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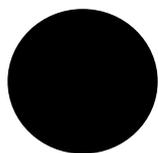
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Eastphalia Rising? Asian Influence and the Fate of Human Security *Sung Won Kim, David P. Fidler, and Sumit Ganguly*

The question is no longer *if* the rise of China, India, and Asia will affect world politics. The question is *how* the migration of power and influence towards Asia will change global affairs and the nations and people affected by these dramatic shifts. Meanwhile, the soothsayers of international politics probe the consequences of China's and India's trajectories for the United States, world order, and even the planet itself. Most attempts at clairvoyance focus on how Asia's growing prominence might affect the distribution and use of material power by states. Power is important, but politics among nations also involves competition among ideas. The interplay of power and ideas defines the twists and turns of peace, diplomacy, and war, which affects the security and well-being of all people.

With power shifting toward the East, Asian preferences and ideas have a greater opportunity than ever before to affect world politics, potentially supplanting Western dominance and universal principles, known for centuries as "Westphalian" and "post-Westphalian" concepts, with a new "Eastphalian" alternative. Effectively, an Eastphalian international order would reinvigorate the concepts of national sovereignty and non-intervention in the domestic affairs of states, first set forth in the Peace of West-

phalia in 1648, and back these principles with increased material power and an Asian perspective. As a vision of world order, this new Eastphalian system challenges Western preferences for universal adoption of transnational principles, such as democracy, free market economics, and human rights. The conservatism of an Eastphalian approach could radically curtail the influence of Western power and ideas that have for so long dominated the fate of humanity.

The global economic crisis illustrates most concretely the potential for Asian countries to craft an Eastphalian system. The damage this crisis has inflicted on the United States and Europe has produced discussion of an "Asian model" or a "Beijing consensus" on economic policy. Past Western sermonizing about how other countries should follow Western models now seems quaint. As Chinese Vice Premier Wang Qishan put it, "The teachers now have some problems."

With Western societies suffering economic turmoil and Western ideas tarnished in the process, the growing importance of Asia allows the rising forces in this region to determine what mixture of power and ideas will shape international relations for the foreseeable future. The pan-Asian commitment to principles of sovereignty and

non-intervention creates particularly interesting and difficult challenges for the future of the concept of human security—first floated in the years immediately following the end of the Cold War but facing a future where Asian attitudes and power loom larger. The potential for conflict on the scope and substance of the concept of human security between East and West is clear.

Asian concepts of coexistence, now backed by greater power, may transform the human security concept into a smaller, less ambitious idea shielded by sovereignty and advanced domestically through powerful and pervasive governments. The increasing international activities of China and India, in particular, signal the potential for a pan-Asian perspective on human security that would likely find support in other regions, such as Africa, where governments have long chafed under the inclination of Western nations to interfere in domestic affairs for various reasons, including the promotion of concepts like human security. This trajectory would adversely affect more universal and interventionist visions of human security, which have stimulated ideas such as the responsibility to protect individuals, communities, ethnic or religious groups, and entire societies from global threats or threats posed by their own governments. With a vision of human security rendered sterile by an emphasis on sovereignty and non-intervention, an Eastphalian order might effectively doom transnational efforts to alleviate suffering as an operative principle in world affairs.

China, India, and other Asian countries will not escape scrutiny as their power and influence grows. In fact, their increased importance will attract heightened interest in how Asian nations handle challenges to human security, such as the continued emergence of fast-moving economic, epidemiological, and environmental threats. However, the window of opportunity for China,

India, and the Asian region to offer compelling visions for international politics, global governance, and human security may already be closing. As the world drifts into a multipolar system, heightening great power rivalries, the increasing intensity of such competition—between East and West, old and new powers, even between the rising Asian great powers—will lessen the importance of ideas because the struggle for power distorts everything, like a black hole in the center of an increasingly anarchic world.

Indeed, if China, India, and the Asian region cannot meet the challenge of persuasively imagining and effectively advancing human security on this new frontier of world politics, Asia's opportunity to shed its subordination to Western power and ideas and to shape global affairs will be wasted.

