

CRUX OF ASIA: CHINA, INDIA, AND THE EMERGING GLOBAL ORDER

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The rise of China and India as major world powers promises to test the established global order in the coming decades. As the two powers grow, they are bound to change the current international system—with profound implications for themselves, the United States, and the world. And whether they agree on the changes to be made, especially when it comes to their relationship with the West, will influence the system's future character. A close examination of Chinese and Indian perspectives on the fundamentals of the emerging international order reveals that Sino-Indian differences on many issues of both bilateral and global significance are stark.

Key Points

- China and India's sustained economic growth fuels their increasing geopolitical and military influence.
- Despite their developmental similarities, China and India's bilateral strategic rivalry means that they have competing priorities on most major global issues.
- Sino-Indian differences are considerable on issues relating to the nonproliferation system, Asian security, regional stability in Southern Asia, and security in the maritime commons, space, and cyberspace. The two rising powers broadly agree on matters relating to the international economic system, energy security, and the environment.
- Because of its ongoing shift to the Asia-Pacific and status as the only global superpower, the United States must manage a complex set of relationships with China and India, which are at times working at cross-purposes.

Chinese and Indian Positions on International Issues

Global Order: China and India tend to agree on the importance of state sovereignty and the need to reform global governance institutions to reflect the new balance of power. They also share a strong commitment to the open economic order that has allowed both powers to flourish in the global marketplace. But the two diverge on many details of the international system, such as the future viability of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the role of state-owned enterprises in fostering globalization.

Regional Security: Both China and India want a stable Asia-Pacific that will allow them to sustain their economic prosperity, but they perceive threats very differently and have divergent priorities. Importantly, India seeks a resolute American presence in the region to hedge against possible Chinese excesses, while China sees the United States as significantly complicating its pursuit of its regional goals and worries about American containment attempts.

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TOPICS AND CONTRIBUTORS

Changing Global Order

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Global Nonproliferation System

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Asian Security

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Security in the Global Commons: Beijing and New Delhi rely heavily on open sea lines of communication, and as a result, they both support the current maritime security regime. However, their interpretations as to its provisions have occasionally diverged. In space, China enjoys significant advantages over India and has emphasized the military dimensions of its program, while New Delhi has only recently begun developing space-based military technology. Both countries are just beginning to wrestle with the difficult task of forming cybersecurity policies, but they have already acted to limit objectionable or illegal activities online. In striking the balance between online freedom and social stability, India has encountered a higher degree of opprobrium in the public sphere than its counterpart.

Nontraditional Security: Chinese and Indian approaches to both energy and the environment broadly converge. Because India and China face a rising domestic demand for energy, they heavily rely on foreign suppliers of energy resources. This has prompted both governments to seek more efficient power sources and to secure their presence in overseas energy markets. On environmental policy, the two countries focus on primarily local and short-term concerns that must be balanced with the need for economic growth.

Stability in Southern Asia

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