

Asian Approaches to International Order and Global Governance: Conflict and Convergence

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'Has Asia been doing enough in leading the world opinion on how to manage, and in particular not to mismanage, the global challenges we face today, including that of terrorism, violence, and global injustice,' asked Indian Nobel laureate Amartya Sen at a forum in Bangkok in 2007.¹ Much has been said and written about the 'rise' of Asia, very little about Asia's contribution to global governance.² To be sure, many Asian nations, not just the major Asian power like China, Japan, or India, but also South Korea, Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia, all demand a greater voice in international affairs, both for themselves as well as for the region. Asian views of international order are changing in keeping with the region's economic and political ascendancy. The founding leaders of modern Asian states were preoccupied with bringing down colonial rule, protesting Western dominance, asserting their sovereignty and equality, and in many cases, demanding concessions and economic aid from the West. Hence, their ideas about international order were imbued with what might be called 'defensive sovereignty'. But if one takes the shift in world power to Asia as an incontrovertible fact or an irreversible trend,³ then should we not expect Asian ideas about and approaches to international relations to change as well? One might also hope that instead of pursuing defensive sovereignty, Asia will harness its substantial economic achievements of recent decades to seek out a share of global leadership in addressing the world's problems. Yet, as this essay finds, the leading Asian powers - China, India and Japan – while seeking global leadership, seem to be *more concerned with developing and legitimising their national power aspirations* (using the traditional notions and means of international relations) *than contributing to global governance.*⁴

A central challenge facing international order today is the seeming contradiction between the desire of Asia's leading states to be recognised and treated as global powers on the one hand, and their limited and hesitant contribution to global governance on the other. The problem is compounded by an emerging *realpolitik* in the international behaviour of Asia's leading powers, China, Japan and India, resource constraints on the part of India and to a lesser extent China, the legacies of their (India's and China's) historical self-identification and involvement with the "Third World" bloc, political constraints on Japan's international role, and a certain legitimacy deficit of each of these powers in their own regional neighbourhood.

¹ 'Eastern Influence Badly Needed,' *The Bangkok Post*, April 1, 2007, p.3

² Kishore Mahbubani's *The New Asian Hemisphere: The Irresistible Shift of Global Power to the East* (New York: PublicAffairs 2008), and other writings address both Asia's rise and its responsibilities for global governance.

³ For a sceptical note on Asia's rise, see: Minxin Pei, "Bamboozled: Don't Believe the Asia Hype," *Foreign Policy*, (July–August 2009).

⁴ I use the term global governance to refer to "collective efforts to identify, understand or address worldwide problems that *respect no national or regional boundaries and go beyond the capacity of individual States to solve*". This builds upon a definition offered by Thomas Weiss and Ramesh Thakur and found in *Definition of basic concepts and terminologies in governance and public administration* (New York, United Nations Economic and Social Council, 27-31 March 2006), p.4. Italics are my addition.

Asia is hugely diverse and there is no consensus over where its boundaries lie. There is really no single conception, voice, or identity of Asia.⁵ To speak of an *Asian* conception of or *Asian* contribution to, international order and global governance would be a gross over-generalisation. What one might find instead are *national* conceptions, put forward by the ruling elite in various Asian states. Moreover, conceptual thinking within Asia about its role in international relations is hardly plentiful. A desire for increasing the region's leadership of global institutions is growing in Asia. But there is no coherent Asian thinking on global governance. While Europe's intelligentsia and policy community speak of its role as a "global normative power", in Asia, a collective regional idea about world order is yet to develop.

National or regional ideas or role conceptions about international order are not a given or constant. They are shaped and reshaped continually by domestic and external developments, such as economic growth and crisis, and war and peace. While this holds true anywhere, in a rapidly transforming region like Asia, where the most dramatic shift in the world economic and military power is taking place, change is even more difficult to predict and account for. For example, Chinese, Indian and even Japanese role conceptions of international relations and world order have changed in significant ways since the early post-Second World War period, in keeping with changes in their domestic politics, economic capacity and policy, and the impact of external developments such as the end of the Cold War. India has abandoned its traditional non-alignment concept, and more arguably, moved significantly away from the entire Nehruvian approach. China has moved well past the tenets of Maoist socialist internationalism to embrace a worldview that is best described as neo-Westphalianism. The shift occurring in Japan is equally significant, as it pursues the idea of a 'normal state' with significant implications for its post-war foreign policy and security framework.

The Backdrop: Conformist Japan, Revisionist China, and Adaptive India.

Indeed, the shifting self-images and 'national role conceptions'⁶ of Asia's three major players – China, Japan and India - are a good starting point to analyze Asia's role in global governance.⁷ International relations scholars usually speak of 'realism' and 'idealism' (which incorporates elements of liberalism) as the two alternative ways of

⁵ Amitav Acharya 'Asia is Not One,' *Journal of Asian Studies*. vol. 69, no.4, (2010), pp. 1001-13.

⁶ The term 'national role conception' was coined by Kal Holsti to refer to 'the policymakers' own definitions of the general kinds of decisions, commitments, rules, and actions suitable to their state, and of the functions, if any, their state should perform on a continuing basis in the international system or in subordinate regional systems. It is their "image" of the appropriate orientations or functions of their state toward, or in, the external environment.' Kal J. Holsti, 'National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy,' *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Sep., 1970), pp. 245-46. Significantly for the purpose of this essay, Holsti starts with inter-state relations in China during the Chou dynasty, and in India during the Maurya period, to illustrate the concept, and considers non-alignment, balancer, satiated and unsatiated (status quo and revisionist) powers, as some of the examples.

