lost its meaning and relevance. Moreover, the concept of NWFZ, mooted in South Asia, ignores the factor of clandestine nuclear transactions. As discussed earlier, even if the Indian government does not make its nuclear weapons country specific, it is common knowledge that Indian nuclear weapons are basically meant to deter China. The hierarchical legal order, defined by the NPT, legitimizes China’s nuclear weapons. To secure its citizens, the Indian need for nuclear weapons is guided by the doctrine of credible minimum deterrence. India has made it clear that it does not want to enter into arms race with any country, and indeed, India does not need to enter into such a race. It has to assess the strategic environment in which it is located. It cannot ignore developments taking place which may adversely affect its security. India is playing an important role and can play a more constructive role in managing Asian security. The most significant structural and normative order ought to be global nuclear disarmament. India has been supporting the goal before and after it turned a nuclear weapon country. It supports the goal inside the UN and its different organs. India has been proposing for the Nuclear Weapons Convention in different international organisations and platforms. Even the recent push relating to humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons found support from the Indian government. India should be supporting the move for global nuclear disarmament wherever it is mooted. However, it needs to be careful and abstain from the idea of treating nuclear reduction as nuclear disarmament. This is mooted in a few so-called nuclear disarmament reports and proposals.

Comes the question: what should be India’s approach to the nuclear order

till global nuclear disarmament is accepted by all the nuclear weapons countries and a Nuclear Weapons Convention is concluded? India needs to accept limits to its power for bringing about nuclear disarmament. Quite obviously, China is not going to accept an Asian nuclear disarmament, and India cannot force China to go for an Asian nuclear disarmament. So, in this situation, India can maintain its policy for global nuclear disarmament as a norm. However, it should also work for stability and peace in the global order in general and the Asian nuclear order in particular till the world agrees for nuclear disarmament.

India has always stayed away from military alliances during and after the Cold War. If the Chinese aggressive behaviour and military/nuclear modernisation continue, it will be a big policy dilemma for India. Entering into military alliance with the US does not appear a viable alternative because the US does not appear ready to lead. It may indirectly assist India's military, not nuclear weapons modernisation, and facilitate closer relationship with the countries such as Japan and South Korea. Despite increasing friendship between India and Japan, the strategic gap between the two countries remains. The countries affected by the Chinese design may have to develop a higher degree of understanding. Even if there is no formal alliance, these countries can have better understanding and network to manage China. The entire effort should be to make the nuclear order stable, not unstable. The genuinely multipolar Asian nuclear order should be more interactive, interdependent and based on mutual recognition and reciprocity.

The maintenance of Asian nuclear order through deterrence stability should remain the preference of India. India may have to do some innovative modification in its nuclear posture and doctrine to deter a country using nuclear blackmail to shield terrorism. India's nuclear doctrine does not appear deterring enough. The Indian political class and a section of the strategic community have begun to discuss this complexity. The coming months should witness far more serious discussions and debate on the issue. India should also engage the international community on the matter. It may have to explain to the world that the nuclear blackmailing is affecting the nuclear order in Asia.

At the same time, India must collaborate with the international community to counter proliferation and the clandestine network. For the purpose, information sharing becomes very crucial. India may have a network of the affected countries willing to seriously fight the network. As many of the affected countries are in Asia, obviously, these countries may participate more actively. But the proliferation network demonstrates the global reach; so, willing members of the international community also need to be included in it. India may have to insist that other geo-political considerations are not invoked to shield the network. India can also contribute to the Asian nuclear order by supporting the idea of an Asian security architecture. The security architecture should be a place for dialogue and discussion, and not turn into a hierarchical bureaucratic organisation. This should

not be an Asian NATO. Nor should it be an Asian Security Council. This may come up as an organisation which meaningfully integrates the existing institutions so that there is no functional overlap among the organisations. The networking organisations can be functionally specialized on different issue areas. The overall objective of the security architecture should be to check and manage competitive strategic interaction in Nuclear Asia by preventing the outbreak of hostilities and eliminating the danger of escalation.

For nuclear security or prevention of nuclear terrorism, India may have to become more pro-active among Asian countries. During the first Nuclear Security Summit, India announced setting up of a Global Center for Nuclear Energy Partnership (GCNEP). Under the GCNEP, there are five schools, and one of the schools is the School of Nuclear Security Studies. Its mission is to "impart training to security agencies on application of physical protection system and response procedure, to enhance physical security of nuclear facilities by developing and deploying most modern technological tools including information security and to provide facilities for test and evaluation of sensors and systems used for physical security."³⁰ Already this school has conducted several programmes on different aspects of nuclear security for Asian countries.

The international community, great powers active in Asia and major powers of Asia all recognize that economically growing India is playing a constructive role in strategic stability of the Asian nuclear order and adding meaningfully to the overall ambience of Asian security. India is active in international organisations, regional organisations and multilateral bodies of which it is a part. India is seeking the membership of the multilateral export controls regimes. India can help the objective of these regimes, especially the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Management of nuclear commerce is necessary for the nuclear order. Asia is under represented in the Nuclear Suppliers Group. The membership of an Asian nuclear weapon country that is committed to playing a responsible role will certainly be good for the regime and the Asian nuclear order.

Conclusion

The Asian nuclear order as part of the global nuclear order by and large is stable, and like the international nuclear order of the Cold War is based on deterrence. However, unlike the Cold War order it is not predominantly bipolar. Although it has a tendency to emerge multipolar, yet the stark reality is that it is China-centric. With the emergence of China as a great power, its shadow will continue to loom large in the emerging Asian nuclear order. As global nuclear disarmament does not appear in sight in the next 10-15 years, the Asian nuclear order may have to deal with Asian nuclear weapons countries whose number may increase if the Iranian and North Korean issues are not resolved and the US chooses to withdraw extended deterrence or remain indifferent in West Asia.

India is set to play an important role for nuclear disarmament as well as Asian nuclear order. It is participating in important institutions and bodies for maintaining the global and Asian nuclear order. India never accepted the flawed South Asia paradigm vis-à-vis nuclear weapons. The major powers recognize India's increasing role in the maintenance and survival of the order. India is offering its institutions to contribute to the order. India may play more pro-active role in Asia. If India's entry is facilitated in a multilateral regime like the Nuclear Suppliers Group, it would be able to contribute in a better way. Moreover, as India and China both have to grow economically in the near future, stability of the Asian order is indispensable for both. Both the countries have to work out with their friends and allies to hammer out this point.

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MAJOR STRATEGIC REGIONS OF ASIA

23

India's Regional Strategy: Balancing Geopolitics with Geoeconomics in South Asia

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It is a truism to say that geography of a country informs its foreign policy and defines its strategic outlook. India's geo-strategic location is such that, despite being conventionally seen as a predominant power in the South Asian region, its security and economic interests straddle Central Asia, West Asia and the Indo-Pacific cutting across major strategic neighbourhoods in Asia, in an expanded geopolitical theatre. In the post-cold war context of emerging threats and opportunities, all these neighbourhoods are important—from the point of view of energy security, piracy, terrorism and search for markets and investment for Indian entrepreneurs as well as employment opportunities for its growing young population. However, the scope of this chapter is limited to the most significant priority area in terms of security and geopolitics—its immediate neighbourhood; i.e. the South Asian region.

India's regional strategy has undergone significant shifts with the change in global power structure since the end of the cold war. Because of its new-found self-confidence induced by remarkable economic growth over a decade, India is no longer constrained by geopolitical and security considerations, and has sought to pursue its strategic interests through geoeconomic¹ engagement with all countries in the region. From a zero-sum perspective of bilateral relation with the countries of the region, India is transitioning to a positive-sum engagement. This is not to argue, however, that geo-politics has become irrelevant. Rather geopolitics continues to inform security even as the logic of geoeconomics is providing an impetus for change. Since the 1990s, India has moved towards establishing 'partnerships' with its neighbours and invited them to participate in and benefit from its economic development. As a result, the nature of regional geopolitics—

often characterized as a hotbed of forces arraigned against one another—is beginning to shift towards a network of stakeholders interlocked in a mutually beneficial transactional relationship.

The chapter seeks to provide a broad overview of India's regional strategy, interrogate the assumptions that informed such a strategy, highlight factors that brought about shifts in Indian approach and the underlying basis for such change. It seeks answers to the following questions: What has impelled transformation in India's attitude towards the region? Does it point to a well-thought-out regional strategy? Does it mean its geopolitical and geo-strategic compulsions have become irrelevant? Given China's growing engagement in South Asia, will India's economic engagement translate into a political dividend that will help New Delhi to retain its preponderant influence in the region?

The main hypotheses of the chapter are: shift in India's regional strategy has been dictated by changes in regional geopolitical situation and sustained growth in Indian economy. Given its geographical location, it will continue to play a significant role in regional economic development, and strengthen energy and market connectivity. These imperatives of geoeconomics, built into its regional strategy, will help India retain its pre-eminent position in the region.

Situating India in the Region

India's centrality in the South Asian region is too obvious to be missed—in terms of its geographical location, size, defence spending and sustained economic growth over a decade. It is a fact that India is the only country in the region which shares borders with all the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries. Except for Pakistan and Afghanistan, no other SAARC country shares borders with any other member country in the region. Given the common historical experiences and cultural overlaps in the region, India has a slice of every other country in the region within itself given its vast diversity, which places India in a unique position to enable regional integration. As the pre-eminent power in South Asia, India considers the entire region as a single geo-strategic and geo-economic whole and regards its preeminence as a natural consequence of its physical and economic preponderance. Rather than its military strength. India's outlook as the inheritor state of British India was substantially shaped by the latter's geo-political and geo-strategic outlook

With the partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947 and subsequent emergence of sovereign countries with defined (but unsettled) borders, there was a sudden rupture in the historical, socio-cultural linkages and physical connectivity that existed within the region prior to partition. However, despite physical barriers raised by the states, the cultural overlaps continued to create contexts for cooperation. Former Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran defined the region

quite well—sifting out the commonalities among various states of the region—as

a compact unit of sub-continental proportions,... occupying an easily identifiable geographical space, enjoying a broad cultural unity and a wide range of intra-regional economic complementarities. There were mighty empires in our history that straddled this sub-continent and the experience of colonialism more recently, reinforced the legacy of interconnectedness and affinity.²

Such a construct informs the conception of the region at the practitioners' level and hints at the manner in which India views the region. As regards the Indian sub-continent, within the larger South Asian region, the geopolitical unity that the British had spawned over the centuries was disrupted as new geopolitics with new boundaries forced nation states to look at each other from their narrow sovereignty-sensitive prisms. The geopolitical attribute of the region, intertwined with cultural and familial ties made the boundaries between the South Asian states quite a challenge to negotiate with. The trauma of partition left a legacy of hatred and mistrust which has—through the experience of vivisection of Pakistan later in 1971, become a lasting feature of sub-continental politics and affected regional integration. As far as the whole region is concerned, as post-colonial South Asian states consolidated their borders, and went on with their nation-building efforts; historical legacies, and geopolitical considerations dominated their policies towards one another. Issues like physical connectivity, economic cooperation, cultural exchange, and people-to-people interaction were made subservient to national security interests. The situation persists to this date.

As the dominant state of the region accounting for 64 per cent of the territory, 75 per cent of the population and 78 per cent of the GDP, and about 79 per cent of total military expenditure, India has always perceived itself as a security provider³ and has been averse to external presence and interference in the region. Such an approach does not mean that India is not sensitive to its neighbours' economic and strategic aspirations. Its objective has been to see that while neighbours pursue their security and strategic objectives and pursue close cooperation with external powers, it cannot be at the cost of undermining India's security. Given the sensitivities and constraints outlined above as well as geopolitical expediencies over time, its approach has evolved over the years keeping its focus on protecting its security and economic interests. New Delhi has rather emphasised on developing a cooperative framework that makes the countries of the region stakeholders in the peace and stability of the region and becomes a win-win situation for all. Undeniably, concern for security, a hangover of the colonial past, goes hand in hand with the spirit of cooperation while framing India's approach towards the region and the world.

India's first Prime Minister and major architect of its foreign policy, Jawaharlal Nehru dwelt on it in one of his speeches in June 1948 at Ootacamund:

People talk vaguely of India's leadership in Asia. I deprecate such talk. I want this problem to be approached not in terms of this country or that country being the leader and pushing or pulling others, but rather in a spirit of cooperation between all the countries of Asia, big or small. If any country pulls more than its weight, well and good. If it can serve a common cause more than its share necessitates, well, I have no doubt it will be patted on the back, and it will be a good thing. But this business of any country thinking of itself as the leader of others smacks too much of a superiority complex which is not desirable in organisations working together for the common good. Let us drop this method of referring to the matter, but talk only in terms of co-operation between countries whatever they may be.⁴

Strategic Inheritance and Changing Outlook

To begin with, independent India inherited the strategic outlook of the British Empire so far as its security was concerned. The geopolitical identity of the region as South Asia as well as the characterization of the region as a single strategic whole has its roots in the colonial experience of the region. The British had effective control of the region and had built a comprehensive security architecture aligned to its colonial interests under the leadership of the British Indian administration that India inherited and adopted with minor modifications⁵ even after partition. In the post-independence context, taking into account the prevailing security environment, Indian leadership found it quite realistic to continue with the colonial arrangements on defence and security related issues with the neighbouring states, emphasizing regional unity with India at the centre of the South Asian geostrategic theatre. From the Indian side, therefore, the discourse on geo-politics of the region was informed by articulations which laid stress on ethnic and cultural overlap and common historical experiences. However, such an ideal construct was far from appealing to some of the neighbours, which militated against their sense of autonomy and independence from Indian influence. For them, Indian emphasis on geographical, strategic and cultural unity smacked of 'hegemony' and demonstrated India's will to dominate over the rest of the regional countries.

The response to such a 'unitarian' formulation was on expected lines. Historical narratives built around partition engendered a new political narrative contrary to Indian argument in favour of the "natural unity" of the region. State-centric nation-building and identity-building exercises in the region consciously avoided an India-centred world view. While India's approach to preserve a regional order based on the colonial strategic outlook was viewed with suspicion as an India-focused narrative, the larger question of building a South Asian regional outlook failed to inform the foreign policies of the states in the region. They

rather looked for external allies against a perceived ‘Indian threat’ and resisted any attempt to look at the region as a single socio-cultural and geo-strategic entity which was perceived to be undermining their sovereignty and interfered with the state-led efforts to build separate identities. A case in point is the way Pakistan harped on the two-nation theory and went on to build an exclusive identity reinterpreting history to emphasize the separateness of the Muslim identity, disregarding the fact that there were so many commonalities that bound the people of Pakistan with the people of other countries in the neighbourhood. Similarly, the Nepalisation efforts that was built around the Nepal Monarchy and Hindu identity in Nepal, excessive emphasis on promotion of Drukpa consciousness in Bhutan, the emphasis on Sinhala-Buddhist identity in Sri Lanka tried to gloss over the commonalities and stressed on differences, resulting in inter-state disharmony and often intra-state tension. The emphasis on the religious identity in Bangladesh to construct a distinct identity from India are some of the other examples. Interstate cultural overlaps were seen with suspicion rather than regarded as opportunity for promoting interstate understanding.

Due to its colonial experience, India felt a natural aversion for cold war bipolar politics, which greatly heightened its security concerns, especially because of the quest of power blocs seeking allies in the region. India looked at the South Asian region as a single geographical unit in terms of its threat perceptions. While it redrafted the primarily security-centric treaties that British India had signed with Himalayan countries in the north, namely; Nepal and Bhutan soon after its independence, its prime concerns remained the role of external powers in the region and their impact on regional geopolitics. Non-alignment became a major tool to keep the country away from great power rivalry and provide it with strategic space to conduct its foreign policy. As Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit pointed out, “Her neutrality itself implies involvement in its cause. So long as the approach to peace lies through military pacts and greater weapons of destruction India’s role must remain limited”.⁶

India’s emphasis on South Asia as a single geo-strategic space created certain anxiety in the region. Pakistan could not reconcile with the emerging power balance in which India emerged as a regional power and sought parity with India by joining externally sponsored military alliance; some states of South Asia, especially those ruled by authoritarian regimes, saw India as a threat. This is because democratic forces in those countries were eager to seek India’s help to enable regime change and help in the democratization effort. They tried to challenge India’s preeminence in the region and attempted to engage external powers to undermine the geo-strategic unity that India wanted to preserve. The 1962 war with China and defeat of India brought about a realistic understanding of the regional situation on the part of India. Cold War politics, US military assistance to Pakistan under the 1954 Mutual Defence agreement threatened the strategic

balance in South Asia. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 only aggravated the strategic environment and posed new challenges and necessitated continuous recalibration of policy imperatives.

Changing Security Narrative

While smaller neighbours of India sought to build their identities in exclusive terms, and tried to build strategic alliance/relationship with extra-regional powers, India's sensitivity towards external influence in the region continued during the post-colonial period. Indian suspicion about countries in the region courting extra-regional powers intensified further by the enthusiasm of extra-regional powers to seek lasting influence in India's neighbourhood. Two countries that immediately come to mind here are the United States and China. India has perceived their geo-strategic collaboration with the countries in the immediate neighbourhood as deliberate attempts to stifle India's regional prominence and undermine its security. Such efforts have also had corrosive impact on the state of relationship between India and its neighbours. Pakistan's quest for parity with India through alliances with the USA and China is an issue that has not only affected India-Pakistan relations, but from an Indian perspective has also negatively impacted regional security dynamics.

During the cold war years, the US looked at India as unamenable to its global strategy to contain communism and found in Pakistan a willing partner and ally. India's commitment to non-alignment, its quest for strategic autonomy and conclusion of friendship treaty with the former USSR were viewed with suspicion by the United States. Similarly, India perceived US presence and its decision to arm Pakistan as strategic challenge to undo India's preponderant military strength. There is also a perception in India that since China views India as a country that has the potential to compete with it both regionally and globally for power and influence, it decided to arm Pakistan and help it with nuclear and missile technology in a deliberate ploy to challenge India's regional preeminence. Other issues like border dispute with India and Tibet also loom large in China's strategic calculus and influences its South Asia policy.

In the changed geopolitical context, however, India and the US have dispelled their suspicion about each other, while India and China have enhanced bilateral economic relationship. Moreover, in the post-cold war era, terrorism and other non-traditional security issues changed the manner in which nation states in the region looked at security within a military strategy framework. The fact that the countries of the region share porous borders compelled them to cooperate rather than it being a choice or preference. This has led India to overhaul its regional strategy. However, this is not to deny that suspicions about Chinese intent remains, which has its impact on India's regional strategy.

Moreover, it would be important to chart out India's security imperatives which have guided India's strategy towards some of its neighbours. India shares a porous border with most of its neighbours where there is ethnic overlap, and cultural contiguity. It is particularly true of India's relationship with Nepal and Bhutan with whom it shares open borders. It is natural for India, therefore, to have a stake in the stability and security of these two Himalayan neighbours. A brief look at various treaties that India signed with both these Himalayan countries after independence shows very clearly that security issue featured very prominently therein. India's treaty with Bhutan in 1949, its treaty with Nepal in 1950, its treaty of Peace and Friendship with Bangladesh in 1972, Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987, are some of the examples in which geo-political dimension played an important role. In clear contrast, during the post-cold war phase, India has signed new treaties introducing geo-economics as an important facet of bilateral engagement, which was conspicuous by its absence previously.⁷ Most of these treaties are rich in economic and developmental content even though there are significant security features.⁸ The balance is carefully maintained in these bilateral agreements underlining the need to reset neighbourhood strategy in an innovative manner by making economic cooperation and connectivity as key drivers in its foreign policy.

As great power interests in the region waned, in Indian strategic calculus, most of the neighbours were no longer viewed as security liabilities. Rather, with the end of the cold war, and liberalization and growth of Indian economy, there is a thinking in the government that India should change its approach towards its neighbours. The famous Gujral doctrine⁹ signaled such a shift in strategic thinking at the highest level, which was reportedly resisted by the foreign office bureaucracy to start with. But over time, the strategy has been readapted by the Indian foreign office with visible effect, which has found mention in policy articulations from time to time since the end of the Cold War.¹⁰ Democratic transition in the neighbourhood also provided a new context to India's engagement. Neighbours also reciprocated to some extent and seemed to view India with interest, when they saw India was willing to provide them with a stake in its growing economy. India's effort to balance its geopolitical strategic concerns with geo-economic initiatives was effected through crafting of innovative policy instruments—firstly, by signing a new set of bilateral treaties to promote free trade and commerce; secondly, by forging security partnerships in the form of providing training, conducting joint exercises and taking up common stance on security issues related to maritime domain and terrorism; thirdly, by investing in developmental activities through aid, assistance, and soft lines of credit.

Between Geoeconomics and Geopolitics

As has been argued above, the end of cold war opened up strategic space for India significantly. India's attempt to move into the realm of geo-economics was fueled by its understanding that there was a need to unlock the regional potential for economic growth through active engagement with each of its neighbours. India was aware of the advantages of its geo-political location, and knew that all it needed was to reestablish economic linkages which existed before partition through bilateral, regional and multilateral initiatives. Geographically, India is situated at the centre of South Asia and it shares border with all the South Asian neighbours. During British time, the subcontinent was a unified whole and partition disconnected the rail and road linkages by 1965. From the 1990s, India has demonstrated its willingness to work towards restoration of physical connectivity among various states in the region. Factoring Pakistani reservations to grant India connectivity to Afghanistan and Central Asia through its territory, India has focused on developing subregional connectivity with Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. The recent signing of Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) motor vehicle agreement¹¹ in June 2015 signals such shift in Indian approach from bilateralism that dominated its approach to regional multilateralism.

The end of cold war provided the context for foreign policy revisions too as global power dynamic underwent a change. India's own balance of payment crisis triggered a series of reforms to open up India's economy. Imperative of globalization facilitated this trade liberalization. With the disintegration of Soviet Union, it was realized arms race is unsustainable without domestic economic development. The collapse of the so-called Tiger economies of East Asia also alerted India to the need for focusing of economic reconstruction. Against this backdrop, Gujral doctrine¹² directed India to look at the region from a more benevolent perspective. Rather than hard bargaining; India adopted a policy of showing magnanimity and providing concession on a non-reciprocal basis. Though Gujral made an exception and did not include Pakistan in his scheme of things; India's decision to extend (Most Favoured Nation) MFN status to Islamabad unilaterally was one of the instances where New Delhi was even prepared to walk the extra mile to enable geoeconomic linkage with Pakistan.

On the security front, US interests in the region dwindled, and India's relations with China improved significantly after the 1988 visit of Rajiv Gandhi and signing of an agreement to maintain peace and tranquility on the border. This rapprochement had a benign impact on India's relationship with its neighbours to begin with. China itself advised India's neighbours to resolve their bilateral matters with India amicably. This was evident during the 1989 crisis with Nepal¹³ the 1987 Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) mission in Sri Lanka and in 1995 when Jiang Zemin advised Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir issue bilaterally with

India and give trade and commerce a chance. Geoeconomics became a principal instrument to advance geopolitical objectives. Earlier, a reluctant participant in SAARC, India also showed greater interest in regional integration as it was in line with its revised policy to advance its geo-economic interests. This also helped India's own standing in the region. As one of the policy makers had argued, "Economic integration in the sub-continent must restore the natural flow of goods, peoples and ideas that characterized our shared space as South Asians, and which now stands interrupted due to political divisions."¹⁴

The decade thus witnessed India's increasing engagement with SAARC. Economic cooperation took off as the promise of common market, common currency, breaking of trade barriers to creating enabling environment caught people's imagination. In 1995 with the operationalization of South Asia Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA) it became a first major step towards regional integration as trade entered into the agenda of SAARC. The states moved towards South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) which was ratified in 2004 and was operationalized in 2006; however, the idea of connectivity gained ground and became part and parcel of trade narrative subsequently to enable SAFTA.

The 1998 nuclear tests diverted India's attention towards geopolitics again. However, as anti-nuclear lobby wanted to portray South Asia as a nuclear flashpoint and sanctions were imposed, India's economic imperatives grew. To ease tension, India and Pakistan started the process of dialogue. India and Sri Lanka signed a bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that has now helped bilateral trade to grow to US \$5 billion. There were, of course, instances where India's geopolitical calculus was still considered important; for example, when India refused to provide transit to Nepal to access Bangladeshi ports citing security considerations (India agreed to remove it later). However, Indian position on regional trade and transit changed gradually on an incremental basis and by the end of the 1990s, India was mooted a South Asian Growth Quadrangle, where imperatives of geoeconomics were prominent.

The first decade of the new millennium brought the imperatives of geopolitics back on stage. China's growing engagement with many of the South Asian countries, though ostensibly economic had strategic dimension weaved into it, was perceived as a threat to India's security and geopolitical interests. There was a perception that strengthening of ties between India and the US after the signing of civilian nuclear agreement in 2005 and growing concerns in the US and the West about Chinese assertion in its Asian neighbourhood, led China to upscale its engagement in the region. Earlier, China's strategic ties were confined to Pakistan; however, since 2005, China has sought to replicate this engagement with other countries of South Asia. It has found a willing partner in Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. India's weak delivery capacity and inability to act with

decisiveness in the region due to domestic constraints was effectively leveraged by China to expand its footprints in the region. With Bangladesh, China has signed a Defence Cooperation Agreement in 2001, the content of which is yet to be made public; it was the greatest ally of the Monarchy in Nepal for some time and supplied weapons to fight the Maoists when India suspended supply of weapons to the Nepalese Army following Monarchy's decision to takeover power directly in 2005. Later, when India midwifed a peace agreement in Nepal, Beijing warmed up to the Maoists and has become an important stakeholder in Nepal's peace process. Chinese influence in the region can be gauged by the fact that following Afghanistan's entry into SAARC in 2007, some member countries especially Bangladesh under Begum Khaleda Zia and Nepal under King Gyanendra and Pakistan worked together to facilitate China's entry into SAARC as an observer and now wants Beijing as a new member.

Keeping in line with its emphasis on economic linkages, India tried to reinvigorate bilateral and quadrilateral cooperation to make some forward movement in spite of the logjam within SAARC. Connectivity became a thrust area. With the coming of Sheikh Hasina's government in Bangladesh which was well disposed towards the issue of regional connectivity, pursuing this agenda looked feasible. First signs of change were evident when Bangladesh decided to sign the Asian Highway Network Agreement.¹⁵ Bangladesh though opened up the inland waterways to India selectively providing surface transit and continued to remain embroiled in geopolitical calculations. It needs mention here that surface transit was operational till 1965 and was closed after the 1965 Indo-Pak war. However the issues of connectivity have taken a positive turn between India and Bangladesh with Kolkata-Dhaka-Agartala and Dhaka-Shillong-Guwahati that were inaugurated during Prime Minister Modi's visit to Bangladesh.

From Security Treaties to Economic Partnership

An analysis of various treaties that India signed with its neighbours reveals some interesting details about how India's approach to the region has underwent a discernable shift. The 1949 Treaty with Bhutan declared perpetual peace between the two countries and made Bhutan's foreign policy a subset of Indian foreign policy (article 2) while assuring that Bhutanese citizens will be treated at par with the Indian citizens (article 7), it extended every facility for the carriage, by land and water for its goods throughout Indian territory. It allowed Bhutan to import arms ammunition, machinery, warlike material or stores with the assistance and approval of government of India (article 6).¹⁶ Similarly, its treaty with Nepal signed in 1950 grew out of strategic imperative of China's occupation of Tibet in 1949. Article 2 of Treaty of Peace and friendship with Nepal made it imperative for the two countries to inform each other "serious friction or misunderstanding

with any neighbouring states”¹⁷ and article 6 and 7 provided resident status and other facilities to the nationals of the other on the basis of reciprocity. The letters exchanged between the leaders in addition to the treaty were significant. It provided consultations and counter measures in case of foreign aggression and gave India first priority to develop natural resources of Nepal and prevented the two countries to employ foreign nationals whose activities may be prejudicial to the security of the other.

The treaty between India and Bangladesh signed in 1972 described “ties of friendship through blood and sacrifices”¹⁸ and the article 4 of the treaty provided for “regular contacts with each other on major international problems affecting the interests of both States, through meetings and exchanges of views at all levels” and article 9 committed not to provide any assistance to any third party “taking part in an armed conflict, against the other party.” In case of attack or threat of attack, the two countries would consult each other to take appropriate measures. And article 10 bound the two countries not to undertake “any commitment secret or open, toward one or more States which may be incompatible with the present Treaty.” India’s accord with Sri Lanka in 1987 had also a pronounced security imperative. Security features were particularly embedded in the letters that were exchanged along with the 1987 Indo-Lanka Accord, which read, “Trincomalee or any other ports in Sri Lanka will not be made available for military use by any country in a manner prejudicial to India’s interest” foreign broadcasting services cannot be used for military or intelligence purpose”.¹⁹ While these treaties were signed in the shadow of cold war politics and major external threats; a study of the treaties that India has signed recently indicate how the thrust has changed from military to issues like terrorism and trade and commerce.

Compared to the treaties signed during the cold war years, the treaties that followed the end of cold war significantly moderated India’s emphasis on security. India agreed to revise its 1948 treaty with Bhutan keeping in view the latter’s sensitivities. Article 2 of the revised 2007 Indo-Bhutan Treaty now reads, “the Government of the Kingdom of Bhutan and the Government of the Republic of India shall cooperate closely with each other on issues relating to their national interests. Neither Government shall allow the use of its territory for activities harmful to the national security and interest of the other. Neither Government shall allow the use of its territory for activities harmful to the national security and interest of the other.”²⁰ Article 8 reads, “to consolidate and expand their economic cooperation for mutual and longterm benefit.”

The preamble to the Framework agreement for Cooperation and Development with Bangladesh in 2011 declares “the two countries are desirous to promote trans-border cooperation in the management of shared water resources, hydropower potentials and eco-systems and in the areas of connectivity and trade

and economic cooperation and are convinced that cooperation at the bilateral, sub-regional and regional levels will accelerate development and enable the two countries to realise their developmental aspirations..."²¹ Articles 1 to 4 speak of transport network and subregional cooperation; cooperation in water resources, basin management, flood control; disaster management; connecting electricity grid. Article 7 emphasises subregional cooperation in the power sector and joint development and financing of projects. The only security feature this treaty has is article 9 which reads, "To cooperate on security issues of concern to each other while fully respecting each other's sovereignty. Neither party shall allow the use of its territory for activities harmful to the other."²²

The preamble of the Framework Agreement signed with Maldives in 2011²³ emphasizes eradication of poverty and subregional cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region and South Asia; Article 1 speaks of promoting trade and investment and development of infrastructure, new and renewable energy, communications; strengthening links in the banking and financial sectors; improving credit and insurance facilities and establishment of development finance institutions; Article 2 emphasises connectivity; Article 4 focuses on technical cooperation and exchange of advance information in case of natural disasters. Article 5 and 6 contain some security features. Article 5 deals with "piracy, maritime security, terrorism, organised crime, drugs and human trafficking", and "cooperation to enhance security in the Indian Ocean Region through coordinated patrolling and aerial surveillance, exchange of information, development of effective legal framework and other measures mutually agreed upon. It also talks of intensifying bilateral "cooperation in the area of training and capacity building of police and security forces." Article 6, commits both countries not to "allow the use of territory for activities harmful to the national security and interest of the other." An analysis of all these agreement reveal that majority of articles relates to economic, energy and cooperation on natural disaster. There is also specific mention of subregional cooperation.

