

# India's Peaceful Rise in World Politics--Present Reality and Future Prospects: A Chinese Point of View

SHI Yinhong

SONG Dexing

As one of the world's ancient civilizations and as a huge modern-day country, India by all considerations does not lack the ambitions of a great nation, and in fact has always shown a strong desire to be counted among the world's great powers. Since the time of pre-independence Congress Party leader Jawaharlal Nehru's bold rhetoric about India becoming an "impressive and dramatic" nation, to the proclaiming of a "twenty-first century superpower" during the seven years of rule by the leadership of the Bharatiya Janata Party beginning in 1998, down to the present proclamation of "India's Century" by today's Indian National Congress Singh government, this has always been the case. India possesses the population, size, and natural resources of a leading nation, and judging from some of the key indicators of great nations, it is displaying a truly impressive level of competitive power. Not only that, India's aspiration to seek the status of a great nation, along with its faith in strategic realism as its plan for governance, provides a major driving force in its pursuit of power, while at the same time the great changes in the post-Cold War international situation and the basic currents of the contemporary world also provide an unprecedented opportunity for its present and future peaceful (or generally peaceful) rise. On the other hand, it is difficult to ignore the various unique difficulties faced by India, the quite serious internal and external constraints from which it suffers, and which therefore to a great extent obscure its favorable prospects for a strong rise.

## India's Rise of the Century

Both history and the logic of world politics show that from the late 19th century up to the present time and into the foreseeable future, basic conditions for the world's great powers have increased sharply in comparison to earlier times.<sup>1</sup> In other words, in order to play a leading role in present and future world politics, a country must possess, in addition to an advanced level of technology and a modern economic, political and social organization, a big enough "base of power and influence," that is, approaching or occupying the world's front tier in terms of territory, population, and natural resources.<sup>2</sup> Obviously, apart from the United States, China, Russia, and a future, fully unified Europe, India is about the only nation in the world having all these conditions.<sup>3</sup>

First, the scope of its existing base gives India the foundational conditions to become a world power. According to its 2001 census data, as of March 1, 2001, India's population had broken the 1 billion mark, second only to China. Favorable terrain and suitable climate allow over half of India's land to be arable, thus a land area comprising 2.4% of the world's land is able to sustain 17% of the world's population. India has almost all the mineral resources on the South Asian subcontinent, ranking third in the world in iron ore, and fifth in bauxite reserves.

In the midst of India's rise of the century, the significance of the great increase in its economic power is especially notable. Since the market reforms beginning in the early 1990s, its economy has increased rapidly each year. Since 2005, its economic growth rate exceeded 9% for three years in a row. Notwithstanding the impact of the subsequent rupee appreciation and price increases, as well as the

---

<sup>1</sup> Ludwig Dehio, *The Precarious Balance: Four Centuries of European Power Struggle* (New York: Random House, 1962); Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987).

<sup>2</sup> 有关国际体系中世界大国的论述见时殷弘：“关于中国的大国地位及其形象思考”，《国际经济评论》1999年第5期。[for related information on the world's great powers in the international system see Shi Yihong: "Thinking on China's Status and Image as a Great Nation" *International Economic Review* 1999 No. 5.]

<sup>3</sup> 下面有关印度经济和军事或准军事高技术状况的论述，主要引自宋德星：“南亚安全形势”，载刘强主编：《2008 国际安全》，北京：时事出版社 2009 年版，第 169-173 页。

slowdown in its economic growth rate, in fiscal year 2007-2008, the growth rate still reached 8.5%. As to the economic situation in fiscal year 2008-09, all sectors in India are embracing a positive outlook, believing that India still has one of the world's fastest growing economies in the world, and moreover that its growth rate has even greater stability than before.<sup>4</sup> Corresponding to this, India's overall economic strength has significantly increased. According to WTO statistics, although India's annual 2006 trade volume only amounted to 1.2% of world trade<sup>5</sup>, its imports and exports grew rapidly, and following this, its foreign exchange reserves also experienced steady growth, reaching USD \$285 billion. India is already the world's twelfth largest economy, with a 2008 GDP of USD \$1.2 trillion. If calculated using the purchasing power parity (PPP) method, India is already the world's fourth largest economy, and therefore is one of the leading countries of choice for foreign direct investment (FDI).<sup>6</sup>

