

## India's Foreign Policy for Major Power : Its Thucydides Trap in the Future?

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## **India's Foreign Policy for Major Power: Its Thucydides Trap in the Future?<sup>1)</sup>**

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The primary objective of this paper' is to explain how India might proceed with its foreign policy. Predicting its future course is rather difficult task, only a critique of India's foreign policy since 1947 suggests some major clues relevant to the country's peaceful development.

India's foreign policy over the past seven decades is readily divisible into two distinct periods: the Cold War period and the post-Cold War period. In other words, the year of 1990 marked as its watershed of transformation in the country's foreign policy.

During the latter period, especially in the 2010s, India has demonstrated its rapid expansion of its national power in terms of economic size and defense capability. Due to emergence, it is possible not to rule out India might fall into the Thucydides Trap in the future.

### **1. Cold War Period of 1947 to the 1980s: Non-Alignment and Alliance with the Soviet Union**

To accentuate India's current foreign policy, the paper first begins by discussing its foreign policy in the Cold War period. For many countries, the existing foreign policy seems to have been formed through accumulation of and reflection upon past policies. India is no exception to it.

#### **1.1 Non-Alignment Policy**

India's foreign policy from 1947 to the 1960s is well known as *Non-Alignment*. Its main thrusts were the preservation of hard-won independence and the achievement of national integration and development. For India, independence was sacrosanct under the international circumstances then prevailing, as the US and Soviet Union mutually strove to increase their respective supporting alliances and expand their global strategic space.

It seems no wonder today that, like other countries, India adopted Non-Alignment to defend its independence. In maintaining its independence, India relied particularly on Prime Minister Nehru's skillful diplomacy and his commanding international stature.

In the Cold War, Non-Alignment entailed aloofness from both camps, led respectively by the US and the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, this understanding is

insufficient in isolation. Non-Alignment carried another important implication: joining in some degree of common cause with other Non-Alignment-espousing countries, such as Egypt and the former Yugoslavia. Co-operation among Non-Aligned countries was somehow successful in maintaining their independence through collective protests against various unfavorable policies and situations.

In this sense, Non-Alignment differs completely from *NonAlignment 2.0* (Khilnani et al. 2012), which advocates a new Non-Alignment policy under the present circumstances, without allied partners. Nonetheless, this Non-Alignment has contributed to the pursuit of strategic autonomy in terms of strategic thinking, propounded among the Indian strategic community from the 1990s onward. Most recently, with the advent of the Modi government, the goal of transforming India into a major world power has been particularly emphasized.

## 1.2 Alliance with the Soviet Union

It might be inferred that non-alignment was a useful and effective foreign policy during the sustained, antagonistic rivalry between the two camps during the 1950s and 1960s. Paradoxically sounds though, it was only possible to pursue non-alignment in the context of the Cold War rivalry that India tried continually to diffuse.

India shifted its foreign policy to an alliance with the Soviet Union in 1971. In fact, India has never jettisoned its *pro forma* adherence to the Non-Alignment facade. India was nevertheless compelled to adopt an alliance policy due to the emergence of two international alliances involving important international actors: the US-Pakistan-China and India-the Soviet Union.

India and the Soviet Union concluded the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in August 1971. Article 9 stipulates that in the event of “either being subjected to an attack or a threat thereof, the High Contracting Parties shall immediately enter into mutual consultations to remove such threat and *to take appropriate effective measures* to ensure peace and the security of their countries” (emphasis added).

If alliances are defined for these purposes as “formal associations of states for the use (or non-use) of military force, in specified circumstances, against states outside their own membership,” (Snyder 1997: 7), then Article 9 of the treaty signifies that the two countries entered into a formal alliance.

On August 10, 1971, *The Times* reported that “India today entered into a formal alliance with the Soviet Union”; meanwhile, *The Guardian* clarified the move as a “departure from the Indian policy of non-alignment.”

The alliance was successful in counterbalancing the US-China-Pakistan combination. However, this was achieved at the cost of India’s valuable strategic autonomy. A typical case in point occurred in 1979, when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. India, which had consistently criticized interference in other countries’ domestic matters, was unable to assert a single critical word against the invasion.