Security ahead of Economic Engagement: The Pak-Af Subregion

However, geo-strategic interests of India have been very much evident in India's agreements with its Western neighbours within the region, particularly, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Strategic Partnership Agreement with Afghanistan, which India signed in 2011 has a manifest security content. India's Strategic Partnership Agreement emphasizes on Strategic Dialogue between the National Security Advisors of the two countries, training, equipping and capacity building programmes for Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and fight against international terrorism. It has significant features relating to economic and socio-cultural cooperation between the two countries.

With Pakistan, India signed the Lahore Agreement of 1999 which emphasized that “nuclear dimension of the security environment of the two countries adds to their responsibility for avoidance of conflict between the two countries”²⁴: given resolution of Kashmir conflict through bilateral engagement, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, and an emphasis on SAARC. Only Article 3(ii) focused on trade and economic cooperation. Not to use their territory against each other was agreed in 2004 when former Prime Minister Vajpayee visited Islamabad to attend the SAARC summit. Given the relationship between the two countries and Pakistan’s constant search for parity with India with the help of external powers, India’s objectives have been to emphasise on the need to stop cross border terrorism and to open up trade and connectivity. Pakistan is apprehensive that geoeconomic dimension of India’s foreign policy should not undermine its geopolitical and security interests. Thus, India’s effort to engage Pakistan economically has not been successful.

It needs to be mentioned here that in keeping with India’s economic approach towards its neighbours, India had conferred MFN status to Pakistan in 1995. Pakistan is yet to reciprocate this gesture. Given Pakistan’s insecurity complex vis-à-vis India, even if it agrees to bilateral trade with India with riders, it is unlikely to allow India connectivity to its West and Central Asian region through its territory. Pakistan’s former commerce Secretary Zafar Mahmood in fact had made it clear that MFN status to India, “would not alter the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement that allows Afghan goods to cross over Pakistan into India and not vice versa.”²⁵ Interestingly, Indian goods bound for Afghanistan were allowed to pass through Pakistan by land during 1959-1965. This was a part of Afghanistan-Pakistan trade agreement. Afghanistan is now demanding that Pakistan should allow Afghanistan to trade with India in return for Pakistan’s trade with Tajikistan.²⁶

Building Regional Blocks: Mixing Geopolitics with Economics

India geo-economic engagement in the last decade has used multilateral and sub-regional arrangements to escape the excessive geo-political imperatives brought in by some countries in the larger regional SAARC forum. India is increasingly focusing on multilateral regional initiatives to connect to South East Asia. However a ‘look west’ approach has been missing due to the reservations of Pakistan. India’s role in SAARC has increased. It is steering various regional projects and taking a lead in regional connectivity.

Coming to the issue of connectivity, Indian leadership has been quite vocal on improving communication linkages at all levels. For example, in his speech to the 14th SAARC summit in New Delhi in 2007, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had clearly delineated India’s approach in this regard. He had

said, “Connectivity—physical, economic and of the mind, enabling us to use fully our geographical and resource endowments, has historically been the key to our region’s peace and prosperity. South Asia has flourished most when connected to itself and the rest of the world.”²⁷ In the 18th SAARC summit held in Kathmandu in 2014, Prime Minister Modi also stressed on connectivity and acknowledged that India had huge trade imbalance with all the South Asian countries which was not sustainable. India is already providing duty free access to 99.7 per cent items to 5 least developed countries of South Asia.²⁸

South Asian grid connectivity and multimodal transport network are some of the issues that India is piloting within SAARC. Apart from this, several sub-regional cooperation efforts are in progress. For example: India, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh grid connectivity, India-Bangladesh bilateral grid connectivity. India-Bangladesh and Nepal trilateral cooperation on Ganges, India-Bhutan and Bangladesh trilateral cooperation on Brahmaputra are some other initiatives which attest to subregional cooperation in non-traditional security areas. However, many of these subregional cooperation initiative is functioning beyond the SAARC framework.

The proposed Agreement that was to be signed in the 18th SAARC summit on ‘Regulation of Passenger and Cargo Vehicular Traffic amongst SAARC Member States’, ‘SAARC Regional Agreement on Railways’ and ‘SAARC Framework Agreement for Energy Cooperation’ could not be concluded as Pakistan wanted more time for internal consultation. It was apparent that Pakistan did not want to be a party to an agreement that would provide India access to Afghanistan. SAARC process has been stagnating or making little progress because of geopolitics and the enduring rivalry between two major countries of SAARC, namely India and Pakistan.

This is one of the reasons why subregional cooperation beyond the SAARC framework is gaining ground. For example in 1998 when South Asia Growth Quadrangle was mooted, the then Prime Minister I.K. Gujral said, “Eastern India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan form a clear economic and ecological sun-unit in our region, and there is every reason for us to encourage more intensive cooperation in that area than may be feasible for the region as a whole.”²⁹ There are several of such initiatives involving India, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. These four countries have accelerated the process of subregionalism and connecting both by road and rail, upgrading ports, increasing efficiency of waterways by dredging it regularly. After the present Awami League government assumed power in Bangladesh, a 51-point MoU was signed between the two countries and many of them are related to trade and transit.³⁰ In fact, India’s leadership role in this regard is evident from bilateral aid of US\$1 billion (out of which \$200 million is now converted to grant) is being utilized for building communication network in

Bangladesh and connecting India with Bangladesh.³¹ During Prime Minister Modi's visit, India extended a further US \$2 billion credit line to boost infrastructure development there. In 2014, India extended US \$1 billion credit line to Nepal for developmental activities. All these and along with India's contribution to developing road network in Afghanistan attest to a neoliberal thrust in India's foreign policy.³² Connecting energy grids are noteworthy initiatives between the sub region of Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and India.³³ According to North East Vision Document 2020, "NER shares 98 per cent of its borders with the neighbouring countries of Bhutan, Nepal, China, Bangladesh and Myanmar and the Look East Policy focus on the region can help it to access the markets in East Asian and Southeast Asia."³⁴ An emphasis on economic dimension of the relations is evident from the report which further reads, "Given that the fortunes of over 38 million people depend on good neighbourliness, the bureaucratic and defence-dominated approach to relationships must give way to the one based on mutual economic gains".³⁵

SAARC energy cooperation agreement was signed in the 18th SAARC Summit. Already, India is planning to approve cross border energy trade on Indian Energy Exchange which is likely to trade 120 Mw with Bhutan, 50 Mw each with Bangladesh and Nepal and share power with other neighbouring countries when grid is connected to Sri Lanka and Pakistan.³⁶

Other regional forum where India is active are Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). Its engagement with Association of South East Asian Nation (ASEAN), East Asia Summit (EAS), Asian Regional Forum (ARF) clearly indicate how India is overcoming its geopolitical challenges with geo-economic approach. BIMSTEC was initiated in 1997 and soon after Myanmar joined. Nepal and Bhutan became members in 2004 expanding the BIMSTEC. According to an analyst, India's potential lies more with BIMSTEC than SAARC. "As compared to five percent as in the case of SAARC, intra-BIMSTEC trade as a percentage of their total trade is close to 7 percent. In 2007, India's total exports to BIMSTEC countries was \$7.8 billion and in 2013 it increased to \$19 billion, while during this period its imports from this group increased from \$5.7 billion to \$8.3 billion."³⁷ Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh attending the BIMSTEC summit in March 2014 emphasised on the conclusion of the Agreement on Trade in Goods by the end of 2014. He also stressed the need for early finalisation of the Agreement on Services and Investments. Already the BIMSTEC countries are yet to ratify the Convention on Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism, Trans-National Organised Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking. Such subregional engagements signals India's attempt to go ahead with the geoecoomic imperative in its regional strategy by all means possible.

Simultaneously, India's geopolitical interests are served by several multilateral defence cooperation that it has signed with neighbouring countries including training and capacity building. There is trilateral maritime cooperation between India, Sri Lanka and Maldives, it has annual Defence Dialogue with Sri Lanka; it has joint anti-terror military exercises with Bangladesh. Both the countries have annual army staff talks. The three services of India and Sri Lanka also hold annual staff talks. India and Nepal held first battalion level joint exercise in 2013 known as 'Surya Kiran'. Such bilateral arrangements together with multilateral ones like the Trilateral Cooperation in Maritime Security which India, Sri Lanka and Maldives launched in October 2011 signify that India will try to keep updating its defence engagements with most of its neighbours within the purview of its overall regional strategy and use the lever of economic engagement to build mutual trust and understanding.

Challenge of Competing Regionalism: The China Factor

India's approach to the region is now confronted with the challenge of China's increasing political and economic intrusion into the South Asian region for its own geo-strategic goals. The South Asian countries have often welcomed China because of its willingness to invest large capital in infrastructure and development of new ports. China's model of economic engagement that is based on build-own-transfer and its ability to complete projects in time make it a preferable economic partner. Of course, South Asian countries also want to engage China to balance India's dominance in the region as Beijing is perceived as a strategic competitor to India in the region. The Chinese proposal of Bangladesh China India Myanmar (BCIM) economic corridor and Maritime Silk route is thus being interpreted at various levels as an effort to engage South Asian countries and strengthen Chinese influence in the region. SAARC emphasizes regional connectivity. And Chinese efforts to connect to South Asia as a full member of SAARC is being seen by India as an attempt to take further advantage of the initiatives being taken by SAARC to liberalise trade and commerce within the region. Because of Indian indifference, the idea of a BCIM economic corridor, which started as the Kunming initiative in 1997 has been lying dormant for quite some time. After Xi Jinping was elected as the President of China, he came out with his "one belt one road" policy to boost connectivity in Asia. China also unveiled its periphery strategy in the 'Peripheral Diplomacy Conference' in 2013 and sought to activate BCIM corridor.³⁸ India is also reluctant to join this initiative wholeheartedly when the SAARC initiative to establish regional connectivity is yet to fructify due to Islamabad's reluctance.

**Comparative Trade figures of India and China with the South Asian Countries
(in US dollars in million for 2014)**

	<i>India's Export</i>	<i>China's Export</i>	<i>India's Import</i>	<i>China's Import</i>
Afghanistan	443.05	393.60	242.14	-
Bangladesh	6,579.88	11,792.98	556.64	761.74
Bhutan	303.35	-	159.46	-
Maldives	139.84	-	-	-
Nepal	4,405.08	2,282.85	602.04	46.80
Pakistan	2,181.82	13,248.42	529.32	2,760.39
Sri Lanka	6,433.18	3,794.25	591.69	248.72

Source: <http://data.imf.org/?sk=253a4049-e94d-4228-b99d 561553731322&csId=1 390030 323199 &css =1390030323199>

China's export to India is 54,132.74 million and import stands at 16,412.57 making China India's largest trading partner.

For a fairly long period, India has tried to connect its North East region with South East Asia by developing infrastructure that would facilitate its connectivity to Myanmar and Bangladesh. China wants to develop the Yunnan-Arakan-Chittagong road to have an access to the Bay of Bengal. Already, India and China are competing for influence in Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. Thus, India continues to be lukewarm to China's proposed Maritime Silk Route (MSR) and BCIM whereas Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are openly welcoming it. It is likely that China would like to further intensify its engagement with South Asian neighbours and compete with India to gain access to their markets for trade and investment. It will also compete for influence in the neighbourhood. In this competing regionalism, economic instruments would be used to gain strategic mileage. The US would also be a player in this geo-strategic competition. While China would use BCIM and MSR, India needs to bring in further impetus to reinvigorate SAARC and revitalize subregional cooperation. It would be in India's interest to pursue several multilateral institutions to maximize economic benefit and strategic goals.

One of the significant developments in terms of establishing connectivity is that India along with three of its north-eastern neighbours—Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal (BBIN)—has decided to enable sub-regional cooperation on management of water resources and cooperate on power/hydropower generation and establish connectivity and transit among the member states. They have signed an agreement on multi-modal Motor Vehicle Agreement (MVA) in June 2015. This is significant in the context of trade and infrastructure connectivity and is likely to generate economic activities and employment opportunities. It is apparent that geo-economic consideration has motivated India to engage in such sub-regional

cooperation initiative. In contrast, in the 1980s, India preferred bilateral negotiations to regional or subregional arrangement to further trade with its neighbours. During the 1980s, security was a major consideration when Nepal demanded to be given access to Bangladesh ports through Indian territory. Similarly, Bangladesh had earlier argued that transit to India through its territory would have security implications for the country. Yet, agreements like the Asian Highway, Asian railway network, bilateral, regional and multilateral connectivity underline that it is economic consideration that has now become the most important driving force. Both India and China are competing with each other to establish connectivity along their geographical periphery to access the nearest rail, road and port network.

Though India and China are competing for influence in the region and beyond their trade with and investment in the South Asian countries remain important markers of their influence. According to a well-researched report, "among South Asian countries, Pakistan was the most prominent aid recipient from China in the past decade, receiving \$66 billion, or 87 percent of the regional total aid, while Sri Lanka ran a distant second with \$5 billion and Nepal rounded out the top three with \$2 billion."³⁹ The report further argues that, "From 2001 to 2011, 17 percent of the China's global infrastructure assistance was allocated to South Asia".⁴⁰ According to Director General of Foreign Trade, "During the last decade, India's total trade with SAARC countries increased from US\$ 5.6 billion in 2004-05 to nearly US\$ 20 billion in 2013-14. During the five-year period (2009-10 to 2013-14), exports grew at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 20.2 percent, while imports grew at a CAGR of 10.5 percent. Bangladesh is India's largest trading partner in the SAARC followed by Sri Lanka, Nepal and Pakistan."⁴¹ The statistics provided above prove that both India and China are engaging countries in the South Asian region on a proactive basis and geo-economic consideration are taking the front seat in their calculations.

Prospects

India's geo-economic policy has two major aspects. First, to accelerate its economic development through multiple channels—gaining access to road and rail network for its geographically isolated regions and thereby generate economic activities, trade, access to seaports; second, turn economic engagement through sharing of prosperity into strategic gains. This is aimed at reducing the perception of India as a regional hegemon and pose as a benevolent partner ready to share its prosperity with all its neighbours. In an increasingly interconnected world, this is a necessary first step. India's aspiration to play a larger global role cannot be fulfilled without the support of its neighbours and without adopting a strategy of economic integration in the region. However it does not mean increasing business interest will undermine its strategic interest as some scholars have pointed

out.⁴² India needs to clearly devise a policy towards those who are willing to partner with it and those who are not. The benefits of engagement need to be substantial so as to increase the cost of disengagement. While its geopolitical compulsions will impede India's ability to play a bigger role in the region, its neo-liberal approach to its neighbours is likely to bear fruit. Dynamics of India's relations with its neighbours have changed vastly during the last decade. The momentum can be sustained by staying the course and promoting economic cooperation and taking pro-active measures to boost regional cooperation while being mindful of its core security concerns that can be mutually addressed in an atmosphere of trust engendered through geoeconomic engagement.

NOTES

1. The concept of 'geo-economics' was first introduced by American historian Edward Luttwak in his article titled "From Geopolitics to Geo-Economics: Logic of Conflict, Grammar of Commerce", in *The National Interest*, No. 20 (Summer 1990), pp. 17-23. The basic argument that this article advanced was that in a globalized world, "the deference that armed strength could evoke in the dealings of government over all matters" including economic, was in decline and the "methods of commerce" were displacing the "military methods". Sanjaya Baru, in his article titled "Geo-economics and Strategy", in *Survival*, June-July 2012, Vol 54(3), pp.47-59 defined Geo-economics both "as the relationship between economic policy and changes in national power and geopolitics (in other words, the geopolitical consequences of economic phenomena)" and "as the economic consequences of trends in geopolitics and national power". It has also been defined as "continuation of the logic of geopolitics, applied to the era of globalization". (Klaus Solberg Søilen, "Geoeconomics", bookboon.com, 2012, at <http://bookboon.com/en/geoeconomics-ebook> (Accessed on November 5, 2015).
2. "Foreign Secretary Mr. Shyam Saran's speech on "India and its Neighbours" at the India International Centre (IIC), on February 14, 2005, at <http://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/2483/Foreign+Secretary+Mr+Shyam+Sarans+speech+on+India+and+its+Neighbours+at+the+India+International+Centre+IIC> (Accessed on October 1, 2015).
3. Smruti S Pattanaik, "Can India be a Security Provider to its Neighbours: Competing Interests, Dichotomical Expectations, Challenges and Constraints", in S.D. Muni and Vivek Chadha ed., *Asian Strategic Review 2015* (New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2015), pp.31-66.
4. Reported in *The Statesman*, 2 June 1948 and as cited in A Appadorai, "India's foreign Policy", *International Affairs*, Vol. 25(1), January 1949, p.44.
5. For details on India's policy towards South Asian region see, Arvind Gupta, Ashok K Behuria and Smruti S Pattanaik, "Does India Have a Neighbourhood Policy?", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol 36(2), 2012, pp. 229-246
6. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, "India's Foreign policy", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 34(3), April 1956, p. 435.
7. The treaties that India has signed recently are: Indo-Bhutan treaty, 2008; Development Partnership Agreement with Bangladesh, 2011; Development Partnership Agreement with Maldives, 2011.
8. The Strategic Partnership Agreement, 2011 with Afghanistan has political, economic and strategic dimensions.
9. I.K. Gujral, "Foreign Policy for India", External Publicity Division, Ministry of External affairs, Delhi, 1998, pp.23-24
10. One sees a visible change in India's approach to its neighbours. It signed bilateral FTA with Sri Lanka in 1998, It provided \$1 billion credit line for infrastructure development out of

- which \$200m was converted into grant. In the recent visit of Prime Minister Modi to Bangladesh another \$2 billion credit line has been extended. India has extended another \$1 billion credit line to Nepal in 2014 and 2 billion credit line to Afghanistan.
11. "India, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh Sign a landmark Motor Vehicles Agreement for seamless movement of road traffic among Four SAARC Countries in Thimpu", June 15, 2015, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=122516> (Accessed on October 2, 2015).
 12. Gujral speaks of five principles of non-reciprocity, not allowing territory to be used against another country, non-interference in internal affairs of another, respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty and settlement of disputes through peaceful bilateral negotiation. He makes clear that non-reciprocity approach should be applied to Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Gujral, n.9, p.95
 13. India decided to close 20 special entry points for trade and transit except for two in the India-Nepal border over the renewal of trade and transit treaty. Nepal wanted a separate trade and transit treaty whereas India insisted on having one treaty. Nepal's import of anti-aircraft gun from China in violation of the 1950 treaty triggered the reaction from India.
 14. Speech by Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran, February 4, 2005, at <http://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/2483/Foreign+Secretary+Mr+Shyam+Sarans+speech+on+India+and+its+Neighbours+at+the+India+International+Centre+IIC> (Accessed on January 5, 2010).
 15. BNP government had refused to sign the agreement as it did not want to approve the proposed route that enters India and after passing through Bangladesh reenters India. The fear was it will make Bangladesh India dependent. There was another argument that India will indirectly get transit which Bangladesh has been refusing under security consideration. The main part of the route (AH1) as favoured by India enters into Bangladesh at Benapol (from West Bengal) and via Dhaka exits at Tamabil (Sylhet) to enter into India's northeast. The other main route (AH2) enters into North Bangladesh at Banglabandha and also via Dhaka exits at Tamabil into India.
 16. Treaty of Perpetual Peace and Friendship, August 8, 1949, at http://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/5242/Treaty_or_Perpetual_Peace_and_Friendship (Accessed on November 5, 2015).
 17. Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Treaty of Peace and friendship, at <http://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/6295/Treaty+of+Peace+and+Friendship> (Accessed on September 1, 2015).
 18. For details of the Treaty of Peace and friendship between India and Bangladesh 1972 see, <http://www.commonlit.org/in/other/treaties/INTSer/1972/6.html> (Accessed on November 5, 2015).
 19. J.N. Dixit, *Assignment Colombo* (New Delhi: Konark Publishers, 1998).
 20. MEA, India Bhutan Friendship Treaty, 2007, <http://mea.gov.in/Images/pdf/india-bhutan-treaty-07.pdf> (Accessed on January 2, 2015).
 21. MEA, "Framework Agreement on Cooperation for Development between India and Bangladesh", September 6, 2011, at <http://mea.gov.in/bilateraldocuments.htm?dtl/5218/Framework+Agreement+on+Cooperation+for+Development+between+India+and+Bangladesh> (Accessed on November 5, 2015).
 22. Ibid
 23. "Framework Agreement on Cooperation for Development between India and Maldives", November 12, 2011, at <http://mea.gov.in/bilateral- documents.htm?dtl/5407/Framework+Agreement+on+Cooperation+for+Development+between+India+and+Maldives> (Accessed on October 2, 2015).
 24. MEA, "Lahore Declaration", February 1999, <http://mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?18997/Lahore+Declaration+February+1999> (Accessed on January 2, 2015).
 25. Anita Joshua, "Pak grants MFN status to India", *The Hindu*, November 3, 2011, at <http://>

- /www.thehindu.com/news/international/pak-grants-mfn-status-to-india/article2591731.ece, (Accessed on January 15, 2015).
26. "Key Pakistani-Afghan trade deals stall on India, souring ties", *Express Tribune*, September 17, 2015, at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/958367/key-pakistani-afghan-trade-deals-stall-on-india-souring-ties/> (Accessed on October 21, 2015).
 27. "Prime Minister's Address to the 14th SAARC Summit", 3 April 2007, available at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=26591> (Accessed on January 7, 2015).
 28. Speech by the Prime Minister at the SAARC Summit, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/pmreleases.aspx?mincode=3>, (Accessed on January 10, 2015).
 29. I.K. Gujral, n.9, p.10
 30. See MEA, "Joint Communiqué issued on the occasion of the visit to India of Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh", January 12, 2010 at <http://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/3452/Joint+Communiqu+issued+on+the+occasion+of+the+visit+to+India+of+Her+Excellency+Sheikh+Hasina+Prime+Minister+of+Bangladesh> (Accessed on January 9, 2015).
 31. The agreement provides for credit at a 1.75 per cent interest rate with a repayment period of 20 years, including a grace period of five years. The rate of interest was later revised to 1% in May 2012. <http://hciddhaka.gov.in/pages.php?id=2>, (Accessed on January 17, 2015).
 32. India is committed to build Chahbahar port in Iran.
 33. A 400 kv line constructed by Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd and Power Grid Company of Bangladesh in the Eastern sector – Baharampur in India to Bheramara in Bangladesh with the load capacity of 500 MW
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 35. Ibid.
 36. Shreya Jai, "India to facilitate cross-border power trading with SAARC Nations", *Business standard*, January 20, 2015, http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/india-to-facilitate-cross-border-power-trading-with-saarc-nations-ex-to-be-trading-platform-for-nepal-bhutan-bangladesh-115011900658_1.html, (Accessed on January 25, 2015).
 37. Bipul Chatterjee and Surendar Singh, "Time to Energize BIMSTEC", *The Diplomat*, January 7, 2015, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/01/time-to-energize-bimstec/> (Accessed on January 17, 2015).
 38. Smruti S Pattanaik, "Bangladesh-China Relations in 2014", in Prashant Kumar Singh ed., *China Yearbook 2014*, (New Delhi: Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses and Magnum Books, 2015), p.275.
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 40. Ibid
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24

India's Central Asian Strategic Paradoxes: The Impact of Strategic Autonomy in the Emerging Asian Regional Architecture

Micha'el Tanchum

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's July 2015 tour of the five Central Asian republics was a significant diplomatic gesture signaling New Delhi's desire to ameliorate its weak strategic position in Central Asia. New Delhi's poor maneuvering under previous Indian governments has left India isolated in Central Asia, a region critical for India's energy, trade and security needs. Indicative of India's prior lackluster performance, Modi's visit to Turkmenistan was the first by an Indian prime minister in twenty years, an unjustifiable diplomatic lacuna given that Ashgabat is a crucial partner for New Delhi in the construction of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India natural gas pipeline. Although India needs to counterbalance Chinese and especially Pakistani influence in the region, New Delhi had sought to maintain its strategic autonomy from both Moscow and Washington, particularly during Manmohan Singh's second term as prime minister. This policy has caused Russia, in addition to China, to marginalize India in the region. Without a robust strategic partnership with any of the major powers, coupled with a delivery deficit in deepening its economic cooperation with the Central Asian republics themselves, New Delhi finds itself sidelined in the region in the run-up to its full membership in Central Asia's premier regional organisation, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

This chapter examines how India's insistence on a policy of strategic autonomy, in conjunction with its inability to increase bilateral trade, has created a paradoxical policy orientation in Central Asia, negatively impacting policy outcomes for India's energy, trade and security relations. The chapter analyzes the causes of India's

original setback in Tajikistan in December 2010 and then suggest that New Delhi's subsequent *Connect Central Asia Policy* has encountered similar economic and security setbacks in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan because of the paradoxes engendered by India's policy of strategic autonomy under the Government of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. In so doing, this chapter hopes to shed light on possible outcomes for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's new diplomatic posture toward Central Asia. India's ability to reverse its economic delivery deficit, especially in relation to energy infrastructure investment in Central Asia will be the key factor in improving its strategic position in the region.

India's Unsure Strategic Footing in Central Asia

India's anticipated 2016 full membership in Central Asia's premier geopolitical and economic association, the SCO, will ostensibly provide India more diplomatic leverage than its current observer status. However, India will begin its membership on an unsure strategic footing with the SCO's two major powers, China and Russia, since India maintains a geostrategic rivalry with the former and is looked upon with increasing suspicion by the latter.

As a result of its long-standing territorial dispute with China, India faces 400,000 Chinese troops on its border. India also must cope with additional threats from China's build-up of military infrastructure in Tibet and the Chinese-administered Gwadar port on Pakistan's Indian Ocean coast. India's position is weakened by Beijing's ascendant role in the SCO due to China's deepening bilateral economic relations with each of the Central Asian republics through the massive infrastructure investments of Beijing's Silk Road Economic Belt and Maritime Silk Road initiatives (now collectively termed 'One Belt, One Road', or OBOR).

As China's 'all-weather' ally Pakistan is slated to become a full SCO member simultaneously with India, Beijing is poised to assume a greater leading role in the organisation. Expanding its OBOR initiative into the subcontinent, Beijing signed a group of agreements with Islamabad in April 2015 providing Pakistan with a US \$46 billion infrastructure package to establish the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The corridor will extend from the Chinese-built Gwadar port on Pakistan's Indian Ocean coast to China's westernmost city Kashgar (Kashi) in Xinjiang.¹ As part of the CPEC package, a Chinese National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) subsidiary will construct most of Pakistan's portion of the Iran-Pakistan natural gas pipeline financed by a US \$2 billion Chinese loan covering 85 percent of the construction cost.²

Worse, India cannot rely on Russia as a counterbalance to China's Central Asian advances since Russia looks askance on its erstwhile Indian ally for developing strategic ties with the United States, embodied in the 2008 agreement on civil nuclear cooperation and reinforced by the diplomatic tone and agreements

reached during U.S. President Barack Obama's January 2015 visit to New Delhi. Washington, which concluded the agreement with New Delhi in defiance of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, sought to strengthen the rising India as a democratic counterweight to China in the Asia-Pacific region. However, prior to the Modi government, India balked at fulfilling this role. During his May 2012 visit to South Korea to participate in the Seoul Nuclear Security Summit, Modi's predecessor, then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, expressed his doubts to the Korean press about the effectiveness of any collective security strategy to contain China and declared his intention for India to maintain its equidistance from Washington and Beijing.³ Nonetheless, in response to New Delhi's relationship with Washington, Russia has been steadily increasing its arms sales to Pakistan, with Moscow's August 2015 agreement to sell four MI-35 attack helicopters as the most recent example.⁴

India's efforts to increase its bilateral economic cooperation in Central Asia, particularly in critical sectors such as energy development and production, have been hampered by its insistence on strategic autonomy. Because New Delhi lacks a strong strategic partnership with the United States, the larger Central Asian republics can accede to Chinese pressure to limit the scope of their bilateral economic cooperation with India without damaging their developing defense ties to the United States and NATO. Conversely, because of India's lack of strong bilateral economic relations with the Central Asian republics, the smaller Central Asian republics can accede to Russian pressure to limit the scope of their bilateral defense cooperation with India without risking the loss of a major trading partner. The collapse of India's position in Central Asia began in this manner with the small Central Asian republic of Tajikistan.

India's Security Setback in Tajikistan and the Paradoxical Connect Central Asia Policy

Officially announced by New Delhi in June 2012, India's *Connect Central Asia* policy was the formalization of New Delhi's revamped efforts to offset the grave strategic setback India first suffered in December 2010 with its loss of Tajikistan's Ayni airbase to Russia. The Ayni airbase had been the key to New Delhi's plan for expanding India's strategic footprint in Central Asia. Originally used by the Soviets during the 1980s, the airbase had been abandoned since the 1988-89 withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. New Delhi contributed technical assistance and US \$70 million to renovate the airbase between 2003 and 2010. India's Border Roads Organisation (BRO), directed by the Army Corps of Engineers, extended the main runway to 3,200 meters to accommodate all types of aircraft, built a control tower with state-of-the-art navigational technology, and constructed three hangars capable of housing squadrons of MiG-29 bombers

used by the Indian Air Force.⁵ Nonetheless, there are no reports of Indian combat aircraft having ever been stationed at the base. Although the BRO began the Ayni renovations in 2004, New Delhi never developed any meaningful leverage with the Tajik government. Russia's 201st Motor Rifle Division (MRD), Moscow's largest military contingent abroad, is stationed in Dushanbe and two other Tajik cities. Moscow had been intent on preventing other foreign nations from using the base. In December 2010, Tajikistan announced that Russia would be the only country to use the Ayni airbase.⁶ Moscow and Dushanbe then began negotiating the terms of their future military cooperation and Russia's support for Tajik President Emomali Rahmon's November 2013 re-election bid. India was effectively closed out of Ayni and the embarrassing reversal ushered in a period during which India had virtually no significant defense presence in Central Asia.

The decision also stemmed from the powerful economic influence that Moscow exerts on Dushanbe through the personal remittances of Tajik workers in Russia. According to the Central Bank of Russia, personal remittances from Tajik workers amounted to US\$2.19 billion in 2010.⁷ In the year India lost the use of the Ayni airbase to Russia, personal remittances from Russia accounted for 39 per cent of Tajikistan's GDP.⁸ By 2012, the year New Delhi announced its *Connect Central Asia Policy*, remittances from Russia accounted for 43 per cent of Tajikistan's GDP. Meanwhile, Indian bilateral trade with Tajikistan does not act as a sufficient economic counterweight. From 2010-2011, India-Tajikistan bilateral trade amounted to only US\$41.3 million. From 2011-2012, the period prior to India's inauguration of its India-Central Asia Dialogue, the amount of India's trade with Tajikistan dropped by 31 per cent to US\$28.37 million.⁹ China's trade with Tajikistan also dwarfed that of India's. The volume of Chinese-Tajik bilateral trade amounted to US\$660 million, a little over half of the US\$1.04 billion bilateral trade between Russia and Tajikistan. During New Delhi's decade-long effort to develop a security relationship with Dushanbe, India did not concurrently develop a sufficiently significant trade partnership with Tajikistan. During the period, Chinese-Tajik bilateral trade has emerged as important economic counterweight to Russia. Since India was not a critical trading partner for Tajikistan, and New Delhi could not offer Dushanbe an avenue for wider security cooperation with a US-led alliance because of New Delhi's strategic autonomy from Washington, there was little cost to Tajikistan for reducing its strategic relationship with India.

