

Canadian
Forces
College

Collège
des
Forces
Canadiennes



RELUCTANT HEGEMON OR FUTURE GREAT POWER: INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY AND FUTURE SECURITY ROLE

Maj M.S. Thompson

JCSP 42

Exercise Solo Flight

Disclaimer

Opinions expressed remain those of the author and do not represent Department of National Defence or Canadian Forces policy. This paper may not be used without written permission.

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of National Defence, 2016.

PCEMI 42

Exercice Solo Flight

Avertissement

Les opinions exprimées n'engagent que leurs auteurs et ne reflètent aucunement des politiques du Ministère de la Défense nationale ou des Forces canadiennes. Ce papier ne peut être reproduit sans autorisation écrite.

© Sa Majesté la Reine du Chef du Canada, représentée par le ministre de la Défense nationale, 2016.

EXERCISE *SOLO FLIGHT* – EXERCICE *SOLO FLIGHT*

**RELUCTANT HEGEMON OR FUTURE GREAT POWER: INDIA'S
FOREIGN POLICY AND FUTURE SECURITY ROLE**

Maj M.S. Thompson

“This paper was written by a student attending the Canadian Forces College in fulfilment of one of the requirements of the Course of Studies. The paper is a scholastic document, and thus contains facts and opinions, which the author alone considered appropriate and correct for the subject. It does not necessarily reflect the policy or the opinion of any agency, including the Government of Canada and the Canadian Department of National Defence. This paper may not be released, quoted or copied, except with the express permission of the Canadian Department of National Defence.”

Word Count: 5483

“La présente étude a été rédigée par un stagiaire du Collège des Forces canadiennes pour satisfaire à l'une des exigences du cours. L'étude est un document qui se rapporte au cours et contient donc des faits et des opinions que seul l'auteur considère appropriés et convenables au sujet. Elle ne reflète pas nécessairement la politique ou l'opinion d'un organisme quelconque, y compris le gouvernement du Canada et le ministère de la Défense nationale du Canada. Il est défendu de diffuser, de citer ou de reproduire cette étude sans la permission expresse du ministère de la Défense nationale.”

Compte de mots: 5483

RELUCTANT HEGEMON OR FUTURE GREAT POWER: INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY AND FUTURE SECURITY ROLE

The Indian influence across much of Asia has been one of culture, language, religion, ideas and values, not of bloody conquest...Does that not also make India a 'global superpower', though not in the traditional sense! Can this not be the power we seek in the next century?

- Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Speech at Leadership Summit, 17 November
2006

INTRODUCTION

During the 20th century, the United States (US) emerged from being a small, largely isolationist nation to becoming global superpower due to unprecedented economic growth, consolidation of military and diplomatic power, and pervasive cultural presence. To many, the 20th century is known as the “American Century”. Similarly, the 21st century looks to be the “Asian” century, with China and India playing the lead roles. China’s prominence and role in future international relations and security matters is fairly obvious. India, however, is not so clearly ready to assume a similar role as a global power and security actor. It is a country with tremendous potential, whose regional and global influence has been rising steadily since the turn of the century. Consequently, India’s role as a security provider has been increasingly debated in contemporary strategic studies circles, due namely to economic and military advances.¹

However, India’s history, strategic traditions, and current foreign policy suggest that India may in fact be reticent to take on the mantle of global power, hegemon, or security provider. “Some see India as a reluctant hegemon unwilling to engage, claiming that this will not be congruent with the global presence it seeks to project.”²

¹ Vivek Chada, “Concluding Assessment,” in *Asian Strategic Review 2015: India as a Security Provider*, edited by S.D. Muni and Vivek Chada (New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2015), 349.

² Ummu Salva Bava, “New Powers for Global Change? India’s Role in the Emerging World Order.” *Dialogue on Globalization: FES Briefing Paper* no 4 (March 2007), 6. Note: Dr. Ummu Salma Bava is Associate Professor and Coordinator of the Netherlands Prime Minister’s Grant and Director, UGC – Europe Area Studies

Current Indian strategic thinking and foreign influences on Indian policy, however, are likely to encourage India to take on more of an active role in regional and global security matters, albeit in a manner in keeping with Indian traditions, strategic culture, and vision. This paper will demonstrate that, although India faces several challenges, it is on its way to achieving great power status during the 21st century, and that it will have to develop new foreign and domestic policies to become an effective security provider during the “Asian Century.” These new policies will be heavily influenced by India’s strategic culture, history, and demand for India to become a major security provider.

Section one of this paper will discuss India’s *strategic culture* and the schools of thought which inform Indian strategy and policy, followed by an analysis of current Indian foreign policy. Subsequently, section two will assess India’s growing power and address the factors that will help or hinder India’s Great Power aspirations in the 21st century. The paper will conclude with a discussion in section three about challenges that India will face in developing or adapting to its new roles, along with potential Indian policies that will enable its desired status as a Global Power.

