

The Kippenberger Lecture 2011

Great powers and Asia's destiny: A view from Delhi

C. Raja Mohan



Discussion Leader

Centre for Strategic Studies: New Zealand
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No. 10/11

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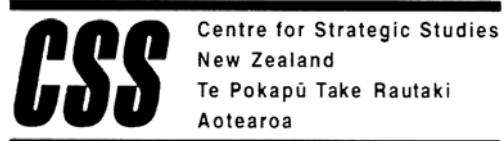
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Foreword

The role that India will play in East Asia's future is still shrouded in mystery for many of us (and the fact that it will play a significant role in the first place is still news to some). Will New Delhi be guided by a clear sense of India's place in wider Asian security affairs, utilizing its available economic, political and military resources adeptly to contribute to regional order? Or will India's capacity to project its influence eastward from South Asia be curtailed by the need to focus heavily on its own neighbourhood and by the challenging complexity of India's domestic politics?

Moreover, even if one is to assume an active role for India in the security future of the wider Asian region, what shape will that regional order take? Will it be inclusive and cooperative, peaceful and integrated: the sort of order which suits New Zealand and other countries on the region's rim? Or will it be dominated by sometimes violent scuffles between the major powers, rising and declining together, in a contest for regional primacy where the interests of small and medium powers are displaced and eventually forgotten?

To address these issues in tandem requires a scholar and observer who understands the dynamics of India's potential as a significant part of the East Asian security landscape and who also has a keen awareness of that landscape itself. When the Centre for Strategic Studies at Victoria University of Wellington was looking for a person to look at these two interconnected issues, one name stood out very clearly: Dr C. Raja Mohan. As the 2011 holder of the Sir Howard Kippenberger Visiting Chair in Strategic Studies, Dr Mohan has confirmed our expectations that he would offer us a powerful framework from which to view Asia-Pacific security and India's role in the coming regional balance. As the main synthesis of his important contributions to New Zealand's understanding of these important questions, we in the Centre are delighted to commend this publication to our readers.

*Professor Robert Ayson
Director
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About the author

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Dr C. Raja Mohan is currently a Senior Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi. He is a columnist on foreign affairs for *The Indian Express*, New Delhi, Adjunct Professor of South Asian Studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Singapore and a Non-Resident Senior Associate of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC. He is on the National Security Advisory Board of the Government of India.

Earlier, Mohan taught at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in New Delhi and the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Singapore. He also served as the Diplomatic Editor and the Washington Correspondent of *The Hindu*. Mohan has a master's degree in Nuclear Physics and a Ph.D. in international relations. He was a Research Associate at the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, during 1983-92. Mohan was a member of the UN Inter-Governmental Expert Group on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, during 1991-92. He was a Jennings Randolph Peace Fellow at the U.S. Institute of Peace, Washington DC, during 1992-93.

Mohan led the Indian Chapter of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs during 1999-2006. Mohan was the Henry Alfred Kissinger Chair in Foreign Policy and International Relations at the Library of Congress, Washington DC during 2009-10. His recent books include *Crossing the Rubicon: The Shaping of India's New Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave, 2004); *Impossible Allies: Nuclear India, United States and the Global Order* (New Delhi: India Research Press, 2006); *Power Realignments in Asia: China, India and the United States* (New Delhi: Sage, 2009) (Coedited with Alyssa Ayres).

About the Chair

Established in 2006, the Sir Howard Kippenberger Visiting Chair honours Major General Sir Howard Kippenberger, KBE, CB, DSO, ED, one of New Zealand's most distinguished and courageous soldiers, who was also an eminent scholar and strategist. He served as President of the New Zealand Returned and Services' Association and oversaw the production of 23 volumes of New Zealand official war histories. The Chair was established with funding from the Garfield Weston Foundation in Britain, the New Zealand Defence Force and the Royal New Zealand Returned and Services' Association (Incorporated) through the Victoria University Foundation and is coordinated by the Centre for Strategic Studies: New Zealand.

Great powers and Asia's destiny: A view from Delhi

The Sir Howard Kippenberger Visiting Chair in Strategic Studies
Fourth Public Lecture

28 February 2011

C. Raja Mohan Ph.D.

Introduction

Howard Kippenberger has been described as the very "symbol of New Zealand's achievement".¹ The General's story is at once inspirational and emblematic of the courage and integrity of the thousands of New Zealanders who answered the call for national service and rose to the demands of war in the last century. General Kippenberger—a soldier, scholar and strategic thinker—was not a hero just for New Zealand. He was part of what has been the 'greatest generation' in the West that fought two world wars and laid the foundations for an enduring liberal international order. To be sure, General Kippenberger is not widely known in India. Nor is there much awareness in New Zealand of the intersections between the military career of General Kippenberger and the expansive role of the Indian armed forces under the British Raj in the first half of the 20th century. Nor is either country conscious of the parallel evolution of their modern nationhood in the early decades of the last century.

Kippenberger saw his first battle combat in the Somme in 1914. The Somme was also where the Indian army had a major deployment in the First World War. While many Indian units were decimated, two Indian soldiers—one Hindu and another Muslim—were awarded the Victoria Cross for their bravery. In the Second World War, Kippenberger saw action in North Africa and Italy, places where the Indian Army had made major contributions. More broadly, the inter-war period laid the foundations for the emergence of New Zealand as a mature nation. The end of the First World War also provided a huge fillip to the Indian national movement. It made the emerging elites of India conscious of the dynamics of the international system and the interconnections between the struggles at home and those abroad. All great ideas sweeping the world in the inter war period had their impact and resonance in India. If the national trajectories of India and New Zealand, as parts of the British Empire, were intertwined during the first half of the 20th century, they rapidly diverged in the second half. As independent India coped with the Cold War that enveloped it, its path diverged from that of New Zealand, an important part of the U.S. alliance system. Nearly two decades after the Cold War, Delhi and Wellington find themselves as part of the East Asia Summit (EAS) process, which has emerged as the principal forum for the discussion of regional security cooperation in Asia. As East Asia emerges as the new fulcrum of global economic and geopolitical transformation amidst the perceived decline of the West and the rise of Asia, Delhi and Wellington will have a lot to do with each other in the coming years.

¹ For an insightful biography, see Glyn Harper, *Kippenberger: An Inspired New Zealand Commander* (Auckland: Harper Collins, 2005).