To bolster its weak position in Central Asia in the wake of its setback in Tajikistan, India convened the first meeting of the India-Central Asia Dialogue in the Kyrgyz capital Bishkek in June 2012. In his keynote address, India's Minister of External Affairs unveiled New Delhi's *Connect Central Asia* policy. Among its

declared objectives for “deep engagement” with the Central Asian republics, New Delhi enumerated the need for strengthened strategic and security cooperation and long-term partnerships in energy development. However, New Delhi continued to struggle to realize these goals.

One year after the inaugural round of New Delhi’s India-Central Asia Dialogue, Moscow began sending the first installments of a new US\$1 billion military aid package to Bishkek, effectively closing off Kyrgyzstan to India as it did Tajikistan. As in Tajikistan, India’s economic relations did not serve as a consideration for Bishkek. From 2011-2012, India-Kyrgyzstan bilateral trade amounted to only US\$30.05 million. Despite the Bishkek round of the India-Central Asia Dialogue, Indian-Kyrgyz bilateral trade rose to only US\$37.12 million in 2012-2013.¹⁰ In sharp contrast, Chinese-Kyrgyz bilateral trade in 2011 amounted to US\$4.98 billion.¹¹ Chinese-Kyrgyz bilateral trade further grew to US\$5.97 billion in 2012, accounting for half of Kyrgyzstan’s total trade.¹² Although Russian-Kyrgyz bilateral trade accounts for 17 per cent of Kyrgyz trade as compared to China’s 50 per cent, Moscow also exerts considerable economic influence on Bishkek through the personal remittances of Kyrgyz workers in Russia.¹³ Although Kyrgyz dependence on remittances from Russia is less than that of Tajikistan, remittances account for a large portion of the Kyrgyz economy. Remittances accounted for 23 per cent of Kyrgyzstan’s 2011 GDP, and rose to 25 per cent of its 2012 GDP.¹⁴

India was not even under consideration for a major role in the operation of the ‘Transit Center’ at the Manas airport outside of Bishkek after the July 2014 expiration of the U.S. lease on the airbase.¹⁵ Having lost Tajikistan, which India regarded as its ‘gateway’ to Central Asia, New Delhi had no chance for a significant presence in Kyrgyzstan without altering its almost equidistance stance between Moscow and Washington. Indeed, in the wake of the Modi government’s January 2015 embrace of Washington, New Delhi’s fortunes changed in Kyrgyzstan. As a result of closer India-U.S. strategic cooperation, members of the Indian and Kyrgyz armed forces completed a two-week joint military exercise in Kyrgyzstan in March 2015. Involving Special Forces from each country, including Kyrgyzstan’s “Scorpions” units, the *Kanzhar 2015* exercise focused on the neutralization of armed militant organisations in mountainous areas. While the joint exercise was relatively small, consisting of approximately 100 soldiers, the presence of Indian combat forces on the ground in Central Asia marks an important comeback for India’s hitherto floundering *Connect Central Asia* policy.

The changing fortunes of India’s strategic cooperation in Central Asia was undoubtedly connected to a rising anxiety over Russian hard power as well as a concurrent apprehension over the growing predominance of Chinese economic

soft power among the nations of the region. However, it is also the product of India's more muscular assertion of its national interests in international affairs under Narendra Modi's government and, in particular, Modi's deepening strategic partnership with the United States. Five months prior to the Indian-Kyrgyz joint exercises, Kyrgyzstan participated for the first time in the Kazakhstan-NATO joint military exercise known as Steppe Eagle.

Featuring Kazakhstan's NATO-trained air mobile brigade KAZBRIG, the yearly Steppe Eagle exercises serve to widen the scope of NATO interoperability across the Kazakhstani armed forces and is therefore perhaps the most significant of NATO's Partnership for Peace programs conducted in Central Asia. Despite the fact Kyrgyzstan has received a US \$1 billion military aid package from Moscow, Bishkek chose to participate in Steppe Eagle 2014, which ran from September 16 to October 25, 2014. That followed the 2013 training of almost 900 members of Kyrgyz Special Forces units by the United States.¹⁶ Among those units trained by the U.S. were Kyrgyzstan's "Scorpions" Special Forces that participated in the March 2015 joint exercises with India. Thus, Prime Minister Modi's decision to modify India's policy orientation of strategic autonomy and develop closer cooperation with the United States enhanced New Delhi's value as a security partner.

However, India's choice to focus so much effort on developing defense cooperation with the two smaller Central Asian republics is itself somewhat paradoxical, since these two weakest of the five Central Asian republics cannot exercise a significant degree of independence in their foreign policies. In July 2015, Kyrgyz Prime Minister Temir Sariyev abrogated Kyrgyzstan's bilateral aid and assistance agreement with the United States, ending a cooperation treaty that had been in place since 1993.¹⁷ Accounting for about US \$2 billion of aid over the course of twenty years, Bishkek's decision was ostensibly in retaliation for Washington's decision to make the Kyrgyz dissident Azimjon Askarov the recipient of the U.S. State Department's 2014 Human Rights Defender award. Askarov, an ethnic Uzbek journalist serving a life sentence for inciting ethnic hatred, was arrested during the violent ethnic disturbances in Kyrgyzstan's southern region that had erupted after former Kyrgyz president Kurmanbek Bakiyev was forced from office by popular protests in Bishkek. Kyrgyzstan's current president, Almazbek Atambayev characterized the U.S. State Department's award to Askarov as a "deliberate provocation aiming to flare up ethnic tensions."¹⁸

While the award provided a precipitating cause for Atambayev to partially sever relations with the U.S., Bishkek's deepening ties with Moscow were at the root of the rupture in relations. In May 2015, Kyrgyzstan signed a series of protocols with Russia, solidifying Kyrgyzstan December 2014 accession to the

Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union. Similar to the incentives previously offered to Tajikistan discussed above, Kyrgyzstan will receive critical financial aid from Moscow and relief from rival Uzbekistan's monopoly as Kyrgyzstan's supplier of natural gas. Like his Tajik counterpart earlier, Atambayev is counting on Russian financial support to help him secure his position in the run-up to Kyrgyzstan October 4, 2015 parliamentary elections. Lacking significant trade partnership with Kyrgyzstan and not being a major investor in its energy and transportation infrastructure development, India's renewed security cooperation with Kyrgyzstan will likely end if Ashgabat succumbs to Russian pressure to further distance itself from Washington.

Strategic Autonomy and Indian Economic Setbacks in Kazakhstan: India-UK Contrast

Most damaging to the New Delhi's *Connect Central Asia* policy during the Manmohan Singh government has been China's sidelining of India in Kazakhstan—geographically Central Asia's largest nation and the region's wealthiest economy—through China's assertive energy policy. The combined negative impact of India's policy of strategic autonomy and its deliver deficit in economic cooperation, particularly energy infrastructure investment, is poignantly illustrated by the contrast between Kazakhstan's strategic and economic cooperation with India and the United Kingdom. Because India has maintained a strategic distance from the United States and NATO, India's value for Kazakhstan as an additional counterbalance to Russia is greatly limited. Because of India's concurrent failure to significantly expand its trade with Kazakhstan, Astana does not perceive India as an economic counterbalance to Russia or China, contributing to the flawed performance of India's *Connect Central Asia* policy in Kazakhstan. Indeed, the most embarrassing setback to New Delhi's *Connect Central Asia* policy has been India's loss of Conoco Phillips' 8.4 per cent stake in Kazakhstan's massive Kashagan oil field to the China's CNPC in September 2013.

Five months after New Delhi announced its *Connect Central Asia* policy to bolster security cooperation and develop long-term energy partnerships with the nations of the region, ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL), the international arm of India's Oil and Natural Gas Corporation concluded an agreement, in late 2012, to purchase Conoco Phillips' 8.4 per cent interest in Kashagan, pending Astana's approval. Considered the largest oil discovery in the last thirty years, the US\$5 billion stake in Kashagan was perceived by New Delhi as a significant foothold in Kazakhstan's oil industry.

The second round of New Delhi's India-Central Asia Dialogue was held in Almaty in June 2013. In addition to being held in Kazakhstan's commercial center,

the India-Central Asia Dialogue II featured a special session focused on the bilateral relations between India and Kazakhstan. About one month prior to this second round of New Delhi's India-Central Asia Dialogue, the Indian government announced it had received positive indications from Astana that it would approve the sale to OVL.¹⁹ However, one month after the Almaty round, Conoco Phillips was notified that the Kazakhstan Ministry of Oil and Gas would invoke Kazakhstan's Subsoil Law to pre-empt the proposed sale to OVL.²⁰ Instead, Kazakhstan's state-owned energy company KazMunaiGas bought Conoco Phillips' 8.4 per cent stake in the Kashagan field and then sold an 8.33 per cent stake in Kashagan to China's CNPC for an equivalent five billion. The head of KazMunaiGas informed the press that CNPC also promised up to US\$3 billion to cover half the cost of Kazakhstan's financing Kashagan's second phase of development.²¹ In a public display of China's diplomatic triumph, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Astana in early September to sign the acquisition agreement with Kazakhstani President Nursultan Nazarbayev, one of 22 agreements concluded between China and Kazakhstan worth US\$30 billion. It was during this trip that President Xi chose the opportunity of his speech at Kazakhstan's Nazarbayev University to propose that China and Kazakhstan should partner in building what Beijing then termed the "Silk Road Economic Belt."

India's strategic distance from Washington and NATO during latter half of the Manmohan Singh government did not serve New Delhi well in its relations with Kazakhstan. The volume of Indian-Kazakhstan bilateral trade is twenty-five times less than Kazakhstan's trade volume with China.²² With such a delivery deficit in economic cooperation, India's lacking of a strategic partnership with the U.S. and NATO in Central Asia left India struggling to be a significant player in Kazakhstan.

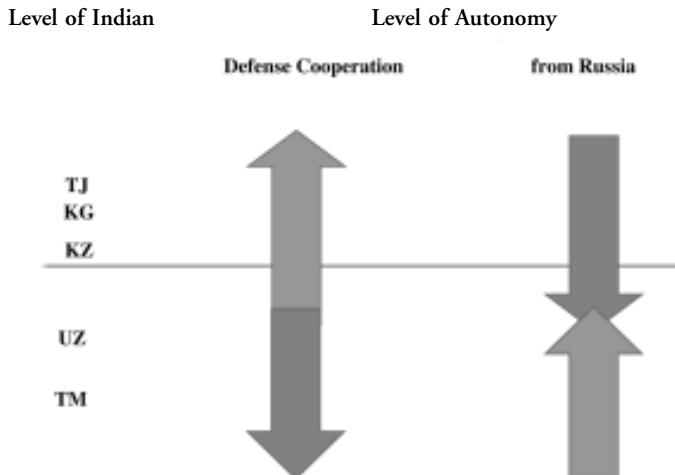
Although a member of the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), energy-rich and economically prospering Kazakhstan is seeking to counterbalance its security relations with Russia by developing relations with the U.S. and NATO, particularly through the annual Steppe Eagle military exercises. Steppe Eagle has been run by NATO's Partnership for Peace program since 2006 when Kazakhstan signed an Individual Partnership Action Plan with NATO. Steppe Eagle 2013 marked the beginning of a new expanded level NATO-Kazakhstan security cooperation, with Kazakh army and airforce units joining KAZBRIG as well as defense forces from the largest number of participating countries to date.²³ India was not invited to participate or even be present at the exercises as an observer. By not forming a strategic partnership with the U.S. as Washington seeks to cope with Russia's military resurgence and China's economic expansion in Central Asia, New Delhi, under the Manmohan Singh government, found itself left out in Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan could deepen its economic

cooperation with China at India's expense without incurring any significant cost to its own security relationships with NATO.

India's failure stands in marked contrast to the security and economic cooperation that the United Kingdom enjoys with Kazakhstan. As one of the initiators of the Steppe Eagle annual exercise even before it was a NATO PfP program, the United Kingdom has a significant track record in providing vital security training to Kazakhstan's armed forces. Kazakhstani officers and soldiers regularly receive advanced training at British military institutions, including President Nazarbayev's own grandson who graduated from Britain's famous Sandhurst Military Academy in 2009. At the same time that Kazakhstan's Ministry of Oil and Gas announced the cancellation of its sale to India of an 8.4 per cent stake in the Kashagan field, British Prime Minister David Cameron and President Nazarbayev presided over the unveiling of the Bolashak on-shore oil and gas processing plant at the Kashagan field.²⁴ The plant is operated in part by the Anglo-Dutch energy conglomerate *Royal Dutch Shell*, one of the seven companies in the consortium, now including China's CNPC, that are developing the Kashagan field. Cameron's visit was the first official visit to Kazakhstan by an acting British Prime Minister. While Britain's bilateral trade with Kazakhstan is greater than India's, the volume of U.K.-Kazakhstan bilateral trade is ten times smaller than the volume of China-Kazakhstan bilateral trade. Bolstered by Britain's strong security partnership with Kazakhstan, Astana and London signed business contracts during Cameron's visit worth over US\$1 billion.²⁵

India's Central Asia Paradox

Under the Manmohan Singh government, the three Central Asian republics heretofore discussed—Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan—have been the principal focus of India's efforts to expand defense cooperation while New Delhi devoted relatively less effort to improving security ties with Uzbekistan and particularly Turkmenistan.²⁶ It appears that India's motivation to concentrate its defense diplomacy primarily on Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan was New Delhi's rivalry with Beijing, as only these three Central Asian republics share a border with China.²⁷ However, the overriding concern given to this geographical factor seems to have occluded the vision of Indian policymakers to the larger geopolitical landscape of Central Asia and has given rise to an odd strategic paradox in New Dehli's *Connect Central Asia* policy. India engaged most in defense cooperations with the Central Asian republics least capable to become a partner to India while the Central Asian republics most able to become a partner to India were offered the least defense cooperation by New Delhi.



Source²⁸

As the chart indicates, India concentrated its defense cooperation on those Central Asian republics that exercise the least autonomy from Russia, despite the growing strategic rift between Moscow and New Delhi.

When considering the combined effect with India's delivery deficit in securing long-term energy partnerships, the discrepancy is even more paradoxical, particularly in relation to Turkmenistan, which is slated to deliver one million cubic meters of natural gas per day to India through Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan India (TAPI) pipeline.²⁹ In addition to helping to ease India's skyrocketing energy demand, the Modi government's ability to ensure the construction of the TAPI pipeline constitutes a critical test of its efforts to improve India's strategic position in Central Asia.

Turkmenistan and India's Comeback in Central Asia

India has placed great hopes on the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline, for which construction has still not yet begun. The stalled TAPI pipeline is intended to transport gas from Turkmenistan across Afghanistan and Pakistan to the Indian town of Fazilka on the Indo-Pakistani border. Providing 38 million standard cubic meters a day of natural gas to India, the TAPI pipeline will significantly ease the rapidly rising demand for energy from India's growing economy. Even more critical from a geostrategic perspective, the TAPI pipeline project, by creating the first significant overland link with India, will permanently alter the pattern of Central Asian connectivity more in India's favor.

Under the Manmohan Singh government, India was similarly outmaneuvered by China's energy and trade diplomacy in Turkmenistan. During the same Central Asian tour in which President Xi signed the Kashagan acquisition agreement in

Astana, he also inaugurated the operations of Turkmenistan's Galkynysh gas field, the world's second largest gas field. A highly symbolic accomplishment for China, the Galkynysh field was developed by a CNPC-led consortium without the participation of a major Western energy company. Although the TAPI pipeline was originally intended to transport gas from Turkmenistan's Dauletabad field, the Galkynysh field, has emerged as the source for the pipeline. According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Dauletabad field's production forecasts were lower than expected. Predicting production to decline, the ADB reported that analysts doubted whether the Dauletabad field could meet the then proposed target of transporting 30 billion cubic meters of gas per year to South Asia.³⁰ The TAPI pipeline will have to transport gas from the Galkynysh field providing Beijing with significant influence over the future of the TAPI pipeline project.³¹ China's state-owned CNPC will be the sole service contractor for the second development phase at Galkynysh. Perhaps tellingly, Turkmenistan sent no delegation of experts to New Delhi's June 2013 India-Central Asia Dialogue. Turkmenistan, which is not a member of the Russian-led CSTO, seeks to use its energy wealth to maintain its independence from Russia and prevent itself from being dominated by a Russo-Iranian bloc. Turkmenistan's President Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov changed course from his predecessor's strict neutrality and has been developing security relations with the U.S., NATO, and Israel.

India's economic and energy relations with Turkmenistan have been inextricably bound to Ashgabat's primary concern to protect its strategic assets in the Caspian from Moscow and Tehran. New Delhi's lack of strong defense cooperation with Washington diminished India's own strategic value for Ashgabat. Turkmenistan deepened its economic cooperation with China at India's expense without incurring any significant cost to its security relationships with the U.S. and its allies. Signaling Turkmenistan's participation in China's OBOR initiative, Ashgabat and Beijing signed the *China-Turkmenistan Friendly Cooperation Agreement* in May 2014. As part of the Sino-Turkmen relationship, Ashgabat will supply Beijing with over 65 bcm of natural gas by 2020. To accommodate the increase, Beijing is expanding the Central Asia-China gas pipeline system by constructing two additional lines traversing different routes from Turkmenistan to Xinjiang province.³²

Turkmenistan is presently China's principal supplier, accounting for almost 50 per cent of China's overall gas imports. In 2014, Turkmenistan transported 25.9 bcm to China.³³ While short of the 30 bcm target agreed upon between TürkmenGaz and CNPC, Turkmenistan has assured China it will meet its 2015 quota of 40 bcm. However, with Russia having slashed its gas imports from Turkmenistan by over 80 percent, China has become the only major market for Turkmenistan's natural gas. The revenues that Ashgabat earns are offset by the

debt it owes CNPC for building the China-Turkmenistan pipeline. Developing a dangerously high level of economic dependence on China, the TAPI pipeline would go a long way to alleviating Turkmenistan's desperate need to diversify its export markets. Thus, Turkmenistan would be more amenable to Indian initiatives to facilitate the TAPI pipeline's construction.

However, up to the present, India has not put forth any major investment initiative. The US \$10 billion TAPI pipeline, also dubbed "Peace Pipeline" because of the intention to promote regional cooperation among South Asia's principal adversaries, will have to traverse a dangerous route before reaching India, passing through Afghanistan's Kandahar province and the neighboring Quetta region of Pakistan, traditionally the heartland of Taliban militancy. It is because of the risk involved in this route that TAPI's progress has stalled. The ADB, which assumed the role of transaction advisor to facilitate the construction of the pipeline, estimates that the delays have raised the cost of the project by US \$2.5 billion to its current US \$10 billion price tag. In October 2014, the ADB commissioned a feasibility study for the TAPI pipeline project as part of its effort to establish a consortium that would construct the pipeline by 2018.

At the TAPI Steering Committee meeting held in November 2014 in Turkmenistan's capital Ashgabat, representatives from the four nations and the ADB agreed to an accelerated timetable for completion of the pipeline. Pending selection of a consortium leader, construction could begin in 2015 and the pipeline could be operational by 2018.

Yet the selection of a consortium leader has proven to be TAPI's main stumbling block. U.S. oil majors Chevron and Exxon Mobil initially expressed interest in the role. However, owing to Turkmenistan law, which precludes the private ownership of land, both companies withdrew from consideration after Asghabat's refusal to issue an equity stake in the Galkynysh field in exchange for assuming the risk of construction. Total S.A., after Chevron and ExxonMobil's withdrawal, was considered the leading candidate. The February 11, 2015 TAPI Steering Committee held in Islamabad failed to select the French energy giant as consortium leader and special TAPI meeting was convened in the Afghan capital Kabul on March 15, 2014 to select a consortium leader.

In addition to Total, the Kabul meeting considered Russia's Rostec and CNPC were also being considered for the project, with the possibility of creating two consortiums: one as a joint venture between the Turkmenistan government and Total for Galkynysh's upstream operations while the other would be consortium with Total as lead operator along with Russia's Rostec and CNPC for the pipeline construction. This scheme would offer Total a sufficient profit share in the gas field to warrant its assumption of the risk of the pipeline construction, while Turkmenistan technically will retain legal ownership of the land, probably in the

form of a modified Technical Services Contract that would give Total the first right of refusal over gas extracted from Galkynysh.³⁴ The participation of Rostec and CNPC as consortium partners for the construction of the pipeline under Total's leadership would also constitute a savvy move by Ashgabat to mollify Moscow and Beijing.

Although the scheme has so far not materialized, the scheme's proposal indicates that India still has not assumed the role of a regional leader. Despite the Modi government's professed ambitions, New Delhi has not stepped up to offer an investment proposal to incentivize an international energy major to become consortium leader. Even with the Prime Minister's landmark July visit to Turkmenistan, no new Indian initiative has been forthcoming, with economically-booming India content to play the same financial role as its struggling Afghan and Pakistani partners. The August 7, 2015 Steering Committee meeting held in Ashgabat gave its official imprimatur to the current state of affairs by announcing that each of the four states would be joint stakeholders in the project with TürkmenGaz acting as the consortium leader,³⁵ despite the fact that TürkmenGaz nor its counterparts in the three other partner nations have the capacity to construct a transnational pipeline.

India's continued deliver deficit in relation to infrastructure investments in Turkmenistan's natural gas production and the production of related products is striking. In contrast to India, Turkey, Japan, and South Korea have completed or in the process of completing major projects in Turkmenistan, including a joint Turkish-Japanese project to construct gas-to-liquids plant capable of producing 600,000 tons of gasoline per year, a joint Turkish-Japanese project to construct fertilizer plant capable of producing 3,500 tons per day of fertilizer from natural gas ammonia, and a joint Japanese-South Korea project to construct a gas chemical plant capable of producing ethylene and polypropylene. During her April 2015 visit to Ashgabat, India's Minister of External Affairs Sushma Swaraj raised the matter of India constructing a fertilizer plant in Turkmenistan.³⁶

Prime Minister Modi's subsequent July 2015 visit to Turkmenistan so far has not resulted in a contract between New Delhi and Ashgabat. Despite Modi's change of diplomatic tone toward Central Asia, as the delivery deficit in energy infrastructure investment in Turkmenistan indicates, the paradoxes of India's *Connect Central Asia* policy persist.

Conclusion

Since NATO's 2014 drawdown of forces in Afghanistan, Russia and China are even better placed to prevent India from playing a leading role in Central Asia. Because of the paradoxes engendered through its strategic posture and economic delivery deficit, New Delhi, its full membership notwithstanding, will watch from

the sidelines as the SCO constructs its own Russo-Chinese dominated trade, transit, and security corridor from the Baltic to the Pacific. Although India holds out hope for its own International North-South Transportation Corridor (INSTC) centered on the Iranian port of Chabahar, the INSTC is unlikely to elevate India's strategic position if the orientation of Eurasia's energy and commercial transportation networks have been already established by Beijing and Moscow.

To avoid this fate, the present India government needs to resolve the underlying paradoxes in the execution of its *Connect Central Asia* policy with all possible alacrity. The construction of the TAPI pipeline is the most critical initiative for New Delhi to alter the pattern of regional diplomacy in Central Asia through the establishment of connectivity with India. The success of a transnational Central Asia-to-India pipeline would certainly spur the expansion of current efforts to create road and rail transportation connectivity between Central Asia and India, ensuring that the INSTC does not become an auxiliary artery of China's OBOR initiative. By driving the development of connectivity through large-scale energy infrastructure investments, India would be able to deepen its bilateral economic partnerships with the Central Asian republics and become a major player in the emerging Eurasian regional architecture. In so doing, India's full SCO membership could then create the possibility of new alliance formations, offering Central Asia an alternative to joint Sino-Russian hegemony.

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30. Asian Development Bank, "South Asian Gas Demand Strong Enough for Two Pipeline Schemes" September 22, 2005, <http://www.adb.org/news/south-asian-gas-demand-strong-enough-two-pipeline-schemes> (Accessed on October 08, 2013).
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The Dynamics of Change in India-Southeast Asia Relations: Beyond Economics to Strategic Partnerships

Shankari Sundararaman

The global order is today witnessing dramatic changes even as the politico-security and economic drivers of the policies of countries are shifting from the Atlantic to the Pacific. In the two and a half decades since the end of the Cold War, the geo-political transformation of Asia has been critical; and the emerging new global order is fraught with the dynamics of change that is currently very fluid, and ripe with uncertainties. Changes shaping the regional and global order are driven by the rise of China and the decline of the West. As the emergence of China shapes the Asian region, it is imperative to look at India's approach to Asian Security within this context.

This essay seeks to locate the geo-political significance of Southeast Asia within the context of India's foreign policy, and the implications this has on India's economic, political and security level objectives in the larger framework of emerging regional dynamics. It examines the impact of geo-politics on the Southeast Asian region itself, and views the changes that have shaped the region for nearly two decades as a backdrop to understanding India's foreign policy towards the region. The essay is divided into three sections. The first section relates to the geo-political importance of Southeast Asia itself; it focuses on the changing nature of the Southeast Asian sub-region which remains at the core of a newly emerging geo-political and geo-strategic concept which is the Indo-Pacific. The core focus of this section lies in recognizing the manner in which Southeast Asian geopolitics has shifted over the years.

The second section looks at how India's approach to this region has evolved from an economics dominated perspective to one that has come to include defence

and security level initiatives. This section will seek to look at India's two-pronged strategy, both at the bilateral and multilateral levels. India's own move towards embracing Southeast Asian regionalism emerged from economic compulsions, and has today moved to areas of convergence on security level ties with the wider region.

The third section moves beyond the initial two decades of the 2nd phase of the Look East Policy to address a core issue that has emerged—that is, maritime security in the wider region. Since 2012, when the India-ASEAN Commemorative Summit was held, the ties with the region have been elevated to the level of a strategic partnership. One of the critical factors of this has been the focus on maritime security in which both the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea become focal points of discussion. The recognition that Southeast Asia lies at the core of India's engagement with the wider region is critical to the analyses in all three sections of this essay.

The Geo-Political Shift in Southeast Asia

For more than two decades since the end of the Cold War, the region of Southeast Asia has witnessed a sense of 'strategic quiescence'.¹ The last inter-state level military incursion in the region was the Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia, and the withdrawal of the troops in 1989 left a sense of tranquillity.² The East Timor conflict at the intra-state level was seen as correcting a historical wrong. The resolution of the East Timor issue, and the later peaceful democratic shift of Southeast Asia's vital player Indonesia's political consolidation internally, was a reaffirmation that all was well with one of the largest players in the region.

This phase was followed by nearly a decade of institution building, in which ASEAN focused on maintaining its own centrality in the regional mechanisms that were re-ordering Asia-Pacific multilateralism. While there were regional concerns around the 2001 terror attacks on the USA and the region being implicated as a second front in the Global War on Terror (GWOT), even this did not alter the regional balance given that the ASEAN immediately initiated declarations with countries on measures to counter terrorism.³ For over a decade, from this time till 2012, the focus of the USA was also less in the context of Southeast Asia; this was because of its own concerns relating to developments in Afghanistan and West Asia.

Throughout this period, regional institutional mechanisms grew in the wider Asia-Pacific. ASEAN as a regional organisation that emerged in the 1960s at the height of the Cold War, was instrumental in setting the stage for furthering the process of regional institution building. In its very origins, the ASEAN had a duality of purpose. The first was the need to address insurgencies within the member states themselves, and also to protect the region and insulate them from

external interference.⁴ This was important because issues of internal insurgencies (particularly communist insurgencies) were weakening security from within. The weakening of the individual states was considered detrimental for the wider region given that there were external powers involved in the region due to the Cold War.⁵ While the outward focus on the need to promote economic cooperation among the members was often voiced as the primary reason for the initiative, issues like the promotion of the treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), the expansion of Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon's Free Zone (SEANWFZ), and the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN), were clearly also the drivers of a larger political agenda that Southeast Asia was seeking for itself.⁶ As the Cold War ended, there was a greater sense of regional identity because of the successful implementation of the Paris Peace Accords to end the Cambodian conflict—this was ASEAN's first test at regional cohesiveness.⁷

Following this, the ASEAN Regional Forum emerged as a security level multilateral platform in the region, making it the first ever regional mechanism to address Asia-Pacific security issues. This was followed by the ASEAN+3 East Asia initiative after the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997. It evolved into the East Asia Summit which included ASEAN+6 comprising three East Asian countries as well as Australia, India and New Zealand. Added to these institutional mechanisms, the emergence of the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM+) has also been important as it has been able to bring together the process of the Defence Minister's dialogue to the forefront. The focus of the ADMM+ was to cooperate with its non-ASEAN counterparts to ensure that there was capacity build-up among all the members, and promote the ASEAN to address complex security challenges in the region.⁸

This level of regional cooperation was underscored by the 'ASEAN way' which was to gradually bring on board those members that were slower than the rest on issues of economics and security, and to evolve into a security community as envisaged by scholars like Karl Deutsch.⁹ Amitav Acharya states that the concept of a security community was being pushed forward by ASEAN wherein states had developed the habit of peaceful interaction, thereby renouncing the use of force to settle disputes. The ASEAN formation has evolved through a process where issues of bilateral tensions have been set aside by member states to form a regional grouping. Most observers of the ASEAN process have viewed ASEAN's ability to be a security community along two critical parameters: the first is the fact that, through interactions and socialization, member states within the grouping can address issues of conflict and anarchy;¹⁰ the second parameter is that regional institutions can help to build long-term stakes in the promotion of regional peace among the member states, and that these mechanisms can be extended beyond the immediate region.¹¹

Much of the focus in building these regional institutional mechanisms was based on the need to maintain ASEAN and its principles as the core of the institutional mechanisms in the region. Thus, there was a predominant emphasis on the centrality of ASEAN as the core of the regional mechanisms. In June 2011, in an article in the *Jakarta Post* titled the “The ASEAN Heart of Asia”, the ASEAN Secretary General, Suring Pitsuwan, stated that the ASEAN had “emerged as the fulcrum of geo-political stability in Asia”.¹² In this article, Surin Pitsuwan stressed the need for a fine balance in the politico-security architecture in the region, and laid emphasis on the need to continually restructure and broaden the ASEAN to include external actors in the region which have a critical stake in regional security.¹³ This reference to the management of extra-regional powers and their stakes was crucial, given that in the following year, the ASEAN summit was disrupted in 2012 at Phnom Penh over Cambodia’s refusal to allow any statement on the South China Sea. The heightened role played by the major powers and their influence on the smaller countries in the region was highlighted through this stand-off, with some observers even questioning the cohesiveness of ASEAN. The complacent belief that ASEAN would act as the hinge of regional geo-political stability came undone. Now there was growing emphasis that the balance of power was playing in the region, and was beginning to impact the smaller regional countries who found more space within the regional mechanisms to address their security concerns.