## 1.3 Conspicuous Features of India’s Foreign Policy during the Cold War

Through its early Cold War experiences, India might have learned the effectiveness of

Non-Alignment for maintaining its strategic autonomy. But the new international structure emerging in the 1970s demanded an alternative foreign policy. Conversely, though its alliance with the Soviet Union helped India to avoid untoward situations, this cooperation circumscribed India's diplomatic autonomy.

Although both Non-Alignment and the Soviet alliance had positive and negative aspects, the two policies have distinct preconditions.

First, Non-Alignment certainly has its own appeal to the whole world, but India's foreign policy focused mainly on South Asia and, at its widest scale, Asia. This is evidenced by the wars in which India engaged, including three against Pakistan – October 1947 to December 1948, August to September 1965, and December 1971 – and one against China (October to November 1962).<sup>2)</sup> Therefore the period under review was hardly possible to say “peaceful.”

Second, as India adopted a closed-door economic policy, its foreign policy was fundamentally unaffected by the international economic environment prevailing at that time. Due to its insulated economic policy, India was able to pursue its foreign policy without devoting much attention to the linkage between foreign and domestic policies.

## **2. Post-Cold War Period: 1990s onward**

### **2.1 Three Phases of India's Foreign Policy**

Since the Cold War ended, India has confronted a completely new set of circumstances in which its traditional foreign policy has lost relevance. It has been compelled to seek a fresh orientation and foreign policy objectives. Nevertheless, its efforts to do so have posed a daunting challenge.

From the 1990s to the present day, India's foreign policy has exhibited gradual evolution through three stages.

#### **1990s: Uncertainty**

Upon entering the post-Cold War era in 1991, India launched a policy of economic liberalization. Although its economic policy aims have become crystal clear, India's foreign policy remained opaque, including its connection with the new economic policy.

Under the Rao government, which was catapulted to power in the 1991 general election, India initiated several foreign policy steps. Rao visited Japan in 1992 to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of bilateral relations, which had borne little fruit to that point. His visit to China the following year produced the Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the Line of Actual Control (Horimoto 2014). Still in force today, the agreement's intent was to expand economic intercourse between India and China by shelving their complicated border issue.

India's Look East policy was set in motion in 1993 (Haidar 2012: 53). In 1994, Rao visited the US in a bid to improve bilateral relations, simply he was unsuccessful. India established its first strategic partnership with South Africa in 1997, followed by atomic testing in 1998. Although these policy initiatives were outstanding and presented a new India to the world, they lacked consistency in suggesting India's foreign policy

objectives.

### **2000s: Orientation towards prominence**

Upon entering the 2000s, India's latent inclination toward becoming a major power gradually flourished. Though this aspiration's root may be traced to 1998, it remained a pipe dream until Brazil, Russia, India, and China came to be popularly known as the BRICs in 2001. India would subsequently achieve its extremely high economic growth rate in the mid-2000s.

In light of these developments, a number of commentators formed the view epitomized by Raja Mohan: "After disappointing itself for decades, India is on the verge of becoming a great power" (Mohan 2006).

### **2010s: Taking shape as a major power:**

During the early 2010s, various views of India as a major power have become ubiquitous. China is, perhaps, one of the countries concerned by India's expanding national power. For example, when India successfully launched its Agni-V intercontinental missile in April 2012, China's *Global Times* described the launch as "demonstrating the country's ambition to become a major world power."<sup>3)</sup> In 2013, *The Economist* published a special issue explaining its title story, announcing India as a great power<sup>4)</sup>.

In terms of economic performance, India has lagged through the early 2010s. Nonetheless, India remains the world's largest arms buyer, importing nearly three times as many weapons as China or Pakistan during 2009–2013, according to a (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) report of March 2014<sup>5)</sup>

In the 2014 general election, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won its biggest ever victory. With its election slogan of "*Shreshtha Bharat*" ("Great India") and high economic growth, the BJP captured the people's imagination, presenting a plan to make India a richer and stronger nation.