DEVELOPMENT OF INDIA’S FOREIGN POLICY

India is the world’s second largest nation by population and an ever-increasing player in international affairs. In order to understand how India will act in the 21st century and what security roles it will adopt, one must first set the stage by examining India’s current foreign policy, as informed by its history, *strategic culture*, and grand strategic traditions. This section will first describe strategic culture as a concept, then discuss India’s strategic culture and how it

shapes Indian foreign and security policies, followed by a summary of current Indian foreign policy platforms.

Strategic Culture

Differing schools of thought exist concerning strategic culture, necessitating a brief overview of the prevailing definitions. Alastair Johnston defines it through the lens of *political culture* as: “an integrated set of symbols...that acts to establish pervasive and long-lasting grand strategic preferences.”³ He states that strategic culture formulates “concepts of the role and efficacy of force in interstate political affairs, and by clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the strategic preferences seem uniquely realistic and efficacious operate.”⁴ Jack Snyder defines it as “a sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behavior that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation.”⁵ Ken Booth takes a more historical, social, or geographic view when defining it as “a nation’s traditions, values, attitudes, patterns of behavior, habits, symbols, achievements and particular ways of adapting to the environment and solving problem with respect to the use of force.”⁶ A succinct synthesis of these ideas reveals that strategic culture is an influential lens through which nations view the world, based on deep-seated cultural beliefs, assumptions, and values, that informs strategic thought and decision-making.

Components of Strategic Culture

Strategic culture is comprised of two primary elements: the *central strategic paradigm*, and *grand strategy*. The central strategic paradigm refers to “basic assumptions about orderliness

³ Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 36.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Shrikant Paranjpe, *India’s Strategic Culture: The Making of National Security Policy* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2013), 12.

⁶ Ibid.

in the world”, and includes assumptions about the role of war in human affairs, the efficacy of the use of force, and the nature of the adversary.⁷ Grand strategy is “the secondary assumptions about operational policy that follow from the prior assumptions.”⁸ This aspect of strategic culture is identified or characterized over time from disparate texts and statements from scholars, diplomats, politicians, statesmen, military officials, and others who have influence over a nation’s strategic policies.

Criticisms of Strategic Culture as a Concept

While strategic culture is largely a respected analytical approach, it does have several salient drawbacks. If poorly-scoped, it can be “too broad and encompassing” to be used effectively as an analytical tool, and that homogeneity of strategic culture in any society (let alone one as populous as India) would likely be impossible.⁹ Second, nations build their own myths, which can influence external behavior, making it difficult to differentiate between cultural myths and reality in decisions made by political leaders.¹⁰ These criticisms are valid, and as such the following discussion should be read with the understanding that strategic culture is not proscriptive, that a country may in fact develop and enact policies that run counter to their strategic culture. Strategic culture is merely informative and highly influential on a state’s policy and strategy formulation.

India’s Strategic Culture

Kanti Bajpai, a noted Indian international relations analyst and educator, has done considerable study on India’s strategic culture and observed that India is a unique case in some

⁷ Kanti Bajpai, “Indian Strategic Culture,” In Michael R. Chambers, ed., *South Asia in 2020: Future Strategic Balances and Alliances* (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2003), 247.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Paranjpe, 14.

¹⁰ Ibid.

ways. Scholars like Alastair Johnston, he contends, often focus on elements of strategic culture that are not appropriate for India. For example, referring to a society's "canonical texts" to glean cultural significance is not easy with India, since there exists a significant gap between current Indian writings and the only significant Indian historical treatise on military strategy, economic policy, and statecraft, the *Arthashastra*, written approximately two-thousand years ago.¹¹ Instead, analysis must focus on the wealth of modern writings that have emerged since the end of the Cold War. Bajpai also argues that examining India's economic, cultural and other elements of grand strategy would be more appropriate than the standard discourse on the application of force, because of India's aversion to the use of force as a first choice.¹² Lastly, rather than the conventional focus on regional and local threats only to inform India's grand strategy, one must consider the impacts of globalization and the relationship with distant great powers and global players for a growing power like India.

Evolution of India's Current Foreign Policy Ideology

India is a vast, multicultural, democratic society, and to say that there exists one homogenous strategic culture would be incorrect. One can examine the strategic culture through the three primary schools of thought in India, as identified by Kanti Bajpai: *Nehruvianism*, *neoliberalism*, and *hyperrealism*. These are not official schools of thought, he admits, and that the terms might even be controversial to some, but the majority of Indian strategic thinking and policy can be boiled down to one of these groups.¹³ These schools also can be attributed as the prevailing philosophy during the three major periods in Indian strategic thinking, post-Independence in 1947. This section will provide a brief overview of each period and school of

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Bajpai, "Indian Strategic Culture," 245-246.

thought in order to inform subsequent discussions, rather than enumerating the many nuanced tenets of each school here.