Economically, the Southeast Asian region was showing significant economic growth. Following the Financial Crisis of 1997, much progress had been made with the expansion of ASEAN to include all the ten regional members. There has also been the addition of dialogue partners to the scene—particularly the inclusion of China and India—the two rising economies critical to the region. This has resulted in economic integration. The expansion of the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (FTA)’s with its extra-regional counterparts—particularly China-ASEAN FTA and the India-ASEAN FTA—seemed to usher in a phase of economic integration, where issues of political discord would be automatically forgotten and mitigated.¹⁴

However, this view has clearly shifted over the past five years in which growing importance is being given to security issues. Moreover, while economics will still remain critical, there is ambiguity over how states are responding to the presence of major power rivalries that have emerged. Since 2010, the shifts taking place in the region are critically along the areas of security, where the rise of China has been a significant factor that has propelled the manner in which the regional outlook is changing. The evidence of this was visible during the ARF meeting in Hanoi in July 2010 where the agenda for the South China Sea was first raised by Hillary Clinton, presumably at the behest of Vietnam which was the Chair of the

meeting. The session highlighted the developments in the South China Sea, and stressed the need for multilateral negotiations. It also emphasized the need for recognizing sea lanes as the “global commons”.¹⁵

Through the two decades since the end of the Cold War, the notion that the US presence was missing from the region of Southeast Asia was driven by the fact that, apart from its focus on allies in East Asia, US presence in the Southeast Asian sub-region was considered to be on the decline following its withdrawal from the Philippines in 1992. This was seen as US ‘absence’, even though the US was always seen as the foremost Asia-Pacific power. With its positions in Guam and Diego Garcia, the role of the USA was stretched across the Indo-Pacific even though it was preoccupied with its focus in Southwest Asia for more than two decades.¹⁶ Since end of 2011, the move towards the US rebalance and the pivot to Asia have been focused on changing regional equations pushed by China’s rise.

Southeast Asian responses have been mixed on the matter of China’s rise and the US rebalancing. For years, China’s ‘charm offensive’ has been visible in the context of Southeast Asia, where aspects of non-military ties have been expanded on areas of culture and business level links.¹⁷ Initially, China’s growing economic prowess was a factor that concerned Southeast Asian countries, especially since there was a view that critical FDI from these countries would shift base to China.¹⁸ However, to China’s credit, it was able to deploy a win-win strategy for the region and itself.¹⁹ Added to this, China has also deployed its economic resources to the wider region through loans/aid for investments in developmental projects.²⁰

On the political side things have not been so cordial. Increased Chinese nationalism and rhetoric over its territorial claims in the South China Sea (SCS) has made its Southeast Asian neighbours wary since the gap between economic and political level ties are often seen as being out of sync with one another.²¹ This same sense of ambiguity underlines the Southeast Asian response to the US rebalancing: some countries welcomed the renewed role for the USA in the region; others felt that this would once again bring the focus of the “giants” back into the regional matrix. The fear was that US presence would tilt the balance in the region towards a more protracted military build-up by China to assert its territorial claims in SCS. In other words, this was a critical fall out of the US rebalancing. Moreover, Southeast Asian states that comprise small to medium powers, were also concerned that the cohesiveness of ASEAN would be challenged by these dynamics as was evident during the 2012 ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh when the grouping could not issue a Joint Communiqué for the first time since its inception.²²

The developments in the region—particularly over the increased claims and territorial disputes in the South China Sea—have led to some scholars viewing the situation within the region as the emergence of a security dilemma, wherein

there is a possibility of conflict among the major players in the region.²³ While the role of the USA and China are more critical in the contest of the shifts that are shaping this region, India too is beginning to be considered regionally as an important player. Almost from the early 1990's, when India began its Look East Policy (LEP), the shift towards recognizing a larger role for itself in the region has been indicative of this. While the initial phase of the LEP focused on economic level ties, it has also simultaneously projected the security level relations with Southeast Asia. These factors relating to India's ties with Southeast Asia are discussed in the following section.

India's Relations with Southeast Asia through the Look East Policy

While India's interaction with the region can be traced to a 2000 year historical/cultural context, this period was impacted by colonialism which altered contacts within the region.²⁴ The colonial period clearly established the territorial boundaries of the emerging nation-state systems and, through the decolonization phase, there were cordial relations when India supported the nationalist movements in the region. This was clearly evident in India's role in coordinating both the Asian Relations Conference of March 1947 as well as taking the initiative to formalize the Bandung Conference in 1955. The objective of building an Asian identity and a unity based on the experiences of colonialism and nationalist struggles was one of the commonalities that tied India to the Southeast Asia during this early phase.²⁵ In this phase, the role assumed by China and India as the leaders of a post-colonial Asian order was a critical factor, but it was cut short by the 1962 Sino-Indian war.

India's own economic development—based on its adoption of an import substitution regime coupled with industrialization—critically shifted India into an inward looking phase.²⁶ For Southeast Asia also, this phase was one where the ASEAN emerged within the context of bipolarity, and the erstwhile SEATO was seen as being the foundations of ASEAN.²⁷ From the 1960s till almost 1990, India and the region remained at a distance from one another. India's role in the Cambodian conflict, and the recognition that it gave to the Heng Samrin regime in Cambodia, was a further cause for the distance between the two.

In the early 1990's, the government of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao initiated the LEP, under which the relations with Southeast Asia expanded. Among the factors that drove India's integration with Southeast Asia was India's own move towards regional economic integration, now its key priority. To understand India's move towards regional integration, it is important to draw from the seminal work of Walter Mattli in his *The Logic of Regional Integration* (1999), which views the process of regional integration as a simple approach of demand and supply.²⁸ Mattli argues that states seek integration by demands from within, and that the

response is by supplying the integration mechanism externally. This basically comes from an economic need following which calculations of political and security interests may also emerge.²⁹ What becomes evident from this is that domestic level players seek the economic gains accruing from regional integration, and the ruling political elite understands the benefits of regional integration and seek the membership of the state to these institutions.³⁰

He further states that those that seek inclusion in these regional mechanisms view the initiative from two levels: economic ties are the drivers of integration; which then also lead to security level linkages which are far more diverse and complex. There is a view that the growing level of multilateral engagement will allow for more robust cooperation among member states which, in turn, may lead to the mitigation of issues that arise from security threats.³¹ When viewed from this perspective, India-ASEAN relations have moved from the levels of a clear economic angle to incorporating issues that deal with security and strategic matters.

This first phase of the ties with Southeast Asia was focused on trade and investments: bilateral trade increased from US\$ 2.3 billion in 1991 to US\$ 7.8 billion in 2001-02.³² Today, nearly two and a half decades later, the India-ASEAN bilateral trade is slated to touch US\$ 100 billion in 2015. While the economic success of the India-ASEAN ties is credible through the initiation of the India-ASEAN FTA and the FTA in services and investments to be operational from July 2015, the focus is shifting to other areas of concern and cooperation along security lines.

India's approach to furthering security level ties with Southeast Asia was the outcome of a two-pronged strategy, both at the bilateral and the multilateral levels. This has been an effective approach to furthering security level ties with the region. India has fostered closer bilateral level defence cooperation with the regional countries.

Two critical factors increased the focus on security issues. The first was the need to further land connectivity with Southeast Asian countries. In this regard, Myanmar became a key focal point for India where its strategic importance began to assume priority—especially in the light of the inroads made by both China and Pakistan which supported the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC).³³ This was an important calculation in the Indian approach to the LEP. In 1996, when the ASEAN debated the entry of Myanmar into the ASEAN grouping, it was the victory of pragmatism that prevailed. The strategy to include Myanmar was “cleverly orchestrated” by including it along with Cambodia and Laos, so as to ensure that the degree of opposition and resistance to its entry may be diluted.³⁴ India too took this pragmatic approach when it changed its policy towards Myanmar, which was evident as early as 1993 and began to look at the

region as a vital link in its LEP. The question of connectivity, and the impact that this would have on the insurgency in India's northeast, were credible reasons to push forward this relationship.

The second factor that dictated this change was the regional view on the expansion of India's naval capability into a blue water navy. The regional views and fears regarding this were highlighted as early as the late 1980s, when the *Far Eastern Economic Review* highlighted India's proposal to build the naval base at the Great Nicobar Island, with this being seen as India's effort to project its naval capability into the Malacca Straits. This was met with some concern in Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries.³⁵ However, this position changed considerably following the initiation of the LEP which focused on building both economic and security level ties.

Almost from the turn of the century, India has been using naval diplomacy in the wider region to assist in security of the SLOC's as well as in search and rescue missions. One of the most important contributions has been in disaster relief, such as the Indian Ocean Tsunami 2004 and the Jogjakarta earthquake in 2006. While the results on the economic side were clearly visible, the slow gains that were made in the defence and security sides were more incremental. Though defence level ties were visible almost from the inception of the Look East Policy, the region did not see India as a counter weight to the rise of China.³⁶ This is exemplified in Goh Chok Tong's famous statement about India and China being the two wings of the ASEAN jumbo.³⁷

Specific among the defence level ties are with Malaysia and Singapore. A defence cooperation MoU was signed with Malaysia in 1993 which was the earliest of these initiatives.³⁸ This was enlarged in scope in 2008, wherein issues of co-production, joint ventures, and collaborations were to be enhanced. Other areas were in the training of air force personnel. By 2010, this had evolved into the MIDCOM meetings which were high level military exchanges focused on the Air Force and Navy.³⁹

Following this, defence relations with Singapore emerged in 2003. They evolved into the joint bilateral exercise called SINDEX (Joint Air exercises) as well as SIMBEX (Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise) which was last conducted in May 2014.⁴⁰ The progress with Singapore was even more as compared with Malaysia since Singapore. This was no doubt because Singapore was a forerunner for India's larger engagement in all the ASEAN led initiatives. Other than the USA, Singapore was the only country with which India has held joint defence exercises in its own territory. Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam too have emerged as important countries with which India has focused and enhanced its defence ties. With Thailand, India began the Coordinated Patrols (CORPAT) in 2005. With Indonesia, the CORPAT began in 2002 and, in a bid to enhance

ties across a wide spectrum the two countries signed a strategic partnership agreement in 2005 as a way forward. Naval training and exchanges between India and Southeast Asian countries have been taking place through coordinated efforts. The most successful of these has been the SIMBEX, MILAN, and the patrolling of the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL), which have been done in the Andaman Sea and the South China Sea.⁴¹ With Vietnam also, defence level ties have increased recently. In September 2014, during the visit of the Indian President, the two countries signed a Defence Line of Credit (LoC) agreement, which was subsequently followed up during the visit of the Vietnamese Prime Minister to India in November 2014. Under this agreement, Vietnam will receive US\$ 100 million as a line of Credit for the purchase of Patrol boats.⁴²

At the multilateral level also, this expansion of ties has been critical. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) was the first such platform that engaged India with all the regional and extra-regional players. Its achievements have been critical in the areas relating to confidence building, even though the other two pillars of preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution have been diluted for want of credible action on part of the mechanism. The Track II initiative of the ARF, the *Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific* (CSCAP), was welcomed by India during the first decade of its LEP. The focus of evolving the CSCAP was to address the building of epistemic communities which would foster change on the governmental processes of the Track I ARF. However, this has been effective only in some measures relating to non-traditional security threats—such as ocean management and creating a database for safety practices in the use of nuclear energy. While the CSCAP has been able to move forward on its own definition of preventive security and how this relates to the ARF processes, it has not been able to push its implementation within the more rigidly confined Track I processes.⁴³

From 2005 onwards, the evolution of the East Asia Summit (EAS) has been a significant development in the regional security level interaction. While not as cumbersome as the ARF, the EAS seems to be a more focused on cutting across economic and politico-security dimensions. The EAS is a good example of a broader concept of multilateralism which has emerged as a result of the competing initiatives along both economic and security parameters.⁴⁴ The emergence of the East Asia Summit (EAS) actually highlights this multiplicity of interests. During its formation, China sought to maintain it as an East Asian initiative. However, this did not find acceptance among the other members, particularly the ASEAN states. The view was that the inclusion of India, Australia and New Zealand were vital to the EAS because the extension of the region logically included the Pacific region also. Thus, the definitional aspects that limited itself to geography alone did not win merit, and it was more important to include other states on the basis of their economic and security merits as well. With the later additions of the

United States and Russia, this dimension has changed further to incorporate the two major global players with high stakes in the wider region. The culmination of the defence level ties with the region was visible when India was invited by the ASEAN to be part of the East Asian Summit when it evolved in 2005. ASEAN's support of India's entry in the EAS was an indicator of India's recognition as an Asia-Pacific player.⁴⁵

Two other groupings that are relevant to India with regard to how it has managed its multilateral institutional approaches to the region are: the ADMM+ and the ASEAN Maritime Forum. The ADMM+ brings India into the wider debates that are shaping the region wherein the particular focus, over the past few years, has been on the emerging challenges in the South China Sea. Similarly, with the shifting focus on maritime issues, the ASEAN Maritime Forum has been a significant addition which will converge on maritime matters. One of the foremost concerns is that the AMF and the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery (ReCAAP) will be able to bring convergence for addressing issues of piracy and robbery across this extant.

The Maritime Dimension in India-Southeast Asia Security Relations

The India-ASEAN Commemorative Summit held in 2012 highlighted the first two decades of the Look East Policy. One of the main outcomes of this summit was to raise India's regional ties with Southeast Asia to the level of a Strategic Partnership. One of the more important objectives of this agreement was to include the area of maritime security as a core concern for these states. In terms of the maritime component of India's relations with Southeast Asia, the focus has been two fold. First, regionally, the ASEAN countries have recognized the importance of India's role in the larger context of the Indian Ocean region, particularly the linking of trade routes that are connected through Southeast Asia to the Indian Ocean.⁴⁶ India's role was a significant one since most of its immediate neighbours in Southeast Asia—Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore—are also important littoral states of the Indian Ocean. Assessing India's strategic role in the region cannot overlook the importance of this connect.

As the most strategic player in the Indian Ocean region, India has been described as holding the 'box seat' in this theatre particularly because its geographical location allows it to have an advantage vis-à-vis other players in maintaining the security of the Indian Ocean.⁴⁷ This role is critical for the Southeast Asian countries too (all are littoral states) since they do not have the same level of capability that India possesses in terms of naval strength. India's ability to lead this group in terms of the provisions for maintaining the security of the Indian Ocean region can be a critical component in furthering security level ties in the Indian Ocean.⁴⁸

Currently, one of the most critical areas for India to focus on in this regard relates to the role Indonesia is seeking for itself. Under President Joko Widodo, Indonesia has been pushing the notion of Indonesia's emergence as *porosmaritimdunia* or the global maritime fulcrum, which is looking towards the development of ports within the country and is also seeking investment for this. Indonesia is currently looking to regional investments for assistance to develop these ports, and China is likely to be a critical player in this region. The visit by President Jokowi to China in November 2014 to attend the APEC summit focused on Indonesia's support to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) which President Jokowi hopes to locate in Jakarta. The significance of the visit was highlighted when President Jokowi announced at the Press Conference that he had requested President Xi Jinping to ensure that Chinese state enterprises should be more involved in the development of Indonesia's maritime infrastructure. President Xi Jinping's statement that, "China has always regarded Indonesia as our old best friend and we have always prioritized keeping our relations intact by seeing Indonesia as a strategic partner that we can trust",⁴⁹ clearly indicates the shifting nature of China-Indonesia relations.

Any developments in China-Indonesia relations can critically alter the balance in the Indian Ocean region more favourably towards China, which is a factor that has already been of deep concern to India. Closer Sino-Indonesian ties may not be beneficial for the region as a whole. Currently, Indonesia's foreign policy is also debating the relevance of looking beyond ASEAN, especially since the regional grouping itself has been unable to find cohesion on important matters.⁵⁰ Several observers have stated that the rise of China and its focus on building the Maritime Silk Road will subsume the maritime interests of other countries in the region. Indonesia's archipelagic extant as well as the need to meet its own maritime demands may lead to a larger footprint for the Chinese in the Indian Ocean region.

The vital connect of the Indian Ocean also draws India into its larger partnerships with other players such as the USA and Japan. India's strategic location in the IOR is a strong factor in its security relations with the USA. In recent times, India's close ties with the USA are strongly impelled by a strategic tilt that seems to be focused on the rise of China. Similarly, in terms of its ties with Japan too, this strategic component is strongly visible in the recent focus of building a 'Special Strategic and Global Partnership' during Prime Minister Modi's visit to Japan in September 2014. Other than the economic component of the ties with Japan, the two sides have also agreed to further their defence cooperation, and have signed a pact on addressing regional stability.⁵¹ As opposed to China—which perceives India's role in the Indian Ocean as a potential threat—both the USA and Japan see India's role as an opportunity to push India into taking a more balancing role in the region vis-à-vis China.

Another region of growing concern is the South China Sea (SCS) where regional tensions have been exacerbated by the territorial claims made by China. While India is not seen as a littoral state of the SCS, there is no doubt that, increasingly, India's role in the region is becoming vital for other reasons. Due to its close ties with the other littoral states of the SCS, India is being viewed as an extra-regional player in the South China Sea. It is carrying out naval deployments, visits, and exercises in the SCS. Recently, India has also been carrying out joint explorations with other countries (for example, with Vietnam) where joint collaborations to explore resources have irked China. While India does not accord primary importance to the South China Sea as it does to the Indian Ocean, there is no doubt that the region is critical to Indian security as it falls under the category of the 'global commons', and is also seen as part of India's extended neighbourhood.⁵² This change in India's strategic shift is clearly visible. Thus, in December 2012, when China raised objections against India's collaboration with Vietnam over resource exploration, India's then Naval Chief, Admiral D.K. Joshi, was assertive and stressed India's desire to protect its interests in the region. He also added that while India was not a claimant to the SCS disputes, it would ensure the safety of freedom of navigation in that region.⁵³ This statement is also significant given that India's ONGC Videsh has been involved in joint collaborations with Vietnam over the exploration of offshore oil blocks in Southern Vietnam. This was a major shift in India's position—especially since earlier, it had shied away from taking a more visible role in the SCS issue.

In recognizing the South China Sea as a part of its extended neighbourhood is a clear indication of how India perceives its role in the wider region. In this context, India's willingness to embrace the new strategic concept of the Indo-Pacific is a clear indicator of the beginnings of a more the nuanced approach. Moving beyond its position vis-à-vis Southeast Asia, the adoption of the term Indo-Pacific in strategic discourse has supported India's expanded identification with the Western Pacific too.⁵⁴ It is interesting to see that both China and India look upon the other's presence in the waters adjacent to their states as encroaching on their oceans. Much as China does not regard the Indian Ocean as India's, so too India does not regard the South China Sea as China's.⁵⁵

It is important to emphasize that this change in India's approach is also critical because of India's own geo-economic concerns in the South China Sea. Almost 55 per cent of India's trade transits through the Straits of Malacca, and any attempt by China to block this will impact India's overall economic interests. Added to this, India's increasing concern to address its energy demands as well as explorations on this front make it an active contender for the resources in the South China Sea.⁵⁶

China's increasing assertiveness in the South China Sea since 2011 has been cause of worry for the regional states, particularly members of the ASEAN. Since

several of these states are claimants to the territorial disputes in the South China Sea, ASEAN's focus has been to ensure that the disputes are settled through the process of ASEAN mechanisms. As early as 2002, China and ASEAN had agreed to a Declaration on the Code of Conduct (DoC) for the claimants to the SCS dispute. This was to be formalized into a more binding Code of Conduct (CoC) within a decade. However, the 2012 ASEAN summit failed to address the issue of Chinese hostilities in the region, and was also unable to finalize a Joint Communiqué for the first time since its inception. Subsequently, the South China Sea dispute has been raised at the 2013 ADMM+, where China refused to allow the matter to be discussed stating that it was a bilateral issue between China and the claimants.⁵⁷ Clearly ASEAN has been less cohesive, especially because smaller countries that have been recipients of China's economic investments are not keen to bring the issue to the forefront in the regional grouping.

This was clearly visible through 2013 and 2014, when the South China Sea remained the focus of most regional mechanism processes. India strongly endorsed the UN Convention on Law of the Seas (UNCLOS) during these deliberations. India's increasing ties with Vietnam are critical in this regard. In June 2013, India and Vietnam conducted joint exercises in the South China Sea which was followed by the Vice-Ministerial defence policy dialogue in November 2013.⁵⁸ India has also strengthened its defence engagement with other countries (such as the Philippines) which have been trying to advance their own security interests in the region vis-à-vis China, which has furthered security ties with major players in the region, including India. While the scenario in the South China Sea is still evolving, there is no doubt that India will continue to calibrate its approach to the region based on its geo-economic and geo-political concerns.⁵⁹

Conclusion: Will India 'Act East'?

There is, today, an overwhelming recognition that India's relationship with Southeast Asia forms the core of its engagement with the Indo-Pacific region. While the Look East Policy itself has a critical place in the manner in which India's post-Cold War foreign policy has evolved, there still remains much for India to do in terms of implementation. No doubt this will remain the core focus of the current administration under Prime Minister Modi. Moreover, it is important to look at India's policy towards the region in the context of three areas of India's foreign policy: in the immediate neighbourhood, in the context of extended regional interactions, and at the global level.

While these three tiers of India's interaction may feed into one another, its policy towards Southeast Asia has been an extension of its neighbourhood policy in the first two decades. In its current phase, India's approach seeks to include the wider regional calculations that have emerged. The advances made by India to be

included in multilateral level mechanisms is truly credible, though there is still a gap in recognizing India as a full-fledged independent security provider for the wider region. Much of the focus on India in terms of its strategic approach is also based on the fact that the region sees India as a country with a significant tilt towards the USA. The USA is seen as the region's primary security provider even as China has emerged as the region's foremost economic partner. Within this context, India's role remains hinged on the primacy of the USA, and not as a single independent player in the way China is perceived.⁶⁰ One of the key challenges for India in determining a more robust interaction with the region is to translate its identified 'rhetoric' into action. In November 2014, the government of Prime Minister Modi rechristened the LEP as the Act East Policy, thus emphasizing the shift in policy to include a more active role for India in the strategic developments within the region through an enhancement of its defence diplomacy.

No doubt there are challenges in India's approach to Southeast Asia which it needs to fine tune. These include the following issues. First, its relations with Southeast Asia and East Asia must not be contingent upon China's rise. India has been endorsing a multipolar global order since the end of the Cold War. As the rise of China continues, it may have the potential to further challenge regional dynamics which will make it imperative for India to strengthen its links with Southeast Asia. Second, India's own pace of implementation suggests an urgent need to push forward critical reform within the country. The reluctance to take quick and firm decisions is not missed by its neighbours in Southeast Asia. India needs to focus its attention in terms of moving forward on its ability to deliver on the projects that it has undertaken in the region.

The emphasis on establishing connectivity with the region is important. Currently, the level of overland connectivity as well as through air links is woefully inadequate. The focus of shifting to the Act East policy has, once again, brought the dimensions of the relationship to the 3-C's: culture, commerce and connectivity. However, India should really be looking to endorse the 3-D's: diversity, democracy and defence. Unless there are more political level ties that go beyond trade and investment linkages, the deepening of defence ties cannot be furthered. Given that there have been no political tensions with the region, the ability to build intense political level relations should be pursued further.⁶¹ Moreover, for India, the core of its policy has been to look at the ASEAN as an entity that lies at the heart of the region. This has led to India giving ASEAN centrality in its dealings with Southeast Asia. As this centrality remains uncertain, India too will need to recalibrate its relations, both at the bilateral and multilateral levels. Moreover, there are still complexities that emerge from a mind-set that is looking to keep the major powers engaged in the region. The lack of strategic

autonomy compels the ASEAN states to rally with many rather than identify with one. This holds back the furtherance of ties with India as well because threat perceptions create trust deficits that critically challenge the region. Moreover, Southeast Asian countries tend to focus their security priorities on a north-south axis, and not on the east-west axis. This is predominantly due to the presence of its larger neighbour to the north—China—which for centuries has looked at the countries to its south more as political subordinates rather than as equals. Historically too, India's influence has always been a softer one, based on the transfusion of culture and religious identity which was subsumed regionally to form a local variant. In terms of political and security matters, the focus for Southeast Asia has not been on its immediate western neighbour, India. This change in its calculations requires credible shift in mind-sets which still remain a stumbling block for the region.

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FUTURE TRENDS AND SCENARIOS

26

Strategic Trends in Asia: Future Directions

Boris Volkhonsky

Although the “pivot to Asia” was declared by the then US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton back in late 2011,¹ it is the year 2014 which can be rightfully regarded as truly pivotal in the geopolitics of Eurasia and hence, the world in general. Several major strategic factors emerged in 2014 and in all probability will be further explicated in 2015 that are destined to form a completely new geopolitical setup on the continent as well as globally.

Such factors are numerous, but I would like to underline just four of them as most notable and having a long-lasting effect on global geopolitics.

First, the rise of China which has become the number one global economy in terms of “purchasing power parity”, or PPP.² As calculated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), China will produce US \$17.6 trillion in terms of goods and services—compared with US \$17.4 trillion for the US. This means that currently China produces 16.5 per cent of the global economy when measured in real PPP terms, compared with 16.3 per cent for the US. Although, Chinese officials tried to somehow play down the importance of the IMF’s conclusions, this development effectively marks the end of the US global economic monopoly.

Second, in July 2014, at the BRICS summit in Fortaleza, Brazil, the five BRICS member states signed a deal to create a new US \$100 billion development bank and emergency reserve fund.³ This step was further enhanced by the Chinese initiative to establish Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in October 2014⁴ and consequently almost all Asian countries and many major economies outside Asia (with the most notable exception of the US and Japan) have joined the AIIB. As almost unanimously estimated, the creation of these financial enterprises is sure to create a challenge and competition for the World Bank, IMF and other financial institutions representing the Bretton Woods system.

These developments were further underscored by a series of agreements between BRICS members as well as with non-BRICS member countries to conduct transactions in national currencies. Although in short term perspective this cannot be regarded as too severe a blow for the US dollar monopoly, but as is well known, even great trees grow from tiny seeds. In any case, together with the previous factor, this is a clear sign that the whole global financial and economic system based on US dollar monopoly is going to be redesigned dramatically.

Along with the multilateral integration processes within the BRICS, the year 2014 also witnessed a major bilateral development between two members of the group, Russia and China. In May 2014, the two countries signed a 30-year deal worth US \$400 billion providing for an uninterrupted flow of Russian natural gas to China.⁵ This deal falls in line with closer cooperation demonstrated at Fortaleza summit; it also demonstrates the practical implementation of Russia's own "pivot to Asia" and drastically minimizes Russia's dependence on European oil and gas consumers, thus totally changing the existing balance in global energy markets.

Third, the decline of the global US monopoly was further replicated on a regional level. The September 2014 summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Dushanbe finalized procedures for admitting new members.⁶ This move basically removed all obstacles for the SCO enlargement which means that the long-discussed issue of countries like India and Pakistan (also, later, Iran, Afghanistan, and possibly Mongolia) acquiring full membership is going to be solved in the nearest future.

This, in turn, means that the SCO, which for a long time has been regarded as a China-centered regional grouping with the primary purpose of promoting China's economic interests in the post-Soviet space (primarily, in Central Asia) is going to acquire a completely new meaning. With the five countries joining the Organisation, it will encompass a vast area ranging from North-Eastern Europe to the Pacific and Indian Oceans. This will not only give new impetus for integration processes in Eurasia, but will effectively mean a creation of a new alternative center of power which will challenge the unipolar world order and become a game-changer in Asia and globally.

Among other things, the SCO enlargement would enable to implement the long-cherished project of the International North-South Transport Corridor (from seaports on India's west coast via Iran to Transcaucasia, Central Asia and further on to Russia and Northern Europe) which is seen as a major prerequisite for overcoming the most serious geographical obstacle on the way of wider Eurasian integration—lack of land connectivity between South Asia and the rest of the continent.

Last but not least, in May 2014 the leaders of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus

signed a treaty transforming the Customs Union into Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) which came into force on January 1, 2015.⁷ Consequently, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan have joined the Union. The importance of this integration format by far exceeds its geographical boundaries and definitely has nothing to do with, as its critics claim, "restoration of the Soviet Union". For one, the format does not limit or restrict national sovereignty of its member states. On the contrary, it allows free flow of goods, services and labor force between its members, thus establishing a free economy zone and an integrated market of more than 180 million people and a GDP of over US \$4 trillion. This kind of integration definitely has nothing in common with state regulated economy of the Soviet time.

The attractiveness of the Eurasian Union has been demonstrated by the fact that countries different both in geographic and socio-economic sense, like Vietnam, Mexico, Egypt, Israel and more than 30 others have demonstrated a desire to form a free trade zone with it. In November 2014, during Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin's visit to India, an agreement was reached to start preparation for such agreement between the Customs Union and India, too.⁸

For some time, the EAEU project was looked upon as a challenge to China-sponsored and promoted Silk Road Economic Belt project. But on May 8, 2015, during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Moscow to mark the 70th anniversary of the Great Victory over Nazism, he and Russia's President Vladimir Putin signed a joint statement on cooperation on the construction of the joint EAEU and the Silk Road project, and the coherence of the two. The broad infrastructural framework is open for other regional participants (e.g. the above mentioned North-South corridor could well be incorporated into it with the participation and for the benefit of such countries as India and Iran, among others).

The four above mentioned factors do not exhaust all the substantial developments of 2014 affecting Eurasia and the world in general, but they definitely outline the contours of a global setup which determines most major political and economic actions by global and regional actors. The principal significance of all four is that each in its way symbolizes the rise of an alternative center(s) of power presenting a real challenge to the unipolar world order the West has been trying to preserve since the collapse of the Soviet block in early 1990s.

Quite obviously, the challenges coming from the emergence of this new center (or, centers) of power could not go unnoticed in the West. More so, the "pivot to Asia" was clearly declared in late 2011 in an anticipation of such challenges and in a way was an attempt to forestall such developments. At the same time, the situation in mid-teens of the 21st century is rather different from that in the beginning of the century when, in the aftermath of 9/11 attacks, the US had the desire and ability to get directly involved in the repercussive actions against the real (or, imaginary) adversaries. Today, after the infamous and totally disastrous

(both for the US and the respective countries) conclusion of the reckless adventures in Iraq and Afghanistan, the US is trying, as much as possible, to resort to the tactics of *proxy confrontation*, placing much of the burden in confronting its competitors and adversaries on others.

Examples are too numerous to deal in detail with each one, but some are worth mentioning.

While not abandoning the idea of toppling Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria (which for a long time has been and still is one of the staunchest Russian allies in the Middle East), the US spent a lot of effort and money on support of the so called "moderate Syrian opposition". The efforts only resulted in a creation of a totally new terrorist threat in the form of "Islamic State" (IS) which surpasses all previously known terrorist organisations and networks (including the notorious *al Qaeda*) in terms of financing, structural organisation, militancy, cruelty and unscrupulousness.

It is hardly coincidental that the crisis in Ukraine erupted soon after the idea of establishing the BRICS Bank was first raised at the 5th BRICS summit in Durban, South Africa, in 2013, although the preparation for the "color revolution" had been going on for at least 20 plus years before. The illegitimate coup in Ukraine was financed and orchestrated from outside, and ever since the West has been supporting the policies of genocide adopted by the new Ukrainian rulers, closing their eyes on the atrocities against the people of Novorossiya and fabricating all kinds of lies concerning the alleged "Russian involvement" in the crisis in former Ukraine.

Russia's actions in the aftermath of the Ukrainian crisis might have appeared to be reactive in their nature, but in fact they reflect the long-felt need to relocate the focus of Russia's economic and political interests to Asia. The need to implement the measures listed above (closer cooperation within BRICS, shift to national currencies, SCO enlargement, Russian-Chinese gas deal, Eurasian integration, etc.) comprising Russia's own obvious "pivot to Asia" had been felt for a long time. The Ukrainian crisis only accelerated the pace, which probably came as unexpected by the schemers behind it. This "pivot to Asia" will not only help Russia diversify foreign trade and economic relations, but also become a major factor in the wide scale program of development of Russian Far East and Siberia regions.