Eastward Ho!

Asia's opportunity arises primarily because of the shift of power eastwards, which creates possibilities that did not previously exist. Earlier shifts in power, such as the emergence of the United States and the Soviet Union as global forces, opened the international system to the spread of ideas, but, for most of the history of modern international relations, Western power and ideas have dominated.

Little did the war-weary Europeans who negotiated the Peace of Westphalia three-and-a-half centuries ago imagine that what they wrought would become a system that eventually encompassed the globe. In ending the Thirty Years' War, a bloody conflict fueled by power politics and vicious Catholic-Protestant sectarianism, European nations established a system of territorial states, each with control over their own peoples and domestic affairs. From this framework flowed the principles of sovereignty, equality of sovereign states, non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other countries, and consent-based law of nations.



European states did not, however, consider non-European peoples and governments to be worthy of membership in the Westphalian system. Through guns, germs, steel, and cock-sure prejudice, Western powers simply imposed their ideas on non-European civilizations and societies in the Americas, Africa, and Asia, incorporating them, often brutally, into the Westphalian world. The British subjugated the diverse peoples of the Indian subcontinent and made British India the crown jewel of its empire. In East Asia, Western imperialism

swept aside the traditional Sino-centric order and humiliated the once dominant Middle Kingdom.

This pattern of domination of world affairs by Western power and ideas continued even when Western countries began to deviate from Westphalian principles in order to advocate universal adoption of democratic forms of government, market-based economic systems, and protection of human rights. The West most clearly pursued this post-Westphalian strategy after the end of the Cold War—a historic transformation in

the structure of international relations that left Western power and ideas unrivaled.

The emergence of China and India as great powers and of Asia as a center of increasing influence provides Asian nations, individually and collectively, with the chance to have a say in world affairs not dictated by, subordinated to, or structured with Western preferences. Material power may give Asian nations the space to engage in global politics not as long-suffering victims of imperialism but as global leaders with strong views on sovereignty, opposed to outside interference in their domestic governance and political affairs, and confident in their preferences for how diplomacy should be conducted.

Global Power, Global Ideas

The concept that ideas matter in contemplating the potential impact of China and India in Asia and beyond might rankle foreign policy brahmins whose worldview begins and ends with the distribution and use of material power by states. In this worldview, ideas mean little in the struggle among states for survival.

Although statecraft provides cynicism with a steady diet of red meat, power and ideas remain interlocked in international relations. Each historical period supports this observation. The age of European imperialism was marked by the “standard of civilization”—the concept that non-European peoples were “uncivilized” and could become civilized only after adopting European political and economic ideas and systems. In the interwar years of the 1920s and 1930s, totalitarian and fascist ideologies ran roughshod over the liberal internationalism that created the League of Nations and sought to outlaw war. Later, during the Cold War, Soviet communism and American capitalism battled for hearts and minds around the world. And, during its post-Cold War hyper-power moment, America’s

preferred ideas on democracy, economic markets, and globalization had their day in the sun.

The relationship between power and ideas in world politics is often misunderstood because scholars, diplomats, and statesmen try to establish that power trumps ideas, or that ideas determine how we construct our world, or that only certain ideas should prevail. These debates miss the interplay between power and ideas in international relations. To understand this relationship, think of the anarchy prevailing among states as a market for power and ideas. Historically, only a small number of great powers determined supply and demand in this market. In the nineteenth century, the ideas and norms preferred by the European great powers dominated. Following World War II, two competitors, the United States and the Soviet Union, controlled the market. After the Soviet Union’s collapse, the United States acted as the all but unquestioned source of power and ideas in global affairs.

Within this geopolitical market for power and ideas, concepts and norms get filtered through the prism of the balance of power, which bends ideas and ideologies to make them look like instruments of power politics. As competition among the great powers heats up, ideas have little impact on the configuration of power or how states formulate and advance their national interests. For example, during the Cold War, each new project—such as human rights, international economic justice, or even exploiting deep seabed resources as the “common heritage of mankind”—became battlegrounds in the struggle between the superpowers.