## **2.2 No official policy or announcement: uncovering India's foreign policy**

Arguably, the ultimate objective of India's foreign policy is the country's transformation into a major world power, but no official document was issued during the post-Cold War period. Nevertheless, three documents written during the 2000s and 2010s have been compiled that indicate this objective.

Beginning was the Government of India's *Report of Group of Ministers on National Security*, 2001, suggesting that India has no reasonable alternative but to opt for closer relations with the US.<sup>6)</sup>

The second was *The Challenge: India and the New American Global Strategy*, 2006, submitted to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh by a task force headed by K. Subrahmanyam. Although its contents remain secret, Sanjaya Baru disclosed the gist of it as "the time has come for India to advance its interests through greater integration with the global economy, making the best use of economic opportunities provided by developed economies, especially the US" (Baru 2014: 168). This carries an almost identical tone to that of the 2001 report.

Third is the purportedly semi-official *NonAlignment 2.0*, which has aroused severe criticism since its publication, particularly from the Indian strategic community. In summary, its main argument emphasizes strategic autonomy and how it might be realized.

These three documents provide excellent materials and data elucidating India's current foreign policy. Since the 2000s, various other publications have advanced arguments characterizing India's foreign policy as diverse, multilateral, and swing state in nature (Kliman and Fontaine: 2012). However, these analyses remain incomplete, failing to provide a total picture of India's foreign policy, particularly its main objectives.

Consequently, it is hard for foreigners to grasp India's diplomatic activities, which sometimes lean toward the US and Japan, but at other times, align more closely with China and Russia, depending upon the conditions and timing.

Moreover, India sometimes looks to adopt the Chinese-style external policy of *Taoguang Yanghui* (韬光养晦): *biding one's time while strengthening one's power*. First propounded by Deng Xiaoping, this stance was also observed by Hu Jintao, but is not maintained by Xi Jinping today. In short, India probably aspires to be a major power, but it continues to conceal its true objective. Conscious that declaring this aspiration might cause unfavorable situations and reactions, India has, to date, sought to sail safely by avoiding explicit disclosure of its opinions and intentions.

It was, perhaps, under such circumstances that Shiv Shankar Menon, National Security Advisor, dared to remark on December 11, 2013 that India is adopting "multilateralism for our values and bilateralism for our interests."<sup>7)</sup> He also remarked in November 2015 that "India will not become a great power by loudly proclaiming its intentions."<sup>8)</sup>

In fact, various opinions denying India's emergence as a major power have been voiced. For example, Miller (2013) points out that India's diplomatic elites tend to resist the country's rise. Former National Security Advisor M.K. Narayanan characterizes India as a *reluctant power*.<sup>9)</sup> Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of India's emergence as a major power is its recency. Therefore, it is taking time to find out suitable steps during the present transitional period.

Another important point in this respect is India's defensive posture. As George K. Tanham opines, "throughout most of its history, India has been on the strategic defensive.... Indian armies seldom attempted a forward strategy against the invaders, and thus most of the fighting took place on Indian territory" (Tanham 1992: 52). Cohen and Dasgupta (2010) also attempt to explain India's military modernization with the term *strategic restraint*: since the Cold War, India has pursued military procurement policies without a manifest objective.

### 2.3 India's Foreign Policy Matrix: Becoming a Major Power

As described above, the framework of India's foreign policy has been vague, unlike that of other countries, such as the US and China, which have officially announced their foreign policy orientations. Strangely, India nonetheless appears to have been conducting its foreign policy with certain objectives in mind, particularly that of becoming a major world power.

In fact, under the Modi government, India seems to be casting aside its wary posture. As Foreign Secretary Subrahmanyam Jaishankar declared on July 20, 2015 at his IISS-Fullerton Lecture, India's foreign policy strategy is "*to aspire to be a leading power, rather than just a balancing power.*"<sup>10)</sup>

The Jaishankar's statement was the Government of India's first official announcement of its intention to be a leading power. Because Jaishankar is Modi's trusted Foreign Secretary,<sup>11)</sup> his remark could be surmised as either a direct or indirect assurance from Modi or a reflection of his intentions. His assertion has, therefore, been evaluated as marking a substantial shift in India's reluctance to realize its role as a large ability.