Still, the purposes of the puppet masters behind the Ukrainian crisis were manifold.

For one, the crisis erupted at the time when the talks on creation of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) somehow stalled with critics pointing out that the deal only favored big corporate businesses, mostly those from the U.S.⁹ At the same time, the growing interdependence between Russia and the European Union (EU) in energy sphere presented a real challenge

for the US energy companies which had elevated their work on shale gas extraction. a) By creating the crisis and forcing Russia to act apparently reactively, the US managed to put an obstacle on the direct route of Russian gas transportation to Western Europe via Ukraine; b) create a media-exaggerated image of Russia as “aggressor”; thus, c) create a rift between Russia and EU making the latter more submissive in its talks on TTIP and ensuring preferences for its own companies in the European energy market. The consequent economic sanctions imposed by the West against Russia only highlighted that the crisis in Ukraine was simply a pretext—the aim was (and still is) to weaken Russia irrespective of its policies.

Second, the crisis in Ukraine was meant to create a hotbed of instability close to Russia’s borders with the aim of diminishing Russia’s strategic power and stalling the process of Eurasian integration. If Russia had not acted decisively (and in a way hardly expected by Washington strategists), Russian Navy would have soon been kicked out of Sevastopol and that Russian city would ultimately serve as a NATO navy base.

But most importantly, the crisis in Ukraine demonstrated a kind of proxy attack on Russia as one of the main pillars (along with China and India) of BRICS. Being unable to wage direct political (and proxy military) assault simultaneously on all three, the US has adopted different tactics in dealing with China and India.

In case of China, which basically presents the biggest global challenge to the US monopoly, the US is trying to revive old and forge new alliances with countries of East and Southeast Asia, especially those that have problems in their relations with China—Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, the Philippines and others.

In 2012, the US marines were stationed in the port city of Darwin in the northern part of Australia, and later the same year the US combat ships were deployed in Singapore.¹⁰ The strategic task is obvious—that is, by using minimal force to be able to cut maritime routes of transportation of goods (primarily, hydrocarbons) in case the situation in Chinese seas deteriorates to the level of an open conflict (either between China and any of its East Asian neighbors, or between mainland China and Taiwan).

Needless to say, such preparations which had been going on for a long time did not go unnoticed in China. The so called “string of pearls” strategy in the Indian Ocean¹¹ with footholds in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar and possibly some other countries along the main route of transportation from the Middle East and East Africa to Southeast and East Asia has a twofold objective. One, controlling the route by Chinese battleships thus securing the safety of transported goods. Second, creating alternative land routes, namely via Pakistan and Pakistan-controlled Kashmir as well as via Myanmar. Such alternative routes would enable China to avoid passing through the narrow Malacca Strait which can be easily blocked by US navy in case of emergency.

During President Obama's second term, being preoccupied with dramatic developments in other parts of the world, the US somehow eased its attention to Asia Pacific. Even the talks on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) stalled along with similar talks on TTIP with proposed members being unable to reach a long-promised final agreement. This does not mean that the US has abandoned the region altogether or gave up the task of containing China. While reloading the burden of a direct confrontation on its allies in the region, the US still exerts political and diplomatic pressure upon China on such "peripheral" issues as human rights, intellectual property, yuan exchange rate, alleged computer hacking, etc.

In search of proxies, the US ascribes a special role to India. India has good reason to worry about China's growing activity in the Indian Ocean and strengthening ties with India's immediate neighbors, not all of whom may be called friends. In this context we see a set of asymmetrical oppositions defining international relations on the continent. While not being able and willing to confront China directly, the US puts forward its proxies. On the other hand, direct confrontation (despite all existing problems in bilateral relations) is not in the interests of either China or India—the two demonstrate an example of partnership between countries that can hardly be called friends.

At the same time, the growing Beijing—Islamabad axis (as the most crucial part of the "string of pearls" strategy) demonstrates that China, too, is eager to employ same tactics of "proxy confrontation"—while developing partnership face-to-face, it creates problems for India on the other border, thus diminishing the risks of direct confrontation.

In a way, India's "Look East" policy (recently reformulated as "Act East" policy¹²) can also be regarded as an asymmetrical response to China's activity in close proximity to India's maritime borders. India's activity in East and Southeast Asia, its growing ties with countries like Japan and Vietnam have begotten a new term Indo-Pacific to define the vast region encompassing "both the Pacific and Indian Oceans, defined in part by the geographically expanding interests and reach of China and India, and the continued strategic role and presence of the United States in both".¹³

But this may also be a simplified view of the strategy. Indeed, India's cooperation with the countries of Asia Pacific, its cautious policies of avoiding confrontation as much as possible, its experience as one of the founders and leaders of the Non-Alignment movement create prerequisites for an alternative "third center of power" not involved in the global China-US standoff.¹⁴

As for the US strategy in regard to India, it has been changing with years. The turning point in the bilateral relationship is regarded to be the "nuclear deal" of 2005-2008 which opened way for full-scale cooperation between the two countries in nuclear and related spheres. Also, in subsequent years, the US became

India's number one partner in defense sector replacing Russia. Obama's presidency (especially during the first term) witnessed a relative cooling down of relations manifested on numerous occasions. The relationship reached a critical point on the eve of the 2014 general elections in India. It is a well-known fact that starting from 2005, Narendra Modi was regarded as an unwelcome guest in the US due to his alleged involvement in the 2002 riots in Gujarat. Up to the end of 2013, the US State Department repeatedly reiterated its stance that the policies regarding Modi remain unchanged.¹⁵

Along with mistreating Narendra Modi overtly, the US simultaneously used a number of covert ploys aimed at preventing BJP's win. The years prior to the general elections witnessed an unprecedented rise of Western- (primarily, American)-funded NGOs' activity in various spheres which even prompted the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to raise his voice against it.¹⁶ Also, there is all reason to believe that at least some of the activists of the populist *Aam Aadmi Party* (AAP), whose sole aim was to split the opposition's votes which would otherwise go to BJP, were on the US payroll.

Only when Modi's victory became imminent, the US policies changed and the then US Ambassador to India Nancy Powell met with Gujarat Chief Minister about to become Prime Minister of India, in February 2014.¹⁷ Still, BJP's victory and Narendra Modi's premiership put the two sides in a delicate position, which now both are trying to overcome. Modi's September 2014 visit to the US and the invitation to Barack Obama to the Republic Day parade in 2015 are the clear examples of such efforts aimed at bridging the gap that might have appeared due to the US previous policies in regard to Modi.

Still, despite clear signs of a new warming up of Indo-US relations, certain problems still remain. Among them, the US immigration reform agenda and visa problems for Indian high-tech workers; the controversy over the US-pushed reform of the World Trade Organisation; US concerns about India's commitment to intellectual property rights, and some others.¹⁸ These issues may seem minor, but one thing remains obvious—India is too big an independent country to blindly follow in the wake of the US policies in the region.

Taking into account that despite the decisive BJP victory in 2014 general elections, quite a lot of domestic problems remain unresolved (ranging from economic reform to center-state relations and communal tensions), one can only wonder how long the US will stick to its current policy of courting India, or, in case they become dissatisfied with the government's stand on crucial international issues, one day they will shift to schemes along the "Arab spring" or Ukrainian lines.

All this creates a rather complicated and, as stated above, asymmetrical intermingling of relations between the major players in Asia, or, more broadly, in

Eurasia. Such intermingling was recently ridiculed by a British blogger in a piece called “Clear as mud” in regard to what is going on in the Middle East and how interests of different players (the West, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, IS, Syria, Iran) intersect and contradict one another.¹⁹ If applied to the strategic trends in “wider Asia”, one may see that the two prevailing tendencies here are: one of closer integration irrespective of the existing and long-standing problems: the other one of outside interference which can achieve its objectives only in the “divide and rule” situation.

In this context, what is drastically needed is the new quality of integration in Asia which would enable to overcome the existing geographic and geopolitical barriers hindering cooperation in the continent. The problems of the continent should be handled and solutions sought for by regional powers themselves without any outside interference.

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Asian Security Contentions: Trends and Scenarios

S. Samuel C. Rajiv

Asian security contentions are wide-ranging and diverse, with geo-political exigencies engendering security deficits and regional instabilities. For the purposes of this chapter, two key contentions that are representative of an animated security discourse pertaining to two critical sub-regions of Asia are sought to be examined. These are maritime territorial disputes in the South China Sea (SCS) and the Iranian nuclear contentions in West Asia.

Some of the relevant drivers impinging on the course of these contentions will be delineated. The chapter will highlight Indian interests and approaches vis-à-vis these contentions. It will then briefly lay out possible policy options for India that would best maximise its security preferences, vis-à-vis two alternative scenarios that could unfold regarding each of the contentions over the course of the near-to-mid-term future.

Maritime Territorial Disputes in SCS

Competing claims on maritime boundaries has been a key bone of contention that has animated Asia-Pacific security in the recent past. This is most discernible in the SCS, where China is up against the claims of South East Asian states like Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines over the Spratly Islands and with Vietnam over the Paracel Islands. China/Taiwan and Japan also have escalating territorial dispute over the Senkaku (Japanese name)/Diaoyu (Chinese name) islands in the East China Sea. Japan in turn has competing claims with South Korea over Takeshima (Japanese name)/Dokdo (South Korean) Islands in the Sea of Japan. This section however primarily focusses on disputes in the SCS.

Assertive Strategic Behaviour

Assertive strategic behaviour to safeguard such territorial claims has translated into regional security angst. Instances of such Chinese behaviour in recent past include the unilateral declaration of the Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea in November 2013, overlapping the existing ADIZ's of Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. The US termed the move as 'provocative', and a 'serious step in the wrong direction'.¹ There were apprehensions that China would make a similar move vis-à-vis the SCS as well.

The US views China's claims in the SCS as 'fundamentally flawed' as they are not derived from land features. The Chinese 'nine-dash line' extends from Hainan Island down towards Indonesia and then loops further towards Taiwan in the rough shape of a sagging balloon (also termed as 'cow's tongue'). The US State Department in December 2014 in a study noted that 'China has not clarified through legislation, proclamation, or other official statements the legal basis or nature of its claim associated with the dashed-line map'.² The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson criticised the report as being 'not helpful to the resolution of the South China issue ...'³ Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on his part had earlier in February 2014 urged the US to 'respect China's rights' and to 'not take sides', during a meeting with US Secretary of State John Kerry.⁴

The US Navy has also been encountering 'belligerent' Chinese tactical moves in the waters of the SCS. In a December 2013 incident, a PLA Navy vessel allegedly made a dangerous manoeuvre within 100 yards ahead of the US Navy guided missile cruiser USS *Cowpens*, forcing it to make an abrupt stop.⁵ Reports noted that the *Cowpens* was in international waters but was on a mission observing China's only aircraft carrier *Liaoning* which was making its first voyage in the SCS from its homeport of Qingdao.⁶ In August 2014, a fighter jet of the PLA Air Force allegedly conducted an 'unsafe intercept' of a US P-8 maritime reconnaissance aircraft within a distance of 30 feet over the waters of the SCS.⁷

Other instances of Chinese aggressive behaviour as listed by the US Assistant Secretary of State Russel in testimony to Congress in February 2014 include:

continued restrictions on access to Scarborough Reef; pressure on the long-standing Philippine presence at the Second Thomas Shoal; putting hydrocarbon blocks up for bid in an area close to another country's mainland and far away even from the islands that China is claiming; announcing administrative and even military districts in contested areas in the South China Sea; an unprecedented spike in risky activity by China's maritime agencies near the Senkaku Islands; ... and the recent updating of fishing regulations covering disputed areas in the South China Sea.⁸

Chinese land reclamation efforts in recent times have come under increased scrutiny. The US State Department in May 2015 stated that such efforts near Spratly Islands including the building of air strips and radar stations were

'contributing to tensions'.⁹ Assistant Secretary Russel insisted that Chinese reclamation efforts though 'not necessarily a violation of international law' were 'certainly violating China's claim to be a good neighbour and a benign and non-threatening power'.¹⁰ Defence Secretary Ashton Carter at Pearl Harbour on May 27, 2015 called for an end to such efforts 'by any claimant' and that such moves 'increase the demand for American [military] engagement in the Asia-Pacific region'.¹¹ Chinese Foreign Ministry however insisted that its activities were 'lawful, fair and reasonable within China's scope of sovereignty'.¹²

The 2015 US Department of Defence (DoD) report to the Congress on Chinese military capabilities states that China will be able to use such 'enhanced infrastructure' as 'persistent civil-military bases of operation to significantly enhance its presence in the disputed area'.¹³ The report further noted that the Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) in March 2014 for the first time prevented the resupply of Philippines military personnel who have been stationed at Second Thomas Shoal of the Spratly Island since 1999. While the report notes that preparing for potential conflict across the Taiwan Straits remains the primary focus of Chinese military investment and growth, it is also increasing its emphasis on preparing for contingencies in the SCS [and East China Sea] as well.

In May 2014, Vietnam and China had a spat over the presence of a Chinese oil rig in the SCS, which led to the ramming of Coast Guard vessels and subsequent anti-Chinese riots in Vietnam. Both countries reached an agreement to establish a hotline between their respective defence ministers in October 2014 in the aftermath of the crisis, which ended in July when the Chinese removed the rig. The dispute in the SCS between Vietnam and China particularly stands out given that both countries have reached agreements in the past regarding land border demarcation in 1999, as well as agreement for cooperation in the Tonkin Gulf in 2004.¹⁴ Analysts therefore note that Southeast Asian nations may become wary of China's preference for bilateral mechanisms to resolve such maritime disputes in the face of such aggressive strategic behaviour.¹⁵

Apart from China, other nations have also taken to aggressive patrolling in their territorial waters which led to the loss of lives. In May 2013 for instance, the Philippines Coast Guard (PCG) killed a Taiwanese fisherman operating at a distance of about 40 nautical miles from Philippines territory. Though this was clearly in the Philippines Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), Philippine National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) later brought criminal charges against the PCG crew for trying to falsify evidence, among other charges.¹⁶ Reports however noted that the NBI did not find fault with the 'indiscriminate' use of force, which the crew contended they resorted to 'kill' the engine of the vessel.

The maritime disputes in the SCS play in the backdrop of China's unresolved territorial claims on Taiwan and its increasingly robust naval forays in the Indian

Ocean. Taiwan's 2013 National Defence Report claimed that China would be in a position to invade and occupy Taiwan by 2020.¹⁷ Chinese naval forays in the Indian Ocean are drawing the attention of policy makers in India. Chinese diesel submarines making port calls in Sri Lanka in 2014 led to a sense of disquiet in New Delhi. China claimed that these submarines were part of anti-piracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden. Indian analysts have termed it a 'seminal development with far-reaching consequences' which was akin to a 'continental' power stretching its 'sea-legs'.¹⁸

Thickening Trade Linkages

The security dilemmas generated by such unresolved maritime territorial disputes bring to bear uncertainties and potential for conflict in the 'Indo-Asia-Pacific'¹⁹, a region of immense commercial significance and trade inter linkages. China for instance is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) largest trading partner while ASEAN is China's third largest trading partner. Trade between the two was over \$366 billion in 2014.²⁰ It is expected to reach \$1 trillion by 2020.²¹

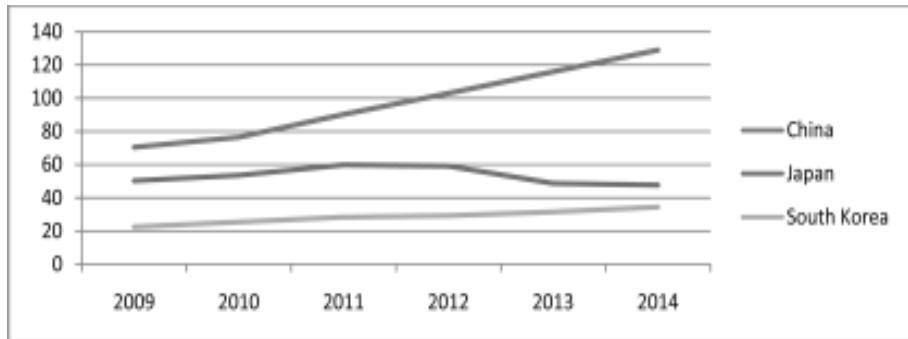
China was also the source of 5.8 per cent of FDI inflows into ASEAN from 2012-14. The European Union and Japan accounted for 30 per cent of inflows while the US accounted for 8.8 per cent.²² Over 15 million barrels per day (bpd) of oil transited the Straits of Malacca in 2013, onward through the East China Sea to the energy-hungry economic powerhouses of East Asia—China, Japan, and South Korea. US DoD reports indicate that over 80 per cent of energy imported by these countries transit the waters of the SCS. The US has equally significant commercial interests in the region. US-ASEAN trade is next only to US-China and US-Japan trade. US investments in ASEAN countries total more than \$190 billion. Analysts noted that this was more than US investments in Brazil, China, India, and Russia combined (till at least 2012).²³ Intra-ASEAN trade was over \$600 billion in 2014.²⁴

Rising Military Capabilities

The security dilemmas get further exacerbated on account of increasing military profile of the countries of the region. US DoD reports note that Beijing is building up its anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) 'counter-intervention' capabilities, including long-range land-attack and anti-ship cruise missiles, conducting ambitious exercises involving all three of its naval fleets like the October 2013 exercise in the Philippine Sea, while 'continuing to improve capabilities in nuclear deterrence and long-range conventional strike'.²⁵ The US Pacific Fleet Commander informed the Congress in March 2014 that China was maintaining the continuous presence of three Coast Guard vessels in the SCS, apart from the regular transits of Chinese Navy warships.²⁶ In addition to the lone aircraft carrier

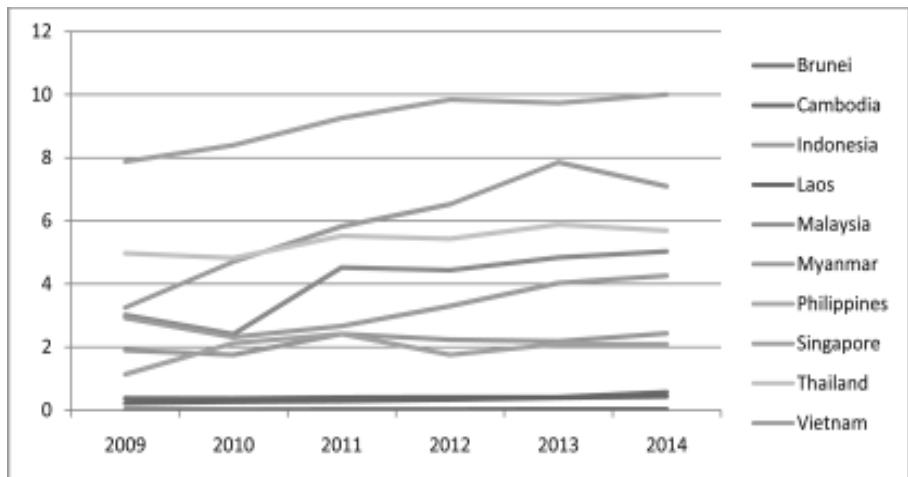
bought from Ukraine put into service in 2012, reports in February 2015 noted that China was building another aircraft carrier at Dalian to be ready by 2020.²⁷

Chart 1: Defence Budgets: China, Japan, South Korea: 2009-2014 (US\$ Billion)



Source: IISS, *Military Balance*, Various Issues.

Chart 2: ASEAN Defence Budgets 2009-14 (US\$ Billion)



Source: IISS, *Military Balance*, Various Issues.

Other military modernisation efforts by countries of the region include that by Japan which launched the first of two 27,000 tonne helicopter carriers in August 2013 (commissioned in March 2015). The second ship is due to be commissioned in 2017. The name of this ship has generated controversy, as a vessel bearing that name had attacked the Chinese cities of Shanghai and Nanjing in 1937 and took part in the Pearl Harbour attacks in 1941.²⁸ Analysts noted that these are Japan's largest naval vessels since the Second World War. Japan is also providing 10 Coast Guard vessels to the Philippines worth over \$150 million. All of them will be inducted before 2017.

South Korea deployed its 1,000-1, 5000 km range Hyunmu cruise missile in response to increasing acts of brinkmanship by North Korea. Seoul also launched its sixth Type-214 submarine (1800 tonnes) in May 2015. An indigenous South Korean submarine displacing 3,000 tonnes and having air independent propulsion (AIP) is expected by 2022. Reports in January 2015 noted that South Korea had created a submarine command, under the command of a two-star general.²⁹ Vietnam ordered six Kilo-class submarines in 2009.³⁰ While the fourth submarine was received in May 2015, it is expected to receive the remaining two before 2016. As regards fighter aircraft, Singapore and Vietnam ordered 12 F-15 long-range strike aircraft and 12 Su-30 MK2 aircraft respectively in 2013.³¹ Thailand has similar numbers of Gripen aircraft in its inventory.

US Military Presence

The US is the pre-eminent 'Indo-Asia-Pacific' power, with a significant military presence in the region. It has 30,000 troops in South Korea, Thailand among other places and another 50,000 in Japan. The US Pacific Command (PACOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR) stretches from Japan to Australia to India. The US has treaty-based defence relationships with Thailand and Philippines in Southeast Asia and with Japan in Northeast Asia, while Singapore is an important logistics and maintenance hub.

In the aftermath of the US 're-balance' to Asia-Pacific, announced in January 2012, 60 per cent of US naval forces are scheduled to be deployed in the region, to be realised by 2020. Reports note that the US Navy's fleet of 285 ships including cruisers, destroyers and submarines are currently evenly split between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.³² The US is also operationalising 'rotational' bases in Australia and Philippines. Analysts note that developing a mutual web of complementary military ties with countries of the region would serve US interests better than developing remote bases in the Pacific.³³

To strengthen such ties, President Obama visited Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Japan in April 2014, each of which is wary of Chinese intentions. Among other outcomes of these visits included the US easing its arms embargo on Vietnam and upgrading its relationship with Malaysia to that of a 'comprehensive partnership'.³⁴ During his visit to Tokyo, analysts noted that for the first time ever, a US President asserted that the US-Japan security alliance covered the Senkaku Islands as well.³⁵ A 10-year defence agreement with the Philippines was concluded during Obama's April 2014 visit. A 25-year 'rotational' agreement for stationing of US marines in the northern Australian city of Darwin, first announced in 2011 by Obama, was signed in August 2014 by the then US Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel.

The US is further engaged in conducting rigorous military exercises with its

allies to fine tune mutual operational readiness. President Obama in November 2014 at the Myanmar East Asia Summit reiterated his administration's efforts to strengthen ASEAN-US ties. His presence in Myanmar was pertinent given that he had skipped the previous year's summit in Brunei as well as the APEC Summit in Indonesia due to domestic dynamics (budget impasse in US Congress).

ASEAN Security Community (ASM) Stillborn But Efforts On

China and Southeast Asian states though have been making efforts to mitigate mutual tensions. Given the fact that such efforts have seen intermittent progress, extant tensions appear further stark. China and the ASEAN for instance in 2002 had agreed to adopt the Declaration of the Conduct of Parties in the SCS but the mechanism has not been put in place as yet even after 12 years of discussions.

The ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM), the highest defence consultative mechanism which is held annually, began in 2006. ADMM-Plus meetings, inclusive of ASEAN's eight dialogue partners began in 2010. These are held biennially. Among other positives in recent past include the humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) exercise organised in June 2013 for the first time by the ADMM-Plus to foster cooperation and goodwill.

China and Japan made efforts to address outstanding issues when Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met with President Xi Jinping in November 2014 on the side lines of the APEC Summit meeting in Beijing. Both sides reached an agreement on a maritime crisis management mechanism as well as agreed to pursue 'Mutually Beneficial Relationship based on Common Strategic Interests'.³⁶ As noted earlier, China and Vietnam have instituted a hotline between their defence ministers for the first time ever in October 2014.

India's Interests and Stakes

India has vital interests in the Indo-Pacific region. Seven of India's top 25 trading partners in 2014-15 were in East and Southeast Asia (China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, not including Australia) while six were in West Asia (United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iraq, Kuwait, Iran). Indian imports from ASEAN were over \$44 billion in 2014-15, which was nearly 10 per cent of its total imports. Exports to ASEAN were nearly \$32 billion for the same period, for 10.2 per cent of total.³⁷ India and ASEAN, which had adopted the 'ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity (2010-15)' in 2010, have an ambitious trade target of \$200 billion by 2022. Secretary (East) Anil Wadhwa releasing a report on May 22, 2015 noted India's 'extensive and expanding trade and investment relations with APEC [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation] economies, which account for 35 percent of India's merchandise trade, 27 percent of FDI inflows, and 40 percent of FDI outflows'.³⁸

Table 1: India's Bilateral Trade: ASEAN, Australia, China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	(US\$ Million) 2014-15
Australia	13,792.33	12,502.01	18,055.35	15,434.34	12,122.81	13,029.38
Brunei	453.09	257.23	1,500.51	854.82	796.05	882.87
Cambodia	50.60	74.95	106.72	124.18	154.04	160.49
China	42,441.90	57,648.62	73,390.13	65,783.21	65,858.98	72,347.42
Indonesia	11,720.03	15,619.41	21,443.92	20,210.79	19,598.50	19,047.96
Japan	10,363.72	13,723.27	18,327.97	18,512.35	16,294.82	15,516.93
Laos	36.98	13.33	104.24	167.56	89.29	152.58
Malaysia	8,012.19	10,394.75	13,454.00	14,395.13	13,427.80	16,934.29
Myanmar	1,497.77	1,338.29	1,926.52	1,957.35	2,182.68	2,004.78
Philippines	1,061.84	1,310.49	1,434.29	1,691.18	1,810.59	1,818.62
Singapore	14,046.74	16,964.75	25,246.19	21,105.63	19,273.03	16,933.83
South Korea	11,997.12	14,202.58	17,164.34	17,307.37	16,679.28	18,132.06
Taiwan	4,490.00	6,262.60	8,174.82	7,007.32	6,030.73	6,207.35
Thailand	4,671.68	6,546.31	8,244.85	9,085.78	9,043.47	9,330.71
Vietnam	2,360.76	3,716.34	5,441.96	6,282.15	8,036.19	9,261.23

Source: Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Export-Import Data Bank, www.commerce.nic.in

India has time and again stressed mutually acceptable cooperative security solutions to address the simmering maritime territorial disputes in Southeast Asia in accordance with the UN Convention on Law of the Seas (UNCLOS). It has called for the maintenance of the freedom of navigation of the seas and airspace in the region. Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the 9th East Asia Summit meeting in November 2014 in Nay Pyi Taw for instance stated:

Following international law and norms is important for peace and stability in South China Sea ... We also hope that the efforts to conclude a Code of Conduct on South China Sea by a process of consensus would be successful soon.³⁹

It is pertinent to note that during President Obama's visit to India in January 2015, India and the US jointly affirmed (reports acknowledged for the first time ever) 'the importance of safeguarding maritime security and ensuring freedom of navigation and over flight throughout the region, especially in the South China Sea'.⁴⁰

Enhanced Diplomatic, Economic, Military Engagement

Some of the ASEAN countries are important energy partners. Indonesia for instance, with which India had established a 'strategic partnership' in 2005, is an important supplier of coal. India's energy imports (inclusive of coal and oil) from the ASEAN countries in the recent past varied from a high of 11.3 per

cent in 2011-12 to 5.74 per cent in 2014-15.⁴¹ Indian companies have also agreements with their Southeast Asian counterparts like Vietnam to drill for oil in the waters of the SCS, operative since 1988. Two other blocks were added in 2006, one of which was 'relinquished after completing the work programme'.⁴² While the Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) had given up prospecting in one of the two blocks it was operating in 2011, reports noted that Vietnam persuaded it to continue to do so and it has since renewed India's lease for another year in August 2014.⁴³

During the visit of the Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung to India in October 2014, a Heads of Agreement was signed between ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) and PetroVietnam for participation on 'agreed blocks', subject to 'due diligence and negotiations'.⁴⁴ China's position has been that if India-Vietnam agreements 'concerns waters administered by China or if such cooperation project is not approved by the Chinese government ... we will not support it'.⁴⁵ Minister of State in the MEA Gen. V.K. Singh (Retd.) told the Rajya Sabha in December 2014 that

Such activity by Indian companies is purely commercial in nature. India's position on South China Sea issue is consistent and has been reiterated bilaterally and in multilateral fora on several occasions.⁴⁶

India extended a \$100 million Line of Credit for defence procurement to Vietnam in September 2014 during the visit of President Pranab Mukherjee. India and Vietnam, which had established a 'Strategic Partnership' in 2007, expect to increase their bilateral trade to \$15 billion by 2020.⁴⁷ Bilateral trade has grown by nearly 150 per cent over the past five years from \$2.3 billion in 2009-10 to over \$9 billion in 2014-15.⁴⁸

In order to further strengthen its ties with the countries of the region, the Modi government has activated India's 'Look East' policy (hence termed 'Act East' policy). Analysts note that Prime Minister Modi's bilateral visits to Japan (August-September 2014), Australia (November 2014), South Korea (May 2015) and China (May 2015), along with high-level delegation visits to Singapore and Vietnam by External Affairs Minister (EAM) Sushma Swaraj (August 2014) and by President Mukherjee to Vietnam (September 2014) are indicative of this policy in motion.⁴⁹ EAM Swaraj inaugurated an independent Indian Mission to ASEAN in April 2015.

High-level visits to India in the past year included that by President Xi Jinping in September 2014, for the first such visit since 2005. China agreed to invest \$20 billion in India by 2020, inclusive of \$7 bn for two industrial parks (one of which is an automobile parts manufacturing facility) in Gujarat and Maharashtra. Among other agreements, India and China have agreed to cooperate in space research, including the development of remote sensing and communication

satellites.⁵⁰ India-China bilateral trade meanwhile was worth over \$72 billion in 2014-15, up from \$42 billion in 2009-10.

India has stepped up its economic and defence linkages with countries of the region as well.⁵¹ At one end of the spectrum, India has stepped up its strategic engagement with Myanmar, the only Southeast Asian country with which India shares a long border of nearly 1,700 km. Both countries naval forces conducted coordinated patrols in March 2013 as well as in February 2014 as well. EAM Swaraj visited Myanmar for the ASEAN Regional Forum meetings in August 2014. She told reporters that she impressed upon the Myanmarese leadership to tackle insurgent bases inside their country targeting Indian interests.⁵²

At the other end of the spectrum, India's engagement with Australia has seen an upward trajectory. During PM Modi's visit to Australia in November 2014, India and Australia signed an agreement regarding cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and agreed to hold annual defence policy talks. They also pledged to continue the service-to-service staff talks, hold regular bilateral maritime exercises, annual dialogues on disarmament, non-proliferation and international security, exchanges on counter-radicalisation, joint working group on counter-terrorism and other trans-national crimes, among other initiatives.⁵³ India-Australia bilateral trade was worth \$13 billion in 2014-15, while in 2011-12 it stood at \$18 billion.

During PM Modi's visit to South Korea in May 2015, both sides elevated their bilateral relationship to that of a 'Special Strategic Partnership'.⁵⁴ India and Japan agreed to step up their 'Strategic and Global Partnership' to a 'Special Strategic and Global Partnership' during the visit of PM Modi in August-September 2014. In his joint press conference with PM Shinzo Abe, Modi stated that India and Japan 'intend to give a new thrust and direction to our defence cooperation, including collaboration in defence technology and equipment, given our shared interest in peace and stability and maritime security'.⁵⁵ Japan intends to invest \$35 billion by 2020.