Unified Idealism: Nehruvianism (1950s and 1960s).

Based on the beliefs of India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru (in office 1947-1964), Nehruvianists fundamentally believe that states must seek to understand each other better in order to cure the ills of the international system; "international laws and institutions, military restraint, negotiations and compromise, cooperation, free intercourse between societies, and regard for the well-being of peoples everywhere and not just one's own citizens" all contribute to a peaceful world order.¹⁴ In this belief system, prioritizing state resource for war preparation is ruinous and futile, since such actions create the conditions and impetus for war. This philosophy was evident during the Nehru regime via the adoption of Indian 'non-alignment' with either Cold War superpower, a moralistic view of international relations, and a guidepost of world cooperation and world peace.¹⁵

Hyperrealism (1970s and 1980s).

Hard realities such as border disputes with China in 1962 and an attack by Pakistan in 1965 ushered in a change in India's political structure at the end of the 1960s, signaled by the decline in the Congress Party's power, and the rise of hyperrealists under the leadership of Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi.¹⁶ Hyperrealists espouse a pessimistic view of international relations and an "endless cycle of repetition" characterized by continual tradeoffs of threats and counter threats.¹⁷ In this world view, conflict and rivalry between states cannot become

¹⁴ Ibid, 252.

¹⁵ Mukherjee, 87-88.

¹⁶ Ibid, 88.

¹⁷ Bajpai, "Indian Strategic Culture," 253.

friendship; instead, states must build up their military capability in order to manage interactions through “the threat and use of force.”¹⁸ Indian policies during this period exhibit a hyperrealist slant: the centralization of power to control uncooperative domestic political actors, suspension of state governments, abandonment of non-alignment via the Indo-Soviet treaty of 1971, military intervention in the Bangladesh War to stop Pakistani atrocities committed there, detonation of its first atomic bomb in 1974 in response to China’s newfound nuclear status, and Indian intervention in Sikkim, eventually incorporating it into the Indian state.¹⁹ These policies and actions were a vast departure from Nehruvianism’s moralist idealism.

Neoliberalism (1990s and Onward).

After the Cold War, Indian strategic thinking took on a decidedly pragmatic, neoliberal character. This school of thought acknowledges that warfare and coercion are fundamental aspects of international relations, but that states ultimately seek economic power because it is the source of a state’s strength and security, including robust military power.²⁰ They further believe that increased economic interdependence between states greatly reduces the risk of conflict and that communication, trade, and economic interaction can transform international relations. India shifted towards pragmatic, neoliberal policies after “over four decades of socialist economic policy and poor fiscal management culminated in a severe balance of payment crisis.”²¹ India’s idealism waned, it abandoned its nonalignment and anti-western ideology, sought normalized relationships with neighbors, a positive relationship with the United States, a newfound

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Mukherjee, 88-89.

²⁰ Bajpai, “Indian Strategic Culture,” 252.

²¹ Mukherjee, 89.

commitment to international institutions, and a greater focus on defense, including nuclear weapons.²² Much of this thinking is the basis for India's foreign policy today.

Commonalities.

Despite key differences, several common themes emerge across the three schools of thought, and as such they influence Indian strategists and policy makers, irrespective of their particular schools of thought. First, "at the heart of international relations is the notion of the sovereign state that recognizes no higher authority", leading to the beliefs that all states are responsible for their own security and well-being, and that, above all, "states strive to protect their territory and autonomy."²³ Second, state "interests, power, and violence are staples of international relations."²⁴ This premise translate to the beliefs that states inexorably seek to achieve national interests and to cultivate power (a necessity in a competitive global system), and that "conflict and war are a constant shadow over interstate relations."²⁵ Lastly, they agree that state power unquestionably comprises both military and economic capabilities, though they differ on the appropriate mix of each.²⁶

India's *Pansheel* Philosophy.

Another critical bedrock of India's foreign policy worth noting is the definitively-Indian philosophy of *pansheel*, which originated when the emperor Ashoka's converted to Buddhism in approximately 250 BC. The *pansheel* are the five principles of peaceful coexistence, derived from Buddhism, that inform the peaceful core of Indian strategic culture and thinking: "1) mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, 2) mutual non-aggression, 3)

²² Ibid, 89-90.