This paper is divided into nine sections. Following this introduction, the paper secondly looks at the question whether India really ‘belongs’ to East Asia. The third section looks at the contemporary evolution of the idea of Asia in the 20th century. In the fourth and the fifth we review Asia’s strategic legacy in the middle of the 20th century and the transformation of the region’s geopolitics since then. The focus of these two sections is on the changing dynamic of great power relations in Asia over the last few decades. In Section Six we assess the likely direction and impact of Sino-American rivalry on the region. In the Seventh, we take a look at the state of security regionalism in Asia and the challenges it faces. Section Eight explores the problems of integrating the two rising Asian powers, China and India, into the structures of global governance. Section Nine offers some concluding thoughts on the changing great power relations in Asia.

Does India ‘belong’ to East Asia?

While New Zealand sees itself as very much part of an Asia-Pacific region, there is much skepticism in Wellington as elsewhere as to whether India really ‘belongs’ to this region. That in turn raises the broader question of defining what Asia means in geographic terms and the limitation of its various sub-regions. The post Second World War tradition among the strategic and diplomatic communities around the world has been to differentiate between South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Northeast Asia as specific sub-regions of Asia. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, the term Central Asia has often been used to describe the five ‘stans’—Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. The Caucasus region, including Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, continues to be seen as an extension of Europe rather than of Asia. The term South-West Asia has often been used to describe the complex of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and the Arabian Peninsula. West Asia is a broader term that encompasses the region stretching from Iran to the Mediterranean. Many in the region prefer to use the term Middle East rather than West Asia. The term Greater Middle East has been used to include North Africa, the Caucasus, Central Asia and occasionally Afghanistan and Pakistan. Put simply there is no international consensus on where the various sub-regions of Asia begin and end. Even more important there is no general agreement on what exactly are the boundaries of Asia, which occupies a large portion of the Eurasian land mass and connects to Africa at one end and has close maritime connections with Australasia and the South Pacific at the other.

Regions like nations are ‘imagined communities’ and are not strictly defined by geography.² Economic, political and strategic considerations have always injected a measure of elasticity into the conceptions of regions. This was true in the case of Europe’s evolution over the last many centuries. The varying definitions of Asia are part of the same trend line. Policy-makers in different parts of the world are guided by practical and immediate considerations in imagining the ‘boundaries’ of a region. The idea of Asia itself has evolved over the millennia and centuries. The early explorers and adventurers of Greece had a conception of Asia as part of a tri-continental system of the old world—Europe, Africa and Asia. Although Europe and Asia were part of a geographic continuum, they were seen as distinct continents. The Romans and colonial European powers developed their own imaginations of Asia. From the late 19th century the national movements in Asia constructed their own conceptions of Asia. Even in the contemporary period, the notion of Asia evolved and many different voices spoke in the name of

² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1993); See also Peter Katzenstein, *A World of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

an Asian collective at different movements.³ The notion of Asia remains a contested one, and this disputation reflects itself in the struggle to create institutional mechanisms for the promotion of economic integration, stability and security in the great continent. The rise of China and India meanwhile will at once change the interpretations of Asia's geographic scope. For example the decision of ASEAN to invite India to become a member of the EAS surprised most observers of Asia. Even more significant was the invitation in 2010 to Washington and Moscow to join the same process.

Since the middle of the last century, India has increasingly been seen as part of South Asia rather than of East Asia. This was more a product of India's inward economic orientation and the relative decline in the weight of the Subcontinent in regional and international affairs after decolonization and Partition. Undivided India, however, had much to do with the emergence of modern Asia. Although colonial rule disrupted India's traditional economic links within Asia, the British Raj also put India at the centre of the first wave of economic globalization in the region. Even more important in the security domain, India became the centre of the imperial defence system that protected British interests in the vast space stretching from the Eastern Mediterranean to the South China Sea.⁴ The armies of the Raj played a big role in the Middle Eastern Theatre during the First World War and the Southeast Asian theatre during the Second. It was the Indian army, under the command of Lord Mountbatten, that received the surrender of the Japanese troops from Singapore to Hanoi.⁵ As the imperialist age drew to a close, the Indian national movement played a key role in developing Asian identity and promoting solidarity among the Asian nations.

The idea of Asia

The image of a common Asian identity began to gain momentum in the late 19th century as new leaders in the region, touched by European modernization but chafing under colonial rule, began to rediscover the common bonds among different Asian peoples. Some, like Swami Vivekananda, sought to define this identity in opposition to the West. Vivekananda, who travelled to both the United States and Japan, spoke of the primacy of the spiritual in Asia that was different from the material civilization of the West. Rabindranath Tagore, the first Asian to win the Nobel Prize for literature, was a great international traveller. He offered a critique of Western industrial society and underlined the importance of Asian spiritual civilization.⁶ Tagore's own ideas of Asian unity grew from his interaction with the Japanese scholar and art historian Okakura Tenshin who underscored the importance of Asian cultural unity.⁷ Meanwhile, the archaeological and other studies of Indian influences in Southeast Asia at the beginning of the 20th century saw the growing awareness of the historical interconnectedness of different parts of Asia. Not everyone agreed with the new Asianist ideas, especially its definition of the East in

³ For a brief but incisive review see, Anthony Milner and Deborah Johnson, *The Idea of Asia* (2004) available at <https://digitalcollections.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/41891> accessed on September 12, 2011.

⁴ For the notion of the 'India Centre' in Great Britain's security policy towards the Indian Ocean and the Pacific littorals see, Peter John Brobst, *The Future of the Great Game* (Akron: University of Akron Press, 2005).

⁵ For a concise military history of India, see Daniel Marston and Chandar Sundaram, eds., *A Military History of South Asia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).

⁶ Stephen Hay, *Asian Ideas of East and West: Tagore and his Critics in China and Japan* (Harvard University Press, 1970).