⁷ I leave out the role conceptions of Russia, Australia and the US from this analysis. They do influence Asian security, but not as much Asia's approach to global and regional governance.

describing the worldviews of states and leaders. Realists take international relations as a highly competitive game driven by considerations of national interest and where war remains a constant possibility and genuine international cooperation highly improbable. Idealists/liberals are optimistic, believing that conflict can be mitigated through the pacific effects of economic interdependence, international institutions and shared democratic governance. But these concepts, which derive from Western theory and experience, do not do justice to the 'maverick' or eclectic (and quintessentially pragmatic⁸), outlooks and approaches of Asian leaders. For example, India's Jawaharlal Nehru was foremost among those nationalist leaders whose ideas about world order were eminently compatible with Wilsonian liberal internationalism. Burma's leader Aung San was a self-professed internationalist who championed economic interdependence and regional integration in Asia.⁹ But Nehru's critics in Asia, such as the former Foreign Secretary Carlos Romulo of the Philippines, who once accused him of being a 'starry-eyed idealist', were not necessarily people who, as a realist might expect, dismissed regional and international cooperation. Romulo was actually an active champion of regional multilateral institutions. Realism, as some academic analysts argue, may well be the dominant mode of thinking among Asia's policymaking elite, but this has not prevented Asian states from engaging in multilateral cooperation at the global and increasingly, *regional* levels, as the case of Singapore under Lee Kuan Yew, foremost among Asia's realist statesmen, attests.

Perhaps a better way to look at post-War Asian thinking on international relations is to assess how Asian states related to an international order which was practically an extension of the 'European international society' and was overwhelmingly dominated by the West. Here, despite some early rhetoric on Asian unity, there remained significant differences within the region, which I would label as *conformist*, *revisionist*, and *adaptive*.

The classic *conformist* nation was post-war Japan, the first Asian nation to modernize by imitating the West. Because of its economic accomplishments and military power, Meiji Japan was granted limited entry into the European international society as a 'civilised' nation, a status that was denied to the European colonies in Asia, such as India. To be sure, Japan did turn against Western powers when its effort to dominate its own Asian neighbourhood was challenged. But post-war Japan, despite its distinct cultural-political style and a plurality of voices within its academic institutions retained a largely conformist posture in the international system, accepting Western ideas, rules and institutions and becoming a significant financial stakeholder in them. Japan might not have been the 'yes-man' of Asia, but it was certainly not, and still not, a 'Japan that can say no'.

⁸ A point made by Mahbubani, but it applies to the contemporary breed. Several of the founding leaders of Asian states defy this characterisation. Consider Mao, Sukarno and even Nehru.

⁹ 'I am an internationalist, but an internationalist who does not all [allow] himself to be swept off the firm Earth.' 'The one fact from which no nation, big or small, can escape is the increasing universal interdependence of nations.' Aung San, *Burma's Challenge* (South Okklapa, Myanmar: U Aung Gyi, 1974), p, 192-3. These remarks by Aung San are a far cry from the self-imposed autarchy and isolationism of the military junta which came to rule the country.

This was especially in contrast to communist China, which occupied the other end of the spectrum as Asia's leading *revisionist* power. China under the nationalist regime started out as a conformist nation, but communist China was a different story. "From its birth date," writes Chinese historian Chen Jian, 'Mao's China challenged the Western powers in general and the United States in particular by questioning and, consequently, negating the legitimacy of the 'norms of international relations'.¹⁰

India remained somewhere in between. Its position may be best described as an *adaptive* one. Jawaharlal Nehru rejected European style power politics and was especially scathing on the realist prescriptions about international order which, as proposed in the 1940s by Nicholas Spykman, Winston Churchill and Walter Lippmann, would have divided the world into a series of regional blocs each under a great power's leadership (including one under India itself). Instead, Nehru would propose what he called a 'world association' of states that recognized the essential equality of states. But Nehru never went too far in his critique of Western dominance or in pushing for the creation of an anti-Western bloc in Asia, a fact recognised and appreciated by Britain (but not the US). He kept the tone of the Asian Relations Conference of 1947 (of which he was the chief organizer) or the Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung in 1955 (of which he was a co-sponsor) remarkably moderate. Nehru defended the United Nations, and for all his early championing of Asian unity and shepherding of communist China, disagreed with Chou En-lai at Bandung when the latter proposed a permanent regional association of Asian and African countries to serve China's need at a time when it was not recognized by the UN. Nehru's concept of 'non-involvement' (which later fused into the broader doctrine of 'non-alignment') was practically an adaptive extension of the Western principle of non-intervention at a time when the two superpowers were violating the doctrine with impunity.¹¹

The predicament and position of Southeast Asian nations was closer to India's than to China's or Japan's. They were willing to live within the existing system of international governance which preserved their independence. With the brief revisionist posture of Sukarno in the 1960s when he withdrew Indonesia from the UN and flirted his own ideas about 'old established forces' (OLDEFOS) and 'new emerging forces' (NEFOS), and that of communist Vietnam in the 1970s and 80s, Southeast Asian states have generally accepted the rules and norms of the international system, especially non-interference, diplomatic interdependence and sovereignty equality of states. Burma's Aung San and U Nu exemplified this thinking in the early period, and later, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations spearheaded the emergence of a regional international society based on adaptations of these rules.

The divergent attitudes and responses of Asia's key nations towards the existing international order meant significant intra-regional differences over how to organize the region and the world at large. Japan's sense of cultural and political supremacy as Asia's first modernising nation had underpinned its quest for an East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere. But while Japan's initial military victories over Western powers inspired Asian nationalists, the Japanese idea of an exclusionary regional economic and political bloc

¹⁰ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

¹¹ Amitav Acharya, *Whose Ideas Matter: Agency and Power in Asian Regionalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009).

did not. Thus, Aung San after flirting for a while with the Japan's East Asian co-prosperity sphere idea would declare: "a new Asian order...will not and must not be one like the Co-prosperity Sphere of militarist Japan, nor should it be another Asiatic Monroe doctrine, nor imperial preference or currency bloc."¹²

In post-Second World War Asia, wide differences emerged over the philosophy of international economic relations, especially between China and Japan (the undisputed leader of East Asia's market economies). Ironically, India's approach to economic development had more in common with socialist China than with democratic Japan. One offshoot of the divergent positions of Asia's three major powers was that none would be able to lead an Asian regional organisation. After World War II doomed Japan's effort to create an East Asian bloc, Nationalist China and Nehruvian India in a competitive way and India and communist China in a more cooperative manner were the central actors in a period from 1947 to 1955 when Asia tried to develop a regional multilateral grouping. But neither would succeed, conceding the ground to a group of Southeast Asian countries, who were suspicious of the bigger Asian powers to lead the region. They-Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Singapore, formed the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967. ASEAN survived precisely because it was not led by any of the three great Asian powers. This failure of the major Asian powers to provide leadership in building viable regional institutions – and the resulting regionalist leadership of the ASEAN members - has since becomes a defining feature of Asian regional governance.