²³ Bajpai, "Indian Strategic Culture ,"251.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

non-interference in each other's affairs, 4) equality and mutual benefit, and 5) peaceful coexistence."²⁷

India's Foreign Policy Today

From independence in 1947 to today, the three major phases of India's foreign and domestic policies have each been informed by one of the three aforementioned schools of thought. Beginning with "idealism under Nehru, through a period of 'hard realism' (or *realpolitik*) lasting roughly from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s (coinciding with the dominance of the Indian political scene by Indira Gandhi), to economically driven pragmatism today."²⁸ This transition from Nehruvianism, to hyperrealism, to the contemporary, predominantly neoliberal Indian approach informs current policies. Additionally, India's foreign policy was hampered by the Cold War for decades, its position informed strongly by the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM), and a weak economy. No longer shackled by such issues, Indian foreign policy is seeing a renaissance of confidence and a willingness to play an important role in the region, and as an emerging global power. This section will address key aspects of India's regional and global foreign policy, setting the stage for a discussion of India's role in the 21st century.

Major Themes in Indian Foreign Policy

Indian foreign policy today is a careful balance between idealism and pragmatism that seeks to target specific states in ways that will bring it "specific and tangible security benefits."²⁹

The modern Indian approach is to develop strategies to rebuild relationships with its two

²⁷ Paranjpe, 26.

²⁸ Rohan Mukherjee and David M. Malone, "Indian Foreign Policy and Contemporary Security Challenges," *International Affairs* 87, no. 1 (2011): 87.

²⁹ Bava, 6.

estranged neighbors, China and Pakistan, and with more distant powers like the US, Japan, Australia, Israel, and Iran.³⁰ It also centers around two critical tenets that flow from India's strategic culture and history: the recognition that in any conflict the roots of the conflict must be tackled (conflict resolution, rather than conflict management), and the need to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence.³¹ India's nuclear weapons policy is quite characteristic of its rational foreign policy. While reserving the right to use nuclear weapons in self-defense, or to retaliate against a nuclear attack by a state, India adheres to a "No First Use" policy, nor would they use them against non-nuclear powers, and only seeks to maintain a "minimum credible deterrence" regarding the quantity it possesses.³² The Indian approach heavily favors rule-based, rather than power-based relationships, favors multilateralism, and support for international institutions.³³

INDIA – 21ST CENTURY GREAT POWER?

Given India's rise to international power since Independence in 1947, many have suggested that the 21st century will be the "Chindian" century, as in led by both China and India. China is the world's largest country by population, has a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, and has an enormous economy that is intertwined with many of the world's great powers. China is already a great power. India, however, has not yet achieved that status. This section will outline what elements of Indian national power will enable such a shift in India's global power status.

India's Instruments of Power

³⁰ Kapur, 1.

³¹ Paranjpe, 47.

³² Ibid, 106-107.

³³ Priya Chacko, *Indian Foreign Policy: The Politics of Postcolonial Identity from 1947-2004* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 201.

Across the diplomatic, informational, military, and economic (DIME) spectrum, India's power grows. According to Dr. Uumu Salma Bava, two primary factors, however, are shaping this rise most – “the political dividend [India] has garnered as the world's largest democracy and its growing economic status, which, according to projections, will cause it to emerge, along with China, as a key economic driver of the future.”³⁴

Economic

While China may be leading India in “hard infrastructure” development for several decades, global perceptions have shifted greatly in favor of the Indian economy because of exceptional “soft infrastructure” growth, notably in the information technology sector.³⁵ “India, with its good legal structure, corporate governance, banking system, financial sector, property rights security, its skilled manpower and young work force, has become the new economic icon of the emerging powers.”³⁶ Additionally, India is a strong presence in the international economic community, with “a voice in the development of international economic arrangements such as the work of the World Trade Organization and the G-20.”³⁷ Regionally, India is head and shoulders above its neighbors in the economic arena, which affords it the ability to influence its neighbors.

India's economic growth is impressive, but not without its challenges. In 2007, then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh outlined the issues that will continue to challenge Indian economic growth: “revitalization of the rural economy, education, health, rural and urban infrastructure, environmental degradation, ... better and enhanced delivery of essential public services, upgrading the financial system for better global integration, a better regulatory

³⁴ Bava, 2.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Kapur, 3.

system.”³⁸ Furthermore, many Indians live well below the poverty line, averaging \$1.25 (US) per day and GDP growth has slowed to an average of approximately 2% per year.³⁹ Despite this, the size of the Indian market and its developing infrastructure has India well-positioned to become a global economic power in the coming decades.

Diplomatic

India has gained significant credibility in the diplomatic arena in the new millennium. Its strong democratic track record, reputation from internal struggles as being tough on terrorism, and the fact that it has been a very responsible nuclear power (and not a source of proliferation like its neighbor Pakistan), have all strengthened India’s diplomatic credibility, especially to the West (and the US in particular).⁴⁰ India also gains significant diplomatic clout and leeway from being the “un-China” in Asia. As described by Prime Minister Singh, “unlike China’s rise, the rise of India does not cause any apprehensions for the world takes a benign view of India. They want us to succeed...we should take advantage of it.”⁴¹ India has also gained considerable diplomatic clout by its growing friendship with the United States under Prime Minister Modi’s leadership.