To form an overview of India's foreign policy, various piecemeal foreign policies can be collated to produce a mapped matrix. The matrix, as shown later, is intended to outline an overview of India's foreign policy from the 2000s to the present day.

### **To become a major power**

The matrix shows India's ultimate strategic objective, which is now being openly pursued: becoming a major world power. India has the basic attributes of various magnitudes and a geopolitical position sufficient to claim the status of a major power. During the Cold War, India's national power lagged far below its potential. Therefore, that it might someday become a major power seemed little more than a fantasy.

Now, in 2014, India has the ninth largest GDP globally (USD 2.066 trillion)<sup>12)</sup>. Moreover, it has the world's seventh highest annual defense expenditure (USD 50 billion), taking Japan's spot from the prior year (USD 45.8 billion).<sup>13)</sup>

At present, the US remains the sole superpower. Both China and India are among those chasing this status, although each is apparently one or two laps behind. No other country appears likely to pursue this aspiration.

To achieve its ultimate objective, India has deployed various measures at three levels: global, regional, and sub-regional. Each level has its specific objectives and corresponding measures. At the global level, various main features of India's foreign policy are represented, underpinned by the other two levels.

**Global level:** India aspires to be a major power. The US remains the prevailing power, apparently seeking to maintain a US-centric world order. After the end of World War II, the US used its extraordinary national influence to found political institutions such as the UN and economic institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF. In effect, the US created a world system designed to maintain its dominance: *Pax Americana*.

Fundamentally, the US has been, and remains, even now, a status quo power. Then US President Barack Obama remarked in his speech on the Syrian issue, "America is not the world's policeman." His remarks underscored the relative decline of US power. However, the US remains willing to shape a world order, as demonstrated by its National Security Strategy of 2010: "Just as America helped to determine the course of the 20th century, we must now build the sources of American strength and influence, and *shape an international order* capable of overcoming the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century"



(emphasis added).<sup>14)</sup> The US pursues its orientation of dominance through such policies such as “Pivot to Asia” and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) the latter accord being signed by 12 nations on February 4, 2016.

In aspiring to be a major power, India has emphasized breaking out of the US orientation and policies of status quo-ism. As John Mearsheimer points out, China seeks to achieve Asian dominance similar to that of the US in the Western Hemisphere. *To contain China, the US* has allied with Japan and other states to form a balancing coalition (Mearsheimer 2014a).

India cooperates with China and Russia vis-a-vis the US and its allies to establish multi-polarization of the international system. This orientation connotes India's revisionist thinking. Like China, India's ultimate objective is to acquire the capability to build an international order. India aspires to be a rule-maker, rather than a rule-follower, in contrast to its role during the Cold War. To achieve major power status, India has been a willing partner in promoting revisionist thinking, cooperating with China and Russia through BRICS summits and the SCO.

In addition, India has deployed various measures to achieve its aspirations. It is striving to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council, which would enable India to have greater influence over international issues. India is probably the world's most active country in establishing strategic partnerships with other states, totaling 23 by 2014.<sup>15)</sup> Such strategic partnerships are expected to enhance and broaden the India's basic infrastructure. India has learned a great lesson from its alliance with the Soviet Union, which jeopardized its strategic autonomy.

In 2012, the US's National Intelligence Council predicted:

As the world's largest economic power, China is expected to remain ahead of India, but the gap could begin to close by 2030. India's rate of economic growth is likely to rise while China's slows. In 2030 India could be the rising economic powerhouse that China is seen to be today. China's current economic growth rate – 8 to 10 per cent – will probably be a distant memory by 2030.<sup>16)</sup>

In short, India wishes to become a rich country with military capabilities, including atomic weapons and conventional defense missiles.

**Regional level:** regional level (Asia, Western Pacific, Middle East, Africa, and the Indian Ocean), India is striving to attain a dominant position and to display its relative presence, while simultaneously collaborating with the US, Japan, and other states distinctly opposed to China. Today, the regional level is India's major battlefield of diplomatic activities.