⁷ See also, Okakura Tenshin's classic work *The Ideals of the East* (1904) begins with a simple but dramatic statement "Asia is one". For his intellectual engagement with Tagore, see Rustom Bharucha, *Another Asia: Rabindranath Tagore and Okakura Tenshin* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009).

opposition to the West. Many in Japan wanted to ‘escape Asia’ rather than be defined by it. In China there was a strong opposition to Tagore’s emphasis on spiritual civilization and a call instead for rapid material advances to catch up with the West. In India too, many reformist leaders sought to shake off the dead weight of India’s past and pursue modernisation along Western lines. Contemporary Asia’s first rising power, Japan, projected the notion of an Asian co-prosperity sphere, which was rejected by the rest of Asia. For many in the region, Asian unity was not an ‘imperial project’ but a nationalist one. For Tagore, the notion of Asia was not about constructing an exclusive identity but providing an alternative universalism to that defined by the West. Clearly there were many conceptions of Asia that overlapped with each other as well as conflicted.⁸ As the Asian contradiction with colonialism sharpened, the rhetoric of Asian unity gained momentum, despite many differences on the geographic scope and ideological basis for emerging Asia.⁹

Amidst the rapid acceleration of the process of decolonization after the end of the Second World War, it was inevitable that the new ideas on Asian unity and solidarity would be reflected in the foreign policies of the newly liberated countries in Asia. Even before India gained full independence, the Prime Minister of the interim government, Jawaharlal Nehru, convened a conference of the Asian nations in Delhi in March 1947, the Asian Relations Conference (ARC). That Asia must band together in carving out a new destiny for itself was a strong impulse for Nehru. In the years before he took charge of India, Nehru was already advocating ideas of an ‘Asian Federation’. Yet the conference underlined all the potential problems that Asia would face in bringing aspirations for unity into practical collaboration. The conference was divided over attitudes towards the role of Western capital in national development in the postcolonial era. The incipient Cold War divisions as well as North South divisions were reflected in profound concern in Western capitals over the kind of approach newly liberated nations might adopt towards the rising spectre of global communism. Some were concerned about the potential threat of ‘Asiatic imperialism’ from India and China, whose great power aspirations were no secret. Beyond that there were big questions about who should be included and who should be kept out of the conference.¹⁰

If the ARC brought into relief the potential divisions in Asia, a group of countries called the Colombo powers—Burma, Ceylon, India, Indonesia and Pakistan—sought to maintain the momentum towards organizing Asian unity. The Bandung Conference on Afro-Asian solidarity showed the expanding geographic scope of the Asian idea as well as its divisions in dealing with Communist China.¹¹ Disappointed by the meagre results of the Bandung conference and upstaged by the diplomatic savvy of the Chinese premier, Zhou Enlai, Nehru moved away from the Asianist agenda to a larger global agenda that focused on non-alignment.¹² Meanwhile the

⁸ For a discussion see Prasenjit Duara, “Asia Redux: Conceptualizing a Region for our Times”, *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 69, No.4, 2010, pp. 963-83; see also Amitav Acharya, “Asia is not One: Regionalism and the Ideas of Asia”, *ISEAS Working Paper*, Politics and Security Series, No. 1 (2011) (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2011).

⁹ Pekka Korhonen, “Common Culture: Asia Rhetoric in the Beginning of the 20th Century”, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, Vol. 9, No.3, January 2008, pp. 395-417.

¹⁰ For details of the conference, see Darvesh Gopal, *Asian Relations: Report of the Proceedings of the First Asian Relations Conference* (New Delhi: Authors Press, 2003).

¹¹ See A. Appadorai, *The Bandung Conference* (New Delhi, Indian Council of World Affairs, 1955); for a recent analysis see, See Seng Tan and Amitav Acharya, eds., *Bandung Revisited: The Legacy of the 1955 Asian-African Conference* (Singapore: National University Press, 2008).

¹² Itty Abraham, “From Bandung to NAM: Nonalignment and Indian Foreign Policy, 1947-65”, *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, Vol. 46, No. 2, 2008, pp. 195-219.

U.S. sought to construct its own alliances in Asia to defeat communism—the Central Treaty Organization and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization. While neither of these organizations survived very long, the bilateral alliances that the U.S. crafted with Japan, South Korea, Australia, the Philippines and Thailand—the so-called hub and spokes system—became the anchor of Asian security. U.S. provision of market access to those countries that adopted the capitalist path of development began to generate the first signs of growth and prosperity even as larger Asia's focus on socialism and self-reliance was widely condemned as producing basket case economies. If 'imperialist regionalism' as well as 'anti-imperialist' regionalism failed to take off in Asia in the 1950s, it was the more modest approach of self-interested regional cooperation unveiled by the formation of ASEAN that would provide the basis for a comprehensive development of regional institutions in Asia. Asian regionalism, which seemed so elusive in the middle of the 20th century, became a reality by the first decade of the 21st century focused around the nomenclature of 'East Asia'.¹³ The economic miracle in East Asia provided a whole new basis for imagining Asian regionalism and brought all the major powers together to manage regional security. Before we get there, let's take a look at parallel geopolitical developments in Asia until the turn of the 21st century.

The geopolitical legacy

As Asia faced a new dawn after the Second World War, its evolution through the Cold War occurred somewhat differently to that of Europe and the rest of the world. While the Cold War provided the overarching framework for the political development in Asia, the region never lent itself to the regimen of a bipolar framework. Unlike in Europe, where the Soviet Union was a dominant threat, Moscow's influence—military, economic and political—tended to be far more limited. Those European colonial powers that initially resisted the decolonization process and sought to regain (and retain) their territorial possessions had eventually to retreat. Britain, which held out for much longer, abandoned its security role East of Suez by 1971 and transferred most of its security burdens to the United States. Japanese imperialism, which had shaken Asia to the core and accelerated the downfall of European colonialism, was defanged after the Second World War and Japan was consigned to a subordinate political position to the United States.¹⁴

While the United States remained the dominant power in Asia, the inherent multipolar tendencies in the region were underlined by the strategies adopted by two nations that had the potential to emerge as great powers—China and India. Communist China demonstrated the capacity to align, de-align, and realign rather than accept the constraining bipolar logic of the Cold War. After the initial deep alignment with the Soviet Union, Beijing broke away from Moscow by the early 1960s and drew closer to Washington by the early 1970s. As concerns about unipolarity emerged in the 2000s, Beijing once again sought to establish a partnership with Moscow. India departed from its non-aligned ideology to seek U.S. military support when it confronted China across its northern borders in 1962, and again when it built a de-facto alliance with Moscow in the 1970s. After the end of the Cold War, talk of a natural alliance with the United States dominated India's foreign policy discourse, even as it danced with Russia and China in the name of promoting multipolarity. Chinese and Indian strategic behaviour has brought into sharp relief their commitment to an 'independent' foreign policy. Even when aligned with one or the other superpowers, both Beijing and Delhi have been loath to give up

¹³ World Bank, *The East Asian Miracle: Economic Growth and Public Policy* (Washington DC, 2003).