Among other areas of cooperation agreed upon in the strategic field included in the joint production of rare earth materials and amphibious aircraft.⁵⁶ Reports noted that an important development during Mr. Modi's visit was Japan removing India's defence aircraft company Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) from the list of banned entities, which it had imposed in the aftermath of India's 1998 nuclear tests.⁵⁷ It is pertinent to note that Indian Rare Earths Ltd, an entity under India's Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), which entered into a MoU with its Japanese counterpart during Modi's visit, was a banned entity after the 1998 tests.

Both sides also agreed to take forward maritime cooperation between the two Coast Guards. It is however pertinent that India and Japan have not held

bilateral exercises involving their navies so far. They have though been part of joint exercises such as Malabar-14 (held along with the US in July 2014), HADR Exercise 'Komodo' held by the Indonesia Navy in March-April 2014 which included China, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, and the US apart from Japan, and RIMPAC exercises in Hawaii in June 2014 which included 22 countries and over 25,000 personnel (China took part for the first time ever in the RIMPAC exercises of 2014).

The Eastern Fleet of the Indian Navy headquartered in Visakhapatnam went on an overseas deployment (OSD) to Japan, apart from Brunei, Malaysia, and Vietnam in June-August 2014. While analysts note that such exercises signal India's willingness to 'scale-up its naval engagement' with United States and countries of the region, they however assert that the 'central arm would need to be deterrence and preparedness for the worst-case scenarios'.⁵⁸

India's engagement with the other countries of the region is equally robust. The Indian Navy conducted coordinated patrols (CORPAT) with the navies of Indonesia, Thailand and Myanmar in 2013. India and Indonesia also conduct their bi-annual CORPAT along their international maritime boundary line (IMBL) regularly. The then Defence Minister A.K. Antony had visited Indonesia in October 2012 for the first ever ministerial-level defence dialogue. India and Malaysia have significant defence interactions including service-to-service staff talks, training programmes for Malaysian pilots on Su-30 jets, among other cooperation.

India's trade with Singapore stood at \$17 billion in 2014-15 and the city-state is also one of India's largest foreign investors. There is also close defence interaction comprising training for Singapore armed forces personnel, port visits, among other activities. As regards Philippines, former Foreign Minister Salman Khurshid during his visit in October 2013 had pledged support for the peaceful resolution of the dispute with China in the West Philippine Sea/SCS.⁵⁹ Reports in August 2014 noted that Manila was seeking closer defence cooperation with India, in the face of reports that China was transforming one of the reefs in the Spratly Islands into a naval base.⁶⁰

Iranian Nuclear Contentions

Apart from issues relating to proliferation networks and nuclear security, concerns regarding the Iran and North Korean nuclear programmes have dominated Asian security landscape. For purposes of this chapter, drivers accounting for the Iranian nuclear imbroglio will be highlighted. The Iran nuclear issue came into international limelight in 2002, when an Iranian opposition group accused Iran of not declaring facilities like the Natanz uranium enrichment plant to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The IAEA conducted its first

inspection of the facility in February 2003. The IAEA subsequently in February 2006 referred the issue to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) due to ‘the absence of confidence that Iran’s nuclear programme is exclusively for peaceful purposes resulting from the history of concealment of Iran’s nuclear activities’.⁶¹

Extended Lack of Progress in Diplomatic Efforts

Efforts undertaken to address Iranian nuclear concerns primarily followed a ‘dual-track approach’. These included punitive non-proliferation and economic sanctions at the multi-lateral (United Nations (UN), European Union (EU)) and unilateral (US) levels and diplomatic-political engagement at the tri-lateral (EU-3) and multi-lateral (P5+1) spectrum. Multi-lateral efforts have been spearheaded by the P5+1 countries since June 2006 (UNSC permanent members along with Germany) and prior to that (from 2003 onwards) by the EU-3 made up of Germany, the United Kingdom and France.

These were however not successful in ‘forcing’ cooperation from Iran on core issues of concern, including on such activities as the stopping of uranium enrichment activities, till the coming to power of Hassan Rouhani in August 2013. This it has been argued was in part due to the mutually reinforcing antagonistic nature of the two-track strategy. While Iranian intransigence attracted increasingly tough punitive measures, these measures in turn hardened Iranian positions.⁶² Iran for instance suspended its implementation of the IAEA Additional Protocol (AP), on February 6, 2006, in the immediate aftermath of its referral to the UNSC on February 4. It had signed the AP in December 2003 though it had not yet ratified it.

Politicised Safeguards

The P5+1 format also witnessed an uneven trajectory. A US high-level delegation participated for the first time only in June 2008 (the talks began two years prior). Talks were also in ‘suspended animation’ from January 2011 to April 2012. An important corollary of such an extended lack of progress in multilateral negotiations was the increasing ‘politicization’ of IAEA safeguards implementation.⁶³ This was most visible in such aspects as providing access to military facilities where nuclear materials-related activity could have taken place, the increasingly robust public campaigns of US-based non-governmental organisations (NGO’s) highlighting acts of omission and commission by Iran, among other issues. The ascendancy of such contentions contributed to the delay in resolving issues of concern while the continued growth of Iranian nuclear capabilities further fuelled apprehensions.

Contentious Bilateral Ties

The diplomatic-political efforts have also been hostage to the nature and content of bilateral relationships that Iran shared with its major interlocutors. The contentious US-Iran and UK-Iran relations are pertinent in this regard. While the US has been the ‘Great Satan’ in the terminology of the Iranian regime, President Bush famously termed Iran as part of the ‘axis of evil’ in his State of the Union speech in 2002. The former Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad characterised the Bush era as the ‘dark’ period in ties with the US.⁶⁴ The UK had to shut down its Embassy at Tehran in 2011 after being targeted by protesters. It was only reopened in August 2015 by Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond, who became the first British Foreign Secretary to visit Tehran since 2003.

Unilateral Sanctions Measures

While multi-lateral UN sanctions were last applied in June 2010, the unilateral sanctions part of the ‘two-track’ strategy was gradually tightened by the US, and subsequently by the EU. This severely affected Iran’s oil exports, its largest source of revenue. Pertinent of these measures included the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability and Divestment Act (CISADA) of January 2010. CISADA imposed restrictions on investments by US companies in Iran’s petroleum sector as well as restrictions on provisions of loans by US financial institutions that do business with Iran, among other provisions.⁶⁵ US officials credited CISADA for major international energy traders like India’s Reliance and France’s Total stopping sale of refined petroleum products to Iran.⁶⁶

The National Defence Authorisation Act (NDAA) 2012 among other provisions provided for sanctions on a foreign bank if it indulged in business transactions with the Central Bank of Iran (CBI). It provided for exemptions from sanctions (as those prescribed in the Iran Sanctions Act) if the President determined ‘that the country with primary jurisdiction over the foreign financial institution has significantly reduced its volume of crude oil purchases from Iran’.⁶⁷ Countries like India were uniquely affected by such measures, with crude oil imports from Iran reducing from about 13 per cent of the total in 2009-10 to about 4 per cent in 2014-15.⁶⁸ Currently, only China, India, South Korea, Turkey, Taiwan and Japan are the countries importing Iranian oil.

The Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act (ITRSRHA) of 2012 led to the creation of ‘escrow’ accounts, given that it mandated that funds owed to Iran as a result of bilateral trade in goods and services ‘are credited to an account located in the country with primary jurisdiction over the foreign financial institution’.⁶⁹ This severely curtailed Iran’s foreign exchange earnings.

These measures significantly affected Iran’s economic standing, with the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) stating in November 2013 that Iran’s ‘oil’ and ‘non-

oil' Gross Domestic Product (GDP) had a negative growth of 5.8 and 3.1 per cent in 2012, respectively.⁷⁰ Analysts have pointed out that Iran's foreign exchange earnings took a severe hit, with Iran having 'un-encumbered access to only \$20 billion' out of its total estimated reserves of about \$80 billion.⁷¹ Iran's depreciating currency and loss of oil revenues have also been pointed out, for example, in the White House Fact Sheet on the Joint Plan of Action (JPOA).⁷²

JCPOA

On the back of such punitive sanctions which negatively affected Iran's economic standing, prospects for an agreement to address concerns improved after the coming to power of Rouhani. President Obama had an unprecedented telephone conversation with Rouhani in September 2013 (when the Iranian President was in New York for the UN General Assembly sessions) and reports noted that both sides have also been engaged in secret bilateral negotiations regarding the nuclear contentions, facilitated by Oman. The November 2013 JPOA between was the result.⁷³

Iran and the P5+1 in talks coordinated by the EU 'reached solutions on key parameters' of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on April 2, 2015 at Lausanne.⁷⁴ This was after nearly 18 months of negotiations and 14 rounds of talks in the aftermath of the JPOA. Iran agreed for robust verification and monitoring mechanisms on its nuclear activities including uranium mining and dual-use items procurement, committed not to do reprocessing activities indefinitely, not to build heavy water plants for 15 years, among other commitments.⁷⁵

Subsequently on July 14, 2015, the JCPOA was finally agreed upon. The JCPOA is designed to ensure the 'exclusively peaceful' nature of the Iranian nuclear programme. It would simultaneously lift all the UNSC and multi-lateral and national sanctions measures that were imposed to pressurise Iran to conform to the UNSC resolutions as well as those of the IAEA. The JCPOA will begin to be implemented (Implementation Day) after the IAEA gives a report that it has verified Iran's implementation of a bunch of nuclear-related measures. These include reduction in Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium to 300 kgs of 3.65 per cent UF₆. The May 2015 report of the IAEA Director General to the Board of Governors noted that Iran had in its possession 8715 kgs of UF₆ enriched up to five per cent.⁷⁶ Therefore, nearly 97 per cent reduction in Iranian stockpile would be required before the agreement is implemented.

Among a host of other commitments Iran has agreed to fulfil include modifications to the Arak heavy water-moderated reactor, drastic reduction in the number of centrifuges (5060 IR-1 centrifuges for 10 years, all of which will be operated only at the Natanz enrichment plant), advanced centrifuges to be produced only after the end of Year 10, enrichment levels capped at 3.67 years

for 15 years, no R&D regarding plutonium and uranium metal machining, daily access to IAEA inspectors at Natanz plant for 15 years (no nuclear-related enrichment or R&D activities to take place at Fordow enrichment plant), monitoring of uranium ore concentrate plants for 25 years, among others.⁷⁷

Transparency and confidence-building measures that Iran has agreed to follow include provisional application of the AP and full implementation of the modified Code 3.1. The latter relates to the early provision of design information to the IAEA. The code was revised in 1992 requiring every NPT member state to inform the IAEA as soon as a decision to construct a nuclear facility is undertaken. The earlier provision only required a state to inform the IAEA six months prior to the introduction of nuclear material.

Iran quit implementing the provision in March 2007 (after agreeing to do so in 2003), in the immediate aftermath of UNSC Resolution 1747, which ramped up sanctions measures against it. The IAEA will have a critical part in policing the terms of the JCPOA, and to certify that Iran's nuclear activities are for peaceful purposes only. The IAEA draws a 'broader [safeguards] conclusion' that 'all nuclear material remained in peaceful activities' in states that have concluded both the comprehensive safeguards agreement (CSA) as well as the AP. Iran implementing and subsequently ratifying the AP was therefore an essential element of the diplomatic solution.

In the aftermath of the JCPOA, there have been some issues of contention raised by the critics of the deal. Israel for instance has been openly critical of the Obama administration for the deal they have negotiated.⁷⁸ They have expressed concern that Iranian nuclear infrastructure will largely remain intact, though there is reduction in the number of centrifuges and nuclear material Israeli analysts are particularly unhappy that Iran continues to have possession of the underground facility of Fordow, though no nuclear material enrichment is slated to take place there.

The Israelis also note that after a decade, majority of restrictions on the Iranian nuclear programme will cease to exist (especially regarding the production of advanced centrifuges). Iran therefore could potentially shorten the 'break-out' time (assessed to be at least 1 year as a result of the JCPOA implementation).⁷⁹ The Israelis and the Saudis are also worried that Iran will continue with more rigour its hegemonic policies regionally, especially with the billions of dollars in sanctions relief that it will now have access to. Iranian Foreign Minister Javed Zarif on the other hand however, on the eve of the JCPOA, held out the prospects of Iranian cooperation to tackle regional threats like the Islamic State.

India's Interests and Stakes

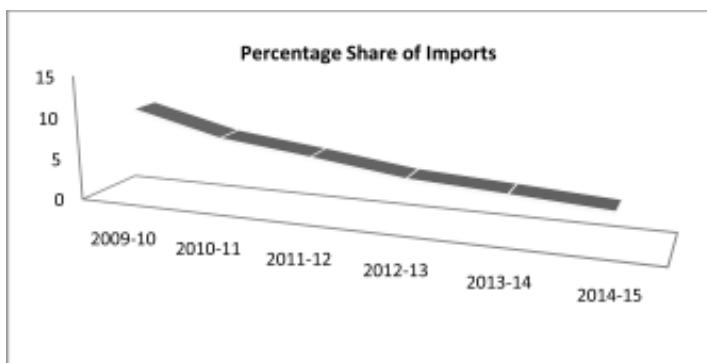
The long-standing Iranian nuclear contentions have led to rising instability in a region of prime importance to India's strategic interests. India considers Iran to

be part of its 'proximate neighbourhood' and therefore considerations of regional stability have dominated India's responses towards the issue. Issues of national security were also involved, in the light of revelations that the clandestine A.Q. Khan network had supplied P-1 centrifuges to Iran. There were varied domestic reactions to India voting against Iran at international fora like the IAEA beginning from 2005 and the charge that India's behaviour was due to US diplomatic pressure. The government however insisted that its Iran policy was independent of such pressures and its decisions were guided by considerations of national interest given that it has been consistent in its stance that it opposes the possibility of another nuclear weapons power in its neighbourhood.⁸⁰

Reduction in Oil Imports

Though India has vigorously opposed the imposition of unilateral sanctions measures, it had to bear the brunt of some of these measures. As noted above, India was affected by such unilateral sanctions measures like NDAA 2012 which led to the reduction of crude oil imports from Iran. As a result of ITRSHRA which went into effect in February 2013, part of payments for Iranian crude was locked up in Indian banks. Reports noted that Indian refiners owed nearly \$7 billion as of May 2015.⁸¹ Indian oil companies therefore have been a significant part of the Iran sanctions relief, having paid \$1.65 billion till July 2014, while another \$900 million was paid by November 2014. Reports further noted that refiners were asked to pay another \$1.4 billion in two equal instalments in August 2015.

Chart 3: Reduction in Oil Imports from Iran: 2009-2015



Source: Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Export-Import Data Bank, www.commerce.nic.in

Indian oil companies like Reliance announced in January 2009 that they would stop the sale of refined gasoline to Iran on account of pressure brought by US Congressmen in December 2008 to stop the provision of loans by the US Exim Bank to fund expansion activities at Jamnagar and for exploration work at

the Krishna-Godavari Basin. Reliance subsequently announced that it would even stop the import of crude from Iran. The company subsequently in December 2012 obtained over \$2 billion loans from the US EXIM Bank for its expansions projects at Jamnagar.⁸² The Exim Bank in a statement noted that the project involving 65 US exporters would support over 12,000 US jobs.⁸³

Stressing Importance of Dialogue, Diplomacy

India meanwhile has consistently held the primacy of 'dialogue and diplomacy' to resolve Iranian nuclear contentions.⁸⁴ It has also held the importance of international institutions like the IAEA of which it is a founding member to be solely responsible for resolving technical issues relating to the contention. When India voted for the third time in favour of an IAEA resolution censuring Iran in November 2009 (after September 2005 and February 2006), its 'Explanation of Vote' states:

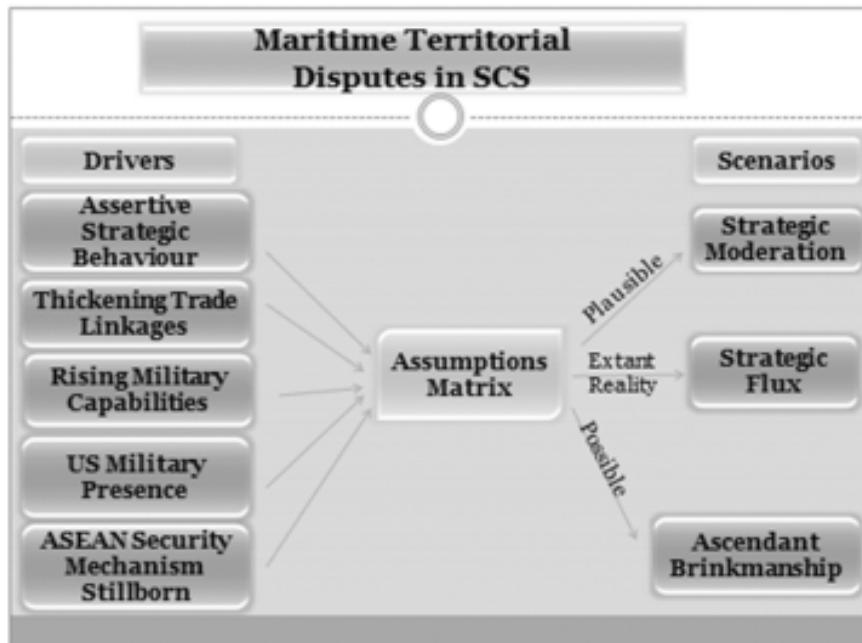
The Agency's safeguards system is the bedrock of the international community's confidence that peaceful uses of nuclear energy and non-proliferation objectives can be pursued in a balanced manner. The integrity of this system should be preserved.⁸⁵

This is pertinent given the contentious relationship between Iran and the IAEA, with the former accusing it of not being impartial in its dealings over its nuclear programme and of being swayed by big powers like the US as well as by Washington-based NGO's like the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS). Such contentions have subsided a bit in the aftermath of the JPOA, though tensions could rise depending on how issues surrounding 'possible military dimensions' relating to Iran's past activities would be resolved.

Opposition to Military Solutions

While Indian policy makers and analysts have consistently held the possibility of a nuclear Iran to be against its interests and against regional stability, it has resolutely opposed the pursuit of a possible military solution by the US and/or Israel to deal with the Iranian nuclear contentions. The government termed the exercise of such an option 'unacceptable international behaviour'. The Foreign Ministry spokesperson in July 2008 explicitly stated that 'a military strike on Iran would have disastrous consequences for the entire region, affecting the lives and livelihood of five million Indians resident in the Gulf, and the world economy'.⁸⁶

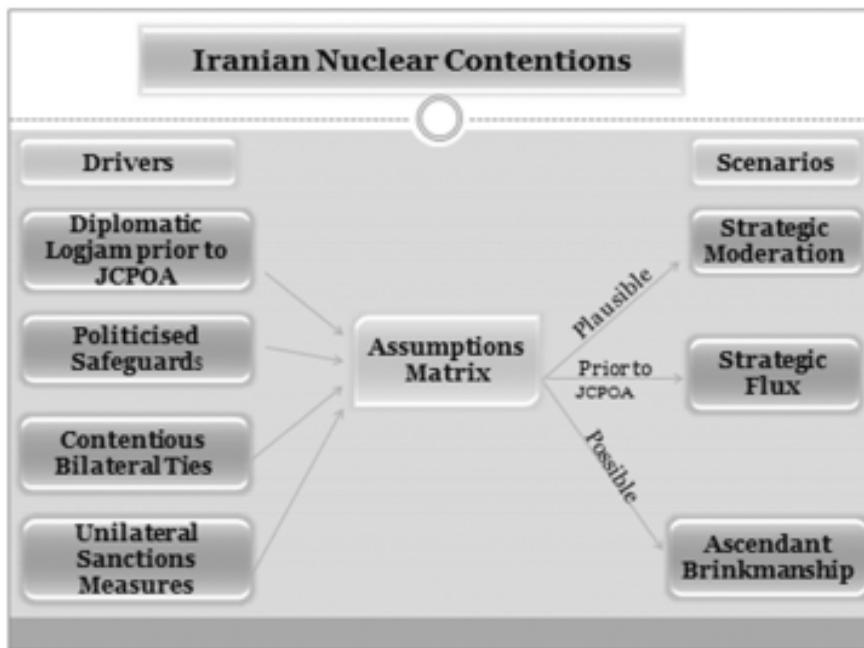
Security Contentions: Alternate Scenarios



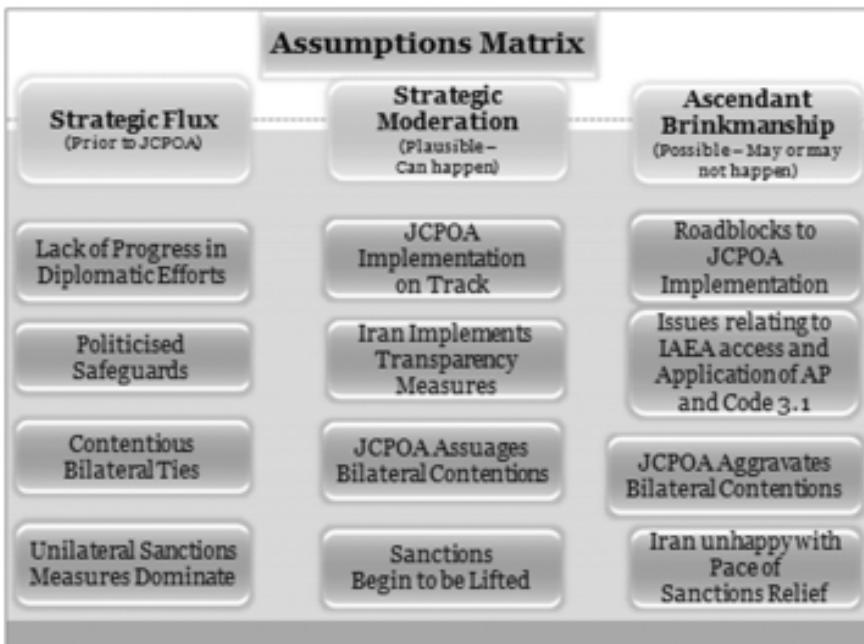
Source: The Author.



Source: The Author.



Source: The Author.



Source: The Author.

Policy Options for India

The twin prongs of an Indian strategy to deal with the alternative scenarios sketched above (Strategic Moderation or Ascendant Brinkmanship) would include the imperative need to reduce vulnerabilities as well as increase options to maximise national interests. Towards these ends, the following could be the some of the relevant policy imperatives, with the first two specifically relating to the West Asian region:

- Continue the stepped up strategic engagement, especially so vis-à-vis countries in West Asia;
- Strengthening of ‘out-of-area’ contingency/regional stability operations capability.⁸⁷
- More robust bilateral/multi-lateral military exercises, training programmes, defence trade with countries in Southeast Asia, Japan, South Korea and Australia;
- Imperative of increased strategic engagement with the US to build capacities
- Enhanced people-to-people interaction with Southeast Asia and China; ‘Visit India Year 2015’ and ‘Visit China Year 2016’ are pertinent examples of steps in the right direction.

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28

Decoding India's Agenda: New Ideas and Emerging Trends in Asian Security

Shruti Pandalai

The road to realising the Asian Century is a rocky one. It is riddled with historic rivalries between different countries, strategic mistrust, unresolved territorial disputes, competition over natural resources, and energy security. In addition to these, Asia is also witnessing rapid militarisation, the arming of the seas, transnational challenges like terrorism, cyber security, and climate change, along with the contrast between acute poverty in some countries to the build-up of wealth in others. Yet, the shift of balance of power to Asia is seen as having become inevitable. The rise of China as the most potent driver of change as well as the steady growth in the profile of India are the two changes singled out as the source of this geopolitical transition.

However, as many political scientists have argued, the “idea of Asia” is not one—that is, it is not interpreted universally in the same way.¹ It has “far from always mean[t] the same configuration of peoples and states [and] it has been mobilised for very different purposes at different times”.² While regionalism for some might be underpinned by similar economic growth patterns and interdependence or the attempt to thwart hegemonic tendencies, for others regionalism is more ideational and normative—in essence making Asia a “contested but durable notion”³

Thus, one might ask: where does India see itself in the Asian century? What roles does it envisage for itself? Can it contribute to regional integration and security? This essay attempts to encapsulate the broad determinants of India’s approach to Asian security, and other emerging trends in the foreseeable future. This involves understanding how New Delhi puts “India First” as it manoeuvres the complex web of regional and global relations, and the implications of this for

Asian security. Much of this will depend on how well India manages its domestic and economic challenges while simultaneously consolidating its own ideas of national power and agency in international realpolitik. The focus of the essay will be primarily on South, East and South East Asia, since India's activism and articulation of its role in the region is more prominent. It will discuss the broad concepts of India's approach, the external and internal determinants that affect its choices, and finally, will draw out the Indian perspective on emerging trends in Asian security.

The Indian Strategic Approach

Foreign policy is understandably not prone to change with a change in government. However, for India, the decisive mandate of 2014 elections has meant renewed vigour and confidence in the way New Delhi approaches its foreign policy priorities.

Conceptually India's strategic approach has been rooted in three broad trends.

- Revitalising India's Strategic Partnerships with major powers, and gaining recognition as a rising global player which can justifiably contribute to Asian security.
- Reclaiming the South Asian neighbourhood as a strategic asset, and reprioritising relationships to boost India's role as a regional power.
- A renewed thrust on economic diplomacy independent of strategic compulsions.

These trends have manifested themselves in two broad patterns of Indian foreign policy behaviour.

Towards Multi-alignment Independent of Strategic Compulsions

Since his election in May 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi seems to have used the platform provided by a series of high profile international summits to put the spotlight back on India after the slump it found itself at the turn of the decade due to domestic turmoil. His focus has been to revitalize great power relationships which have become victims of inertia, and to renew the thrust on economic diplomacy independent of strategic compulsions. Thus, despite an active border dispute with China—the rising cases of Chinese and Indian troop face offs along the Line of Actual Control—Prime Minister Modi hosted President Xi Jinping in his home state of Gujarat in September 2014. He managed to receive commitments of US\$ 20 billion in investment for his Make in India campaign while also restating India's red lines on the boundary dispute.⁴ He has also visited the USA and hosted President Barack Obama in India, making way for visible progress on the implementation of the nuclear deal, agreements on

technology transfer, infrastructure investment, and defence cooperation, including a joint strategic statement recognising India's pivotal role in US Rebalancing to Asia.⁵ At the same time, India rejected US pressure and vetoed the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement in Geneva, refusing to budge on its stand on food-stockpiling seen as being central to India's food security, and refused to join the American led financial sanction regime against Russia.⁶ In fact, in December 2014, Russia and India inked new defence, energy, and trade agreements, with Prime Minister Modi calling "Russia, India's oldest friend", very well aware of the growing strategic cooperation between Russia, China, and now Pakistan.⁷ India has kept a close eye on the US\$ 46 billion investment by China to fund Pakistan's economic corridors that pass through sensitive regions bordering Jammu and Kashmir.⁸

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Modi has also concluded successful visits with Japan, which has already pledged an investment of US\$36 billion over the next five years. He has also strengthened ties—especially in the field of defence cooperation and maritime security—with countries like Australia, Vietnam, and members of the ASEAN forum⁹ who are wary of China's assertiveness in the South China Sea. There is also talk of Russia and China endorsing India's inclusion in the APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) (a 21-nation grouping of Pacific Rim countries) and the long awaited membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) which is pillared by Russia, China, and most of the Central Asian States.¹⁰ Thus, the current government is building on relationships founded it by its predecessors with a renewed urgency to project and accord priority to relationships that help secure India's strategic goals.

India's renewed agency in revitalizing its great power relationships and deepening economic diplomacy are indicative of a *normative* departure from India's conduct in diplomacy. This translates to reading of a shift in behaviour from the past where India was seen as reticent or ambiguous in its articulation of international affairs—that is, "hesitant" to upset the apple cart. Some foreign policy observers in India are unanimous in declaring that India is finally replacing the ideas of *moralpolitik* and *non-alignment* with an approach of *multi-alignment* without compromising strategic autonomy.¹¹ Thus, India chooses to engage with a gamut of countries who may otherwise be opposed to each other, but it is also willing to co-operate with and challenge these countries simultaneously.¹² How this multi-alignment plays out in realpolitik terms will be explained in greater detail in the section that looks at drivers that impact India's approach to Asian security.

Consolidating Leadership in South Asia

While the call for a greater role for India as a security provider in East and South-east Asia as well as in the larger Indian Ocean region is garnering a lot of attention,

it is in India's immediate neighbourhood that New Delhi finds itself constrained to an unprecedented degree, say experts.¹³ It is an open secret that India has had a testy relationship with the neighbourhood. While India's historic, political, and military rivalry with Pakistan has always held the integration of the region hostage, the relationship with the rest of the subcontinent has not been smooth either. Cross border terrorism, territorial disputes, water wars, low regional trade, and India's domestic ethnic compulsions have compounded complaints of neglect and a lack of leadership from India from the different countries in the region. This has been one of the primary factors why China has been able to make economic inroads into the region which, so far, India took for granted.

In the recent months, India has tried to course correct. The symbolic invitation to all SAARC countries for Prime Minister Modi's swearing in—which included the Tibetan Prime Minister in exile was seen as the first step in this direction.¹⁴ Since then, a series of visits to Bhutan and a number of bi-lateral meetings on the sidelines of the SAARC Summit in Kathmandu have shown that boosting India's influence in its immediate neighbourhood is a key strategic priority for the new government in Delhi.¹⁵ Tensions with Pakistan over the border derailed the signing of the agreements on motor and rail connectivity but the summit was rescued by a last minute energy cooperation deal.¹⁶

However, the reality check for India regarding its waning influence in its neighbourhood was when Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Nepal pushed for easing China's full membership in SAARC.¹⁷ Over the last decade, China has transformed its relationships in South Asia, and is currently the largest trading partner of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and the second largest trading partner of Sri Lanka and Nepal.¹⁸ Despite India's Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan, and its participation in the South Asian Free Trade Area (a free trade agreement with seven other South Asian countries), India's trade with South Africa stood at US\$ 17 billion in 2012, while China's was at US\$ 25 billion.¹⁹ China is entering markets in South Asia more aggressively through trade and investment as well as improving its linkages with South Asian states through treaties and bilateral cooperation. It is also following this up by building a ring of road and port connections in India's neighbourhood and deepening military engagements with states on India's periphery.

In other words, China has firmly entrenched itself in India's backyard.²⁰ It is no wonder then that, at the 2014 SAARC summit—when China's Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin offered US\$ 30 billion for infrastructure projects in SAARC and the expansion of trade to US\$ 150 billion in Kathmandu—China was welcomed with great gusto.²¹ China's offer of increased trade and infrastructure development is an off-shoot of the Silk Road Economic Belt—China's plan for an integrated trading network that will stretch from western China to Central Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, and Europe.²² Many SAARC members (including Afghanistan,

Pakistan, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka) have already expressed interest in joining either the Silk Road Economic Belt or its oceanic equivalent, the Maritime Silk Road (MSR); and all, including India, are part of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank which will, in all, probability fund this project.²³

For now, India has quietly rejected joining the MSR project. It is aware of Chinese intentions to guard its energy lifelines, and see it as its attempt at permanently establishing itself in the Indian Ocean region. To counter the Chinese offensive, Prime Minister Modi has promised to fund regional infrastructure projects, health facilities, and even a communications satellite for SAARC countries, with an assurance of freeing India's markets to exporters of smaller countries in the region.²⁴ However, India's past record regarding implementation has come to haunt it. In a study conducted by the IDSA (2012) titled *India's Neighbourhood: Challenges in the Next Two Decades* (of which this author was a part) concluded that,

India lacks the capabilities to deliver timely on promises made at highest levels. This is a sore point between India and its neighbours. A lot of this had to do with sorry state of coordination within the country. India will need to improve its project management skills, coordination mechanisms, and delivery capabilities to establish its credibility.²⁵

This problem is becoming acute, especially in countries like Nepal and Myanmar where China seems to be a distinct favourite. The fact of the matter is the dragon is already in the house, and India is playing catch up.