India's foreign policy has, quite simply, been formulated to cope with the emergence of China, which is ubiquitous at this level. For India, the major hindrances and pitfalls in dealing with China are multifaceted. China accounts for India's greatest volumes of trade, but concurrently offers “all weather relations” to Pakistan, India's arch-rival. Added to these aspects, India and China have been competing throughout the Middle East and



Indian Ocean.

Reflecting such rivalry, the publication *NonAlignment 2.0* refers to China and Chinese interests 113 times (the most of any country in the report).<sup>17)</sup> For example: “China will, for the foreseeable future, remain a significant foreign policy and security challenge for India. It is the one major power which impinges directly on India’s geostrategic space” (paragraph 29).

India’s countermeasures against China include cooperation with the US and Japan in the Asia-Pacific region, boosting political and economic relations with countries of East Asia and Southeast Asia through its “Look East” (now designated as “Act East”) policy, and cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), particularly Vietnam and Singapore. China perceives the policies promoted by India to build closer relations with such countries, particularly the US, as containment. By contrast, India similarly perceives as containment such Chinese policies as the String of Pearls operation, One Belt One Road (OBOR), and close relations with Nepal, Bangladesh, and, most aggravatingly, Pakistan.

India’s relations with Japan could be regarded as “convenient,” hinging on non-conflicting mutual interests. Neither country perceives any mutual threat as they are separated by 6,000 kilometers. The two countries play a mutually supplementary role in both economic and security terms. Japan-India bilateral cooperation might continue for the next decade and beyond (Horimoto 2012: Chapter 1). Naturally, closer relations between the two have not been favored by China.<sup>18)</sup>

We should take note of another scenario, in which the present gap in national power between India and China gradually narrows while the gap between India and Pakistan widens. Pakistan would then need closer relations with China, which values these relations in trying to restrain India’s emergence and prolong Indo-Pakistani antagonism. To cope with such situations, India’s countermeasures might include forging closer relations with Japan.

**Local level (South Asia):** India occupies a special position in terms of economy, size, population, and military power. In South Asia, India is the only superpower. Furthermore, in terms of geopolitics, India is located at South Asia’s center.

Traditionally, neighboring South Asian countries feel insecure with respect to India. Their way to address this is forming closer relations with nearby countries beyond South Asia: the typical preferred ally is China. Kapur, who has studied India’s foreign policy from Nehru to Manmohan Singh, regards India’s South Asian policy as “*giantism*” (Kapur 2009: 410). It might be argued that this giantism was the main cause of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation’s delayed founding and subsequent tardy development.

It is noteworthy that while India pursues revisionism to change the US-centered world order, it simultaneously adheres to its status quo policy in South Asia. At the local level, India is a hegemon; one might term its approach to South Asia hegemonistic.

With this orientation, India’s policy aims to maintain the status quo, contend with the China-Pakistan alliance, and drive economic integration within the local. India must

always confront the possibility of nuclear war with Pakistan (Barno and Bensahel 2015).

### Framing the matrix

I wish to underscore the important aspects of the matrix. It is formulated to outline India's foreign policy implementation as of the mid-2010s. In the coming years, the matrix might transform from three levels to two; alternatively, the objectives and measures in each of the present three levels may evolve. Such changes would likely be induced, at least partly, by transfigurations in the national power of India, China, the US, and Japan, and transitions in the international combination and cooperation of related countries.

As discussed above, India's foreign policy matrix could be schematized as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** India's foreign policy matrix

Level	Present Orientation (*objective; –means)	Future Orientation
Global	*Multi-polarization (revisionist orientation vi's-à-vi's US-the West-Japan) —Cooperation with China and Russia (BRICS, SCO) —UNSC permanent seat —Expansion of military capability, including nuclear weapons —Strengthening diplomatic infrastructure, becoming a rich country with military capability —Strategic partnership (without alliance)	Global power: capability to build international order
Regional (East and West)	<i>Asia and Western Pacific</i> * Relative dominance in Asia and realization of sea power vi's-à-vis China —Cooperation with US and Japan in Asia-Pacific —Boosting political and economic Look East (Act East); Cooperation with ASEAN (particularly Vietnam and Singapore)  <i>West: Middle East, East Africa, and Indian Ocean</i> Establishing predominance in the West —Counter to China-Pakistan axis, the String of Pearls, and OBOR —Promotion of cooperation in the Indian Ocean —Observation of the Middle East (Saudi Arabia; Indian Overseas with its home remittance; Secure energy resources)	Dominance in Asia  Power and presence in the Western Pacific
Local	<i>South Asia</i> *Establishing hegemony —Coping with the China-Pakistan axis —Economic integration of South Asia	Maintenance of hegemony