India's economy has its own characteristics and advantages, and among them an important point is that India is one of the very few countries in the Asia region that has access to the global trade cycle, with its domestic consumption having a greater effect than investment on its economic development. Therefore, in the global financial crisis and economic recession after the autumn of 2008, although India's foreign trade suffered a serious blow, the impact on its overall economy was relatively small. To counter the negative effects of this global economic crisis, the Indian government formally introduced a financial stimulus plan at the beginning of December 2008, which included additional government spending, overall reductions in VAT and multi-faceted support of the export sector, housing loans, financing for small and medium enterprises (SME), the development of the textile industry, and infrastructure financing. India's minister of finance, at the World Economic Forum held at the end of each year, optimistically declared that India's economic growth rate in 2009 will still reach 9%.<sup>7</sup>

In the areas of military and paramilitary technology, India also embodies the strength of a great nation. India not only maintains the world's third largest armed forces with active duty troop strength of 1.4 million, but also as a de facto nuclear weapon state, it continues to vigorously develop and build strategic nuclear forces, its intermediate-range ballistic missile strength has developed rapidly, and in July 2009 it launched its first nuclear-powered strategic missile submarine, which, in the words of the *New York Times*, is a part of a broad expansion of an effort by India's government to create a world-class military force as a part of India's rise.<sup>8</sup> In April 2008, India launched an indigenously manufactured polar satellite carrier rocket, and successfully sent ten satellites into orbit; in October, India will launch its first lunar probe, becoming the sixth country in the world to do so; in December, the first satellite built by India for a foreign nation will be launched into space. This highly publicized space flight has indeed grabbed the attention of many people. In addition, India's space research group plans to develop a series of space exploration projects, in particular, to send a lunar exploration robot to the moon's surface by 2012, and in 2013 to launch spacecraft to Mars, and in 2015 to send two Indian astronauts into space in an Indian-made spacecraft. The chairman of this body has declared that only a sufficient allocation of funds is needed in order for India to easily catch up to China in space exploration.<sup>9</sup>

India seems smug. Although it exaggerates the favorable conditions it possesses for becoming a great world power, according to the facts this is still a figment of the imagination. In the words of India's foreign affairs secretary at his speech in Washington at the beginning of 2003, India's size, its location at the strategic crossroads of Asia and key commercial routes, "its political stability and the adaptability of its democratic system," "The uniting of its one billion population within an incomparably diverse and wide-ranging consensus," "the initiative and technical skill of its people within the field of scientific knowledge,

---

<sup>4</sup> Ren Yan: India's Economy Continues to Look Good, in *Renmin Ribao*, 14 Jan 2008.

<sup>5</sup> "Economy of India", Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy\\_of\\_India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_India).

<sup>6</sup> Nipa Piboonatanasawat and Kartik Goyal, "India May Take More Steps to Help Weakening Economy," Bloomberg, December 15, 2008, <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601091&sid=aK2ccLqM2xhQ&refer=india>; "India 2<sup>nd</sup> Best Country for Biz Investment: Survey," Financial Express, August 1, 2008, <http://www.financialexpress.com/news/India-2nd-best-country-for-biz-investment-Survey/343344/>

<sup>7</sup> "印度经济增长明年或达 9%", 《新京报》, 2008 年 11 月 19 日, <http://finance.jrj.com.cn/2008/11/1910582804490.shtml>. [ "India's Economic Growth Next Year May Reach 9%" *Xinjing Bao*, 19 Nov. 2008.]

<sup>8</sup> Lydia Polgreen, "India Launches Nuclear Submarine," *The New York Times*, July 26, 2009. 关于印度现役部队规模, 见 "India Armed Forces," Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian\\_Armed\\_Forces](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Armed_Forces).