The need of the hour is a defined policy for the region where India adopts the concept of regional welfare, conceptualises norms for the region which recognise that different regional orders are intersecting geo-politically and geo-economically.²⁶ Instead of turning South Asia into a zero sum game of influence with China, the idea of "open regionalism"—where member-countries first come together in smaller sub-regional groups with a focussed agenda, and serve as a preparatory ground for later merging into larger groupings—is being considered as a way forward.²⁷ This consolidation of sub regional influence is a pre-requisite to India's ambitions of being taken seriously as security provider in Asia.

External Drivers Influencing India's Approach to Asian Security

This section focuses on the external high impact drivers which are influencing India's approach to Asian security.

The Rise of China

Before proceeding further, an important question needs to be raised and answered: does the world's largest economy, and a country whose military-industrial complex is likely to surpass the technological sophistication of the USA by 2045²⁸,

determine India's security choices in Asia? The answer is: of course it does. India will have an unpredictable superpower at its borders and despite the expansive engagement, India cannot take co-operation with China for granted. While there is a broad convergence on transnational issues, there is no hiding the deep bilateral rivalry that persists despite the two countries' mutual and growing economic interdependence. Despite the economic volatility it faces domestically, China's rise as a global superpower largely remains uncontested. India is aware that the power differential in national strengths might limit India's options with China.

By August 2014 alone the government reported 334 instances of Chinese army incursions along the disputed border.²⁹ However, the attempt to arm twist India on a settlement of the boundary dispute was made apparent during President Xi's visit to India in September 2014, when over 400 troops of the PLA (Peoples Liberation Army) parked themselves in Ladakh and refused to go back despite the Chinese President's assurances of a retreat.³⁰ The Chinese PLA is known to be taking a tough anti-India line, and is credited with insisting on China's all weather friendship with Pakistan which has kept India on the edge.³¹ Such incidents of provocation have given weight to claims in Indian strategic circles that an "unsettled boundary dispute has the potential to provide China an excuse for initiating a conflict whose real motive will be to settle the issue of regional leadership."³²

Despite scepticism in certain quarters about the PLA's ability to influence Communist Party of China (CPC)'s India policy, the PLA remains an uncontrolled variable which has potential to stir up conflict. India is also watching China's rapid military modernisation closely. China watchers have pointed to the Chinese defence White Papers having envisaged local border wars as a strategic priority.³³ For many in New Delhi, an unresolved border dispute and the tension over Tibet make India the probable target. The speed with which China has transformed its military capabilities; focused on long-range deployment military exercises, the deployment of more advanced missiles capable of targeting most of Indian territory, and the build up of extensive military infrastructure to mobilise at least a half-a-million strong army in a short period in Tibet; have made India nervous, and accelerated and buff its own military modernisation and preparedness along the borders.³⁴ India will have to be on watch to see how the post-Dalai Lama situation in Tibet affects its dealings with China.

Complicating this relationship further are China's continued military and nuclear weapons assistance to Pakistan, its involvement in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, its increased assertion in Arunachal Pradesh and insistence on calling the region South Tibet, and the issuing of stapled visas to residents of Arunachal and Jammu and Kashmir. The clear asymmetry of power, with the rising trade deficit between the two countries, has been accentuated with China creating new

friction points by building dams on the Brahmaputra river, laying claim to the vast resource reserves of the abundant Tibetan plateau, disapproving Indian activism including the presence of Indian oil companies in the South China Sea, opposing India's membership to important institutions like the UNSC, and a consistent attempt at wreaking damage on India's military or economic infrastructure through proxy cyber-attacks.³⁵

Yet, China's statements constantly undermine any of India's concerns regarding its presence in South Asia.³⁶ As discussed in the previous section, there is no doubt that China is gaining influence in Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh apart from its old association with Pakistan. The news of Chinese submarine *Changzheng-2* and warship Chang Xing Dao docking at Colombo harbour for five days in November 2014 had alarm bells ringing in New Delhi.³⁷ Chinese attempts at dismissing suspicions saying they were only protecting their sea lanes of communication which transport energy supplies from Europe, Africa, and the Middle East are not slaying any fears regarding increased strategic rivalry in the Indian Ocean region. These developments have prompted many strategists in India to caution against complacency, and watch out for the establishment of Chinese bases in the Indian Ocean.³⁸ India has also been steadily modernising its maritime forces to guard its waters, and live up to its commitment of being a net security provider in the region.³⁹

Additionally, India and China also have divergent perspectives on issues at the global level—such as the USA's role in Asian security, regional stability in South Asia, and security in the maritime commons, space, and cyberspace.⁴⁰ The common ground so far has only been sought in reforms relating to the international economic system, energy security, and the larger issue of climate change.⁴¹ India is aware that economic parity with China is a distant dream; so the rise of China with its many security ramifications for India, will have a fundamental impact in the way India approaches Asian security.

The Indo-US Relationship

The Indo-US relationship is increasingly seen as central to conceptualising Indian security strategy wherein China looms large. It is also the relationship which is propelling India to a closer political, economic, and military integration with the Asia-Pacific region which is seen as the main driver of the geopolitical tilt towards Asia. Any ambiguity in New Delhi—about its past moves to strengthen the strategic relationship with the USA—was done away with when President Obama visited India in January 2015. The joint vision statement agreed upon by the two heads of states once again reiterated India's role as “a lynchpin” in Washington's strategy of the US “pivot” to Asia.⁴² The difference was that Prime Minister Modi acknowledged and accepted India's role and interest in shaping a

security architecture which would secure its economic and strategic interest as well as help balance against China. The fundamental shift in India's approach was outlined by Prime Minister Modi who said, "For too long, India and the United States have looked at each other across Europe and the Atlantic. When I look towards the East, I see the western shores of the United States."⁴³ The statement ties neatly that India's "Act East Policy" and the USA's rebalance towards Asia, and provide opportunities for India, the USA and other Asia-Pacific countries to work closely to strengthen regional ties. The Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean Region is emphatic about the need to ensure freedom of navigation and over flight throughout the region, especially in the South China Sea.⁴⁴

The US pivot to Asia is being seen as an extraordinary strategic opportunity for India that has the potential of ending India's prolonged isolation from Asian geopolitics, and offering Delhi a chance to insert itself as an indispensable element of the new regional balance of power.⁴⁵ This is perhaps why, post the Obama visit, New Delhi's past apprehensions of embarking on trilateral and quadrilateral partnerships with the USA have been set aside, with Modi and Obama deciding to put the idea of building Asian coalitions at the centre of their regional strategy.⁴⁶ No longer is India citing Chinese concerns; and, it seems more confident in navigating the great power rivalries in Asia. Analysts have pointed out that it is perhaps wise to acknowledge that the US too has tried to place the strategic partnership with India outside any framework of an anti-China coalition. India is aware that China is US's biggest trading partner, and is closely integrated with the USA and the US-led global economy. The pivot strategy, therefore, aims at "balancing without containment" of China, which anyway the US admits is not a possibility.⁴⁷

Such a posture plays to India's advantage as it seeks to balance the two global giants to secure its own interests. Many observers have felt that Beijing's overtures to India increase when India becomes the focus of US attention. India is also cautious that the drift towards Washington may not be misinterpreted by Russia, which has been an "old friend" apart from being one of India's biggest energy suppliers and defence partners. Russia is also critical of India's Central Asia policy. The latter is an energy rich region which is increasingly swamped by China, and has shown very little interest in providing India a foot through the door.⁴⁸ With the relationship with Pakistan souring, India's hopes of having an influence in the Afghan issue are routed through Central Asia. Russia-China ties have gotten stronger due to the crippling economic sanctions it is facing over the Ukraine issue. This has also translated into a thawing towards Pakistan, which has already put India on guard.

While both countries maintain that the progress in the relationship is irreversible—with major breakthroughs in the implementation of the Indo-US

nuclear agreement, the renewal of defence cooperation with an identification of a number of weapons projects for co-development and co-production, high technology transfer, clean energy support, and a commitment of US\$ 4 billion in investment projects as the key outcomes—sceptics believe the tangibles don't really live up to the hype.⁴⁹

Self-doubt, fears about losing strategic autonomy, apprehensions about being a junior partner—are all ghosts of the past that India needs to deal with to maintain the momentum of the relationship which has often been a victim of a lack of implementation after a slew of breakthroughs. It is also imperative that India not look at the USA and China in binary terms if it wants to play a greater role in Asian security. India's evolving relationship with the USA will also determine its engagement with East and Southeast Asia, given the continuation of America's critical role and its stake in the region's security.

Acting East⁵⁰

As a complement to the reboot in Indo-US ties, India has also decided to re-energise its Look East Policy, first established in 1991, to a dynamic Act East policy under Prime Minister Modi in a bid to carve out a greater global role for India. Over the last two decades, this policy has substantially deepened India's economic, institutional, and security relations with South East Asia, and has also expanded its engagement with Northeast Asia and Australia. India has had its share of failures. We have seen its inability to economically develop and revamp infrastructure in its Northeastern states—central to increasing the land connectivity with Southeast Asia.⁵¹ The current government is trying to change this. New Delhi's slow implementation of the Look East Policy in the past has made its SE Asian partners and ASEAN countries sceptical of its ability to pull in the weight to live up to the potential.

Today India's approach to "Acting East" is focused on three main components: increased economic integration, building strategic partnerships, and deepening defence cooperation with a special emphasis on maritime security with the countries in the region. It wants a say in both shaping the regional architecture as well as acting as a net security provider for the region. India has also made it clear that while it is concerned about China's behaviour in the South China Sea, India's motivation for engaging with the region exists independently of its relationship with China, and underlines its larger interest in seeing a multipolar order in Asia where India plays a leading role.

Politically, this has meant that India is deepening its relationships with South East Asian countries, with particular emphasis on Japan, Vietnam, Australia, and ASEAN (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam). It is also trying to enmesh itself strongly into

regional multilateral institutions, such as the East Asia Summit, the ASEAN Regional Forum, and APEC, to which it got a verbal acceptance from Russia and China. India has also shown an active engagement in Regional Trading Arrangements (RTAs).⁵² It has recently signed a Free Trade Agreement in services and investment with ASEAN. Currently, India is a member of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which includes ASEAN members and its six FTA partners: Australia, China, India, Japan, Korea and New Zealand. The regional bloc RCEP accounts for almost 33 percent of world's GDP, and approximately 45 percent of world's population.⁵³ India has offered to reduce tariff barriers for ASEAN under the Free Trade Agreement, but is hesitant to open up its markets in one go to other countries (including China) due the mounting lop sided trade deficit with Beijing.⁵⁴ However, as India is not part of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, forged by the USA in the region excluding China, it is important for India to push through agreements in the RCEP.⁵⁵

India's relationship with Japan is said to be the cornerstone of the new Act East policy. Despite Japan-India trade levelling at a low US\$ 16 billion in 2013-14, there are natural complementarities between India and Japan's economic goals. Japanese technology and investment have the potential to assist India in upgrading its infrastructure and manufacturing sector, and India's massive consumer market and investment needs may present opportunities to kick-start Japan's ailing economy.⁵⁶ India still remains one of the largest recipients of Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA), and Japan will be the main investor supporting the future Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor and The Chennai-Bangalore Industrial Corridor projects as part of the US\$ 35 billion it committed to Indian infrastructure.⁵⁷ Interestingly, Japan has also been roped in to build approximately 2000 kilometres of strategic roads along India's border with China, but in non-disputed territories.⁵⁸ Strategically too, the liberalisation of Japan's Defence Export regime, will help address lacuna in India's huge weapons market, starting with the Shin Maywa US-2 amphibious seaplanes.⁵⁹ Maritime security co-operation is of priority with the two countries, with both regularly participating in bilateral maritime exercises—like Exercise Malabar along with the USA.

Vietnam's geo-strategic location in the region, combined with its testy relationship with China, makes it one of the most significant relationships for India in terms of managing Chinese aggression in the Indian Ocean Region. There has been a deliberate attempt by New Delhi to invest in a close political, defence, and security engagement with Vietnam. Despite Chinese objections in the past, India's state-owned oil company ONGC Videsh Limited as well as Petro-Vietnam have signed a mutual cooperation agreement on the exploration of several South China Sea oil blocks. Indian investments to the range of US\$ 252 million are spread across 73 projects in 2013.⁶⁰ Given that India and Vietnam both use similar Russian defence platforms, experts point to future potential for joint

training and technology transfer between the two. The extension of US\$ 100 million export credit line for defence deals has been reportedly made to Hanoi, with a proposal to supply BrahMos anti-ship missiles to Vietnam to bolster its maritime deterrence.⁶¹ India has also outlined its intention to assist in the modernisation of Vietnam's defence and security forces through expanded training, joint exercises, and cooperation on defence equipment.

India has tried to correct its past neglect of Australia with the conclusion of an Australia-India civil nuclear cooperation agreement, pending final arrangements on safeguards. Aside from the economic benefits of nuclear commerce between the two states, the conclusion of the deal has removed a major source of mistrust from the relationship—that is, India viewing Australia as belonging to the Chinese camp, and Australia doubting India as being a responsible nuclear power.⁶² Australia's emergence as a major supplier of coal—and possibly uranium—in the future is not being overlooked.⁶³ Australia is now looking at India for increased cooperation in matters of maritime security as well as active involvement in the shaping of the agenda of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC).⁶⁴

India is also trying to prioritise its relationship with South Korea, which is faced with a volatile security environment with nuclear armed North Korea, which is vested in protection of the sea lanes of communication in the East Asian region. South Korea has underscored the desirability of a cooperative mechanism for maritime security, with India including joint naval exercises. Additionally, India is trying to pay special attention to Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore on bilateral levels, with the aim of receiving their support to raise India's regional profile.⁶⁵

Ultimately, India aims to Act East to trigger its economic resurgence, and have a ring of partners to aid India's broader strategic objectives of balancing China's increasing presence in the Indian Ocean. China's aggressions on the Indian border as well as its activism in creating maritime disputes in the South China Sea are increasing the relevance of a stronger Indian presence in the region. Depending on India's ability to manage China, its involvement in the region has the potential of acting as a stabilising force. This will mean greater Indian involvement in multilateral maritime security initiatives, particularly in the areas of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, transnational crime, and joint bilateral naval exercises. There is no dearth of ideas. The hard work lies in identifying resources, laying down institutional frameworks, co-ordination and monitoring mechanisms, etc., to ensure a timely implementation of this policy.

Domestic Factors Impinging on India's Approach

While the mood in India is euphoric after a decisive mandate to the ruling party in 2014, a lot of New Delhi's activism towards South and Southeast Asia and

how it chooses to play a larger role in the global arena will also depend on how well it manages its domestic affairs. This section briefly elaborates some domestic factors that impinge on New Delhi's calculations towards Asian security.

Economic Stability

The World Bank forecasts India's steady growth in GDP at 6.7 per cent in 2015-16, primarily owing to a boost in exports and private investment.⁶⁶ Bullish on this sentiment are projections of India becoming the world's third largest economy by 2030.⁶⁷ However, experience has taught India that a slow-down or a reversal of investment inflows—an unanticipated monetary tightening in some high-income countries—the resurgence of debt tensions, the escalation of geopolitical conflict, and even slow and superficial fiscal reforms could adversely impact investment and growth. India is the fourth largest consumer of oil in the world, importing around three million barrels of oil per day.⁶⁸ Threats to the Middle East and North Africa's (MENA) stability and its hydrocarbon production could have devastating consequences for India's economic growth which, in turn, impact its external orientations.⁶⁹

Islamic Extremism and Threats Within

India has been the target for Islamist extremism for the past decade, with the Mumbai terrorist attacks of 2008 leaving scars on the psyche of the entire nation. According to the Global Terrorism Index, terrorism in India increased by 70 per cent from 2012 to 2013, with the main source of *jihadi* terror emanating from Pakistan sponsored terror groups.⁷⁰ India has been attacked consistently by groups like *Lashkar-e-Taiba* (LeT) working out of Pakistan, by the *Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami* or HuJI (from Bangladesh),⁷¹ and now, increasingly, by the *Indian Mujahideen*, a group allegedly funded by the ISI and spread across various cities in India.⁷² With intelligence reports warning of a joint attack being planned by Al Qaeda and the newly formed Islamic State (IS) on India, as well as reports of many Indian youth training and fighting in Syria, the Indian security establishment has a much bigger task on its hands.⁷³ India's fight against religious extremists may soon be considerably complicated by the rise in communal polarisation.

The Maoist/Naxal Challenge

The Maoist insurgency too has spread from a marginal, containable threat to one that has been identified by former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as the “greatest internal security threat” facing the nation.⁷⁴ This rebellion explicitly calls for the overthrow of the Indian state, and directly targets its security forces. It is reported to have been responsible for 192 deaths in 2013, with a maximum

of casualties being policemen.⁷⁵ The Indian Home Ministry lists more than 150 districts as being “Naxalite-affected”, with a Maoist force which is estimated as being somewhere between 10 and 20 thousand armed fighters plus many thousand supporters.⁷⁶ The Indian state’s writ does not run over large chunks of the hinterland where Maoists rule. The movement is sustained by robust funding from extortion to the tune of a whopping US\$ 445 million, derived mostly from iron and coal-mining companies and Indian corporates, and supplemented by narcotics cultivation.⁷⁷ Economists have warned of the risks to India’s investment climate, with talk of US\$ 80 billion worth of steel production projects stalled by instability in mining areas.⁷⁸ Today, the insurgents are also well armed with sophisticated weaponry, including land mines, mortar, and rocket launchers.⁷⁹ They target railways, buses, power lines, telephone towers, and other infrastructure, and now are moving the insurgency from the rural areas to infiltrate towns and cities.⁸⁰ The Indian state is finding itself pressed to come up with a holistic response to fight this insurgency ideologically and tactically.

Insurgencies in Jammu and Kashmir and the North East⁸¹

The continuing turmoil in Kashmir and the Northeast underscore the fragility of India. Cross border terror emanating from Pakistan, with a constant rise in infiltration bids, keep Indian security forces on the edge.⁸² The problems of India’s Northeast also continue to be stalemated. Insurgencies and violence continue to disrupt daily life and governance—particularly in Assam, Manipur, and Nagaland—in spite of both counter-insurgency operations and negotiations. In all these regions, a feeling of political, economic, and cultural alienation and neglect from the rest of India persists, feeding resentment against the Indian state. The stability of the Northeast, particularly in the context of deepening relationships with Southeast Asia, is imperative.

Rise in Nationalism

India is observing a significant rise in nationalism, with public opinion polarised on certain matters vis-à-vis national interest. Recent global attitude polls⁸³ project that the potential rise in nationalism in India comes with implications for India’s relations with China as also its approach to Pakistan and the USA. An off shoot of this rise is also seen in the form of rising majoritarianism in India, with a peak in reports of communal tensions and the targeting of minority communities.⁸⁴

The Role of the Indian Diaspora

If the reception of PM Modi at Madison Square garden, New York or Sydney were any indication, the Indian diaspora has also become an important input in

Prime Minister Modi's foreign policy initiatives and carries heavy political clout. For his visit to Japan, and his meetings with Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott and Chinese President Xi Jinping too, Non-Resident Indian community and members of the BJP-affiliated "overseas friends of India" in those countries doubled up as a source of information and access as also the financiers of political fundraisers.⁸⁵ How India leverages the diaspora to its advantage will also factor in the larger calculus of Indian influence.

Apart from these, changing demographics, urbanisation, migration, technology, globalisation, and impact of many other non-traditional security challenges impact India's behaviour and approach to Asian Security. But to limit and focus this chapter, these have been touched briefly in the last section.

Broad Trends for Asian Security: The Indian Perspective

Having discussed the broad themes of India's approach to Asia and the world and identified the external and domestic factors that determine India's approach to Asian security, the following paragraphs outline the best and least ideal possible scenarios⁸⁶ in the future for India to have a valuable stake in Asian Security.

Worst Case Scenario: A Confrontational Sino-Centric Asian Order

China's new role as Asia's largest economy and the engine of its economic growth could provide the foundation of a Sino-centric order in Asia. With the rapid military modernisation of its armed forces, the development of a fleet of aircraft carriers, and a nuclear armed blue water navy protecting its maritime interests, China's military power status by 2045 is expected to surpass the sophistication of the US army. This will no doubt make it more ambitious in its quest of the re-acquisition of its "lost territories". Any confrontation with the USA over Taiwan will weaken Washington's alliance commitments in East Asia and its willingness to remain the region's security guarantor. This development will destabilise the foundations of the security architecture for most countries with vested interest in the Asia Pacific, including India, with the prospect of confrontation left wide open.

Left vulnerable with the withdrawal of the American security umbrella, alliance partners like Japan and South Korea could develop and deploy nuclear weapons as the only means of securing their autonomy against Chinese hegemony. An unconstrained China could find an opportunity to pursue its declared revisionist aims in the South and East China Seas, resulting in a flare up of territorial disputes. The many bilateral, regional and multilateral institutions anchored around the Chinese economy are incapable in moderating the conflict. Chinese hegemony could, perhaps, also mean the establishment of a regional order which would feature an Asian system in which China sat at the summit of a hierarchical regional

order. In this order, Asian institution-building could develop along the closed lines of Asian exclusivity, rather than the concept of open regionalism as preferred by India.⁸⁷

For India, such a scenario could have drastic consequences. While India's economic growth is steady despite the security environment, in a Sino-centric order the lopsided trade deficit with China could render the Indian economy very fragile, and widen the power differential between the two countries even further. China's approach towards Taiwan may also get reflected in its actions in Tibet, with the PLA assuming control over Tibet. The prospect of a two-front confrontation with China's continued aggression on the disputed border, and its increased support to the designs of Pakistan's military to undermine India will escalate the latter's insecurities. China's continuing support to anti-India non-state actors operating in the Northeast, its blocking of resolutions against Pakistani transgressions, and its strategic encirclement of the Indian Ocean region with an eye on its energy lifelines, could leave India even more vulnerable.

Moreover, the possibility of the strategic control of the waters of the Brahmaputra river by China is a subject of acute concern for India. In this environment, all the CBMs (confidence building mechanisms) could collapse, thus making the security environment hostile. In the event of another crippling terror attack emanating from terror groups operating from Pakistani soil, "nationalist" India could be pushed to the brink, and could be led to decide to punish Pakistan militarily. China, of course, supports Pakistan; thus India could find itself confronted with fears of a two front attack without any strategic partnerships to fall back upon. In such a scenario, India's economic growth could flounder, its capacity to manage its internal conflicts and insurgencies deplete, and a consequent unstable India would no longer remain a viable stake holder in Asian security.

While such an extreme scenario is highly unfeasible, given the current global and strategic environment, it certainly raises a lot of red flags for India's foreign policy mandarins to consider.

However, in my assessment, the *most likely scenario* for India to calibrate its approach to Asian Security would be an upgraded US led but decentralised Asian order which sees major powers in Asia co-operating and competing in the region, and marked by an increase in the Sino-American struggle for leadership.

Most Likely Scenario: A Decentralised, Pluralist but Competitive Asian Order

The most likely scenario in the near future is the slow but certain build-up of the Sino-U.S. rivalry in the region. China's assertiveness in the region and the US response to it in the form of the military and diplomatic rebalancing of Asia

will, in all probability, set off a prolonged geopolitical contest in the region. The region would become more decentralised and complex, with characteristics which neither fall completely in line with those of a hegemonic order or with the traditional balance of power system; it would evolve traits of both. Having accepted the inevitability of China's rise as a global superpower, the USA would try to find ways to co-opt China in the regional order and accommodate its concerns, in exchange of Beijing's accommodation of Washington's core interest of remaining the dominant security provider within East Asia. China would probably recognise that its meteoric rise is owed, in large measure, to its productive integration into the liberal economic order built and sustained by American hegemony, and would continue to see benefit in embedding itself strongly in regional institutions. In such an order, Asian institutions could continue to sink roots, but on the basis of a trans-regional outlook in which economic integration oriented around a Pacific rather than an exclusively Asian axis. The many layered network of alliances in this decentralised system would ensure that China's revisionist tendencies are deterred. Leading regional powers like Japan and India, and other emerging powers in East Asia like South Korea and Australia, along with the states of Southeast Asia would continue to engage economically and diplomatically with China.

In such a scenario, India could pull its weight in the regional order while continuing with its cautious policy of co-operation and competition with China. India could make China a larger stake holder in its economic success; but it would continue its external balancing vis-à-vis China and develops closer defence and economic relations with countries of the region, especially on the issue of maritime security. India's rising global profile would make it a moderating influence in the region. The relationship with Japan and ASEAN could bring rich dividends. China would become more accommodative of India's concerns in order to dissuade it from forging a "formal" alliance with the USA. The two countries could actively play the game of balance of power and influence against each other: China in South Asia, and India in Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific. India could use the multi-layered network of regional institutions and alliances to engage with China more effectively, and to insure itself against any possibility of Chinese aggression. While India could become a major player in the regional security of the region, it would not, however, view its defence diplomacy as part of an alignment with one great power against another. The objective of India would be to engage all powers, strengthen the regional institutions, and contribute effectively to the maintenance of a stable balance of power in Asia and its waters.

In such a scenario these are the broad trends in India's approach to Asian Security, in essence the Indian perspective.⁸⁸

Multi-alignment to Power: “India-First” Policy

It is clear that the present administration in New Delhi sees India’s national interests as being best served in engaging with global powers that could accelerate India’s rise to its “natural potential” as a major player on the global high table. Thus, India chooses to engage with a gamut of countries who may otherwise be opposed to each other, but it is also willing to co-operate with and challenge these countries simultaneously. Despite a decisive shift in Indo-US relations, India will not consider its relationships with USA, China or Russia in binary terms, since each of them bear strategic influence in India’s interests—both in Asia and on the global stage.

Managing China

Contrary to the perception that India will bandwagon against China in an Asian security framework, India will choose to cautiously engage with China while being vocal in its disapproval of any aggressive behaviour—be it on the disputed border, or in matters of the freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, or in China’s increasing presence in the Indian Ocean region. At the same, it is aspiring to make China a stake holder in its economic progress. The myriad problems in the Sino-Indian relationship—primarily the border dispute, the China-Pakistan nuclear and military nexus, and the issue of Tibet—are not going away any time soon. India’s policymakers will be keeping an eye on China’s military modernisation while simultaneously taking steps to rapidly modernise the armed forces, step up deployment, and accelerate the build up of infrastructure along the border. Along with this, India has plans of raising a mountain strike corps of nearly 40,000 troops along the disputed border by the end of 2016. China’s policy towards India for the next decade or more is likely to be a mix of co-operation, hard bargaining, and provocation to test India’s intent. In her visit to Beijing in February 2015, Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj underlined a six-point framework to rejuvenate Sino-Indian relations.⁸⁹ She called for an action-oriented approach that can broaden the base of bilateral engagement, deepen convergence on regional and global issues, develop new areas of cooperation, expand strategic communication and build an Asian Century.⁹⁰ Implementing this would be India’s end goal.

Consolidating Regional Influence in South Asia

Reclaiming a regional leadership role in South Asia is a pre-requisite for India if it wants to be the net security provider in Asia. To consolidate its position in South Asia, India will proactively try and find ways to integrate regional economies through bilateral and multi-lateral arrangements to increase intra-regional trade, and share dividends of India’s economic success. It will also have to become

sensitive to the security concerns of the South Asian states, and deliver on infrastructure and development projects through speedy implementation. While it cannot play a zero sum game for influence with China, India has to ensure that its red lines on matters of security are observed.

Strengthening Indo-US Partnership and Raising Global Profile

Maintaining the current momentum of Indo-US relations is imperative for India's global ambitions. The US pivot to Asia is an extraordinary strategic opportunity for India. The unfolding Sino-US rivalry has the potential to end India's prolonged isolation from Asian geopolitics, and offer Delhi a chance to insert itself as an indispensable element of the new regional balance of power. US leadership in the Indo-Pacific is, thus, more likely to endure through cooperation with a rising India that broadly supports American regional interests—which mirror India's own strategic priorities. USA and India share a compelling interest in defeating terrorism, shaping an Asian security environment that is pluralistic rather than Sino-centric, and sustaining a liberal international economic order. From the US perspective, India will be a stronger anchor in the Asian balance of power, and a better partner if its development drive and military modernisation are successful.⁹¹ Continued co-operation in fields of defence, counter-terrorism and intelligence sharing, clean energy, multilateral partnerships and trans-national challenges will define the relationship.

Acting East: Deeper Economic and Strategic Integration

The Indian government will pursue a greater role in the Asia-Pacific in line with India's growing economic and strategic interests, based on strategic partnerships with Japan, Vietnam, Australia, and ASEAN. This would imply a more active involvement in relevant multilateral institutions, such as the East Asia Summit as well as ASEAN Regional and Regional Trade blocks. Deeper engagement with the region is essential to India's designs of revitalising Indian economic growth and developing its crucial infrastructure. In addition, prioritising relations with India's East and Southeast Asian partners will fulfil India's broader strategic objectives of balancing against China's increasing presence in the Indian Ocean. China's assertive stance in its border dispute with India and maritime territorial disputes in the Asia-Pacific is increasing the relevance of a stronger Indian presence in the region.

Advancing Maritime Modernisation and Strengthening Maritime Co-operation

The threat of strategic encirclement near Indian waters, the protection of critical sea lines of communication, and the unease of Southeast Asian states with Chinese

activism in the maritime disputes in the region has propelled India to advance its maritime modernisation so that it can play a bigger role in providing maritime security. The region can expect greater Indian involvement in multilateral maritime security initiatives, particularly in the areas of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, transnational crime, and joint bilateral naval exercises.

Managing Resource Competition Co-operatively

The sharpening of geo-political competition over resources will take a toll on Asia's economic growth and amplify geo-political tensions. These risks could be managed if Asia's leading states could come together, and establish co-operative frameworks for working on ideas, public private partnerships, technological innovations, etc. that could provide tangible solutions.

Co-operative Frameworks for Trans-national Challenges

India will continue to seek to shape policies, and find mechanisms of co-operation to fight transnational challenges like terrorism and other forms of violent ideological extremism, climate change, food insecurity, pandemic disease, illegal migration, drug trafficking, and cybercrime through various multi-lateral fora in the region. Issues of cyber security and establishing a set of norms for future frameworks will be a priority.

Conservatism in Issues of Nuclear Non-Proliferation

According to some experts,⁹² Indian and Chinese interests converge on the issue of nuclear non-proliferation, and are likely to reflect a conservative approach to it. While the expectations from both countries will grow as their geo-political importance grows, their political and geopolitical interests (as seen in the case of their response to Iran and North Korea) will not tend towards major substantive changes vis-à-vis the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty.