Have matters changed? The end of the Cold War, a common adherence to state-supported capitalist economic development, and the emergence of Asia-wide multilateral regional groupings like the ARF and East Asian Summit, have effectively put an end to the conformist-revisionist-adaptive divide. Today, the differences between Japan, China, India, ASEAN countries over concepts and approaches to economic development are hardly fundamental. In foreign policy terms, India by abandoning Nehruvian non-alignment and China similarly ditching Maoism have moved closer to Japan's conformist position. In this sense, all three Asian powers, China included, are best described status quo powers.¹³ All have embraced ASEAN-led multilateralism in the region. Ironically, it

¹² Josef Silverstein, *The Political Legacy of Aung San* (Ithaca, New York: Department of Asian Studies, Southeast Asian Program, Cornell University [Data paper 86], 1972), p.101.

¹³ The question whether China is status-quo or revisionist has attracted some debate. According to Randall Schweller, 'revisionist states value what they covet more than what they currently possess. . . . they will *employ military force* to change the status quo and to extend their values.' Randall L. Schweller, 'Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In,' *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Summer 1994), p. 105. Iain Johnston defines status quo versus revisionist orientation in terms of participation in international (including regionally-based) institutions. Hence, revisionist means a state's (1) 'participation rates in the institutions that regulate the activities of members of the community are low,' (2) 'The actor may participate in these international institutions, but it does not accept the norms of the community. It breaks these rules and norms once it becomes a member of these institutions,' and (3) 'The actor may participate in these institutions and may abide by their rules and norms temporarily, but if given a chance, it will try to change these rules and norms in ways that defeat the original purposes of the institution and the community.' To these Johnston adds a second set of indicators of

was the US under the Bush Jr administration that seemed to be the least conformist power in relation to a world order and governance structure that it had played a central role in creating.

This apparent convergence of worldviews and approaches does not, however, mean Asian powers share a common view of global governance and how to reform global institutions. Some argue that the simultaneous rise of India and China and their respective moves beyond non-aligned and socialist ideologies may actually mean greater competition, rather than cooperation between them. In this view, India and China have become essentially similar players in the international system, both are aspiring great powers who are equally willing to assert their national interest, increase their power and influence in the world at large, and resort to the use of force in international relations. Realists see distinct prospects for an intensified security dilemma in 21st century Asia not unlike what Europe experienced in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Moreover, there remain important areas of diversity in contemporary Asian thinking on the relationship between democracy and regional stability and international order. While Asian leaders have generally accepted the liberal view that economic interdependence is a force for peace and that international (including regional) institutions are useful if not powerful instruments for managing regional order, sharp divisions remain over the role of democracy: whether democracy promotes development or stagnation (the Lee Kuan Yew versus Fidel Ramos debate in the 1990s)¹⁴, and whether democracy is at all a

revisionist power orientation that has to do with its attitude and behavior towards the distribution of power, namely, 'The actor has internalized a clear preference for a radical redistribution of material power in the international system,' and 'The actor's behavior is aimed in the main at realizing such a redistribution of power, and to this end military power is considered to be a critical tool.' Alastair Iain Johnston, 'Is China a Status Quo Power?' *International Security*, vol. 27, no. 4 (Spring 2003), p.11.

China's growing participation in regional and global institutions, which Johnston documents (Alastair Iain Johnston, *Social States: China in International Institutions, 1980-2000* (Princeton, N.J. Princeton University Press, 2008), its acceptance of the norms of these institutions, and its careful approach, including reluctance to assume the leadership of these institutions, not to mention breaking their rules in any opportunistic manner, suggests a status quo orientation. Moreover, while concerns over China's strategic behaviour remain, its propensity to use military force seems to be limited to the Taiwan question and not to challenge US military dominance globally or in the Pacific. Despite making significant investments in building up its military, China's defence strategy does not seem to reflect a 'clear preference for a radical redistribution of material power in the international system'. China's recent assertiveness in the South China Sea and vis-à-vis Japan, India and the US is likely to feed suspicions of it becoming a revisionist power, but in my view, China is better described as a status-seeker, rather than status-breaker, meaning it seeks to enhance its own status within the existing international order, rather than supplant the latter with one of its own design.

¹⁴ Fareed Zakaria, 'A Conversation with Lee Kuan Yew,' *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 1994); Kim Dae Jung, 'Is Culture Destiny? The Myth of Asia's Anti-Democratic Values,' *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 1994).

suitable political arrangement for Asia and whether democracy is a force of national and regional stability or a prescription for violence and disorder.¹⁵

National Aspirations Versus Global Governance

It is in China, rather than in Japan or India, that a good deal of conceptual thinking in Asia about the future of international order is taking place, at official as well as academic levels. This is partly in response to the international community's doubts and misgivings about China's global role following its spectacular ascent, doubts that are less pronounced in relation to the role of Japan or India. Unsurprisingly therefore, Chinese thinking on international relations today is to a large extent an attempt to legitimise the rise of China as a fundamentally positive force in international relations.

China's initial conceptualisation of the post-Cold War order was presented under the rubric of 'multipolarization'. Consider the following statement posted at the Chinese Foreign Ministry Website in 2000:

Since the end of the Cold War, the world has moved towards multi-polarity, and the international situation on the whole has become more relaxed. This is an objective tendency independent of people's will, reflecting the trend of the development of the present era. Multi-polarization on the whole helps weaken and curb hegemonism and power politics, serves to bring about a just and equitable new international political and economic order and contributes to world peace and development.

But the concept of multi-polarization was dampened by the US victory over Saddam Hussein's Iraq in 1991 and the advent of the so-called 'unipolar moment'. This led some Chinese to modify their position by recognising what they called 'uni-multipolarity'. At the same time, Chinese policy and academic discourse (the two are often inseparable) developed its thesis about China's 'peaceful rise', thereby rejecting the view that China's rise would trigger a power transition dynamic that would lead to war with the United States and other 'status quo' powers.