### 3. India's Thucydides Trap?

It is uncontroversial that Asia is now in a process of power transition. In the history of the modern world, such transitions have been epitomized by the First and Second World Wars.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to infer that similarly catastrophic transitions might occur in Asia in the immediate future, as various multilateral institutions exist to prevent such occurrences. Furthermore, numerous consultative and confidence-building mechanisms exist against the backdrop of globalization.

#### 3.1 Thucydides Trap in Asia

Graham Allison expects a conflict between the US and China, adopting the idea of the Thucydides Trap (Allison 2012).<sup>19)</sup> This describes the phenomenon of a rising power provoking fear in a status quo power, which ultimately escalates into mutual conflict.

In addition, Mearsheimer asserts that China's rise will not be peaceful and that the US will seek to contain China, aiming to prevent it from achieving regional hegemony (Mearsheimer 2014b: Ch. 10). China's fundamental motivation is to dominate the Asia-Pacific region and gain overwhelming superiority against its neighbors. To contain China, the US would attempt to establish a *balancing coalition*.

China has gradually become assertive, initiating several external policy measures to claim its status as a major world power; replacing Japan as the country with the second highest GDP in 2010 undoubtedly reinforces China's claim. These measures include claims on the Senkaku Islands, the Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea, and its territorial claim on the "nine-dash line" in the South China Sea.

The common thread of these measures is challenging US supremacy in Asia, where Japan and other countries supported by the US maintain the status quo. In October 2015, the US has dispatched its destroyer *Lassen* to enforce freedom of navigation and deny China its claimed territorial rights over the reclaimed islands in the South China Sea. The US publicly maintains its intention to continue similar operations.

China must cope with such deployments in support of its domestic and external dignity. Should the tense atmosphere between the US and China persist, there is no gainsaying the possibility of an accidental collision that might trigger war. The basic structural character of such a collision or war suggests that they might fall into the Thucydides Trap.

#### 3.2 India's Response 2010s

Mearsheimer's *balancing coalition* consists primarily of Japan, and other states motivated to counter China's move, including India. How might India respond to such an eventuality?

As discussed in relation to India's foreign policy matrix, India's main concern in Asia is to counter China's ascendance. While India's participation in the coalition is conceivable, it is not easily feasible. As *NonAlignment 2.0* states:

The Challenge for Indian diplomacy will be to develop a diversified network of relations with several major powers to compel China to exercise restraint in its dealings with India, while simultaneously avoiding relationships that go beyond conveying a certain threat threshold in Chinese perceptions. (Khilnani et al. 2012: paragraph 34)

We must review this paragraph carefully. Mearsheimer is mainly referring to the China-related eventuality in the Western Pacific, whereas India's main concern is limited to the Indian Ocean.

Moreover, from the Indian strategic perspective, various tussles in the Western Pacific, such as in the South China Sea, would constitute a relief, rather than a direct threat. At present, India frequently encounters various Chinese transgressions at the shared borders of Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh; it must address them. If the situation in the South China Sea were to defuse, China might focus its attention entirely upon South Asia, increasing its deployment of military might in the region.

India's anxiety is understandable when reviewing its response to the ADIZ in the East China Sea, declared by China on November 23, 2013. There was great concern that China might, in future, extend the ADIZ to include the Himalayan region. When China clarified, on November 28 that it had no such plan, then Foreign Minister Salman Khursid remarked, on December 5, that India did not support either the "threat" or "use of force" in the matter. India also refused to take sides.<sup>20)</sup>

### **In the future**

As discussed above, in the Asian theatre, the present gulf in national power between China and India precludes a Thucydides Trap for India. However, the future seems uncertain. So many Thucydides Traps have arisen through Asia's history. For example, South Asia has sustained three Indo-Pakistani wars. Although their main cause is the Kashmir issue, in combination with other contributing factors, it is also possible to explain them from the standpoint of a Thucydides Trap.