One challenge for India as it seeks to strengthen its diplomatic influence will be its strategic tradition and culture of non-alignment. Granted, India is beginning to move away from the NAM and form stronger bilateral relationships regionally and globally, but in order to be a major player, India must be willing to make political stands both regionally and globally and stand by those political convictions.

³⁸ Bava, 3.

³⁹ Muni, 25.

⁴⁰ Bava, 2.

⁴¹ Chacko, 199.

Military

India's military is one of the largest and most professional in the world. It is also addressing external security by focusing on defense modernization, upgrading weapons systems, and by adopting an "inclusive nuclear doctrine based on minimum deterrence and a 'No First Use' policy."⁴² Its Army consists of over 1.1 million soldiers in 13 corps and 38 divisions, robust armor and aviation capabilities, and steadily growing C4ISR (command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance) capabilities.⁴³ Its Air Force has 39 squadrons, boasts 272 new Sukhoi MKI-30 bombers, plans to purchase 126 new multi-mission combat aircraft, is working with Russia to develop a fifth-generation fighter, has grown its strategic and tactical airlift capability with American C-130 and C-17 aircraft, and has fielded medium-range ballistic missiles with a 5,000 km range.⁴⁴ The Indian Navy is undergoing a dramatic shift from a regional, littoral fleet to becoming a true blue-water navy. India is acquiring 150 new vessels, with 50 currently under construction, increased maritime patrol aircraft, a new maritime helicopter fleet, advanced amphibious landing ships, three new stealth frigates, enhanced sea denial capability due to new Russian Nerpa-class submarines, and four indigenously-designed ballistic nuclear missile submarines.⁴⁵ Airborne, surveillance and warning, anti-submarine warfare, maritime domain awareness, networked fleets via satellite communications, and augmented reach and endurance through tankers, reduced maintenance downtimes, and securing friendly ports of call overseas will also help to propel the Indian Navy to that of a global power.⁴⁶

⁴² Bava, 4.

⁴³ Gurmeet. Kanwal, "India's Military Modernization: Plans and Strategic Underpinnings." *National Bureau of Asian Research* (24 September, 2012), <http://www.nbr.org/research/activity.aspx?id=275>

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

With respect to space technology, India is poised to become a leading nation in the future.⁴⁷ It is widely recognized for its polar launch capability with the robust Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, but has also begun fielding military satellites for communications and surveillance and is seeking an indigenous satellite navigation system to reduce its reliance on US-based Global Positioning System.⁴⁸ Without question, India's military is a source of great strength, one that is growing steadily.

Informational

India has long focused on soft power approaches to international relations, and as the world's largest democracy has been able to set a strong example of how to make democracy work in diverse societies. Bava lauds India for having "...successfully integrated its pluralism and diversity with institutionalised democracy that has the potential to be a model for others."⁴⁹ India's decidedly non-Western style of democracy is attractive, lending it increased soft power appeal. Further, the Indian "brand" is increasingly-appealing in the western world, especially given the large Indian diaspora in the United Kingdom and North America. Key aspects of "Indian-ness" outlined by Singh include: "respect for fundamental human rights, the respect for the rule of law, the respect for multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious rights"; these values have tremendous soft power potential.⁵⁰

INDIA'S FUTURE SECURITY ROLE

Emerging trends in Asian security are increasingly influencing India's role in the region, and three primary factors are likely to have the most significant impact on this as the century

⁴⁷ RS Thakur, "India's Rise as a Global Space Power in 2020," *CLAWS Journal* (Winter 2012), 60, 71.

⁴⁸ Amit Saksena, "India and Space Defense," *The Diplomia*

⁴⁹ Bava, 6.

⁵⁰ Chacko, 199.

progresses. First, the US has increasingly been calling for countries in the region to take greater responsibility in providing security, informed no doubt by its decreasing ability to indefinitely provide or subsidize global security, and because its new Asian strategy depends upon partners and allies to secure its security vision.⁵¹ President Obama made this desire abundantly clear in his November 2010 visit to India. Addressing Parliament, a rare honor extended to “very select Heads of State”, he said, “Like your neighbors in Southeast Asia, we want India not only to ‘Look East,’ we want India to ‘engage East’ – because it will increase the security and prosperity of all our nations.”⁵² The February 2015 National Security Strategy of the United States further highlights a desire for India to be a key partner in the President’s strategic “Pivot to Asia”: “We support India’s role as a regional provider of security and its expanded participation in critical regional institutions. We see a strategic convergence with India’s Act East policy and our continued implementation of the rebalance to Asia and the Pacific.”⁵³ Such continued pressure from the United States to assume an active security role is certainly influential in New Delhi.