China's attitude towards and involvement in global and Asian multilateralism has changed considerably, a change for which its Southeast Asian neighbours, working through ASEAN can justifiably take some credit. To borrow Iain Johnston's words, China is not only a 'status quo power' but also a 'social state'.¹⁶ In Chinese academia, there are ongoing moves to develop a 'Chinese school of international relations' based partly on the historical (and benign) frameworks of the "all under heaven" (*Tianxia*) concept, the tributary system, and the 'Chinese world order'.¹⁷ The *Tianxia* ('all under heaven') concept, which stresses harmony (as opposed to 'sameness' - possibly to send a signal

¹⁵ Amitav Acharya, 'Democracy or Death? will democratisation bring greater regional instability to East Asia?' *The Pacific Review*, vol. 23 no. 3 (July 2010), pp. 335–358.

¹⁶ Footnote 8.

¹⁷ Qin Yaquin, 'Why Is There No-Chinese IR Theory?', *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, vol. 7, no. 3 (2007). Special Issue on 'Why is there no Non-Western International Relations Theory?' edited by Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan. On the Chinese world order, see: John K. Fairbank, *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973).

that China can be politically different but still pursue friendship with other nations,¹⁸ is increasingly invoked by the Chinese leadership; indeed President Hu Jintao has defined the objective of China's foreign policy as to 'jointly construct a harmonious world'.¹⁹

But while China has increased its *participation* in multilateralism and global governance, it has not offered *leadership*. This is explained in part by inexperience, fear of provoking a backlash from other powers, and the lingering impact of Deng Xiaoping's caution about Chinese leadership on behalf of the developing world.²⁰ Chen Dongxiao of the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies points to a perception gap between how the world views China (as an emerging global power) and how China views itself (as a low-income developing country). Also at play is a desire not to sacrifice its sovereignty and independence for the sake of multilateralism and global governance, and the impact of domestic factors such as increasingly diverse interest groups, lack of sufficient institutional coordination for implementing international agreements, and limited integration between domestic and international considerations in decision-making about issues of global governance. These factors, Chen argues means 'China would, at its best, be capable of playing "part time leader" in selected way'.²¹

¹⁸ Zhao Tingyang *Tianxia tixi: Shijie zhidu zhexue daolun* [The Tianxia System: A Philosophy for the World Institution] Nanjing: Jiangsu Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 2005 (Translated for the author by Shanshan Mei); Yu Keping, 'We Must Work to Create a Harmonious World,' 2007. Available at: <http://china.org.cn/english/international/210305.htm>. For a critical view, see William A. Callahan, 'Chinese Visions of World Order: Post-hegemonic or a New Hegemony?' *International Studies Review*, vol. 10, no. 4 (2008): 749-761.

¹⁹ Hu Jintao, 'Making Great Efforts to Build a Harmonious World with Long-lasting Peace and Common Prosperity,' Speech to the U.N. General Assembly marking the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, 15 September 2005.

²⁰ Deng's words, often misquoted and misinterpreted, did not rule out Chinese leadership, but took a very cautious position. On December 24, 1990 Deng stated: 'Some developing countries would like China to become the leader of the Third World. But we absolutely cannot do that -- this is one of our basic state policies. We can't afford to do it and besides, we aren't strong enough. There is nothing to be gained by playing that role; we would only lose most of our initiative. China will always side with the Third World countries, but we shall never seek hegemony over them or serve as their leader. Nevertheless, we cannot simply do nothing in international affairs; we have to make our contribution. In what respect? I think we should help promote the establishment of a new international political and economic order.' 'Seize the Opportunity to Develop the Economy,' December 24, 1990. Available at: <http://chairmanmaozedong.org>
Deng's dictum derived from his assessment of China's limited capacity to lead and a fear of overreaching. Wang Zaibang, 'The Architecture and Efficiency of Global Governance,' in *Leadership and the Global Governance Agenda: Three Voices*, June 2010. Available at: http://www.stanleyfoundation.org/publications/report/3_Voices_o.pdf, pp.16-17.

²¹ Chen Dongxiao, 'China's Perspective on Global Governance and G20,' Available at: http://www.siis.org.cn/en/zhuanti_view_en.aspx?id=10051. This does not mean, however, that Chinese commentaries have been shy of referring to China's inevitable (re)emergence as a great power. China is also the world leader in doing 'comprehensive national power' estimates relative to other powers.

This ambivalence was demonstrated in China's recent reluctance to take the lead in allowing its ample financial resources play a direct role in alleviating the impact of the global financial crisis. Hence the argument from President Hu Jintao:

The Chinese economy is increasingly interconnected with the global economy...China's sound economic growth is in itself a major contribution to global financial stability and economic growth. This is why we must first and foremost run our own affairs well.²²

China has been less reticent in assuming a regional leadership, as exemplified in its promotion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the East Asian Community idea. But even here China has been a cautious exponent, backtracking in the face of resistance to any real or perceived effort on its part to drive the membership and agenda of the East Asian institutions.

While China continues to grapple with the issue of its leadership in world affairs, Japan's national role conception, and its foreign policy and security approach, is being redefined by the idea of 'normal state'. In his 1993 book, *Blueprint for a New Japan*, the leader of the Democratic Party of Japan, Ichiro Ozawa, used the term 'normal state' as a way of reclaiming Japan's right to use force, but only in support of UN-sanctioned operations.²³ But under former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, Japan's normal state aspiration came to reflect some stark strategic motivations: to hedge against any drawdown of US forces in the region, to counter the rise of China and the growing threat from North Korea, and to increase Japan's participation in collective military operations in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf regions. Moreover, it was a response to growing domestic pressures on the Japanese government to address its perceived inability to respond to foreign security threats. The concept could also be used to counter and dilute some of the constitutional limits on Japanese diplomacy and power projection at a time when Japan was under pressure to do more for the US-Japan alliance.²⁴

But some have viewed Japan's normal state aspiration as a welcome step towards a more proactive approach to global governance. If Japan as a normal state is free to deploy its forces internationally, as Ozawa had envisaged, it can thus make a bigger contribution to international peacekeeping, anti-terrorism and anti-piracy operations, hence to key aspects of global security governance. In the economic arena, as Takashi Inoguchi puts it, 'The globalization of governance entails more integrated markets, the global diffusion of military weapons, and the global permeation of public elite culture...Astute, articulate and agile leaders must always be mindful of domestic audiences and yet must act globally – and decisively.'²⁵This requires Japan to move beyond its post-war constitutional constraints. Importantly, Inoguchi cites the Japanese naval deployment to

²² *Japan Times*, 11 November 2008.