Cooperative Security Framework for Conflict Prevention

With India's strong emphasis on sovereignty and its policy of non-intervention in the affairs of other states, the architecture it will seek to shape will see no role for collective security or regional security when it comes to domestic conflicts. Therefore, the multilateral approach to cooperative security remains confined to conflict prevention and confidence building.⁹³

In conclusion, it seems clear that India is gradually emerging as a serious player in the Asian strategic landscape as smaller states reach out to it as a key regional balancer and seek to develop trade and diplomatic ties. As India gradually rises to its role as a regional balancer in Asia, it is important for India to tell the world to give it time to set its own house in order. New Delhi still has a long way

to go in assuring these states of its reliability not only as an economic and political partner but also as a provider of regional security. The political will is clear: it is time for the commitments to come through. Till then, managing China alongside building up India's internal and external capacity is the way forward. The hype can wait—till the ground work remains a work-in-progress.

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Index

- Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), 461
Adam, Smith, 147
Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), 408
Afghanistan, 6, 43, 94, 127, 189, 194, 203, 205, 211, 212, 258, 368, 369, 370, 430
Africa, 7, 230, 324
African Union (AU), 281
Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ), 128, 261, 465
Al Qaeda in Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), 373-74
Al Qaeda in Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), 373, 377
Al Qaeda, 14, 278, 307, 372, 373-75, 377, 383
Al-Jazeera, 103
American Congress, 29
Amity and Cooperation (TAC), 436
Anglo-Russian Great-Game, 85
Annan, Kofi, 323
Anti-access/area denial (A2/AD), 467
Antony, A.K., 122
Arab Spring, 80, 461
Area of Responsibility (AOR), 469
Argentina, 116, 332
Arunachal Pradesh-China and Myanmar, 167
ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM), 470
ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM+), 119, 436, 443, 446
ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), 212
ASEAN Highway Network (AHN), 151
ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), 119, 385, 411, 442
ASEAN+3, 436
ASEAN+6, 154, 436
ASEAN-India relations, 176
ASEAN-India Summit meeting, 118
ASEAN-US ties, 470
Ashley, Richard K., 61
Asia Global Dialogue, 249
Asia Pacific Space Cooperation Organisation (APSCO), 367
Asia, 8, 234
Asian allies, 388
Asian Development Bank (ADB), 151, 161, 428
Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI), 160
Asian Highway (AH), 147
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), 15, 223, 327, 444, 458
Asian Strategic Review, 80
Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), 264, 325, 386, 367, 470, 490
Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF), 367, 368
Asia-Pacific, 80, 117, 118, 123, 293, 314, 321, 328, 420
Assam-Bhutan and Bangladesh, 167
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), 36, 43, 46, 49, 79, 127, 144, 150, 161, 164, 173, 174, 176, 224, 261, 264, 266, 292, 309, 312, 326, 328, 331, 334, 366, 368, 385, 411, 439, 467
Business Advisory Council, 115
Maritime Forum, 443
Ministerial Meetings, 47
Way, 50
Australia, 43, 44, 81, 116, 119, 127, 154, 282, 325, 366, 386, 436, 469, 496
Baluchistan, 212
Bangladesh, 41, 43, 46, 78, 79, 133, 137, 145, 166, 170, 203-4, 211, 215, 292, 295-97, 300, 303, 369, 370, 377, 407, 412-13, 459
War, 296
Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN), 404, 413
Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM), 217, 232, 234, 299, 412
Barbaric medievalism, 184
Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt (BIG-B), 301
Bay of Bengal, 36, 159, 290, 292, 293, 294, 297, 303, 413
 Begum Khaleda Zia, 406
 Belarus, 93, 363, 367
 Belgium, 26
 Belt and Road, 232
 Bhutan, 6, 43, 46, 209, 258, 262, 369, 370, 401, 406
 Bhutan-India-Bangladesh Corridor, 370
 BIMSTEC, 10, 35, 36, 37, 46, 47, 48, 50, 153, 161, 231, 292, 296, 411
 Blizzard 2015, 102, 103
 Blue Economy, 334

- Bluetooth, 349
 Bolivia, 116
 Bolton, K.R., 238
 BrahMos missile, 280
 Brazil, 27, 54, 56, 116, 264
 BRICS Development Bank, 15, 458
 BRICS, 29, 94, 228, 234, 322, 323, 326, 327, 332, 456, 458, 459
 British Raj, 138
 Brown, John Seely, 356
 Brunei, 13, 119, 261, 262, 496
 Buddhism, 8
 Bull, Hedley, 29
 Burma, 68, 291
Business Week, 349
 Buzan, Barry, 10
- Cambodia, 47, 65, 77, 155, 496
 Cameron, David, 426
 Carlson, Allen, 208
 Central Asia, 15, 30, 418, 422, 425, 427
 Central Vietnam, 68
 Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR), 226
 Ceylon, 291
 Changxing Dao, 238
 Character of the Government, 138
 Character of the People, 138
 Charlie Hebdo, 71
 Chasma-2, 384
 Chechnya, 89
 Chile, 116
 China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC), 215
 China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), 215
 China, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 16, 27, 30, 47, 54, 56, 63, 67, 72, 77-79, 88-89, 95, 96, 117-18, 120, 127, 130, 135, 150-51, 154, 159, 187, 191, 193-94, 202-3, 206-7, 211-13, 217, 223, 226, 229-30, 232, 241, 248, 262, 264-65, 277, 294-95, 297-99, 307, 325, 327, 330-31, 333, 335-36, 346, 353, 355, 363, 367-68, 380, 382, 384, 386-87, 402, 425-26, 430, 444, 456, 458-59, 460, 464, 467, 470, 496
 Rise of, 95
 China's
 civil war, 171
 economy, 247
 export to India, 413
 maritime strategy, 214
 military modernisation, 133
 South Asia policy, 217
 China's Maritime Silk Route (MSR), 301, 308, 327
 China-Bhutan border issue, 260
 China-India
 bilateral relationship, 225
 bilateral trade, 227, 473
 border, 131, 134, 230
 military conflict, 224
 relations, 201, 224
 strategic relations, 208
 war, 145, 172
 China-India-Middle East-Africa (CHIMEA), 337
 China-Japan or China-ASEAN cooperation, 234
 China-Kazakhstan bilateral trade, 426
 China-Pakistan, 95
 alignment, 96
 boundary agreement, 259
 China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), 211, 419
 China-South Asia Expo Fair, 230
 Chindia, 224
 Chinese Coast Guard (CCG), 466
 Chinese Communist Party (CCP), 171, 187
 Chinese National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), 419
 Chinese-Kyrgyz bilateral trade, 422
 Chinese-Tajik bilateral trade, 421
 Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), 170
 Chola
 Dynasty, 65
 Empire, 79, 138
 Navy, 68
 Christianity, 8
 CISADA, 476
 Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), 160
 Clinton, Hillary, 437
 CNN, 103
 Cold War, 24, 54, 56, 60, 79, 80, 91, 101, 122, 130, 184, 186, 193, 225, 230, 231, 380, 381, 390, 391, 401, 403, 434, 435, 436, 446, 447
 Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), 425
 Colombo, 310
 Confidence Building Measures (CBMs), 210
 Confucianism, 8
 Connect Central Asia policy, 422
 Constructive Maritime Engagement (CME), 277, 279
 Coordinated Patrols (CORPAT), 441, 474
 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), 11, 99, 106
 Council of Ministers (CoM), 45
 Cuba, 116, 330
 Customs Union (CU), 93
 Cyber Dialogues, 356
 Cybersecurity, 350
 Cyberspace, 366
 Dalai Lama, 107, 224, 260
 D-Company, 195
Deccan Chronicle, 119
 Deccan Mujahideen, 190
 Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), 5, 364

- Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 258
 Deng Xiaoping, 209
 Denmark, 26, 116, 346
 Deutscher, Karl, 436
Dhaka Tribune, 242
 Dhowan, Admiral R.K., 238
 Digital India, 106
 Distant Operations, 283, 284
 Doubting Thomas, 352
 DPRK, 12, 262
Druzhba-Dosti, 92
- Earth Observation (EO), 367
 East Africa, 138, 459
 East African Community (EAC), 336
 East Asia Summit (EAS), 119, 411
 East Asia, 383, 404
 East China Sea, 118, 119, 120, 121, 123, 226, 258, 261, 465
 East Pakistan crisis, 165
 East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), 211
 Estonia, 355
 ETIM groups in Pakistan, 207
 EU-3, 475
 Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), 15, 457
 Eurasian World, 85
 Europe, 7, 25, 26, 230, 324, 375, 380
 European Union (EU), 36, 43, 49, 212, 226, 264, 323-24, 330, 363-64, 458, 475
 Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), 120
 Extent of Territory, 138
- Far Eastern Economic Review, 441
 Fareed Zakaria, 23
 Fifth-Generation Fighter Aircraft (FGFA), 88, 91
 Fiji, 369
 Financial Crisis of 1997, 437
Financial Times, 246, 323
 Finnmore, 60
 Flash Crash of 2010, 353
 Fleet Support Ships (FSS), 313
 Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), 11, 90, 99, 103, 106
 France, 115, 116, 127, 238, 336, 386, 475
 Free Trade Agreement (FTA), 216, 405
- G2, 326
 G20, 94, 228
 G7, 323
 Gandhi, Indira, 81, 169
 Gandhi, Mahatma, 9, 107
 Gandhi, Rajiv, 81, 404
 GCNEP, 391
 General Ne Win, 169
 Geographic Information Systems (GIS), 369
 Geographical Position, 138
 Georgia, 355, 365
 Germany, 115, 116, 127, 475
- Global Positioning System (GPS), 368
 Global South, 231, 234
 Global Terrorism Index, 499
Global Times, 211
 Global Trends 2030, 233
 Global War on Terror (GWOT), 435
 Golden Triangle, 162
 Goswami, Namrata, 98, 108
 Government Computer News, 356
 GPS Aided Geo Augmentation Satellite (GAGAN), 370
 Great Power, 5
 Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), 150
 Green, Alexander, 344
 Gujral doctrine, 403-4
 Gujral, I.K., 37, 410
 Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), 336
 Gulf of Aden, 307, 467
 Gulf War, 134
 Gwadar Port, 241
- Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami, 499
 Himalayan, 208, 401
 Himalayas, 238, 241, 243
 Hinduism, 8
 Hoàng Sa, 261
 Hong Kong, 470
 Hu Jintao, 245
- Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU), 334
India Today, 243
 India, 6-9, 27, 40, 43, 46, 47, 54, 56, 59, 63, 72, 77, 81, 93, 117-18, 127, 135, 137, 144, 154, 159-60, 162, 175, 187, 202, 226, 228, 231, 248, 258, 262, 264, 277, 292, 295, 309, 322, 328, 335, 367-70, 377, 380, 382, 398, 405, 407, 409, 412, 421, 426, 430, 436, 440, 459-60, 469, 473, 497-98
- India's
 Act East Policy, 10-11, 30, 55, 145, 325
 Border Roads Organisation (BRO), 420
 economic growth, 186
 energy cooperation with China, 215
 foreign policy, 137
 Look East Policy, 10-11, 46, 55, 79, 120, 135, 144, 163-64, 172, 311, 325, 333, 439, 460, 472
 military budget, 218
 Monroe Doctrine, 296
 policy on Tibet, 210
 population, 249
 security, 314
 treaty of Peace and Friendship with Bangladesh, 403
 treaty with Bhutan, 403
 treaty with Nepal, 403
- India-ASEAN
 bilateral trade, 440

- connectivity, 174
 FTA, 437
 relations, 440
 ties, 440
- India-Bangladesh Trade Transit Treaty, 158
 India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum, 322, 326
 India-Brazil-South Africa Maritime Exercises (IBSAE), 322
 India-Kyrgyzstan bilateral trade, 422
 India-Myanmar border, 175
 India-Myanmar Friendship Road link, 174
 India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, 149, 174
 Indian Air Force, 135
 Indian Coast Guard, 282
 Indian foreign policy, 57
 Indian Maritime Doctrine (Doctrine-09), 274, 276, 277, 278, 280, 283, 284, 285
 Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), 120
 Indian Mujahideen (IM), 186, 190
 Indian Navy (IN), 119, 276, 278, 280, 281, 282, 283, 306, 308, 310, 312-15
 Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD), 278
 Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), 278, 310, 236
 Indian Ocean Nexus, 337
 Indian Ocean Rim (IOR), 43, 44, 49, 201, 202, 215, 307
 Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), 10, 35, 37, 43, 45, 48, 50, 278, 310, 326, 411
 Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF), 45
 Indian Ocean Rim Initiative (IORI), 43, 45
 Indian Ocean security challenges, 307
 Indian Ocean World Order, 337
 Indian Ocean, 2, 5, 9, 13, 16, 25, 30, 36, 44, 48, 81, 132, 133, 134, 137, 138, 266, 310, 311, 325, 335, 443
 Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF), 404
 Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS), 370
 Indian subcontinent, 292
 Indian-Chinese rivalry, 334
 Indian-Kyrgyz bilateral trade, 422
 India-Pakistan conflict, 95
 India-Pakistan Kargil conflict, 231
 India-Russia Strategic Partnership, 85
 India-Russia ties, 88
 Indo-Asia-Pacific, 467
 Indo-Bhutan Treaty, 407
 Indo-Lanka Accord, 403, 407
 Indonesia, 13, 65, 81, 116, 127, 137, 144, 261-62, 264, 297, 332, 363, 366, 369, 469-70, 496
 Indo-Pakistan War, 230, 406
 Indo-Soviet equation, 86
 Indo-US
 nuclear accord, 207
 nuclear agreement, 88, 208
 relationship, 494
INS Airavat, 120, 281
INS Arihant, 237, 239, 315
INS Chakra, 315
INS Jalashwa, 284
INS Jyoti, 119
INS Kulish, 119
INS Rana, 119
INS Ranjit, 119
INS Satavahana, 123
INS Vikramaditya, 88, 315
INS Vindhyaagiri, 286
 INSAT satellites, 370
 Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), 480
 Inter Government Meeting (IGM), 43
 International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), 386, 474
 International Code of Conduct for Space (ICoC), 364
 International Forum on the Indian Ocean Region (IFIOR), 44
 International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL), 442
 International Monetary Fund (IMF), 15, 29, 455, 458
 International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), 93
 International Relations, 60, 61
 International Shipping Lanes (ISLs), 276
 Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), 349
 Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), 171, 185, 190, 191, 195, 196
 IOR-ARC, 45, 49, 498
 Iran, 7, 81, 94, 127, 346, 366, 368, 369, 383, 470, 476
 Iraq, 94, 376, 470
 Islam, 8
 Islamic State (IS), 16, 80, 373, 499
 Israel, 81, 365, 366, 380, 428
 Italy, 116
- Jackson, William, 356
 Jamaatud-Dawa (JuD), 189
 Japan Self Defence Force, 128
 Japan, 13, 16, 26, 81, 95, 115, 118, 127, 130, 134-35, 137, 154, 173, 260-62, 264, 294-95, 301, 325, 335-36, 367-68, 382-83, 388, 390, 458-59, 465, 469-70, 496
 Japan's 'Flying Geese' strategy, 300
 Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA), 497
 Japan's security dilemma, 265
 Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), 368
 Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF), 312

- Japan-India
 Defence Cooperation, 128
 Strategic Cooperation, 133
 Strategic Partnership, 128
- Japan-India-Australia, 135
- Japan-India-Indonesia, 135
- Japan-India-Malaysia, 135
- Japan-India-Philippine, 135
- Japan-India-Singapore, 135
- Japan-India-Vietnam, 135
- Japan-US alliance, 134
- Japan-USA Joint Development, 134
- Jiang Zemin, 245
- Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), 477-78
- Joko Widodo, 444
- Joshi, Admiral D.K., 121
- Joshi, General B.C., 173
- Kachin Independence Army (KIA), 169
- Kadakin, Alexander, 87
- Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project, 174
- Kaplan, Robert, 337
- Karakoram Highway, 185
- Kargil conflict, 166, 187
- Karmayoga*, 70
- Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, 8, 37, 64
- Kazakhstan, 93, 258, 262, 367, 424-26
- Kazakhstan-NATO joint military exercise, 423
- Keay, John, 62
- Kelly, Kevin, 348
- Kenya, 43
- Khunjerab Pass, 241
- King Gyanendra, 406
- King Rajendra Chola, 67, 70
- Kissinger, Henry, 78
- Korea, 154
- Korean War, 134
- Kratochwil, Friedrich, 61
- Kurzweil, Raymond, 348
- Kuwait, 81, 470
- Kyrgyzstan, 258, 367, 426
- Lakshadweep, 65
- LAO PDR, 369
- Laos, 47, 65, 77, 258, 496
- Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), 187, 189, 190-92, 195, 207, 377, 499
- Lawson, George, 21
- Li Jianxin, 250
- Li Keqiang, 247
- Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), 212
- Line of Actual Control (LAC), 6, 243
- Line of Control (LoC), 7
- London's *Telegraph*, 246
- Los Angeles Times*, 112
- Low Earth Orbit (LEO), 363
- Low Intensity Maritime Operations (LIMO), 280
- Macclesfield Bank, 261
- Machiavelli, Niccolo, 58
- Mahabharata*, 144
- Make in India, 93
- MALABAR, 312
- Malacca Strait, 296, 459
- Malay Peninsula, 68
- Malaya, 291
- Malaysia, 13, 65, 81, 116, 118-19, 135, 261-62, 295, 297, 366, 369, 464, 469-70, 496
- Malaysian-Indonesian archipelago, 63
- Maldives, 43, 63, 65, 67, 79, 137, 297, 308, 310, 369, 370, 377, 412
- Manipur-Myanmar, 167
- Manmohan Singh, 115, 183, 226, 332, 409, 419, 424, 426
- Marie Harf, 90
- Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR), 282
- Maritime Security, 13
- Maritime Silk Route (MSR), 202, 298, 309, 311, 412-13
- Maritime-Military Strategy (Strategy-07), 274, 276, 277, 280, 281, 282, 283, 285
- Mattoo, Amitabh, 63
- Mauritius, 44, 310
- Maurya Empire, 138
- McConnell, Mike, 346
- Meghalaya-Bangladesh, 167
- Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC), 37, 47-48
- Mekong India Economic Corridor, 154
- Mexico, 264, 331
- Middle East and North Africa's (MENA), 499
- Middle East, 7, 25, 138, 193, 324, 375, 459
- Middle East-Myanmar-China, 132
- Middle East-Pakistan-China, 132
- MILAN multinational exercises, 279, 297, 312, 326, 336, 442
- Mine Countermeasures (MCM), 281, 285
- Mizo National Front (MNF), 171
- Mizoram-Myanmar and Bangladesh, 167
- Modi, Narendra, Indian Prime Minister, 1, 87, 90, 92, 94121, 123, 222, 229, 233, 243, 244, 332-33, 335, 418, 430, 446, 461, 473, 489-90
- Modi-Putin Summit Meeting, 90
- Mohan, C. Raja, 63, 297
- Mongolia, 95, 258, 368, 369
- Most Favoured Nation (MFN), 227, 404, 409
- MSNBC, 103
- Mughal Empire, 80, 138
- Mukherjee, Pranab, President of India, 116-17, 472
- Multi-Role Transport Aircraft (MTA), 88
- MV Alondra Rainbow, 280
- Myanmar, 6, 46, 47, 65, 133, 137, 144-45, 149, 155, 160, 169, 175-77, 203, 211, 213, 215, 258, 266, 295, 297-98, 300-1, 303, 369, 413, 459, 496

- Naga National Council (NNC), 169
 Nagaland-Myanmar, 167
 Naidu, Chandrababu, 302
 National Defence Authorisation Act (NDAA), 476
 NATO Pfp program, 426
 NATO, 205, 388, 391, 420, 424-25, 428, 430, 459
 Nehru, Jawaharlal, 7, 35, 38, 81, 165
 Nepal, 6, 40, 43, 46, 204, 209, 242, 258, 369, 370, 401, 404, 405, 491
 Nepal-India-Bangladesh Corridor, 370
 New Silk Road, 232, 234
New York Times, 333
 New Zealand, 116, 154, 386, 436
 Newspaper industry, 100
 No First Use (NFU), 277
 Non-Aligned Movement, 145
 Non-alignment Movement (NAM), 55
 Norm cascade, 58
 Norm emergence, 58
 Norm internalisation, 59
 North America, 25
 North East Asia, 25, 30
 North East Region (NER), 164
 North Korea, 346, 366, 380, 382
 North Sea Fleet, 238
 Nuclear Security Summit (NSS), 386
 Nuclear terrorism, 386
- Obama-Modi Defence Framework Agreement, 356
 Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC), 472
 Oman, 43, 137
 One Belt and One Road, 204, 419
 One-Belt-One-Road project (OBOR), 309
 ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL), 424
 Onuf, Nicholas, 61
 Op Sukoon, 283
 Operation Golden Bird, 173
 Operation Parakram, 187
 Operation Pawan, 281
 Outer Space Treaty, 1967, 363, 365
 Outer Space, 16, 362
- P5+1, 475
 PACINDO, 333
 Pakistan Muslim League, 188
 Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK), 209-10
 Pakistan, 5, 7, 40, 43, 48, 77, 89, 133, 137, 187, 193, 196, 202, 205, 206, 210, 211, 214, 215, 231, 258, 277, 322, 328, 368, 370, 377, 380, 382, 383, 384, 402, 409, 410, 459, 491, 493
 Pakistan's
 Armed Forces, 89
 Civil war, 166
 Deep State, 189, 191, 196
 Drug Industry, 190
 Energy Security Action Plan, 215
- Military, 192
 Taliban, 187, 192
 Terrorism, 194
Panchsheel Multilateralism, 36, 48
Panchsheel Principles, 38-39, 40, 217
 Panetta, Leon, 131
 Pant, Harsh, 242
 Papua New Guinea, 369
 Paracel Island, 261
 Patel, Sardar Vallabhbabai, 9
 People's Liberation Army (PLA), 244, 246-47
 People's Liberation Army-Navy (PLAN), 238, 307-8, 311-12, 465
 People's Republic of China (PRC), 116, 143, 144, 204, 206, 213, 258, 267
 Perry, William J., 383
 Persia, 72
 Persian Gulf, 266, 276, 325
 Pew Research Center, 100
 Philippine National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), 466
 Philippines Coast Guard (PCG), 466
 Philippines Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), 466
 Physical Conformation, 138
 PLA Air Force, 465
 Pokhran II, 205
 post-Dalai Han-Tibetan elite, 209
 Powell, Nancy, 461
 PPWT, 363, 364
 Prakash, Admiral Arun, 238, 239
 Presence and Surveillance Missions (PSM), 276
 Putin, Vladimir, 87
- Qatar, 81, 470
 Qing Dynasty, 257, 258
 Quadrilateral Security Dialogues (QSD), 332
- Rajan, Raghuram, 106
 Rajendra Chola I, 68
 Raju, M.M. Pallam, 121
Ramayana, 144
 Rao, Narasimha, 81, 439
 ReCAAP, 443
 Red Sea, 276
 Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), 119
 Regional Economic Communities (RECs), 13
 Republic of Korea, 116, 369
 Responsibility to Protect (R2P), 81
 Rezang La pass, 172
 RIMPAC, 312
 Rishi Aurobindo Ghosh, 70-71
 Risse-Kappen, 60
 Ruggie, John, 61
 Russia, 7, 16, 26, 30, 85, 89, 92-93, 116-17, 123, 127, 238, 258, 264, 325, 327, 333, 346, 353, 355, 363, 366-67, 384, 386, 420, 430, 456, 458, 459

- Russia-China ties, 495
Russia-India-China (RIC), 94, 228, 322, 367
Russian-Kyrgyz bilateral trade, 422
Russia-Pak ties, 87
- SAARC, 10, 35, 36, 37, 42, 43, 45, 47, 49, 161, 204, 206, 229, 242, 321, 328, 398, 405, 406, 409, 491
economy, 334
energy cooperation agreement, 411
minus Pakistan, plus Thailand, 48
Way, 50
- Sachchidananda, 71
SANWFZ, 389
SASEC, 161
Saudi Arabia, 81, 383, 385, 470
Sea Lane of Communications (SLOCs), 8, 132, 139, 213, 309, 310, 322
SEANWFZ, 436
Seoul Nuclear Security Summit, 420
Seychelles, 310
Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), 90, 94, 229, 322, 325, 328, 367, 418, 419, 456, 458, 490
Shinzo Abe, 332, 473
Siam, 291
Sibal, Kanwal, 239
Silk Road Economic Belt, 491
SINDEX, 441
Singapore, 43, 116, 118, 119, 137, 282, 291, 297, 298, 366, 470, 496
Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX), 441-42
Singh, General V.K., 243, 472
Singh, K.R., 44
Sino-American (G2), 323, 330
Sino-Centric super complex, 25
Sino-Indonesian ties, 444
Sino-Soviet rift, 86
Sinzo Abe, 128
Size of Population, 138
Skanda Purana, 67
SLORC, 440
Snowden scandal, 355
Song China, 68
South Africa, 44, 116, 264
South Asia Free Trade Area (SAFTA), 50, 212, 405
South Asia, 25, 30, 41, 48, 76, 77, 137, 144, 189, 203, 206, 210, 410
South Asian energy sector, 215
South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA), 230
South China Sea (SCS), 16, 118, 119, 120, 121, 123, 130, 135, 206, 226, 238, 258, 261, 273, 294, 302, 312, 313, 384, 437-438, 442, 445, 465-66, 496
South East Asia, 25, 30, 62, 67, 145
South East Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO), 292
South India, 67
South Korea, 13, 127, 173, 261, 262, 332, 366, 367, 382, 383, 388, 390, 459, 465, 469, 470
Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone, 386
Southeast Asia, 230
Southern Bharat, 65
Soviet Union, 4
Soviet-Afghan War, 188
Space Cooperation Pact, 368
Space Security Index 2014, 365
Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership (SPSP), 86-87
Special Strategic Partnership, 473
Spratly islands, 261
Sri Lanka, 7, 40, 43, 46, 63, 65, 67, 79, 133, 137, 203, 204, 212, 215, 292, 295, 296, 297, 300, 301, 308, 331, 367, 369, 370, 377, 405, 412, 413, 459, 491
Srivijaya, 68
Steppe Eagle, 423, 425
Stilwell Road, 176
Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), 186
Swaraj, Sushma , 472
Swami Vivekananda, 70, 71, 107
Syria, 94, 363, 376
- Tahiliani, Admiral R.H., 285
Taiwan, 261, 262, 465
Tajikistan, 258, 262, 353, 367, 409, 420, 421, 422, 426
Taliban militancy, 429
Taliban, 189, 376
TAPI Steering Committee, 429
Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), 377
Temir Sariyev, 423
Thailand, 46, 47, 116, 119, 135, 137, 155, 295, 297, 303, 369, 469, 496
Thayer, Carl, 116
Thayer, Mahan, Alfred, 138
The Associated Press, 111
The Economist, 2-4
The Hindu, 45
The Huffington Post, 100
The Los Angeles Times, 104, 109, 110
The New York Times, 100, 104, 109, 111
the Philippines, 13, 119, 130, 135, 261, 262, 369, 459, 464, 469, 496
The Wall Street Journal, 104, 109, 110, 111
The Washington Post, 104, 107, 109, 110, 112
Tian Xia, 257
Tibet, 171, 203, 205, 208
Tibetan Plateau, 244
Times of India, 244
Tipping point, 58
Trans Asian Railway Network (TAR), 154
Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), 458, 460
Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), 460

- Tripura-Bangladesh, 167
 Turkey, 328, 332, 367
 Turkmenistan, 368, 426
 Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan India (TAPI) pipeline, 427
- U Nu, 168
 Ukraine, 90, 365, 458, 459
 UN
 UN Charter, 5, 282
 UNCLOS, 122, 280, 336, 446
 UNDC Guidelines, 389
 UNESCO World Heritage Site, 261
 United Arab Emirates (UAE), 227, 366, 470
 United Kingdom (UK), 115, 116, 127, 184, 192, 193, 194, 238, 336, 364, 386, 424, 426, 475
 United Kingdom-Kazakhstan bilateral trade, 426
 United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), 169, 171
 United Nations (UN), 54, 56, 81, 119, 248, 249, 264, 330, 365, 475
 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), 365
 United Nations Office of Outer Space Affairs, 369
 United Nations Security Council (UNSC), 29, 91, 94, 95, 118, 119-20, 194, 222, 228-29, 477
 United States (US), 2, 4, 7, 16, 25-26, 77, 78, 79, 87, 90, 115-16, 118, 127, 134, 143, 184, 192, 206, 207, 217, 226, 228, 231, 273, 282, 325, 327, 330, 336, 365, 384, 386, 388, 402, 413, 419, 420, 424, 428, 458, 460, 475, 496
 Computer Fraud and Abuse Act (CFAA), 344
 United States Navy (USN), 312
 Census Bureau, 248
 Department of Defence (DoD), 466
 Drug Enforcement Agency, 188
 National Intelligence Council, 233
 Navy, 286, 465
 US Pacific Command (PACOM), 469
 Pivot to Asia, 313
 rebalance policy, 312
 TV, 102
 USA-Pakistan, 95
 US-China relations, 266, 326
 US-India Defence Relationship, 90
 US-India
 relations, 99, 107
 ties, 106
 US-Iran and UK-Iran relations, 476
 US-Japan security alliance, 469
 US-Pakistan ties, 96
 Uzbekistan, 353, 367, 426
- Vajpayee, Atal Behari, 78, 209
 Vanderbilt Television News Archive (VTNA), 103, 108
 Vasudhaiva-Kutumbakam, 55, 62
- Vedantic monk, 70
 Venezuela, 116
 Verma, Admiral Nirmal, 239
 Vietnam, 13, 16, 47, 65, 77, 95, 117, 118, 119, 123, 127, 135, 231, 258, 261, 262, 363, 369, 459, 464, 469, 496, 497
 War, 130
 Vietnam-Japan strategic partnership, 116
 Vijay Sakhija, 238
 Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, 401
 Visit, Board, Search and Seizure (VBSS), 280
- Wall Street Journal*, 248
 Wang Yang, 326
 Wang Yi, 242
 Watson, Adam, 29
 Weapons of Mass Destruction/Disruption (WMD), 14, 372, 373
 Weber, 60
 Weiser, Mark, 356
 Wendt, Alexander, 61
 West Asia, 383, 385, 470
 West Asian front, 80
 West Pacific, 137
 West Philippine Sea, 474
 West, 8, 77, 80, 88, 95, 186, 187, 193, 194, 353, 434, 457, 458
 Westphalian State, 22
 White Hat, 344
 WiFi, 349
 World Bank, 15, 29, 458, 499
 World Economic World League Table, 226
 World Trade Organisation, 461
 World War II, 134, 292, 323
 World Wars, 61
 World-centric paradigm, 62
 WTO, 217
- Xi Jinping, 204, 214, 222, 225, 226, 232, 244, 245, 246, 247, 263, 264, 333, 412, 425, 457, 470, 472
Xinhua News Agency, 240, 241, 243
 Xinjiang, 241, 259, 419, 428
 Xisha, 261
 Xue Yong, 249
- Yao Yang, 250
 Yellow Sea, 261
- Zafar Mahmood, 409
 Zia-ur-Rahman, 40
 Zimbabwe, 363
 Zone of Peace (ZoP), 335
 ZOPFAN, 436
 Zoroastrianism, 8
 ZPCSA, 336

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