



## **India Must Share Its Success with the World**

17 janvier 2016

The cheerleaders of Indian economy love to say that this century belongs to India. What they mean is that India will move from being an emerging economic superpower to a full fledged economic and diplomatic powerhouse before the end of this century. But to be truly influential at the global level, India needs to relook at its current foreign policy. T.C.A Rangachari, former ambassador to France and Germany, and former director of Academy of International Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia University, writes about what India needs to do about the future in foreign policy.

What would India's global posture and role be as it approaches its centenary in 2047? To answer that question, we need to consider what India and the world might look like then. The shift in the centre of gravity of international affairs from the Atlantic to the Indo-Pacific region that is now hypothesised with increasing credibility might well be a reality. The rise of emerging economies around the world, in particular Asia, will result in the displacement of the established powers.

Multiple projections, now fast entrenching themselves as conventional wisdom, suggest that India will be the third largest economy in the world by 2050. Some estimate that this could happen by 2030. In that same period, India would have also become the most populous nation with 1.7 billion people. The effect of China's reversal of its 'one child' policy of over three decades' standing requires to be factored in. Economic strength, as has happened throughout history, will facilitate the acquisition of military muscle. More worrisome are the new threats to global security that have emerged in the form of non-state actors using the instrumentation of terrorism and nonconventional warfare. The danger to peace may rise exponentially when non-state actors in different theatres of the world are backed up by state sponsorship.

India's GDP, according to an optimistic projection will by then reach nearly \$30 trillion. Depending on its success in augmenting its political union with a single market, and in sustaining growth rates, that GDP figure would make India richer than several G-7 countries - Germany, Japan and the UK put together. In effect, the clock would have been turned back to the pre-colonial days when India was reputed to be the sone ki chidiya, or the golden bird. The world around us would have China, with a GDP of some \$50 trillion as the largest economy followed by the US with a GDP of over \$40 trillion. In the top 10, Japan, Germany, the UK and France would be the four G-7 members; the emerging market economies are expected to be Indonesia, Brazil and Mexico. The quest for peace and prosperity will surely continue to resonate with the world.

Conventional dangers arising from inter-state conflicts will not have been eliminated. Territorial challenges may give way to contention over resources, markets and technology. They are unlikely to engulf the world at large but can be a potent source of disruption. More worrisome are the new threats to international security that have emerged, and may well continue to exist, in the form of non-state actors using the instrumentation of terrorism and non-conventional warfare. The danger to peace may rise exponentially when non-state actors in different theatres of the world are backed up by state sponsorship. Even the militarily powerful will find themselves increasingly ineffective in eliminating threats to their own security. To be able to deal effectively with the dangers to international peace and security and other global challenges, it would be essential to base international cooperation on universal adherence to a globally-agreed set of rules. Unilateralism - singly or in association with like-minded states - will have to give way to genuine multilateralism.

As for prosperity, the promise of the peace dividend presaged by the end of the Cold War has not materialised in Europe in the last quarter of a century. Given the current economic and demographic projections, it might still remain elusive a quarter of a century hence. A recent study by the European Commission assessing different scenarios postulated a worst case scenario of global economic decline in which the EU share of the world GDP might fall by almost half by 2050 and a more attractive 'European renaissance' scenario wherein the EU continues to enlarge, becomes stronger, retains its competitiveness, innovation and share of global GDP at 15-16 per cent. Irrespective of which scenario comes to pass, the impetus for global growth is more likely to come from today's developing or emerging market economies. The continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America are better placed to grow and significantly enhance their share of, and contribution to, the global economy. Whether that would translate into their being able to play a more meaningful role in the management of global affairs remains in question.

There is much talk of the United States in decline. However, the technological lead and military power that the US enjoys over India and China is likely to be more telling than the fact of its ranking behind China as an economic power. With enhanced economic prowess, this partnership can be more meaningful as India overcomes its insecurities and summons up the wherewithal and the political will to take on new global challenges.

As India grows, it should be more forceful in pursuit of the modification of the post-war international power structure dominated by the victors in that war, particularly since they are unlikely to retain their economic dominance, political clout or demographic depth. India should have no difficulty with the principles underpinning the global order. It supports democracy and fundamental freedoms, market economy and international cooperation for resolving international problems. Nor should it have any difficulty in joining in collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace, including aggression, and for peaceful settlement of international disputes.

Indeed, with enhanced economic and military capabilities, India would be better placed to help enforce acceptable international conduct and to penalise misbehaviour. In order to be able to do so effectively, India should reinvigorate its pursuit of the democratisation of the international order replacing the post-World War II order with one that represents, more truly, the global realities of the times. This restructuring would have to be based on the fact of new and emerging powers, including India, being legitimate stakeholders in building and sustaining international peace and security, not least by virtue of contributing substantially to global prosperity. India's credentials as an upright international citizen buttress the country's entitlement. As the decades unfold, this process is inevitable. Yet, India's place at the global high table, including international financial institutions, UNSC, and other multilateral organisations, will need to be secured.

In political terms, India should have the will to be more active and a vocal proponent of a global order inspired by a value system that has its roots in its own civilisational ethos. Mahatma Gandhi always spoke of the universality of human freedom. India's freedom, he said, would not be complete till all subjugated peoples are free. India should not settle for being a helpless bystander when citizens elsewhere are not treated with the dignity they deserve. A politically mature and economically well-off country should be able and prepared to be held, and hold others, accountable to this standard. We must stand true to the belief system that our founding fathers inculcated in this nation.