Moments when ideas have more space to affect international relations occur when transformations in the configuration of power take place. In the twentieth century, the years following World War I, World

War II, and the Cold War allowed for the resurgence of ideas and ideologies. Today, the shift from the post-Cold War system of American hegemony to the “multipolarity” created by the rise of China and India represents another moment for ideas and power to have a more elastic relationship in world affairs. To many around the world, however, American power and ideas no longer appear as formidable or persuasive, which opens up possibilities for others to exploit the perceived limits on American influence. Into this space could step Asia—but material power alone will not produce an Eastphalian order.

Cold War Artifacts

For China and India, the end of the Cold War and the evolution of the post-Cold War world rendered anachronistic concepts that both countries embraced in earlier decades, especially the policy of decolonization, the doctrine of non-alignment, and advocacy for a New International Economic Order (NIEO).

By the time the Soviet Union collapsed, the commitment to ending imperialism had lost its energy because the targeted empires had withered away or died. Accusations of neo-imperialism against Western economic policies, such as support for foreign direct investment, never had the same sting during the Cold War because the Soviet-American struggle turned these accusations into exercises of political expediency.

Non-alignment was inherently defined by the bipolar structure of the Cold War. The Soviet implosion made non-alignment all but irrelevant for Chinese and Indian foreign policy. As a former Indian prime minister confided to one of the authors in the mid-1990s, non-alignment “is a mantra we

keep repeating, but whom are we going to be non-aligned against?” Elements of the non-alignment strategy, such as the use of international organizations to maneuver between the superpowers, lost their *raison d'être* and certainly looked less attractive

“The concept that ideas matter... might rankle foreign policy brahmins whose worldview begins and ends with the distribution of material power by states.”

when active multilateral institutions began to scrutinize problems (e.g., human rights) within China, India, and other Asian countries.

Similarly, following the collapse of the bipolar system, the fervor China and India once exhibited for a more equitable international economic system cooled for two primary reasons. First, the quest for more equitable distribution of wealth and resources—as laid out in the NIEO beginning in the first half of the 1970s—became another pawn on the Soviet-American chessboard and gained little traction independent of this game. The NIEO was dead before the 1980s ended, hastened into its grave by economic crises that rocked the developing world. Second, as China and India hitched their economic development to international markets, they became less interested in radical reforms to save the world’s poor than in aligning their policies with the Western-led system that would enhance their economic prospects and political interests.

The 1990s and 2000s saw both India and China pursue economic liberalization that increased their integration with global markets. India accepted significant changes, including the protection of intellectual

property rights, in the transformation of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade into the World Trade Organization (WTO). China's accession to the WTO in 2000 similarly revealed a Chinese willingness to become more of a status quo power. In addition, both China and India opened their economies to more foreign direct investment from the West, with such investment helping China to emerge as the global economy's manufacturing powerhouse and India to become a global hub for the outsourcing of services by multinational corporations.

The Five Principles Live On

One set of Asian-supported ideas that has lived on is the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence first proclaimed by China, India, and Burma in 1954. Pan-Asian support for these principles has deep roots in the emergence of Asian societies from imperialism, and the Five Principles have resonated strongly in Asia to the present day. The Five Principles laid the basis for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967 and were reinforced in the 1994 creation of the ASEAN Regional Forum on security issues. More recently, the first India-ASEAN summit in 2002 explicitly referred to the Five Principles, and China and India jointly celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Five Principles in 2004. Outside Asia, both China and India have used the Five Principles to shape their relations with countries across the Middle East and Africa.

The concepts underlying the Five Principles derive from the basic tenets of the Westphalian system and, thus have been present in international law and diplomacy for centuries. Curiously, even though the ideas in the Five Principles did not originate in Asia, Asian countries have embraced them and given them an Asian texture. Vigilance about sovereignty, non-interference, political equality, and the creation of mutual economic benefit are recognized as charac-

teristic of Asian diplomatic practices. Many Asian countries have successfully pursued economic interconnectedness regionally and globally without weakening their adherence to the principles of sovereignty, non-intervention, and political equality. The same pattern is also apparent as Asian nations have, especially in a regional context, engaged in more frequent diplomacy on a broader range of issues. This pan-Asian commitment to the Five Principles makes them a cornerstone for an Eastphalian perspective on international relations.