²³ Andrew Horvat, 'Why Ichiro Ozawa is America's True Hope and Why Shinzo Abe Never Was,' San Francisco: Nautilus Institute, 2007.

²⁴ Bhubhindar Singh, 'Japan's Post-Cold War Security Policy: Bringing Back the Normal State,' *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol. 24, no. 1 (2002), pp. 82-105.

²⁵ Takashi Inoguchi, 'Japan's Ambition for Normal Statehood,' Available at: http://www.glocom.org/opinions/essays/200302_inoguchi_japan/0302inoguchi.pdf. p.17.

the Indian Ocean to support US operations in West Asia as one example of normal statehood, along side its support for negotiations to advance free trade in Asia.

In 2005, Japan's Foreign Minister, Taro Aso, who would briefly assume the premiership later, spoke of Japan as a 'thought leader' of Asia.²⁶ Japan has been a pioneer of regional cooperation in Asia and the Pacific. In 1993 Japan helped broker a pathway to multilateral security cooperation by suggesting that the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conferences be used as the platform for regional security dialogues that resulted in the ASEAN Regional Forum (although here Japan was drawing on ideas already circulating in Asia Pacific second track dialogues rather than espousing an entirely original formula). Japanese contribution to concepts of regional economic governance has been more substantive. Japanese officials and scholars were at the forefront of the Pacific Community movement in the 1960s, 70s and 80s, which stressed "open regionalism" as East Asia (defined here as a subset of the Pacific Rim or Asia Pacific) went through its "economic miracle" riding on the wave of Japanese investment and aid that also created de facto regional integration. The 1997 Japanese proposal to develop an Asian Monetary Fund (which some saw as a challenge to the authority of the IMF) might seem to have been an exception, but the Japanese initiative faded quickly in the face of strong US opposition. Japan has actively sought a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, and is willing to collaborate with India (whom it has in the past defeated in a bid for a temporary seat), but it is not clear whether this move reflects a any genuine desire to change the basic rules of the global multilateral system or simply to win itself due recognition for its abundant financial and other contributions to the UN system.

Inoguchi argues that Japan has 'become one of the major rule makers relinquishing the role of a rule taker in global governance in a number of policy areas.' Among the niche areas he identifies are attempts to reconcile different conceptions of human rights, developing "rules and norms of transnational business transactions", and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.²⁷ But these rules and norms do not necessarily represent a fundamental rethinking of the contemporary global governance structure. Japan continues to be a conformist status quo power. Hence, when the current global financial turmoil hit in 2008, Japan's main response was to offer to strengthen the IMF's coffers, rather than put all its resources into developing the fledgling regional financial reserve under the Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI). And Japan like China, indicated that 'Japan's primary responsibility lies in invigorating its own economy...this would be the most immediately effective contribution that Japan can deliver.'²⁸

²⁶ 'Asian Strategy As I See It: Japan as the "Thought Leader" of Asia,' Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Taro Aso at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan, Available at: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm/aso/speech0512.html>. For Aso a thought leader is a 'trailblazer and a problem solver: '...as I perceive it, a thought leader is one who through fate is forced to face up against some sort of very difficult issue earlier than others. And because the issue is so challenging, it is difficult to solve. But as the person struggles to somehow resolve the issue, he/she becomes something for others to emulate.'

²⁷ Takashi Inoguchi, 'Why Are There No Non-Western Theories of International Relations? The Case of Japan,' *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, vol. 7, no. 3 (2007). Special Issue on 'Why is there no Non-Western International Relations Theory?', edited by Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan.

²⁸ *Japan Times*, 11 November 2008.

Speaking to an annual assembly of overseas Indians in 2005, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh asserted that ‘the 21st Century will be an Indian Century.’ His prognosis was defined in economic and political terms: ‘The world will once again look at us with regard and respect, not just for the economic progress we make but for the democratic values we cherish and uphold and the principles of pluralism and inclusiveness we have come to represent which is India’s heritage as a centuries old culture and civilization.’²⁹ Although Singh refrained from trumpeting India as an emerging global power, Barack Obama, like George W. Bush before him, did so more explicitly when he pledged America’s support for India in realising this goal during a visit to Delhi in November 2010.³⁰ Indian commentators and media have not been reticent either, although they may be happy to quote Western policymakers and analysts to make this point.³¹ Arguably, media and policy talk about India as a global power is more cacophonous in Delhi than similar talk about China as a global power in Beijing.

India’s policy of non-alignment has not been replaced by any broad organising framework. In fact neither non-alignment nor Nehru has been formally and officially disavowed by India’s post-Cold War governments. But in his 2003 book, *Crossing the Rubicon*, Indian analyst C. Raja Mohan made a powerful case that India was reverting to a Curzonian geopolitics,³² replacing the Gandhian worldview that first made its appearance roughly a century ago, or the Nehruvian idealism that defined its foreign policy in 20th century. The Curzonian approach assumed Indian centrality in the Asian heartland, and envisaged a proactive and expansive Indian diplomatic and military role in stabilising Asia as a whole. The end of the BJP government might have slowed if not ended that transition, but Indian power projection in both western and eastern Indian Ocean waters is growing, reflecting a Mahanian rather than Nehruvian bent. It is partly driven by a desire, encouraged by the US and the Southeast Asian countries, to assume the role of a ‘regional balancer’ vis-à-vis China (whereas Nehru pioneered Asia’s engagement of communist China), although India avoids any outright containment of China or offers unconditional support to the US strategic framework vis-à-vis China.

Indian interest in advancing global governance is limited by its concern to advance its national power position in the international system that comes through high growth rates, info-tech power, nuclear weapons capability and space dreams (now a partial

²⁹ ‘PM’s inaugural speech at Pravasi Bharatiya Divas,’ Mumbai, & January 2005.