¹⁴ For a comprehensive recent review see, Alice Lyman Miller and Richard Wich, *Becoming Asia: Change and Continuity in Asian International Relations Since World War II* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011); see also Michael Yahuda, *The International Politics of the Asia Pacific*, Third Edition (New York: Routledge, 2011).

their strategic autonomy. A similar tendency has been visible in many other large Asian nations like Indonesia, which has sought to maintain a measure of flexibility in the conduct of foreign policy. As they become stronger and develop the capabilities to influence their environment in Asia and beyond, these powers are likely to emphasize their own independent role than accept Subaltern positions to other great powers.¹⁵

Although the Cold War covered Asia with a thin veil, the many internal contradictions of Asia continued to express themselves with great vigour and complicated the larger strategic dynamic with the great powers. A number of faultlines visible during the Cold War and after are likely to endure in the coming decades.¹⁶ Many Asian nations are yet to complete their internal national consolidation and resolve their territorial disputes with others in the region. Despite their rise, China and India have a significant unfinished territorial consolidation. If separatist tendencies in Xinjiang and Tibet continue to hobble Beijing, similar problems in Kashmir and the North East continue to challenge Delhi. China has a bigger challenge in realizing its political objective of integrating Taiwan into the mainland. While China has resolved most of its land boundary problems with its neighbours, it is a long way from settling the boundary dispute with India. China's maritime territorial disputes with many of its East Asian neighbours have acquired a new edge in recent years.¹⁷ There have been frequent naval incidents between China on the one hand and Japan, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Indonesia on the other. While China has always claimed large swathes of maritime space in the Western Pacific, its assertive enforcement of these claims has sent shockwaves around the region. Beyond territorial disputes, historic animosities, geopolitical rivalries and competition for natural resources and political influence continue to divide the Asian nations. While Asia has enjoyed a prolonged period of peace since the 1980s, there is nothing to suggest that the trend will continue unabated in the coming years.¹⁸ As Asia rises, the changing balance of power between Asia and the West and within Asia raises questions about the future of peace and stability in Asia. To understand the uncertain Asian environment, we need to turn to the changing geopolitics of Asia.

The transformation of Asian geopolitics

The rise of China and India and the broader improvement in the economic fortunes of Asia along with the slowdown of the West amidst financial crisis have begun to alter the geopolitical conceptions of the world. This transformation is being framed in three different ways. The first is focused on the changing balance between East and West.¹⁹ Since the end of the Cold War, the general perception has been that the world's centre of gravity has been shifting from the Atlantic to the Pacific. But as Asia integrates with itself amidst the rise of China, the geopolitical emphasis has shifted from Asia-Pacific to Asia. Over the last decade, China has become the main trading partner for most Asian nations, replacing the historic primacy of Asian

¹⁵ For a discussion see, Rising Powers Initiative, "Foreign Policy Debates in China, India and Russia" at <http://risingpowers.wordpress.com/2011/03/08/foreign-policy-debates-in-russia-india-and-china>

¹⁶ Sumit Ganguly and William R. Thompson, eds., *Asian Rivalries: Conflict, Escalation and Limitations on Two Level Games* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

¹⁷ Min Gyo Koo, *Island Disputes and Maritime Regime Building in East Asia* (New York: Springer, 2010).

¹⁸ For a debate on the prospects for war in Asia, see John J Mearsheimer, "China's unpeaceful rise", *Current History*, April 2006, Vol. 105, Issue 690, pp. 160-62; see also, Richard Bitzinger and Barry Desker, "Why East Asian War is Unlikely", *Survival*, Vol. 50, No. 6, 2008, pp. 105-28.

¹⁹ For a provocative framing of the issue, see Kishore Mahbubani, *The New Asian Hemisphere: the irresistible shift of global power to the East* (New York: Public Affairs, 2008).

linkages with the United States and the West.²⁰ While the deep economic interdependence between China and the United States remains a major driver of the global economy, the prospect of Asia developing on an independent path has gained some adherents. That Asian countries have been growing at relatively high economic growth rates at a time when the West has experienced major economic contraction in recent years has given rise to speculation about Asia's decoupling from the United States and the West. Whether such a decoupling occurs or not, the notion of Asia's uniqueness and the exceptionalism of its political values has gained some ground. This in turn is reinforced by a growing sense of threat, economic and political, posed by Asia to the West.²¹

A second frame looks at the implications of the changing distribution of power within Asia instead of the more popular focus on the emerging contradictions between Asia on the one hand and the United States and the West on the other. Political scientists tend to argue that changes in the distribution of power are among the principal threats to international peace. If that proposition points to conflict between rising Asian powers and those in the West, it must apply equally to Asia itself. For the rise of Asia involves a significant reordering of Asia itself. The central driver for this is China, which in 2011 overtook Japan as the world's second largest economy. China is rapidly on the way to close the gap with the United States in aggregate GDP. Estimates vary on when China will overtake the United States in this measure. Some expect that it could take place by the end of this decade. Meanwhile, China is expanding the gap between itself and India. At the turn of the 1990s, China and India were broadly level in terms of aggregate GDP and per capita incomes. By 2010, these indicators were nearly four times larger for the Chinese. As Chinese economic power translates into military power, with a purposeful modernisation of China's armed forces, there is no doubt that China will emerge as the foremost military power in Asia. Some analysts argue that the phenomenal expansion of Beijing's power will return the region to a historic Sino-centric regional order. Others, however, would insist that the rise of China will lead to regional instability. Just as Germany's rise drove Europe into two world wars, so too might China's rise. Much will depend on how the rest of the region will react to the rise of China. From current indicators, it is quite clear that not all of Asia will accept a Sino-centric regional security order. While some Asian nations might choose to 'band-wagon' with China, others are likely to 'balance' the rise of China through tighter alliances and security cooperation with other powers, especially the United States.²²

The nature of Asian responses brings us to the third frame of reference, which examines the role of external powers, especially the United States, in shaping the security environment in the region. For decades now, the United States has been the principal security provider in Asia, and has had few peer competitors in managing the security order in the region. How might the U.S. role in the region evolve amidst the weakening of the U.S. economy, the exhaustion of its military power in the Middle East during the 2000s, and the rise of China? While the United States insists that it will remain a 'resident power' there is a widespread perception of U.S. decline. To be sure, most Asian nations have welcomed the policy of a 'return to Asia' under the Obama Administration. Amidst Chinese assertiveness in the region, East Asian nations have invited the United States to be part of the EAS and to join ASEAN's defence ministerial consultations. For its

²⁰ Mark Beeson, "East Asian Regionalism and the End of the Asia-Pacific: After American Hegemony", *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 2009, available at <http://www.japanfocus.org/-Mark-Beeson/3008> accessed on September 12, 2011.