The Five Principles themselves are quite conservative. China and India, in particular, behave as status quo powers intent on maintaining a national, regional, and global order from which they benefit politically and economically. This behavior is clearly shown by the willing participation of China and India in various configurations of great powers within the WTO or more broadly in the G-20. Each country also seeks to strengthen its influence in existing international organizations, as illustrated by China's increasing clout within international financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), or India's pursuit of a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

The emphasis across Asia on sovereignty and non-intervention contrasts with more interventionist ideas pursued by the United States and the European Union (EU). The United States and EU members have, in different ways, adopted strategies that are counter to fundamental concepts of the Westphalian system. Their strategies revolve around promoting the spread of a liberal, democratic, and economic project that involves intervention in the internal affairs of other states and seeks the homogenization of politics, economies, cultures, and peoples.

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has vigorously promoted the spread of democracy in, for example, post-communist Eastern Europe through eco-

conomic and military assistance; and in Afghanistan and Iraq through invasion, occupation, and regime change. For its part, the European Union requires all members to be democracies that protect civil and political rights and, increasingly, it has imposed political, economic, human rights, and other requirements on its trade and commercial relations with other countries.

The U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, the failure of NATO countries to

stabilize and reconstruct Afghanistan, the human rights abuses perpetrated in the global war on terror, and the Western-caused global economic crisis have given American and EU approaches to international relations a black eye. These self-inflicted wounds make other countries and regions less fearful of Western power and less tolerant of Western-promoted ideas. In this context, the Eastphalian perspective offers a very attractive alternative.

The qualities of Eastphalia are also enhanced because the conservatism of the approach has not prevented Asian countries from engaging in wide-ranging relations, regionally and beyond. As Asia's economic rise suggests, Asian countries have produced impressive regional economic development. The creation of mutually beneficial economic relations is a strong feature of Asian diplomatic patterns, as demonstrated by the intensity of trade and investment agreements adopted by and among Asian countries.

At the same time, the Asian approach to national and regional security has allowed countries to manage shifts in power—from the end of the Cold War to the subsequent rise of China and India—without large-scale

conflict and widespread instability. There have also been successful cooperative efforts to address new challenges, such as the outbreaks of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and avian influenza, which threaten Asian countries, as well as their

diplomatic and trading partners beyond the region.

In short, the conservative Eastphalian perspective supports extensive diplomatic activities and cooperation

among countries, undertaken in accordance with the Five Principles. As applied, the Five Principles do not produce isolationist tendencies in most Asian countries. Cooperation and collective action occur frequently, but the nature of the collaboration remains focused on addressing specific, shared problems rather than on ensuring the spread of universal models of politics, economics, and human rights.

The Responsibility to Protect

As competition for power intensifies in world politics and states pick sides, the impact of ideas tends to decline. In this heated environment, the conservatism of the Eastphalian outlook might compete effectively with the more intrusive ideas concerning politics, economics, individual rights, and human security the United States and European nations have favored in the post-Cold War era. The move into multipolarity risks creating resistance to, or even outright rejection of, principles and practices at the heart of Western notions of human security: promoting democracy, raising human rights arguments, introducing structural economic reforms, and acknowledging a responsibility to protect individuals and

The Five Principles (1954)

1. Mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty
2. Mutual non-aggression
3. Mutual non-interference in internal affairs
4. Equality and mutual benefit
5. Peaceful co-existence

populations from grievous harms—all of which can involve interventions within sovereign states to correct policies perceived to be illegitimate.