<sup>9</sup> "印度空间研究组织主席: 有钱即可轻易追上中国", 人民网, 2008 年 10 月 21 日, [http://news.ifeng.com/mil/1/200810/1021\\_339\\_840165.shtml](http://news.ifeng.com/mil/1/200810/1021_339_840165.shtml). [Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization: "With Money We Can Easily Catch Up to China" *Renmin Wang*, 21 Oct 2008. ]

its exercise of "restraint and responsibility" with regard to its power and influence, make it an indispensable element in the stability and security of Asia and beyond.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Great Driving Force in India's Rise: Desire, and Belief in Strategy**

India's thirst to achieve the status of a great nation goes without saying, as this is simply a given in international politics. One of Nehru's most famous assertions is that "India in its present position cannot play a secondary role in the world. Either it will become an impressive great nation, or it will keep silent and lie low. An intermediate status cannot appeal to me. I also don't believe that any intermediate position is possible."<sup>11</sup> Here, what needs to be emphasized with regard to this desire for great nation status is this history and reality: India has fought three large-scale wars with Pakistan and one Sino-Indian border war, It can be said that since 1945, it has been the most militaristic nation in Asia outside of Southwest Asia and Vietnam, and today, as mentioned earlier, it still persists in building up large-scale strategic forces and conventional weapons; on the other hand, although India's "turnaround," has been later than China's, it is similar to it, choosing to pursue a peaceful or generally peaceful rise as its basic national direction for the last twenty years. In the words of Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, India and China have both given extremely careful consideration to their fundamental paths as nations, in order to ensure their sustainable development based on a "calculation of peace"; India also resembles China in this way, seeking a peaceful rise.<sup>12</sup>

As a major driving force in India's rise, a kind of strategic culture or strategic faith is extremely important as a backdrop to present-day India's aspiration to the status of a great nation, that is, a plan of strategic realism to cure the country's ills. One of its most important elements or most prominent expressions lies in utilizing unwelcome or even negative international sanctions as a strategic move, causing the world to recognize India as a great power not only in the realm of words and ideas, but as an underlying reality, and this in fact is a practical move for continuously driving forward according to a basic strategic plan. At the same time, strategic realism stipulates, India's basic strategic choice in the contemporary world and Asia is, as much as possible, the accumulation, development and forceful use of peace to its advantage; in this sense, peace is a valuable tool at the service of India's rise, which involves the relationships between objectives and capabilities, costs and benefits, and what is imagined versus what is feasible.

India believes that in the post-Cold War international political reality, "nation-centrism" still predominates, and the foremost concerns of nations remain their own self-interest, including their international influence.<sup>13</sup> In today's India, strategy researchers have almost universally advocated that India's policy toward major global powers--to use a more refined and thus less candid wording--must be consistent with India's view of itself as having a global role in the future (regardless of how great the present difficulties and obstacles may be); at the same time, in view of the lasting interest harbored by world powers outside the region in expanding their influence in South Asia, India's greatest priority will be to dialogue with these countries on bilateral issues and global strategies, as well as political and economic issues, with a view to reaching a consensus; this requires India to take a more proactive strategy, to work with the major global powers to establish new ties of cooperation.<sup>14</sup>

The result, besides self-help, is that bandwagoning with balance becomes India's strategic choice. For India, "bandwagoning" means hitching a ride with the United States, because it is the primary global great nation, and the most powerful nation, and it has a relatively closer relationship with India and needs India to help it check and balance China. However, creating a balance of power is India's fundamental and long-term objective. The long-term trend in India's foreign policy is to seek balanced power and non-

---

<sup>10</sup> "India-US Partnership: Meeting Emerging Security Challenges", Foreign Secretary Mr. Kanwal Sibal's address at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, February 4, 2003, <http://www.usindiafriendship.net/archives/viewpoints/sibal-022003.htm>.

<sup>11</sup> Nehru, *Yindu de Faxian*, p. 57. 尼赫鲁：《印度的发现》，第 57 页。[Nehru, *Yindu de Faxian*, p. 57.]

<sup>12</sup> P.S. Suryanarayana, "China, India Seek Peaceful Rise, Not Hegemony, Says Lee," *The Hindu*, May 31, 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Jaswant Singh, *National Security: An Outline of Our Concerns* (New Delhi: Lancers Publishers & Distributors, 1996), p.30.