Available at:

<http://www.pmindia.nic.in/speech/content.asp?id=65>

³⁰ ‘US supports India as global power: Obama’. *Headlines India*, 8 November 2010.

Available at: <http://headlinesindia.mapsofindia.com/india-and-world/united-states/us-supports-india-as-global-power-obama-67670.html>. On a previous occasion, Obama had already described India as “a leader in Asia and around the world” and as ‘a rising power and a responsible global power.’ ‘India is a rising and responsible global power: Obama,’ *Times of India*, 4 June 2010. Available at:

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/India-is-a-rising-and-responsible-global-power-Obama/articleshow/6009870.cms>.

³¹ See V.R. Raghavan, ‘India and the Global Power Shift’. Available at:

http://www.delhipolicygroup.com/pdf/india_and_the_global_power_shift.pdf.

³² C Raja Mohan, *Crossing the Rubicon: The Shaping of India's New Foreign Policy* (New Delhi, Viking Books, 2003).

reality). Commenting on its stance on global issues ranging from nuclear non-proliferation, climate change, human rights and corruption, veteran journalist Barbara Crosette calls India as the country that gives 'global governance the biggest headache.'³³ India has a legitimate basis to feel that its contribution to global governance is being stymied by other powers - for example, the continuing resistance from the West (and China) to its desire to be recognised as a nuclear weapon state (thereby joining the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty on that basis). Like Japan, India has sought a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, a dream that seems destined to remain unfulfilled for some time despite the Obama administration's recent backing. It has done better through the G-20 forum, but even there, there does not seem to be any obvious Indian ideas or imprint to inspire the reform and restructuring of the global multilateral order. Within Asia itself, India has returned to the fold of Asian regionalism, but in stark contrast to the Nehru era, India's role today is that of a follower, rather than as a leader. And its regional involvement is much stronger in its economic dimension than in its political and security one, even though it remains excluded from APEC.

Asia's role in global governance cannot be delinked from the question: who leads Asia? Historically, aside from their mutual rivalry, three factors have determined the issue of Asian leadership: political will, resource capacity, regional legitimacy and rivalry among the Asian powers. In the immediate post-World War II period, India had high legitimacy in Asia and was more than willing to lead, but was unable to do so due to a lack of resources. Japan's case was exactly the opposite; it had the resources (from the mid-1960s onwards), but not the legitimacy – thanks to memories of its imperialism for which it was deemed to have been insufficiently apologetic by its neighbours – to be Asia's leader. Japan's involvement in regional leadership was deliberately low key, cautious and exercised mostly through development aid and promotion of ideas about regional economic cooperation, leaving aside completely political-security domain. Looking at China then, it had neither the resources nor the legitimacy (since the communist takeover), nor the political will (at the onset of the reform era) to be Asia's leader.

In Asia today, although Japan, China in an increasing manner and India to a lesser extent, have the resources to lead, they still suffer from a deficit of regional legitimacy deriving from past histories (Japanese wartime role, Chinese subversion and Indian diplomatic arrogance, dating back to the Bandung conference). Moreover, their mutual rivalry prevents the Asian powers from assuming regional leadership singly or collectively. Hence, regional leadership rests with a group of the region's weaker states: ASEAN. This is not entirely without merit or contribution, but ASEAN, while an useful and influential voice in regional affairs – although some doubt its ability to manage Asia, home to three of the world's four largest economies, four (excluding Russia) of its eight nuclear weapon states and its fastest growing military forces.

Asia and the G-20: An Uncertain Trumpet

The global economic crisis since 2008 has provided new opportunities for Asia to assume a greater role at least in global economic governance, especially through their participation in the G-20. But the G-20 was by no means an Asian idea (Canadians – no

³³ 'The Elephant in the Room: The biggest pain in Asia isn't the country you'd think,' *Foreign Policy* (January-February 2010).

surprises there - take credit for it, even though its composition – the crucial issue of who to invite - might have been decided – some say by a telephone call- by US Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin and the President of the Deutsche Bundesbank).³⁴

But the G-20 does have an Asian lineage. Four Asian members of the G-20 attended the Bandung Conference - China (PRC), Japan, India, and Indonesia. The number increases to six if Saudi Arabia and Turkey are counted.³⁵ The Bandung conference had several major and long-term implications for international order, chief among them the genesis of the Non-Aligned Movement. It provided a powerful impetus for pan-African and pan-Arab movements led by Nkrumah (who was prevented by the British from attending) and Nasser (who was a star of the meeting, but whose country is conspicuously not a G-20 member) respectively. It advanced decolonization and symbolized the appeal of economic self-reliance in the Third World, thereby delaying the march of market-driven globalization which now underpins the G-20's emergence.

But there are key differences. Bandung was exclusively a South-South event where as the G-20 is a North-South forum. Bandung's focus was political, where as G-20's is primarily economic, at least to this date. Some of the key Bandung alumni in the G-20 have themselves changed dramatically and irreversibly. For Japan, Bandung was the first foray into international diplomacy after defeat in World War II. It has emerged as a key player in Asia and the world. Bandung was communist China's debut on the world diplomatic stage. A poor and fledgling communist country, China then easily invited mistrust. India's Jawaharlal Nehru did his very best (at the cost of his own image and India's influence) to project China as a constructive Asian neighbour, rather than as a communist mischief-maker and an integral member of the Sino-Soviet communist monolith, as the Eisenhower administration was doing its best to project it. China is now the world's emerging superpower, and a valuable and vital member of the global governance architecture. India, as noted, no longer professes Nehruvian non-alignment. It is no longer the leader of Asian unity; that task has long been ceded to the ASEAN. Indonesia at Bandung was on the verge of sliding into authoritarianism; as a G-20 member, it is held up as a shining example of Asian democracy. The global south is no

³⁴ See the 'official history' of the G-20, 'The Group of Twenty: A History'. Available at: <http://www.g20.utoronto.ca/docs/g20history.pdf>.