²¹ Randall Peerenboom, *China Modernizes: Threat to the West or Model for the Rest?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

²² Robert Ross, "Balance of Power Politics and the Rise of China: Accommodation and Balancing in East Asia", *Security Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3, Fall 2006, pp. 355-95.

part, the U.S. has signalled its commitment to strengthen its alliances and its intent to build new partnerships. It has proclaimed an interest in the peaceful resolution of maritime territorial disputes between China and its Southeast Asian neighbours. Nevertheless, the United States is deeply divided over how to deal with the rising Chinese power. Some in Washington believe a conflict with China is inevitable and demand an aggressive containment of Beijing's power before it is too late. At the other extreme are those who say a confrontation with China would be disastrous and propose the development of a framework for 'co-evolution' with Beijing in managing the global order.²³ Some have called for a more explicit 'Group of Two' to manage the international system.²⁴ While the Obama Administration itself has not used the term G-2, during the first year of its tenure it sought to develop a framework of reassurance towards China that involved U.S. respect for Chinese interests and Beijing's commitment to the development of a rules-based international system. Beijing, however, was largely cold to the idea of a G-2 and made it clear that it is not amenable to construct a duopoly on American terms.²⁵ The rest of Asia has many concerns about these prospects. It is fearful of an assertive China and even more apprehensive of a Sino-American condominium or confrontation.

Realignment, dealignment and non-alignment

The formal involvement of the United States in East Asian regional institutions began with the participation of President Obama in the sixth annual East Asia Summit in Bali in November 2011. Obama's visit to Asia at this time seemed to mark a definitive new turn in the U.S. strategic approach to Asia. The ASEAN decision has cast a shadow over the proposition that Asia can construct a regional order all on its own. By inviting America and Russia into the tent, ASEAN has begun to hint that Asian security might only be constructed within a larger framework. East Asia's fear of a rising China and its re-embrace of America are playing themselves out in three different domains. The first is the economic. Until now East Asia has accepted the centrality of China in promoting regional economic integration. The principal vehicle for this has been the 'ASEAN Plus Three' structure that brought the ten Southeast Asian nations together with China, Japan and South Korea. The region is now actively considering an alternative, the so-called Trans-Pacific Partnership. Launched originally as a modest initiative for deeper integration among the most liberal trading nations by Singapore, Brunei, Chile and New Zealand, the Trans-Pacific Partnership has now received the Obama Administration's support. Australia, Malaysia and Vietnam are among those backing the TPP and Japan is considering joining the negotiations. Beijing sees it as a mechanism to exclude China in the name of tougher standards of trade liberalization.²⁶

The second is in the political arena. Only a few years ago even the closest regional allies of the United States including Japan, Australia and Korea were drifting towards a kind of neutrality between Washington and Beijing. Today they are all eager to reinforce their long-standing alliances with the United States. Some of the traditionally non-aligned Southeast nations too are looking to security assurances from the United States as they contemplate the future of East Asia under China's shadow. Washington in turn is ready to build new strategic partnerships with

²³ Henry Kissinger, *On China* (New York: Penguin, 2011).

²⁴ Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Group of Two that Could Change the World", *Financial Times*, January 13, 2009.

²⁵ European Council on Foreign Relations, "No Rush into Marriage: China's Response to the G2", *Asia Analysis*, No. 22, June 2009, available at http://ecfr.eu/page/-/documents/china_analysis_22.pdf accessed on September 12, 2011.

²⁶ For a discussion, see Jane Kelsey, "TPP as Lynchpin of US Anti-China Strategy", November 24, 2011, available at <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO1111/S00588/tpp-as-lynchpin-of-us-anti-china-strategy.htm> accessed on November 27, 2011.

countries like India, Vietnam and Indonesia. While the United States does not take sides in various countries' intensifying maritime territorial disputes with China, it has emphasized America's interest in a peaceful resolution of the competing claims in the South China Sea according to accepted principles of international law. Beijing in contrast prefers to talk with its neighbours bilaterally and has opposed any discussion of the territorial disputes and the larger question of maritime security at the East Asia Summit. Most observers of the region and the Sino-U.S. relationship are surprised at the speed at which tensions have mounted between Washington and Beijing in Asia.²⁷

The third is the military. There has been much concern in Asia at the military staying power of the United States amidst the economic crisis and the growing pressure to cut the defence budget. The Obama Administration has outlined plans to reorganize its global military deployments in order to ensure a credible presence in Asia and its waters. Before arriving in Bali, Obama announced the stationing of United States forces closer to Southeast Asia in north-western Australia. Washington is also rethinking its military doctrine. As it confronts China's rising naval and missile capabilities in the Western Pacific, Washington is developing a new doctrine called 'air-sea battle' that will counter Beijing's attempts to push the U.S. Navy away from the Asian littoral.²⁸

While Washington has denied that it is aiming at countering China, many observers in the region, especially China itself, have seen it as the first step towards an explicit containment of Beijing. That the US would like to maintain US primacy in Asia is quite evident. It is equally clear that a rising China is looking for greater space for itself in Asia and will not accept continuing US hegemony in its neighbourhood. Nor should there be any doubt that Beijing would push back against US efforts to limit China's role in Asia and the resultant security challenges for the region.²⁹ Resolving this tension through a containment strategy might, however, be fraught with at least three structural problems.