<sup>14</sup> Nancy Jetly, ed., *India's Foreign Policy: Challenges and Prospects* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1999), p. XXIV.

American superiority, not even a U.S.-Indian superiority, because: first, if it can begin to establish stable and cooperative relations, which include alternatives, with those countries that possess great economic and military strength, it can guarantee that India can respond to the insufferable arrogance of the superpower, the United States; second, seeking a balance of power is an insurance policy, because while the world at present is moving toward a multi-polar structure, India will guarantee its advantageous position in a structure that has only a few centers of power; and third, domestically, a balance of power is needed, because India's public opinion has always leaned toward discouraging alliances with any great power.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Fundamental Strategic Opportunity for India's Rise**

Not only in its basic desire to strengthen the nation and in adopting a peaceful rise as its fundamental strategy, but also in the most important factors of the external environment, India is the same as China, with both of them facing an unprecedented, historic strategic opportunity.

Since the end of the Cold War, the great changes in the international structure and basic global trends have become a great external safeguard to India's peaceful or generally peaceful rise. A fundamental judgment applicable to China also applies to India (although the speed of India's recognition of this, the firmness of its belief, and its ability to use it advantageously obviously does not match China's), that is, within the greatly changing nature of world politics, peaceful development has its solid foundation. Compared with previous historical periods, the overall value of war as an effective tool for pursuing national interests has weakened substantially, the chief day-to-day problems in international relations have shifted more and more from territorial/military security to economic problems and problems of soft power, the degree of interdependence and influence of the international economy has increased, the expressions of a nations' economic, cultural, diplomatic and moral and judicial influence, in general, has more and more surpassed military displays in importance, and at the same time all kinds of transnational non-traditional threats have appeared. Amid changes like these, peaceful development conforms to the basic trend in world politics, possessing what amounts to a large, fundamental guarantee of success.<sup>16</sup> Not only that, India has found that the world has already moved from the U.S.-Soviet led, highly structured bi-polar world into a new world in which many actors are essential to influence and participate in shaping outcomes in world politics, and this has brought to India the need to adapt, and also a much broadened playing field.

Since the end of the Cold War, therefore, and despite India's especially serious internal problems, the country's strategic elite is confident that their country is destined to play a critical economic and military role in the beginning of the new century. At the beginning of 2003, Bharatiya Janata Party government Foreign Minister Shri Yashwant Sinha made this point using flashy language: "[W]e today have both the capabilities as well as the opportunities. We have built significant national strength in every sense of the term. We have averaged 6% growth rate over the last decade and are now targeting 8%. Our foreign exchange reserves are nearly US\$ 70 billion. From a food shortage country, we have become an exporter and donor of food grains. Our software industry is envy of the world. We are a nuclear power. We also possess significant conventional capabilities. We have an advanced defense production industry. Our space, nuclear science, bio-tech and other high-tech capabilities are a matter of pride. Most of all, our human resources are among the best in the world."<sup>17</sup>

In addition to this, in the new post-Cold War international power distribution pattern, India has gained the status of a so-called "regional core country," making India's main regional strategic objective to impel other countries in the region, especially Pakistan, to accept this status for India, while also "persuading" major countries outside the region to give approval. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the resulting great decrease in power for Russia in South Asia, Pakistan's weakness, internal political and social divisions and corresponding chaos, the emergence of the Post "9-11" U.S.-India anti-terrorism cooperative relationship, India's "all-encompassing diplomacy," the strategic hope and "value system" based expectation placed on India by the United States and all of the west against the backdrop of China's powerful rise, all of these enhance and promote the position of India. The last of these has especially long-lasting and wide-

---

<sup>15</sup> Kanti Bajpai, "India's Security and the Future of the South Asia," in Jetly, ed., *India's Foreign Policy*, pp.83-84.

<sup>16</sup> Shi Yihong: "China's Peaceful Rise and World Order" *Chinese Cross Currents*, 4.3 (July 2007), p. 19.