India has always advocated that the world cannot have peace if there are islands of affluence in a sea of poverty. India should be willing to be a partner in development of people less fortunate. Thus, we must ensure that prosperity is shared. The beginning made with our immediate and extended neighbours must intensify as India becomes more able. In South Asia, we have shared commonalities over centuries, derived from civilisational linkages and of living together in a multi-ethnic, multi-

cultural, multi-lingual, and multi-religious environment. The divisions created by the colonial and imperial onslaught rent asunder complementarities of economies. As India progresses, being the larger nation, it will have to show leadership. It will need to assuage fears of smaller neighbours and treat them as equal. Indeed, within the constraints of respecting sovereignty, India should consider the development priorities of our neighbours as its own. Depending on the willingness of the neighbour, India should be agreeable to participate financially and otherwise as it might do with the states of the Indian Union. It could integrate India's development plans with willing regional partners and ensure everyone gains. A similar logic can be applied to our cooperation with the extended neighbourhood taking into account needs and resources that each side can contribute.

In the global commons, India should be able to play an increasingly leading role as the success of its developmental effort unfolds. For instance, if India succeeds in fulfilling its target of 100 GW of solar power, it would have significantly reduced its dependence on fossil fuel. That alone would make its contribution to reduction of its own, and global, carbon footprint unique. In addition, it would hold out an entirely different developmental model. It can intensify its role in the elimination of global terrorism by not limiting itself to combating just the threats faced by India but also those forces that are out to destabilise human existence elsewhere. Agriculture, dairy, medicine, IT, and other sectors offer scope for leaving a defining Indian imprint, globally.

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But, how would India deal with China as it becomes the largest economy? China's willingness to uphold the extant international order is often times in question. Essentially, China is seeking a greater say in global decision making. President Xi Jin Ping has publicly stated that China seeks to "adjust and reform the global governance system and mechanism. Such reform is not about dismantling the existing system and creating a new one. Rather, it aims to improve the global governance system in an innovative way." The RMB has now become a reserve currency to hold Special Drawing Rights (SDRs). In due course, it would become a currency for international trade. Already, many countries have entered into RMB swaps. This increasing economic clout is natural given China's economic status. What makes China difficult to predict is its pursuit of undefined 'core' interests including territorial, as exemplified in our borders, South and East China seas. President Xi Jin Ping said at the CCP politburo session in January 2013 that while China would remain on a path of peaceful development, it would "never give up" legitimate rights or sacrifice 'core interests'. "No country should presume we will engage in trade involving our 'core interests' or that we will swallow the 'bitter fruit' of harming our sovereignty, security or development interests."

We have agreed to a strategic partnership. Yet, China looks at India and deals with it as a strategic adversary. This is evident from the military stand-offs in the border regions in 2013 and 2014 even as the Chinese Prime Minister and President were on official visits to India. (Remarkably, the incidents have not been repeated in 2015.) It is evident also in China's \$46 billion investment initiative to build the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) through PoK. There are other instances where China's pronouncements and actions (recall China's stand on the Indo-US nuclear deal of 2009) are adverse to Indian interests.

India and China, by 2050, are expected to account for some two-fifths of the global economy. That imposes an obligation on both countries to work cooperatively to promote economic stability and security. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi observed in his address at the Tsinghua University in Beijing on May 15, 2015: "The prospects of the 21st century becoming the Asian century will depend in large measure on what India and China achieve individually and what we do together."

India and China will need to work together in the coming decades to accommodate differing, competing, even conflicting interests in a cooperative arrangement. This is to mutual benefit. Both are large and populous, together constituting nearly two-fifths of humanity. Their primary objective is to eliminate poverty and want, and provide prosperity, or at the very least, livelihood security to their peoples. One way of achieving this objective might be to replace the balance of power approach that tends to shape strategic thinking by a civilisation state, humanist approach. This should not be impossible. China has often said that there has only been a brief interlude of hostility in the several millennia of friendly relations between us.

So, what of the US? There is much talk of the US in decline. However, the technological lead and military power that the US enjoys - and its demonstrated will and ability to maintain it - over India and China is likely to be more telling than the fact of its ranking behind China as an economic power. Neither India (nor China) will be able to reach the per-capita living standards of the US, nor will they have commensurate power projection capability. India and the US, fortunately, have a multifaceted partnership rooted in shared values, among others, of democracy and people-to-people ties. With enhanced economic prowess, this partnership can be more meaningful as India overcomes its insecurities and summons up the wherewithal and the political will to take on new global challenges. This partnership has already articulated tangible principles to guide ongoing efforts to advance mutual prosperity, a clean and healthy environment, greater economic cooperation, regional peace, security and stability for the larger benefit of humankind. Their engagement in the region, along with others, including Japan, Australia and the ASEAN nations, will play a key role in promoting peace, prosperity, stability and security in the Indo-Pacific region.

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India's biggest strength will be its linkage with its traditional partners such as Russia and Japan, as also the developing world. It has a welcome presence because it is seen as non-threatening. It is attractive because it has pursued the difficult model of combining economic development with political freedoms. The more success it achieves in this unprecedented experiment in growth with equity and freedom, the more this model will be replicated when contrasted with capitalism per se, or authoritarian capitalism as the models. And as the developing world becomes economically stronger, irrespective of the model pursued, India will find willing partners in the joint effort to restructure the world order.

In sum, India should be well placed to play a leading role in global management. In the immediate aftermath of Independence, it was India which provided moral leadership by forcefully pursuing the agenda of anti-colonialism, anti-apartheid and racism, and of the right to development of the developing world. When the fruits of its labours over the last seven decades propel it to a pivotal position in the next three decades, it should give back to the people of the world, in moral and material terms, a selfless return.