India is now pursuing its expansion as a military power, to say the least of its growth as an economic power. Conflict with China would consume resources that would otherwise be invested in India's overall development. Moreover, India's economy has been integrated into the world economic system. Unlike during the Cold War, India's diplomatic relations have become multifaceted and multilateral. Therefore, today's India would be wary of undertaking adventurous policies.

However, when the gap between China and India narrows in the future, one cannot rule out some possibility of war. Numerous conflicts have persisted between the two countries, such as the border issues of Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh. Any such incident might escalate into war, as they had in the past.

The most important future problem is expected to be the Tibetan Plateau, from which many of the world's greatest rivers flow: the Yellow River, Yangtze Kiang, Mekong, Salween, Sutlej, and the Brahmaputra (Lehmann and Ninkovic 2013). Brahma Chellaney (2013) presents a detailed discussion of the water issue. As Chellaney observed water, rather than land, is the most precious resource in these disputes. In a world where

nearly one billion people lack access to clean water, today's economic growth can engender tomorrow's "water wars."

Perhaps Asia's future will be shaped by how the power transition occurs. The most crucial factor is expected to be the velocity of growth in Chinese and Indian national power. The more India is able to accelerate its growth, the greater its risk of falling into the Thucydides Trap in decades to come.

Since the 2000s, we have often heard the characterization of Japan-China relations as "cold politics, hot economics." However, the relations between India and China would be far more appropriately described thereby.

#### 4. Conclusion

India's emergence as a major power since the 2000s is propelling the development of a new international relations (IR) model. For example, former National Security Advisor Shiv Shankar Menon observed in 2012 that India's strategic thought has been imported from overseas, therefore, to have maximum strategic autonomy, one might read Arthashastra.<sup>21)</sup> Not only policy strategists but also Indian scholars have proposed creating a new approach to IR (Behera 2007; Mattoo 2009)<sup>22)</sup>. In one respect, a new IR model would attempt to theoretically underpin India's emergence. Put simply, Asia's rise in the 21st century would require a new approach, abandoning the traditional IR of US-centered and European-centered approaches.

Presently, India might be deploying the Chinese-style external policy of *Taoguang Yanghui*, its basic foreign policy approach since the 2000s. Perhaps India understands Thucydides's famous Melian dialogue.<sup>23)</sup>

India is facing its most critical period since independence – and its most interesting for outsiders – in adjusting to its emergence with actual policy orientations for peaceful development.

#### Notes

- 1) This paper is based on my presentation "India's Thucydides Trap?" at the 7th INDAS International Conference, National Museum of Ethnology, December 20, 2015, under the title "Structural Transformation in Globalizing South Asia: Comprehensive Area Studies for Sustainable, Inclusive, and Peaceful Development."
- 2) It is noteworthy that the 1962 War coincided with the Cuban missile crisis. According to some Indian specialists, Khrushchev informed Mao Zedong of the Soviet's imminent deployment of missile bases in Cuba. Mao took this opportunity to teach a lesson to Nehru: Chellaney, Brahma, 2007, The 1962 Chinese Invasion. *The Hindustan Times*, April 2. <https://chellaney.net/2007/04/02/when-china-invaded-india/> (accessed March 16, 2016).
- 3) *Global Times*, April 19, 2012. <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/705683.shtml>.
- 4) "India as a great power: Know your own strength," *The Economist*, March 30, 2013.
- 5) *Business Line*, March 17, 2014. <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/india-is-worlds-biggest-arms-importer-swedish-think-tank/article5794929.ece> (accessed February 1, 2016).