<sup>17</sup> Inaugural Distinguished Persons Lecture by Shri Yashwant Sinha, External Affairs Minister of India on "Diplomacy in the twenty-first Century" organized by the Foreign Service Institute, New Delhi, January 3, 2003, <http://mainindia.nic.in/speech/2003/01/03spc01.htm>.



ranging implications, its number one symbol so far being the U.S.-India nuclear agreement achieved after three years of effort by the Bush government and the approval of the United States Congress, appropriately described by the *New York Times* as aimed at redefining the often mutually discordant conflicted Cold War relationship between the two countries, in which India will develop into a strong force to check and balance the abruptly rising China.<sup>18</sup> To the United States, though, India in the future could become another England (a loyal ally), or it may become another France (the same as the United States in fundamental ideological values, but still often relying on damaging U.S. interests in order to pursue its own interests) or it could become another China, this is still far from certain.<sup>19</sup>

### Serious Future Constraints on India's Peaceful Rise

Just as China's rise may be placed either on the favorable or unfavorable side of the "balance sheets,"<sup>20</sup> India's rise can and should as well. India's fundamental, serious weaknesses are obvious. In 2007, the percentage of India's population living below the poverty line reached 22%, the illiteracy rate was 25%, and it ranked 127th on the world human development index. In natural resources, India also has a great weaknesses, most prominently among them that its oil resources are seriously deficient, with its reserves only amounting to 1% of the world's total. With the majority of its oil imported from the Middle East, India's economy is seriously vulnerable, becoming a bottleneck that constrains India's economic development. At the same time, at present India's proportion of poor and illiterate people is even greater than China's, and unemployment is very serious. This coupled with the slow pace of urbanization, the uneven development of education, and repeated provocations over issues of caste, weakening social cohesion, and even setting off local disturbances.

Compared with China, some of India's basic weaknesses in particular reveal its profound and far-reaching historical and deeply cultural natures. China has the world's longest continuous history, India, however, in many respects is a much more recent creation, it won most of its present-day territory during the later part of the 19th century during the period of British Rule; Chinese civilization to a large degree has been defined by the relationship between itself and the nation, while Indian civilization, is inextricably bound together with the caste system; China has a very durable strong sense of identity and cultural homogeneity among the population, whereas India is characterized by a huge diversity and heterogeneity in ethnicity, language, culture, and religion, which have created or greatly helped in creating internal dissent.<sup>21</sup> Although Chinese cultural tradition has its constraints, it facilitates or effects a common general mentality, a practical spirit and dedication to work and professional ambition, and Chinese people show a more "modern character" than the religious enthusiasm, real taboos, and love of leisure often seen in India. Compared with modern China, India which often prides itself on its democratic system, also has some major flaws in its economic and political system and basic policies, which are keenly felt by some of India's famous scholars: deeply rooted suspicions about free markets and foreign investment, prohibiting farmers from freely selling produce, the large number of restrictions on people's free economic activity, the lack of good governance in many places, and a "chaotic brand of democracy" often fail to provide public goods and the protection of basic rights.<sup>22</sup>

---

18 Peter Baker, "Senate Approves Indian Nuclear Deal," *The New York Times*, October 1, 2008.

19 Anand Giridharadas, "What Role for Emerging India as A U.S. Ally?" *International Herald Tribune*, February 7, 2007.

20 C. Fred Bergsten, Gates Bill, Nicholas R. Lardy, *China: The Balance Sheet—What the World Needs to Know Now about the Emerging Superpower* (Washington, D.C., Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2006).

21 Martin Jacques, *When China Rules the World: The Rise of the Middle Kingdom and the End of the Western World* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), pp. 338-339.

22 Edward Luce, "India Frets as China Rises," *Financial Times*, August 7, 2003. 拉吉夫·甘地(Rajiv Gandhi) 当代问题研究所的一位学者描述和抱怨说: [a scholar from the Modern Issues Research Institute has described and complained about this, saying:] "小工业能否自由存在? 一个商店能否一周七天都开门营业? 能否自由开办一个护理所? 一名人力车夫能否自由从事他的营生? 回答是不能。" (这段话的英文原文为: "Can small-scale industry exist freely? Can a shop be open all seven days of the week? Can a nursing home be freely set up? Can a rickshaw driver ply his trade freely? The answer is no.") Ibid.