The first is the profound interdependence between the economies of the United States and China that is bound to act against a sustained confrontation. China, unlike the Soviet Union, is now a major part of the world capitalist economy and limiting Beijing's global influence will be much more demanding than the previous effort to contain Moscow. It is precisely for this reason that the notion of a 'Group of Two' (Brzezinski) and Sino-American 'co-evolution' (Kissinger) gained ground. That China has rejected a 'condominium' on American terms as well as U.S. attempts to re-establish its primacy in Asia does not in any way reduce the significance of the economic interdependence between them.

Second is the question of the relative decline of the United States. Unlike in the middle of the 20th century, when the U.S. towered over Asia like a colossus, it is now a diminished power. While Washington is still on top of the heap, the narrowing gap with Beijing means the United States will have to spend huge amounts of resources and undertake great risks in containing China. Given the great fluidity in U.S. domestic politics, potential vacillation and confusion on how best

²⁷ Banyan, "Dance of the Giants: China and America in Southeast Asia", *The Economist*, November 21, 2011, available at <http://www.economist.com/blogs/banyan/2011/11/china-and-america-south-east-asia> accessed on November 27, 2011.

²⁸ For an editorial view in Beijing, see, "Airsea Battle Plan Renews Old Hostility", *Global Times*, November 14, 2011, available at <http://www.globaltimes.cn/NEWS/tabid/99/ID/683750/AirSea-Battle-plan-renews-old-hostility.aspx> accessed on November 27, 2011.

²⁹ See Hugh White, "The Obama Doctrine", *Wall Street Journal Asia*, November 25, 2011; See also Yan Xuetong, "How China can Defeat America", *New York Times*, November 20, 2011.

to deal with China could have a significant impact on the credibility and reputation of the United States in Asia.

Third, China is the most important trading partner for most Asian nations, even as concerns about the rise of China mean they are looking to security partnerships with the United States. Nevertheless keeping economic and security policies separate could be a lot more difficult for Asian states to implement.

If its recent approaches have raised doubts about China's 'peaceful rise' and have driven many Asian nations to look for U.S. support, one must assume that Beijing will adapt to the new situation and recalibrate its policy. Central to any new Chinese strategy must be an effort to break the unity of purpose among its neighbours and the United States. As part of that strategy, China would want to weaken U.S. alliances and new strategic partnerships in Asia. For the moment, it appears that Washington has had a measure of success in tightening bonds with old friends and winning new ones. But any prolonged U.S. confrontation with China is likely to divide the domestic political classes in most Asian nations. From the perspective of domestic politics, sustaining an alliance/partnership with the United States against China could be difficult and costly for many Asian nations.

China has never had formal alliances with any major Asian nation. It has had special ties to North Korea, Myanmar and Pakistan and has had intensive engagement with some of the smaller states like Cambodia and Laos. While some of these states might look for alternatives to dependence on China, others are likely more explicitly to bandwagon with Beijing. Additionally, an intensified Sino-U.S. confrontation could also lead to proxy wars in the Asia Pacific region similar to those across the developing world between Washington and Moscow during the Cold War. Finally, there is bound to be a strong temptation among some of the larger Asian countries to return to a policy of non-alignment. While many are wary of a rising China, some of them will also be concerned about a more muscular U.S. forward policy in Asia. A strategy of 'non-alignment' could appeal to some nations that value 'strategic autonomy' and 'independent foreign policy'.

Asian security regionalism

Asia's economic regionalism has acquired much momentum since the end of the Cold War. ASEAN has led the way towards greater economic integration of the ten member states and sought closer integration with the major economies of Asia through the institution of 'ASEAN Plus' Three with China, Japan and South Korea. ASEAN also has a separate plus one arrangement with India. It has signed free trade agreements with all these major economies. ASEAN and East Asia, however, are some distance away from creating an economic community of the kind the Europeans have created. Given the recent financial turbulence in the Euro zone, it is by no means clear whether the region should rush into an emulation of the European Union.³⁰

It is in the security realm, however, that Asia faces the most challenges. At the end of the Cold War, ASEAN took the initiative to set up the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), an institutional framework to discuss region-wide political and security challenges. Since the early 1990s, this mechanism has brought together all the members of ASEAN and its dialogue partners into a single security oriented platform. But the ARF's record has been less than impressive. Many have dismissed it as a 'talk shop' of little consequence for regional security. Others, however, point to

³⁰ Michael G. Plummer and Chia Siow Yue, eds., *Realizing the ASEAN Economic Community* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009).

its none too insignificant contributions to the development of cooperative security norms in the region.³¹ Recognizing the limitations of the ARF, ASEAN took the initiative to establish in 2005 the East Asia Summit (EAS), which has emerged as the new institutional framework to consider Asia's security problems at the highest political level. But is the EAS capable of addressing the security challenges of Asia?³²

Three broad types of conventional conflict confront Asia. The first is the prospect for war between great powers. Until a rising China grabbed the attention of the region, there was little fear in recent times of great power rivalry in the region. The reality that all major powers interested in Asia are armed with nuclear weapons and the fact that there is growing economic interdependence among them have led many to argue that great power conflict is not likely to occur. But economic interdependence, as historians might say by citing the experience of the First World War, is not a guarantee for peace in Asia. Europe saw great power conflict despite the growing interdependence in the first half of the 20th century. Nuclear weapons surely are a bigger dampener on great power wars. Yet we have seen military tensions build up between China and the United States in the waters of the Western Pacific in recent years. The contradiction between China's efforts to enforce a Monroe Doctrine on its maritime periphery and the U.S. commitment to maintain a forward presence in the Western Pacific is real and can only deepen over time.³³ We also know from the Cold War that while nuclear weapons can prevent a conventional war between great powers, they do not prevent competition and conflict by proxy. Great Power rivalry then could express itself in two other forms of conflict—inter-state wars and intra-state conflict. If the outcomes in these conflicts are seen as threatening to one or other of the great powers, they are likely to try to influence the outcome. They might do this by supporting one of the parties in inter-state conflicts and civil wars. If a great power decided directly to inject itself into these conflicts, the stakes could be very high. In the coming years, it is possible to visualize conflicts along all these axes in the region.