- 6) Group of Ministers (Government of India), 2001, *Report of the Group of Ministers on National Security*. New Delhi.
- 7) Taken from the speech by India's National Security Advisor Shivshankar Menon on Strategic Culture and IR Studies in India at the 3rd International Studies Convention held at JNU Convention Centre, New Delhi, December 11, 2013. <http://www.indiawrites.org/diplomacy/india-has-a-unique-strategic-culture-and-diplomatic-style/> (accessed on March 13, 2014).
- 8) Menon, Shiv Shankar, 2015, India Will Not Become a Great Power by Loudly Proclaiming its Intentions. *The Wire* (November 22). <https://thewire.in/16049/india-will-not-become-a-great-power-by-loudly-proclaiming-its-intentions/> (accessed March 1, 2016). Menon also comments on Bharat Karnad's book, *Why India is not a Great Power (Yet)* (Oxford University Press, 2015).
- 9) Narayanan, M.K, 2014, *Keynote Address at the 16th Asian Security Conference on February 19, 2014*. <http://www.idsa.in/asc/keySPeeches.html> (accessed March 16, 2014).
- 10) <https://www.iiss.org/en/events/events/archive/2015-f463/july-636f/fullerton-lecture-jaishankar-f64e> (accessed March 13, 2014).
- 11) He replaced Sujata Singh as Foreign Secretary in January 2015. Her term had been scheduled to end in August 2015. See *The Hindu*, January 28, 2015. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/jaishankar-replaces-sujatha-singh-as-foreign-secretary/article6831196.ece> (accessed March 1, 2016).
- 12) World Bank, Gross domestic product 2014, World Development Indicators, 29, December 2015.
- 13) Trends in World Military Expenditures, 2014. [http://books.sipri.org/product\\_info?c\\_product\\_id=496](http://books.sipri.org/product_info?c_product_id=496) (accessed February 1, 2016).
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- 15) The number of strategic partnership have been calculated using the Annual Reports of the Ministry of External Affairs, India for 1999–2000 and 2015–2016. [http://www.mea.gov.in/annual-reports.htm?57/Annual\\_Reports](http://www.mea.gov.in/annual-reports.htm?57/Annual_Reports).
- 16) National Intelligence Council, 2012, *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds*, p.15. <https://globaltrends2030.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/global-trends-2030-november2012.pdf> (accessed March 1, 2016).
- 17) Pakistan has the second highest number of references (100), followed by the US (34).
- 18) "Japan's hype of containing China with India a mistake," *China Military Online*, October 20, 2015. [http://english.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2015-10/20/content\\_6731759.htm](http://english.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2015-10/20/content_6731759.htm) (accessed on February 1, 2016).
- 19) Greek historian Thucydides attributed the Peloponnesian War to (military powerhouse) Sparta's fear of the rising Athenians, which ultimately led to armed regional conflict. The most recent application of this historical principle mainly concerns US-China relations.
- 20) "India for peaceful resolution of Chinese air defence zone row," *The Economic Times*, December 5, 2013. <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/india-for-peaceful-resolution-of-chinese-air-defence-zone-row/articleshow/26911429.cms?intenttarget=no> (accessed March 3, 2016).
- 21) *Business Standard*, October 19, 2014. He also stressed the importance of studying *Arthashastra*

- on an earlier occasion: <http://www.idsa.in/pressrelease/StudyofArthashastraImportantShivShankarMenon> (accessed March 2, 2016).
- 22) Such arguments remind me of Rajni Kothari's Congress System proposition, which aimed to legitimize Indian democracy under the then-prevailing one-party dominance of Congress rule during the 1950s and 1960s. His main contention was that since the Congress Party was inclusive of opposition parties' ideological standpoints, including those of both the right and the left, these views had been absorbed and were reflected in Congress policies. Therefore, India's political system was not one-party rule.
- 23) Carr, Andrew, 2015, *Will a Turnbull government mean a new foreign policy for Australia?* *East Asia Forum*, November 3. <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2015/11/03/will-a-turnbull-government-mean-a-new-foreign-policy-for-australia/> (accessed March 16, 2016). According to Carr, "Power still matters to Turnbull. He is fond of quoting Thucydides' famous Melian dialogue. As he said in a recent interview, 'the strong do what they will and the weak suffer as they must' ... That is what the whole international order is designed to stop—to ensure that there is a rules-based approach to international relations, and it's very important to stand up for that.'"

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