What seems to be self-contradictory but actually has its deep culturally unifying character, is that India in the one hand has strong ambitions to become a great power and a strong nationalist sentiment, but apart from the desire to dominate the surrounding small countries and Pakistan, it lacks real aspirations outside the region, if expected costs are seen as too high. With disappointment, some Indian scholars point out that is, in part, attributed to the strategy at the time of British-Indian rule--the pursuit of security and India's long lack of desire for authority. The latter is reportedly derived from a dynamic culture, impulsively tending to expand benefits and power, while the latter is reactive, and inward-looking, only being roused to action when faced with a genuine security challenge.<sup>23</sup> This strategic cultural mentality, in addition to India's mostly because of societal characteristics and the emergence more or less one after another of ethnic riots, sectarian conflicts, and incidents of ethnic separatism, have in a sense blocked India from departing from South Asia in strategic economy and even strategy itself.

The international geopolitical structure has both positive and negative aspects for India. What still causes India take to be either heartened or uneasy is that the United States, as it develops relations with India, at the same time insists on forming alliances or providing military support to Pakistan, India's regional rival, with the goal, called by Indian scholars (not without exaggeration), "regional containment," which is to check India or weaken its superior position. At the same time, related to the general position of counter-proliferation and non-proliferation and demands of domestic and foreign affairs, the United States, though with markedly reduced strength, carries out certain technological restrictions and even sanctions toward India, formulating and striving to maintain some restrictions, within international institutions, on India's development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, because India has frequently adopted an unfriendly posture towards China, or acted in ways that China has reason to assume are unfriendly, as well as India's marked hostility to Pakistan, and other significant real shadows and historical resentments in Sino-Indian relations, China in a certain sense is certainly a major, long-standing, strategically constraining factor that India must consider (and in fact has excessively considered), even though both countries are willing to selectively develop relations, determined to avoid repeating the large-scale conflicts of the past 50 years. Finally, at least as important, India's regional rival Pakistan, although its internal hidden dangers of extremely serious, in terms of actual strength it is at a distinct disadvantage compared to India, but having over 100 million people and nuclear weapons, and distinct from its relations with the United States and China, with whom it maintains friendly and close ties, its internal religious sentiments and historical memory are deeply opposed to India; thus, no matter what its future destiny, and no matter how important the long-term prevention of India's great conflicts between itself and Pakistan for regional and global security, Pakistan will always be a major constraint on India's geopolitical power.

### **The Main Effects of India's Rise on International World Politics**

In the twenty-first century, or its early part, India's rise to becoming a powerful nation is almost inevitable. b. For the world and for China, its primary significance is a principle that Deng Xiaoping articulated at the end of 1988. He said to visiting Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, "A genuine Asia-Pacific or Asian century will have to wait until China, India, and a few other neighboring countries are developed, and only then can it be said to have arrived." He also stressed that "once China and India are developed, then it can be said that we have made a contribution to mankind. Also, in the pursuit of this great goal, all developing countries should improve their relations with each other, strengthening their mutual cooperation. China and India, both countries, should do this."<sup>25</sup>

China and India's closeness in territory size, in having populations over 1 billion, continuing rapid development of their economies and of nuclear weapons, and also their national ambition to become first-class powerful nations, is enough to make these two emerging powers, together with the United States, play

---

<sup>23</sup> Bharat Karnad, *Nuclear Weapon & Indian Security: The Realist Foundations of Strategy* (New Delhi: Macmillan India, 2002), p.449.

<sup>24</sup> Baldev Raj Nayar and T.V. Paul, *India in the World Order—Searching for Major-Power Status* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 2.

<sup>25</sup> 邓小平：《邓小平文选》（第三卷），北京：人民出版社 1993 年版，第 283 页。[Deng Xiaoping: *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* (Vol. 3) Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1993, p. 283.]

the primary influential role and to serve as models for Asia's international situation in the early twenty-first century. However the United States, China, and India interact with each other, however they handle affairs among them, will directly influence the future peace and stability of the Asia region.<sup>26</sup>