Asia then has barely begun work on creating an institutional framework to resolve regional security challenges. Asia has traditionally been averse to involving the United Nations (UN) in regional security arrangements. Major Powers like China and India are not interested in 'internationalizing' their security problems—whether it is Tibet, Taiwan, the South China Sea or Kashmir - and give other powers a handle. Even lesser powers have had a tradition of rejecting United Nations interference in their conflicts. North Korea for example prefers dealing with the great powers (the Six Party Talks for example) rather than resolving its nuclear issues with the International Atomic Energy Agency and the United Nations system. Since its founding, the involvement of the United Nations in Asia's regional security problems has been rare and occasional.

The burden of securing Asia, then, falls squarely on the region itself. There are three broad ways in which a security system in Asia might evolve—collective security a concert of major powers, and a balance of power system.³⁴ Collective security involves a system where all stand for one

³¹ Jurgen Haacke and Noel M. Morada, eds., *Cooperative Security in the Asia Pacific: the ASEAN Regional Forum* (Oxford: Routledge, 2010).

³² For a comprehensive review of the founding and early evolution of the EAS, see Ralf Emmers, Joseph Chinyong Liow, and See Seng Tan, "The East Asia Summit and the Regional Security Architecture", *Maryland Series in Contemporary Asian Studies*, Number 3 (2010).

³³ For a review, see Toshi Yoshihara and James Holmes, *Red Star Over the Pacific: China's Rise and the Challenge to U.S. Maritime Strategy* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2010).

³⁴ For a discussion of the possible security orders in Asia, see Malcolm Cook, Raoul Heinrichs, Rory Medcalf, and Andrew Shearer, *Power and Choice: Asian Security Futures* (Sydney: Lowy Institute, 2009).

and each stands for all, in the event of aggression. While collective security systems are the best in a normative sense, achieving them in the real world has always been difficult. A more achievable goal is ‘cooperative security’ that seeks to develop mechanisms for reducing mutual suspicion, building confidence, promoting transparency, and mitigating if not resolving the sources of conflict. The ARF and EAS are largely conceived within this framework, but the former has disappointed while the latter is yet to demonstrate its full potential.

A second approach is at the other end, and emphasizes the importance of power, especially military power, to deter one’s adversaries and to build countervailing coalitions against a threatening state. A balance of power system, as many critics of the idea point out, promotes arms races, is inherently unstable, and breaks down frequently, leading to systemic wars. There is growing concern in Asia that with the rise of Chinese military power and the sense of American decline, many large and small states are stepping up expenditure on acquisition of advanced weapons systems. Some analysts see this as a structural condition of a new Asia that must be addressed through deliberate diplomatic action.³⁵ A third approach involves cooperation among the great powers to act as a concert to enforce a broad set of norms. Falling in between the idealistic notions of collective security and the atavistic forms of balance of power, a concert involves a minimum level of understanding among the major powers. The greatest example of a concert is the one formed by major European powers after the end of the Napoleonic war in the early 19th century. The problem of adapting it to Asia lies in the fact that there are many medium sized powers that will resent any attempt by a few great powers to define order in the region.³⁶ In the end any system that emerges in Asia is likely to have elements of all the three models. In the interim, though, there are substantive disputes on the geographic scope and the normative basis for a future security order in Asia.

Asian powers and global governance

If the problem of constructing a sustainable security order in Asia seems monumental, accommodating Asia and its rising powers into the structures of global governance is likely to be equally daunting. On the economic front, there have been some adaptations to the new situation, as in the decision to redistribute voting rights in the International Monetary Fund. The creation of the G-20 with the presence of a large number of Asian countries is a recognition of the global distribution of economic power and the impossibility of managing the current international system through the G-7 grouping of western nations. In any event, China’s emergence as the world’s second largest economy and its deep interdependence with the United States make it a real force in the management of the global economy. But the political arena represents a more difficult terrain for the accommodation of a rising Asia. The permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is widely seen as representing the power distribution of the middle of the last century. The attempt to change that structure, strangely, has run into the greatest opposition from China, the only Asian permanent member of the UNSC. Beijing has effectively undermined the efforts of fellow Asian powers, Japan and India, to acquire an

³⁵ See Paul Bracken, *Fire in the East: The Rise of Asian Military Power and the Second Nuclear Age* (New York: Harper Collins, 2000); see also Kent Calder, *Asia’s Deadly Triangle: How Arms, Energy and Growth Threaten to Destabilize Asia* (New York: Nicholas Bearly, 1997).

³⁶ Amitav Acharya, “Reordering Asia: Cooperative Security or Concert of Powers?”, *IDSS Working Paper*, no. 3, Singapore, 1999. See also Robert Ayson, “The Six Party Talks Process: Towards an Asian Concert?”, in Ron Huisken, ed., *The Architecture of Security in the Asia-Pacific* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2009), pp. 59-66.

elevated status in the UN system.³⁷ Put simply, divisions within Asia will continue to complicate the integration of the region into the structures of global governance.

A second complication arises from the divergent political approaches between Asia and the West on key issues relating to international security. Since the end of the Cold War leading Western powers have sought to transform the UNSC into an empowered organization that should be able to organize interventions in the internal affairs of nation-states in order to prevent genocide or other human rights abuses. Defined as 'humanitarian intervention' or the international community's 'responsibility to protect', Western leaders underlined the importance of protecting innocent citizens from extreme oppression by the state or a massive civil conflict in the absence of credible state authority. China and India, on the other hand, tend to emphasize the absoluteness of sovereignty in a truly Westphalian sense.³⁸ Beijing and Delhi have also expressed strong reservations at what they see as indiscriminate use of the UNSC to impose sanctions against 'deviant' states whether on nuclear non-proliferation or violation of human rights. That this was not an abstract debate has been reflected in UN debates on the question of Iran's nuclear programme and on the violation of human rights in Sudan. The issues acquired a new edge as the 'Arab Spring' has unfolded since early 2011. China and India, along with Russia, have tended to be squeamish about sanctions and humanitarian interventions in the Middle East. All three nations have also tended to express reservations about how the Western powers have tended to misuse the UNSC resolutions on Libya, passed in the name of protecting innocent civilians, for regime change.³⁹ This emphasis on 'defensive sovereignty' in Beijing and Delhi must be understood in terms of the Asian colonial experience. It is also rooted in deep suspicion of the Western efforts in the past to undermine Chinese and Indian sovereignty in Tibet and Kashmir respectively.⁴⁰ Both are equally averse to the promotion of regime change by the West in the developing world.