³⁵ 'Asian' is not the preferred identity of either Saudi Arabia or Turkey today; certainly doubts are in order in Turkey's case given its fervent if unrequited wish to join Europe. The only Asian G-20 member not taking part in Bandung was South Korea; (neither Korea was invited). Australia, which shares with Turkey the problem of ambivalent regional identity, did not even want to be invited to Bandung. South Africa was represented as an observer at Bandung by two members of the African National Congress. And two of the G-20 members did their very best to sabotage the conference, the UK and the US. The UK feared that Bandung might lead to increased pressure to relinquish its still considerable colonial possession in Asia and elsewhere, while the US feared a propaganda coup for communist China. Acting in concert, the two powers pressured their allies among the Bandung invitees – including Turkey, but also Philippines Pakistan and Thailand - to frustrate not only communist China, but also the 'neutralists' India and Indonesia, who were running the show. They even supplied propaganda material (in the form of "background papers") telling allied nations what to say and what do at the Conference. Amitav Acharya, 'Lessons of Bandung, Then and Now,' *Financial Times* 22 April 2005.

longer led by the likes of Nehru, Nasser or Nkrumah, but by technocrats like Manmohan Singh and Hu Jintao. The transition from the firebrand ideologues like Mao and Sukarno to the introverted Singh and Yudhono signifies this shift within Asia.

Despite these changes, India, China and Indonesia continue to identify themselves as developing nations and are subject to the lingering normative legacy of their involvement in the Third World coalition. For example, India and China stake out positions on the global economy and ecology that are still framed in their predicament and perspective as developing nations. For them national development goals take priority over complying with the West's demands for greener standards.

Whether the G-20 will develop concrete institutional capacity or even emerge as a viable and permanent global institution sharing decision-making and agenda-setting powers from the G-7 and the Bretton Woods institutions is far from clear. As Chinese expert Chen Dongxiao notes, the G-20 is not a group of likeminded nations, but one in which cooperation among the emerging powers is 'issue-based and interest-oriented'. The challenge to cooperation and coordination among these powers is stymied by 'the fact that the economies and trade interests among these emerging powers are more competitive than complimentary.'³⁶ Moreover, the G-20 is a bit of an exclusive club, plagued by questions about its representativeness and legitimacy. According to two Indonesian analysts, although the G20's emergence as 'the premier forum for international economic cooperation', is 'historic...from the perspective of global governance as well as the role of Asia in the global economy,'

...there are many challenges that have to be dealt with first. Countries in the region have to showcase their abilities in sustaining high economic growth, maintaining political stability and working towards closer regional integration. An approach that relies on a politicised and formal structure will not suit the dynamics in a region which is economic growth-oriented and market-driven.³⁷

To compound matters, Asia does not speak as one voice within the G-20. On the issue of reforming global financial regulation, a key concern of the G-20, the "lack of a unified Asian voice" has made it easier for America and Europe to set the terms, sometimes at the expense of Asia's interests. For example, Lee Jang Yung, senior deputy governor of South Korea's Financial Supervisory Service, complains that Asian countries "are facing significant challenges in meeting" the liquidity standards set under the Basel III framework.³⁸

Nations represented at Bandung, including Nehru's India, Mao's China, and Nasser's Egypt, harboured no illusions about achieving global great power status, whether individually or collectively. Asia's G-20 members all aspire to be leaders of the world, not

³⁶ Chen, 'China's Perspective on Global Governance and G20'.

³⁷ Mahendra Siregar and Tuti Irman, 'G20 and the Global Agenda: A Bigger Role for Asia'. Available at: <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2010/11/09/g20-the-global-agenda-a-bigger-role-for-asia/>

³⁸ 'Asia regulators say G20 reform driven by U.S., Europe'. Available at <http://blogs.reuters.com/financial-regulatory-forum/2010/11/29/asia-regulators-say-g20-reform-driven-by-u-s-europe/>

just of the region. Indeed, they (even in the case of middle powers like Indonesia South Korea) may be using the G-20 to leapfrog Asia.

Asian approaches to the major other major issue on the global governance agenda, climate change, are by no means shared or suggestive of an act of global leadership. China and India are leading the resistance to the demand for deeper level of cuts to carbon emissions. Both use the argument that as developing nations, they need more time before accepting slower growth rates (in both economic development and carbon emission) that the Western nations are prepared to accept. Although at the 2010 Boao Forum India's Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh described cooperation between India and China on climate change and environment as 'one of the outstanding success stories of this bilateral relationship,' he also conceded that the two countries 'might not be on the same page as far as emissions are concerned'.³⁹ At the Copenhagen meeting, India agreed to accept non-binding target of cutting CO₂ emissions per unit of GDP by 20-25% from 2005 levels by 2020, where as China 'set a "binding goal" to cut CO₂ per unit of GDP by 40-45% below 2005 levels by 2020.'⁴⁰ But China like India refuses to accept the proposed global target of 50% and more cuts by 2050 (relative to 1990 levels).⁴¹ Moreover, in what Ramesh described as a 'paradigm shift' in both India and China, the two countries have adopted a posture of concerted unilateralism ('we have to do these things on our own') rather than outright multilateralism, in approaching the carbon emissions issue. This means, as Ramesh put it, that the two countries pursue carbon emission cuts through their own domestic policy processes and thus 'delinked emissions control actions from the international negotiations.'⁴² Their defensive position hardly meets Amartya Sen's aforementioned desire to see Asia 'leading the world opinion on how to manage, and in particular not to mismanage, the global challenges we face today'.