Second, “the rise of China and its aggressive attempt at forcing the course of events both in case of bilateral and multilateral disputes has been a cause of worry for countries of the Asia-Pacific region.”⁵⁴ This concern has largely turned South Asians towards India to establish regional balance. Chinese hegemony in Asia, an untested and unpredictable paradigm, does not appeal to many Asian countries; “they see themselves as rising economic and military powers with a confidence in their political and cultural identities.”⁵⁵ The Association of Southeast Asian

⁵¹ Chadha, 349.

⁵² Rup Narayan Das, *The US Factor in Sino-Indian Relations: India’s Fine Balancing*, IDSA Monograph Series no. 46 (New Delhi: Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis, October 2015), 47.

⁵³ Executive Office of the President of the United States of America, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: 2015), 24.

⁵⁴ Chadha, 350.

⁵⁵ Ashok Kapur, *India: From Regional to World Power* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 226.

Nations (ASEAN) remains divided on how to counter China's sudden rise.⁵⁶ China has also made it clear that they intend to stay involved in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and in South Asia in general, by increasing trade with South Asia by \$150 billion, investing \$30 billion over five years, and a desire to have full membership and veto authority.⁵⁷ Building a forward-looking platform for stability in Asia requires continuous attention to Chinese actions and ambitions, with India as a primary bulwark against Chinese hegemony.⁵⁸

Third, there is a growing interest and willingness within India itself to “increase its outreach and play a more substantive role in positively influencing the economic and security concerns of the region.”⁵⁹ This desire comes from the understanding in India that rules-based order in the region is in the interest of its neighboring states, but that it would also foster India's strategic interests.⁶⁰ Modi stated this concisely in Kathmandu in 2014, “Development of close relations with our neighbors is a key priority for my government... The future I dream for India is the future I wish for our entire region”, a vision that rests on five pillars of “trade, investment, assistance, cooperation in every area, contacts between our people – and all through seamless connectivity”.⁶¹

Challenges to India's Future as a Security Provider

Three major security challenges threaten to stifle India's rise as a great power in the near future: ongoing domestic insurgencies, chaos in the South Asia region, and the rise of China to

⁵⁶ Dipankar Banerjee, “India's Defence and Security in the 21st Century: Hard Choices,” *CLAWS Journal* (Winter 2014), 4.

⁵⁷ Muni, 35-36.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 232.

⁵⁹ Chadha, 350.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*.

⁶¹ Muni, 30-31.

global superpower status.⁶² This section will discuss the latter two in further detail and the steps that India will likely take to address them.

Regional Challenges

A significant challenge for India is the glaring asymmetry between itself and its regional contemporaries. While India is a stable, diverse, and increasingly prosperous democracy, “six of India’s neighbors rank in the top 25 dysfunctional states in the world, as tabulated by the Failed States Index of the Fund for Peace.”⁶³ This complicates India’s decision matrix when pursuing regional policy objectives. Furthermore, there is a substantial level of suspicion from India’s neighbors because of evident regional population, size, and strength disparities.⁶⁴ This holdover from the Manmohan Singh regime presents a significant challenge for the Modi regime to overcome. More so than general levels of distrust between neighbors, several critical issues present key challenges to securing India’s regional base. Chief among these is its relationship with Pakistan, which has been contentious since that country’s creation. Additionally, despite Indian hegemony in South Asia, Indian often seems incapable of exerting political influence in Nepal, Bangladesh, or Sri Lanka.⁶⁵ India will need to gain legitimacy and efficacy in this arena.

Pakistan is a critically important challenge because it is on the one hand absolutely critical to India achieving its regional policy, development, and integration goals, but it also exists as the primary roadblock, for myriad complex reasons.⁶⁶ The Pakistani Army has a disproportional amount of power in the country and will likely continue to dictate the nation’s

⁶² Amit Gupta, *Global Security Watch: India* (Santa Barbara, California: Praeger, 2012), 155.

⁶³ Mukherjee, 93.

⁶⁴ SD Muni, “Narendra Modi’s Foreign Policy: Rebuild South Asian Neighbourhood,” *CLAWS Journal* (Summer 2015), 23.

⁶⁵ Paranjpe, 154.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 34.

India policy.⁶⁷ Further is the challenge India faces in dispelling Pakistani myths vis-à-vis India such as the belief that India will not cease until Pakistan is reunited with India, which is simply not in the Indian strategic thought at this time, nor has it been since Nehru was Prime Minister. Pakistan also vexes India due to its support for domestic terrorism inside India.⁶⁸ To overcome some of these challenges, Modi has even attempted to implement “Cricket Diplomacy”, Meeting with Prime Minister Sharif and other SAARC leaders on the margins of the 2015 Cricket world cup, with great success.⁶⁹ The relationship with Pakistan, however, will likely remain hostile for decades, and must be approach with openness, rationality, and non-hostility if there is to be a solution on the horizon.