A third complication comes from the thesis of 'responsible stake holder' in the debates on accommodating China and India into the international order.⁴¹ While the debate has been largely focused on China, it is also often directed at India. Neither Beijing nor Delhi, however, likes the idea that they must 'prove' themselves as 'responsible' members of the international system before they are given a say in the management of the world order. They point to the fact that all great powers in the past sought to prevent or delay the integration of rising powers. They insist the debate on 'responsible stakeholdership' is no different. Yet, there is no question that China and India have had the luxury of being 'free riders' in the international system.

The Western argument that the rising powers must contribute to the management of the world order is a legitimate one. For China and India, the question is about their emergence as rule-

³⁷ J. Mohan Malik, "Security Council Reform: China Signals its Veto", *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 22, No.1, Spring 2005, pp. 19-29.

³⁸ Council on Foreign Relations, "The Dilemma of Humanitarian Intervention", March 24, 2011, available at <http://www.cfr.org/human-rights/dilemma-humanitarian-intervention/p16524> accessed on September 12, 2011.

³⁹ For a background discussion, see David Chandler, "Ideological (Mis)use of Human Rights", available at <http://www.davidchandler.org/pdf/chapters/Human%20Rights-goodhart-chap07.pdf> accessed on September 12, 2011.

⁴⁰ For a discussion of the notion of defensive sovereignty, see Amitav Acharya, "Can Asia Lead?: Power Ambitions and Global Governance in the Twenty-First Century", *International Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 4, 2011, pp. 851-69.

⁴¹ Stewart Patrick, "Irresponsible Stakeholders: The Difficulty of Integrating Rising Powers", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 89, No. 6, November/December 2010, pp. 44-53.

makers and rule-enforcers from their traditional role as rule-takers or rule-breakers. This transition is often complicated by a fifth factor, the occasional emphasis in Beijing and Delhi on ‘Asian exceptionalism’. The debate on ‘Asian values’ in the 1990s developed the argument that Asia is different from the West and therefore can’t be subjected to the norms and principles that govern the internal organization and external orientation of nation-states that has been developed in the West. Even as Lee Kuan Yew and others sought to underline the difference between Asia and Western values in the 1990s, there has been expanding democratization.⁴² This argument is not new and has been very much part of the evolution of the idea of Asia at the turn of the 20th century. While the notion of Asian exceptionalism has found some resonance among the contemporary Chinese leaders, India has had a more complex response. The Indian political classes are proud of their democratic achievements at home, but continue to oppose democratic crusades from the West. The non-aligned orientation of its foreign policy often trumps the question of India’s international and regional identity as one of the world’s major democracies.⁴³ Both China and India, however, have been founded on principles that emerged out of the West in the 19th century. Both states are also aware that their growing economies are becoming deeply intertwined with those in the West and beyond. While ‘Asian exceptionalism’ is a defensive reaction to the Western pressures on a range of issues—from human rights to foreign aid policies—Beijing and Delhi can no longer duck the imperative to develop new ideas and initiatives on building a stable order in Asia and the world.

Conclusion

Our survey of the geopolitical trends in Asia points to the centrality of the U.S.-China relationship for the future of the region. While wishing to avoid the Sino-U.S. relationship breaking down to the point of confrontation, the region has no interest in seeing either a Sino-American condominium or a reduction of the U.S. security role in the region. As we have noted Asia has always had a multipolar tendency. India, which has been marginal to the East Asian balance in the past, is likely to acquire greater salience in the coming years. As India, seeks a simultaneous improvement in its bilateral relationships with both China and the United States, it should take greater initiatives in promoting a more harmonious relationship between Washington and Beijing. Central to such effort must be the development of an ‘open’ and ‘inclusive’ architecture for Asian security. The seemingly simple words, ‘open’ and ‘inclusive’ are critical for the development of a regional security framework that will take care of the interests of all major powers, including China, India and the United States as well as the interests of ASEAN as a whole. The challenge is to overcome the continuing impulses for exclusive arrangements, whether it is the U.S. alliance system or the temptation to develop new institutions that tend to keep one or other great powers out of regional arrangements.

China and India could make a special contribution to a harmonious Asia by resolving the Sino-Indian border dispute, the most significant border dispute that still hobbles Asia. The final settlement of that border dispute would not only reduce mutual suspicions between the two countries, but would open the door for greater economic cooperation between Western China, the eastern subcontinent and the continental ASEAN region. Many parts of inner Asia that have become landlocked since the middle of the last century would have a chance to access global markets through a comprehensive settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary dispute combined

⁴² Damien Kingsbury and Leena Avonius, *Human Rights in Asia: A Reassessment of the Asian Values Debate* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

⁴³ S. D. Muni, *India’s Foreign Policy: The Democracy Dimension* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

with the opening of borders for greater connectivity and the implementation of cross country mega-projects, including oil and natural gas pipelines as well as rail and road corridors.

China, ASEAN and India will have to pay greater attention to addressing the maritime disputes that have acquired a greater salience in recent years. Amidst the discovery of energy resources in the Western Pacific, rising naval and territorial tensions in South China Sea, the East China Sea and the Yellow Sea, the growing importance of the Indian Ocean to Beijing, and the importance of East Asian waters for India, maintaining harmony in the Asian littoral is an urgent requirement. Maritime Southeast Asia, which straddles the vital sea lines of communication for China and India, has a great stake in preventing naval competition between Delhi and Beijing. Meanwhile China and India, which are turning to the seas in a big and sustained way for the first time in their long history, have a responsibility to engage in maritime security dialogue and confidence building.

At a broader global level, as the rise of Asia alters the structures of global power, Asian countries have a greater stake in the maintenance of international security. This in turn will require a comprehensive dialogue between rising Asian powers China and India with the United States that has been the main provider of security in Asia. These countries need to look beyond the traditional divide between 'sovereignty' and intervention'. What they need is to develop a balance between values, capabilities and prudence in deciding when to use force and what constitutes the legitimate use of that force by the United Nations Security Council. China and India must move from 'defensive sovereignty' to 'responsible sovereignty'. The United States' own experience in the Middle East in the last decade and its need to avoid military adventurism abroad amidst a weakening domestic economy provide the basis for a genuine dialogue on addressing the traditional and non-traditional security challenges to the contemporary international system. ■