The attempted use of the responsibility-to-protect principle by Western governments and aid groups in Myanmar after Cyclone Nargis in 2008 produced unified opposition by Asian nations, including China and India. Instead, Asian states emphasized the need to respect Myanmar's sovereignty and provide humanitarian assistance in ways that did not intervene in domestic affairs. This human security crisis saw Asian nations returning to the bedrock principles of the Eastphalian perspective—opposing the application of a radical principle favored by many Western governments and global non-governmental organizations. In the case of Myanmar, the Five Principles may have won, but humanity surely lost. Indeed, the junta's refusal to accept aid contributed to tens of thousands of preventable deaths and extensive human suffering.

The Cyclone Nargis episode perhaps offers a prelude of what may transpire beyond the Asian region as Chinese and Indian influence grows and as world politics becomes more Asian-centric. A more recent example involving Myanmar reflects the contrast: President Obama's condemnation of the trial of dissident leader Aung San Suu Kyi (along with the almost universal call from Western nations for her immediate release) echoed amid the loud silence on the issue from New Delhi and Beijing. Similarly, Sri Lanka's ability to gain Chinese and Indian support in the UN Human Rights Council to defeat Western-backed resolutions critical of Colombo's bloody crushing of the Tamil Tiger insurgency is perhaps also a sign of Eastphalia's arrival.

But states beyond Myanmar and Sri Lanka may also embrace the Eastphalian model in the face of Western protests about their behavior. Moreover, they now have

allies that are increasingly influential, and may attempt to play the China or India card in order to counter the policies of Western powers. Pan-Asian opposition to the principle of the responsibility to protect and the human rights approach informing it raises questions as to whether this principle and the concept of human security it contains have much of a future—especially as China, India, and the Asian region grow in power and influence relative to the West.

Exporting Eastphalia

The conservative Eastphalian perspective will likely prove attractive and exportable beyond the Asian region. Concerns have been raised in the West that China's growing activities in Africa, largely to secure access to natural resources, do not involve efforts to improve democratic governance, the rule of law, and human rights protections in African countries. Specifically, China has been criticized in the West for its relations with Sudan, including acting as a major supplier of arms, failing to pressure Khartoum to end violence and atrocities in Darfur, and opposing the warrant issued by the International Criminal Court for the arrest of Sudan's president.

The Sino-Sudanese relationship adheres, however, to Eastphalian principles. Indeed, in February 2009, China and Sudan celebrated 50 years of diplomatic relations, and Sudanese officials attributed the deepening cooperation with China to both countries' adherence to the principles of "mutual respect, joint interests and refrainment [*sic*] from intervening in the internal affairs of any country."

China's engagement with Sudan reflects an overall approach to Africa. Beijing's relations with, and support of, Zimbabwe under the rule of Robert Mugabe may be distressing to Western powers, but it is not anomalous. Indeed, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, an overarching framework for

deepening Sino-African relations that began in 2000, has promoted the Five Principles as a foundation for cooperation between China and African nations.

Not surprisingly, the nature of the Chinese approach to Africa has raised concerns in the West both in terms of material power and the spread of ideas. China's interest in securing access to natural resources, especially oil, highlights its "no questions asked" policy concerning human security problems in African countries—including the lack of democracy, the rule of law, and human rights.

A Heritage Foundation analysis argued that China "aids and abets oppressive and destitute African dictatorships by legitimizing their misguided policies and praising their development models as suited to individual national conditions."

But China is not alone. Less well known, yet still instructive in the context of Eastphalia, is India's burgeoning relationships with Sudan and other African countries—which occurred as the crisis in Darfur became a global controversy and made Khartoum a pariah in the West. Indian exports to Sudan have grown from \$63 million in 1998 to an estimated \$1.1 billion in 2008, and Indian investment in and loans to Sudan total \$3 billion. Indian relations with Sudan also reflect interest in Sudanese oil, but India-Sudan trade and investment cooperation ranges across a diverse set of economic sectors, including railroads, pharmaceuticals, and transportation equipment. In addition, in contrast to the largely state-driven nature of Chinese involvement, much of India's engagement flows primarily from the private sector. Indeed, the Indian Embassy in Khartoum proclaims that "India is everywhere in Sudan."