The Rise of China

The most significant challenge to India’s role will be China, for many of the reasons already listed in this paper. It is worth highlighting China again to focus on more belligerent actions. China’s policies vis-à-vis its border with India have become more alarming since 2006. Having withdrawn behind the McMahon Line in 1962, effectively consenting to its internationally-recognized border with India, China is now making new claims for Indian territory in what it refers to as *Southern Tibet*, which happens to encompass all of the Indian State of Arunachal Pradesh.⁷⁰ To the Chinese, this is now disputed Chinese territory, which clearly does not bode well for Sino-Indian relations. Couple that with China’s demonstrated desire to infiltrate South Asian economic and security fora, and India is faced with an increasing conundrum.

⁶⁷ Muni, 37.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 31.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 30.

⁷⁰ Banerjee, 6.

Future Indian Policy

Having discussed the evolution of India's foreign policy, its future position as a Great Power, and discussing the demand for increased Indian security, where is India likely to go from here? For India to truly become a Great Power, its reputation in the economic sector as a "free rider", one who does not invest in the international system, but benefits from it, must change; and, India's policies must become more proactive and forward-thinking. A Great Power must have a strategic plan in place to deal with major security concerns, and India is no exception. It must develop robust engagement strategies for both China and Pakistan, and employ whole of government approaches to resolving domestic terrorism. India must also develop long-term strategies for the building and consolidation of national power and seek to establish alliances with like-minded powers such as the United States. What is ultimately necessary is a debate over difficult strategic choices, clear and firm policies and a clear way ahead.

Retired Major General Dipankar Banerjee, the Founding Director of the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies in New Delhi proposes a sound two-phased strategy for long term power consolidation in India. Phase 1: "Consolidation and Cooperation" from now until 2030, would focus on raising domestic income (up to \$10,000 USD per capita), education standards, increased internet access, and higher standard of living.⁷¹ Phase 1 would also seek to strengthen regional institutions like SAARC, raise maritime security in the Indo-Pacific Ocean Zone, strengthened military capability through doctrine, training, technology and modernization, and a significant increase in space and cyber warfare capabilities.⁷² To fully secure its position as a regional hegemon, India must focus on five strategic priorities in the near term: 1) strengthen and prioritize internal security policies and training, 2) stabilize its northern borders, 3) move from a

⁷¹ Banerjee, 9-10.

⁷² Ibid, 10-11.

“Look East” to an “Act East” policy regarding firm commitments and cooperation, 4) Connect Central Asia (via economy, infrastructure, and communications), 5) secure the Indian Ocean.⁷³

Prime Minister Modi’s government seems poised to follow this approach. His government launched the ‘B2B’ (Bhutan to Barat and Barat to Bhutan) initiative and provided assurances that India will continue to respect regional sovereignty, while also pledging hundreds of billions of dollars toward regional development efforts.⁷⁴ India will continue to strengthen the region to strengthen its base. He has also shown a willingness to lead in the region, as evidenced by his comments during the 2015 SAARCH Kathmandu Summit: “There is a new awakening in South Asia; a new recognition of interlinked destinies; and a new belief in shared opportunities. The bonds will grow. Through SAARC or outside it. Among us all or some of us.”⁷⁵ The implication here is that, while India recognizes the value of SAARC and other regional organizations, India will no longer feel “shackled” to them as in the past.

Pakistan will continue to present India will security challenges, continually-stoked by conflict over Kashmir. To that end, it is likely that the Indian government, supported by Indian public opinion, will work towards greater autonomy in Kashmir if Pakistan disavows all links with jihadi elements in its territory.⁷⁶ Additionally, the renewed partnership between India and the US will draw upon India to take a larger role in “promoting democracy, economic openness and liberalism, cultural tolerance, social inclusion, and respectful international engagement to limit the forces of fractious, aggressive nationalism/sovereignty.”⁷⁷ India has not traditionally been very forceful outside of its borders to enforce it, but it will leverage its newfound position on the world stage and in international organizations to do just that.

⁷³ Ibid, 12-13.

⁷⁴ Muni, 27.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 34.

⁷⁶ Gupta, 157

⁷⁷ Bajpai, “India and the United States”, 44.

Phase two of Banerjee's plan, "Securing Our Position in Asia and Globally", takes place from 2030-2050 and falls right in line with Indian strategic culture and likely foreign policy themes. He predicts a decline in European power, continued US power, and Africa and portions of Latin America as the next great sources of promise. To that end, the plan calls for India to reach out to those regions, maintain strong ties with the US, further develop India's soft power appeal, establish "full spectrum dominance" in India's immediate region and a persistent Indian presence around the world, enhanced deterrent capabilities to counter Chinese threats, and active Indian shaping of global affairs through economic and security fora.⁷⁸ These rational suggestions would serve India well in seeking to establish itself as a Great Power.