Relations among the Asian G-20 members remain competitive. China has not been supportive of the bids by India and Japan to acquire a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, even though such a development would be consistent with China's own 'multi-polarization' concept. This apparent contradiction has prompted some analysts accuse China of seeking global multipolarity but regional unipolarity. At Bandung in 1955, there was the perception, exaggerated by Western media, of a Sino-Indian competition. Today, there is similar talk of a China-India rivalry, as well as competition between China and Japan, which was in no position to compete at Bandung. There is the danger that competition among the Asian G-20 members could spill over into other parts of Asia, like Southeast Asia, similar to Sino-Indian competition over African resources and markets, or competition among Russia, China and Brazil over arms sales to African

³⁹ Anantha Krishnan, Climate cooperation changing India-China ties, says Jairam Ramesh," *The Hindu*, 9 April 2010. Available at:

<http://beta.thehindu.com/news/international/article392921.ece>

⁴⁰ 'Where Countries Stand on Copenhagen'. Available at:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8345343.stm>

⁴¹ Pan Jiahua, 'Low Carbon Logic,' November 8, 2010. Available at:

<http://www.chinadialogue.net/article/show/single/en/3927-Low-carbon-logic>

⁴² 'India-China Climate Cooperation Thrives with the "Spirit of Copenhagen'. Available at: <http://www.chinafaqs.org/blog-posts/india-china-climate-cooperation-thrives-spirit-copenhagen>

countries. In the meantime, countries left out of the G-20 (e.g. Singapore, Malaysia) are resentful of those (Indonesia) who are savouring their new status in global affairs.

Conclusion

'China, Japan can help by helping themselves', ran the headline of a *Japan Times* commentary by journalist Frank Ching on Chinese and Japanese responses to the latest global financial crisis.⁴³ Admittedly, they at least China, has already done so. But the headline is remarkably revealing. What it tells us is that Asian countries approach global governance largely in terms of self-help. While Asian conceptions of international relations are no longer a defensive or confrontational reaction to Western dominance, there remains a perceptible gap between Asia's rise in terms of the traditional power indices of international relations and the requirements for global governance. The gap may be explained partly by resentment against Western resistance to the desire of Asian countries to increase their influence over global institutions commensurate with their rise in the global power structure. But it is a fair guess whether a larger say over global institutions will yield a great willingness on the part of Asian powers to go beyond their 'helping others by helping themselves' mindset. There is also little question that intra-Asian differences and rivalries stifle Asia's bid to assume a greater share of the leadership in global governance.

I started this essay by referring to the 'seeming contradiction' between the national power aspirations of leading Asian nations and their role as contributors to global governance. The two goals need not compete with each other. But as the foregoing analysis suggests, changing national role conceptions, such as China's ideas about 'multi-polarization' and 'peaceful rise', Japan's quest for 'normal' statehood, and India's seeming embrace of Curzon and Mahan at the expense of Gandhi and Nehru, do not translate into support for global governance. The obvious answer to Amartya Sen's question posed at the outset of this essay is that Asia is doing *more* than before, but this is still *far from doing enough*.

If one looks for Asian ideas about and approaches to multilateralism and governance, some of these might well be found at the regional level, and for which the credit might belong to its weaker nations, the ASEAN members, rather than Asia's larger powers. Asia offers a type of regionalism which is both home-grown and distinctive from the European type. Asian regionalism offers three key ideas. First, regionalism does not require hegemonic leadership, whether coercive or benign. Second, regionalism does not have to rely on formal, legalistic or politically unifying platforms – regionalism in markets can be equally if not more important. Third, regionalism should be open and inclusive, both in its economic and political-strategic dimensions. Indeed, despite their limitations, the experience of groupings like ASEAN are perhaps more relevant to other parts of the developing world than the much-vaunted European experience, which is far too committed to an ideology of unification (now under serious stress) to serve as a model for the developing world.⁴⁴

⁴³ *Japan Times*, 11 November 2008.

⁴⁴ Amitav Acharya 'Regional Worlds in a Post-Hegemonic Era,' Keynote Address to the 3rd GARNET Annual Conference, Bordeaux, 17-20 September 2008. Available at: http://spirit.sciencespobordeaux.fr/Cahiers%20de%20SPIRIT/Cahiers%20de%20SPIRIT_1_Acharya.pdf

The story of Asian regionalism to date is far from perfect. There are valid doubts about the ability of Asian regional institutions – led as they are by the relatively resource poor ASEAN - to address the region's most serious conflicts (Korean peninsula, India-Pakistan and cross-Strait) or cope with transnational challenges without a significant shift to the neo-Westphalian mindset in the region. Asia lags behind other regions in developing mechanisms for promoting human rights and democracy, and institutionalizing new global norms such as 'the Responsibility to Protect'. But a non-indifference mindset and a 'responsibility to assist' principle may be emerging out of Asia's recent brush with a series of transnational threats, including the Asian financial crisis in 1997, the Bali terrorist attacks in 2001 and 2002, the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) pandemic in 2003, the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004, and the Cyclone Nargis in Burma in 2008. This is an important, if as yet modest, shift from defensive sovereignty to responsible sovereignty. At the same time, Asian regional groups have contributed to regional and global stability well in engaging all the major powers of the world, including China (where they have arguably done a better job compared to the record of the EU and NATO in engaging Russia).

Although regionalism and globalism are sometimes seen as opposing forces, and despite the danger that the global power aspirations of key Asian nations might tempt them to neglect regional cooperation, Asian regionalism has the potential to pave the way for a more concerted and consequential Asian globalism and governance. This is not a mutually incompatible relationship. Asian regional institutions may not resolve all of the region's vexing security and economic challenges, but they may be useful as a potential avenue for tempering the hitherto singular and nationalistic efforts by the individual Asian powers to claim their seat at the table of global decision-making bodies. Indeed, while pursuing its engagement with global institutions and processes, Asia could do well by beginning its response to global problems at home, a strategy that is all the more justified because so many of the major global problems today – climate change, energy, pandemics, illegal migration, etc, have local Asian roots. Asian regional institutions, formal and informal, are already responding to global issues, including climate change (ASEAN, APEC), financial volatility (Chiang Mai Initiative), terrorism (ASEAN, ARF and a web of cross-cutting bilateral and subregional agreements). Much depends on whether Asian regional institutions can strengthen themselves with more robust financial stability and conflict management mechanisms, and move towards a more flexible view of state sovereignty to deal with transnational challenges– all big "ifs". But by engaging common issues of global governance at the regional level, Asian powers can limit their intra-mural conflicts. By gaining experience in dealing with complex transnational issues, securing legitimacy from peaceful interaction with neighbours, and sharing leadership with the region's weaker states in managing region's security and economic conflicts, Asia's emerging powers can derive from their regional interactions useful experience and expertise that could facilitate their substantive contribution to global governance from a position of leadership and strength. The time is ripe for them to make a serious start now.