India is also engaging in broader interactions with Africa under the India-Africa Forum, launched in 2008. This relationship is based, like the Sino-African framework, on concepts found in the Five Principles. Part of the motivation for more extensive engagement is India's realization that it has

“Beijing's relations with, and support of, Zimbabwe under the rule of Robert Mugabe may be distressing to Western powers, but it is not anomalous.”

fallen behind China with respect to Africa. Geopolitical competition with China for strategic resources, export markets, and political support in diplomatic contexts influences how India approaches Africa. Chinese and Indian policies and activities in Africa are certainly not identical, but the similarities in their principles of engagement provide evidence that these Asian powers are exporting the sovereignty-sensitive Eastphalian framework as they extend their interests and influence globally.

Chinese and Indian involvement in Africa causes concern in the United States that, as the influence of these Asian nations in Africa grows, Western influence declines. Through China and India, African governments have access to capital, technology, trade relations, and political support that comes with fewer strings attached. Whether we are witnessing the start of a three-way "great game" in Africa remains to be seen, but rising Asian power on that continent focused through the lens of the Five Principles poses risks for the West's more intrusive and interventionist power and ideas.

Western powers are understandably frustrated with Asia for protecting Myanmar

and Sri Lanka, for fostering relations with Sudan and other repressive regimes, and for refusing to support human rights resolutions in international bodies. But diminishing Western influence is a reality. Increasingly, this frustration will generate less and less policy traction as Western power and ideas have to compete with the globalization of Chinese, Indian, and Asian influence.

Caveat Emptor

The extension of the Eastphalian model beyond Asia will not magically result in global peace and goodwill. How Eastphalia might fare as a basis for international relations is not, of course, clear at the present time, but the history of dysfunctional frameworks for international politics should temper enthusiasm for further globalization.

Further, Eastphalia's incorporation of fundamental elements of the Westphalian order is not comforting given the performance of the Westphalian system—which produced rapacious and racist imperialism and pushed European countries into the horrific conflicts of World Wars I and II. The idea that Asian leaders and societies are somehow better equipped to wield power and influence under these principles than Western states sounds a bit too optimistic.

Skeptics might also point to how vastly more complex world affairs are in the early twenty-first century than during the heyday of the Westphalian system. The contemporary processes of globalization are unlike anything experienced from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. The scope, substance, and sheer speed of change of many problems—ranging from the threat of nuclear proliferation to global climate change—are likewise historically unprecedented.

The conservatism of the Eastphalian outlook does not appear well calibrated to allow states and their societies to address

transnational threats. Amitav Acharya, former head of research at Singapore's Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, agrees, noting that "Asia's conservative norms are increasingly being blamed for the region's failure to address transnational challenges such as financial crises, infectious diseases, and terrorism."

Part of this failure flows from Eastphalia's narrow state-centric focus. Today, transnational threats often stem from the growing influence of non-state forces, such as globalized markets and altered climate patterns, as well as such non-state actors as multinational corporations and global terrorist networks. Against these forces and actors, the Five Principles may appear increasingly attractive as an alternative to Western power and preferences, but they look very dated—and perhaps even dangerous—as a strategy for improving human security. The conservative Eastphalian perspective does not appear to provide states with an auspicious path toward agreement on problems that require collective action or the type of collective action that may be needed.

In the coming decades, prospects for cooperation to improve human security will face an adverse pincer movement from the convergence of multipolarity and the accelerating pace of transnational problems. Multilateral solutions will become harder to construct and implement. In fairness, this dangerous convergence also poses severe challenges to American and European leaders, because these Western officials often seem unwilling or unable to confront what ails world affairs and what looms on the horizon. Still, Eastphalia could end up producing destabilizing competition among the great powers, fragmenting ideas about how to address critical common problems, and severely weakening institutions and regimes needed for effective collective action.

The global economic meltdown and the threat of climate change highlight the pin-cer movement caused by multipolarity and transnational problems—and the dilemma it creates for human security under an East-phalian framework. The global economic crisis appears to have affected China and India less harshly than the United States and Europe for a number of reasons, which include China’s access to huge domestic capital reserves and India’s lower level of integration with the global financial system. China, in particular, seems to be using the crisis to bolster its power in international institutions and vis-à-vis other countries, as seen by the prominent role China has assumed in the G-20 process and in negotiations about the future of the IMF.