CONCLUSION

This paper addressed India's growing national power and considered the question on whether it will become a Global Power or remain "always a bridesmaid, but never the bride."⁷⁹ This paper has demonstrated that, although India faces several challenges, it is indeed on its way to achieving Great Power status during the 21st century, and that it will have to develop new foreign and domestic policies to become an effective security provider during the "Asian Century." These new policies will be heavily influenced by India's strategic culture, history, and demand for India to become a major security provider.

In doing so, the paper discussed strategic culture as a concept and how influential it can be to the development of national policies and strategies. This has also proven to be the case with India. Despite some critics arguing that India has no grand strategic tradition, this is largely untrue due to the commonalities found as the source of Indian strategic thought since independence in 1947. Indian foreign policy went through three major phases, largely informed

⁷⁸ Banerjee, 13-15.

⁷⁹ Gupta, 155.

by Nehruvianism, then hyperrealism, before taking on its contemporary characteristic neoliberalist approach. This paper also addressed some of the major themes in current Indian foreign policy, such as belief in non-violence, rationality, multilateralism, support for international institutions, and the rule of law. Furthermore, Indian policies have been shown to seek Indian regional hegemony prior to a desired growth in Indian power on the global stage. The paper finished with some discussion of potential Indian foreign policies that will further cement their role as a Great Power.

This goal will be met with challenges, however, as evidenced by regional frustrations with South Asian nations persisting, Pakistan continuing to threaten Indian security, and China ever-increasingly working its way into South Asian affairs. Despite these challenges, India's large and growing economy, robust and modern military, ever-increasing diplomatic power, and highly-attractive Indian soft power approaches will all position India well to achieve Great Power Status. These elements of power, combined with forward-thinking and proactive strategies centered around strengthening India's South Asian power base, will lead to India securing its place as a Great Power and global leader in the 21st century.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bajpai, Kanti and Harsh Pant, ed's. *India's National Security: Critical Issues in Indian Politics*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Bajpai, Kanti. "India and the United States: Grand Strategic Partnership for a Better World." *South Asian Survey* 15, no. 1 (2008), 33-47.
- Bajpai, Kanti. "Indian Strategic Culture." In Michael R. Chambers, ed., *South Asia in 2020: Future Strategic Balances and Alliances*. Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2003, 245-303.
- Banerjee, Dipankar. "India's Defence and Security in the 21st Century: Hard Choices." *CLAWS Journal* (Winter 2014), 4.
- Bava, Ummu Salva. "New Powers for Global Change? India's Role in the Emerging World Order." *Dialogue on Globalization: FES Briefing Paper* no 4 (March 2007): 2-7.
- Chacko, Priya. *Indian Foreign Policy: The Politics of Postcolonial Identity from 1947-2004*. New York: Routledge, 2012.
- Chada, Vivek. "Concluding Assessment." In *Asian Strategic Review 2015: India as a Security Provider*, edited by S.D. Muni and Vivek Chada, 349-356. New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2015.
- Das, Rup Narayan. *The US Factor in Sino-Indian Relations: India's Fine Balancing*. IDSA Monograph Series no. 46. New Delhi: Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis, October 2015.
- Gupta, Amit. *Global Security Watch: India*. Santa Barbara, California: Praeger, 2012.
- Johnston, Alastair Iain, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995.
- Kanwal, Gurmeet. "India's Military Modernization: Plans and Strategic Underpinnings." *National Bureau of Asian Research* (24 September, 2012).
<http://www.nbr.org/research/activity.aspx?id=275>
- Kapur, Ashok. *India: From Regional to World Power*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Mazumdar, Arijit. *Indian Foreign Policy in Transition: Relations with South Asia*. New York: Routledge, 2015.
- Michael, Arndt, *India's Foreign Policy and Regional Multilateralism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Mukherjee, Rohan and David M. Malone. "Indian Foreign Policy and Contemporary Security Challenges." *International Affairs* 87, no. 1 (2011): 87-104.
- Muni, SD. "Narendra Modi's Foreign Policy: Rebuild South Asian Neighbourhood." *CLAWS Journal* (Summer 2015): 23-40.

Paranjpe, Shrikant. *India's Strategic Culture: The Making of National Security Policy*. New Delhi: Routledge, 2013.

Sikri, Rajiv. *Challenge and Strategy: Rethinking India's Foreign Policy*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2009.

Singh, Manmohan. "India: the Next Global Superpower?" Speech, Hindustan Times Leadership Summit. November 17, 2006. <http://pmindia.nic.in/speech/content4print.asp?id=449>

Thakur, RS. "India's Rise as a Global Space Power in 2020." *CLAWS Journal* (Winter 2012): 67-75.

United States. Executive Office of the President of the United States. *National Security Strategy*. Washington, DC: 2015.