One can predict that in the future in Asia, among the United States, China, and India, if one country's behavior is seen by the other two as a premonition of domination in Asia, it will face the possibility of the other two uniting to keep it in check. Among them, as an Asia-Pacific nation whose territory is far away in North America, and at the same time having long-standing overall superiority, the United States in this geopolitical chess game can easily assume the lead role, as its policy orientation will directly influence China's and India's security environments. At the same time, it is precisely because of the United States' significant long-term overall advantage, and also exactly because of the inevitability of China and India each becoming powerful nations, that the United States in general would rather cooperate with them, and take advantage of the contradictions between them, but generally strive to prevent major conflicts between them, in order to avoid the anxiety of having to directly take sides or become involved. For India, the South Asian subcontinent it sits on is a geographically separate, independent unit from East Asia, making the strategy space for India's future development primarily the Indian Ocean region and its adjacent surroundings, because in doing so the possible cost may be relatively low, and its available power is relatively large, and over a long period of time, that will certainly not be China's strategic focus. Thus, in addition to China and India's relatively long-term domestic priorities, the development strategy of prioritizing economics, it is unlikely that either a polarization among the three nations or a lasting bipolar confrontation will emerge.

At present, although the U.S.-China-India triangular relationship is characterized by uncertainty, and the U.S.-China relationship's significance for Asia and the whole world far exceeds the U.S.-India relationship and the China-India relationship, its overall structural features are still, for its part, that the three countries all only commit themselves to relatively limited policy goals. b. Therefore, China should dispel the sense of siege that has been much exaggerated by some people, and strive to separate development from bilateral relations with the United States and India, while taking U.S.-India relations seriously, especially maintaining necessary vigilance with regard to their international political intentions. Regarding the actual situation at present, China should especially, amidst quite difficult circumstances, strive for stability and even more strongly promote Sino-Indian relations, diligently and patiently striving to reduce those excessive strategic suspicions, historical grievances, and the possibility of strategic economic competition between China and India. With regard to the greatly significant Sino-Indian relationship, China must not lower its guard. Conversely, in view of the seemingly large gap between India's desire for status as a great nation and its strategic patience, combined with the relatively short history of New Delhi's peaceful rise and the even greater influence of its nationalism, a similar warning can probably be given to India. After a nuclear test, an Indian scholar cautioned his country, saying that "an important great nation must be one that can resist and even endure suffering."<sup>27</sup> To both India and China, these words apply equally well.

#### About the Authors

**Dr. Shi Yinhong** is a Professor at China's Renmin University School of International Relations, whose fields of expertise include the history of international relations, international relations theory, ideology, and strategic research, East Asian security, and Chinese and U.S. foreign policy. He has completed two-year research projects at Harvard University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and has taught

---

26 以下关于美中印三角关系的论述源自宋德星：“地缘政治、弹性均势与美中印三角关系”，《世界经济与政治论坛》2004年第2期。另参见 [The following information on the India-China-US triangular relationship comes from Song Dexing: "Geopolitics, Flexible Balance of Power and the US-China-India triangular relationship" World Economic Forum, No. 2, 2004. See also] Venu Rajamony, "India-China-US Triangle: A Soft Balance of Power System in the Making", Center for Strategic and International Studies, 15 March 2002. [www.csis.org/saprog/venu.pdf](http://www.csis.org/saprog/venu.pdf).

27 Brahma Chellaney, "After the Test: India's Options," *Survival*, Vol.40, Winter 1998-1999, p.94.

many post-graduate courses as a visiting professor at the University of Michigan, University of Denver, and Japan's Aichi University. Recent publications include: *30 Strategic Issues: China's Foreign Strategic Thinking* (2008), *Contemporary International Relations: from the sixteenth Century to the end of the 20th Century* (2006), *International Politics and National Strategy* (2006), *From Napoleon to the Vietnam War: 11 Modern Strategies* (2003) and *International Politics--Theory of Inquiry • Historical Overview • Strategic Thinking* (2002).

**Dr. Song Dexing** is currently professor at the Nanjing Institute of International Relations, Director of China's South Asian Society, with expertise in international political theory, international strategic and security issues, recent writings and translations include: *Harmonious East Asia: the Only Path to East Asian Security*, and *International Relations Theory and Method* (translated with Wu Yonghe)(2008).

Translated from the Chinese original by John Lindblom