Lifting the global economy out of this crisis, however, will take intensive cooperation among the big economic players. But multipolarity means more players, more interests, more potential for disagreement, and potentially less common ground to craft effective strategies. Although the United States remains a global force, its influence is waning, especially given that the rise of China and India signal the emergence of alternative sources of support for countries. Still, the nations hardest hit by the economic crisis might expect countries in better shape—China and India—to bear more of the burden of global collective action.

Leavening multipolarity with the East-phalian emphasis on sovereignty, non-intervention, and mutual benefit might make needed reforms more difficult to achieve and encourage countries to focus on national economic triage at the expense of collective action. The spate of protectionist action many countries took in the wake of the global economic crisis is just one example of

national policies undermining effective global action. Policy and governance fragmentation might be the result, an outcome that could trigger de-globalization in trade and finance, with severe consequences for human security, especially in developing and least-developed countries.

In terms of climate change, the emergence of China and India as great powers and great greenhouse gas producers creates another area where the convergence of

“ Multipolarity means more players, more interests, more potential for disagreement, and potentially less common ground. ”

multipolarity and transnational problems constricts possibilities for global action. So far, neither China nor India exhibits willingness to show leadership on climate change by accepting obligations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Both Asian giants expect the West, particularly the United States, to take the lead in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Although China’s emissions exceed India’s, collective action on climate change will not work if either China or India refuses to participate in emission reduction schemes or in strategies to mitigate the damage climate change will cause developing and least-developed countries.

Asia on the Geopolitical Catwalk

As Asia becomes more important, interest in Chinese, Indian, and Asian policies will increase, as will expectations for more Asian leadership on a range of issues, including human security. The scrutiny will not necessarily always be critical. Some attention will be devoted to understanding how Asian societies and governments cope with challenges to their national security, political

stability, economic prosperity, and social cohesion. Have Asian countries really figured out how to apply traditional Westphalian concepts in ways that bolster human security more effectively than the more radical, interventionist methods preferred by the United States and European countries?

Heightened scrutiny might create significant discomfort for China and India for three reasons. First, these countries are still adjusting to their roles as great powers and may take time to figure out how to operate with greater effectiveness under the glare of the global spotlight. China's appetite for African resources has given rise to accusations of "neo-imperialism," sparking riots and political turmoil in Zambia, for example. An increased presence on the continent will bring increased scrutiny and criticism. Moreover, the global economic crisis will be unforgiving for not only those countries, such as the United States, whose failures triggered the fallout, but also for nations that fail to show global leadership during a time of widespread need.

Second, the principles on which the Eastphalian perspective is based place limits on collective action and, instead, widen the policy space that individual countries demand to pursue their national interests. Other countries will closely and critically evaluate whether the use of this policy space by China and India constricts the potential for collective action across a range of challenges, including compliance with international humanitarian law, stimulation of global economic recovery, and mitigation of the dangers of climate change.

Third, China and India continue to have severe domestic problems that require urgent attention. Both nations have within their borders the best of the First World and the worst of the Third World, and everything in between. Great powers are never free from domestic travails, but the scale of the internal human security challenges facing China and India may be unprecedented because of the size of their populations and the complexity of contemporary problems. Both countries are being pulled simultaneously towards greater global engagement and towards a more concentrated domestic focus. Raising the levels of tension are transnational problems, such as the global economic crisis and climate change, that manifest themselves locally and globally at the same time.

This tug-of-war between expanding global responsibilities constrained by conservative principles of engagement and intensifying domestic priorities will stretch the resources and ingenuity of the Chinese and Indian governments, creating the possibility that each will fall short at both levels, leaving whatever promise Eastphalia might have offered within and beyond Asia unfulfilled. Such an outcome would reverberate far wider than China and India alone. Failure could severely harm the political and economic destiny of countries across the globe and render even more vulnerable the fate of billions of people who are already in desperate need of someone to watch over them. ●

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