

# 1. International ‘aspirations’ of a rising power

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## Introduction

This chapter investigates the roots of India’s Great Power aspiration and how it has become normalized and conditioned by events in India’s foreign and domestic relations, becoming part of India’s self-perception and global self-image. By aspirations, I refer to the underlying aims, goals and interests that have continued to drive Indian foreign policy across different political generations and political parties. For India, these aspirations have been based upon a consensus of ensuring India’s emergence as a Great Power that is fully autonomous, influential and respected in the global community of nations. Most commonly, such aspirations are based upon gaining parity with other great (and super) powers such as the People’s Republic of China, Russia (formerly the USSR) and the USA, and most typically include gaining a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Underlying such desires are also fears of Indian influence being limited to South Asia, of India being used as a pawn in the international politics of others states (as was particularly apparent during the Cold War), and of losing her strategic autonomy.

Whilst not representing a pre-ordained Grand Strategy, these aspirations are instead deeply entrenched beliefs formulated across time among India’s strategic community of bureaucrats and diplomats (especially those in India’s Ministry of External Affairs), political thinkers, politicians, journalists and academics. As such, they have been a consistent and normalized presence throughout India’s post-independence history. As both India’s political and economic power continues to increase within the international system, this aspiration will continue to temper and drive its actions and status as a rising power. While broadly seen as reflective of her large physical landmass, having a sixth of the world’s population, and an extensive and diverse civilizational heritage, some differences in approach concerning how India’s rise as a Great Power will be achieved are apparent. These differences predominantly occur between the widely perceived idealism of earlier Indian leaders (especially Jawaharlal Nehru) and more realist and realpolitik (practical rather than ideological) attitudes

that emerged in the 1990s.

Reflective of these differing views, on one hand India’s autonomy in international affairs is based upon positive neutralism and *purna swaraj* (complete independence) from Great Power politics. This approach in the Cold War period encompassed specific policies of non-alignment, self-reliance, *ahimsa* (non-violence) and nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, Indian conduct was based upon the idealistic internationalism of a Nehruvian world order that strove for peace, harmony, co-operation and development, whereby all countries were treated equally, regardless of status or position. The legacies of colonialism (and Partition) played into this logic by instilling an inherent distrust of any outside (and therefore imperialistic) forces. In sum, this Nehruvian approach to security represented, for the doyen of Indian strategic thought, K. Subrahmanyam, a ‘strategy of balance of power for a militarily weak but large and self-confident nation in a bipolar world’. Other core characteristics included equilibrating balances within Indian society, namely tolerance, equality and general detachment.

Set against this idealism, there was also a deep-seated belief that India was inherently destined to achieve Great Power status. This aspiration was rooted in the perceived standing of earlier Indian empires, the various conquering powers that had sought control of India (from the Greeks and Muslim invaders to the French and the British) and also India’s physical location as the meeting point of Asia. These beliefs combined with India’s struggle for independence, which India’s leaders interpreted as part of an ‘Asian Renaissance’ with a dynamic and proactive India at the helm. A nuclear capacity was additionally regarded as part of this aim in terms of developing both independent capabilities and national self-worth. Despite these more forceful approaches that explicitly called for the world to recognize India’s future position, such aspirations continued to be peaceful, dominated by the understanding ‘that power-seeking provokes power-seeking, force begets force’. Indian policy consequently led to her neither pre-emptively invading nor conquering

other states.

In order to lay out how these different viewpoints have become solidified into India's strategic thinking as core underlying aspirations, the chapter is split into three sections. Drawing out the major principles central to India's Great Power aspiration, the first section deals with the colonial legacies inherited by India and the guiding force of Nehru in the first decades of independence. The next section looks at how India's aspirations evolved during the Cold War as India interacted and was socialized into the international system through its contact with other countries. The third section then discusses how the nuclear tests of 1998 matured and accelerated India's aspiration to Great Power status and inspired her increasingly influential geostrategic relationships. The chapter concludes with some observations on the future trajectory of India's search for Great Power status.

### **Colonial legacies and Nehruvian principles**

India's aspiration to Great Power status begins with the perceived greatness of earlier Indian empires dating back several millennia as often personified in classical Indian texts, such as the Mahabharata and Kautilya's realpolitik-evoking Arthashastra. In turn, India's historical exposure to various empires also emphasized the physical and strategic position of India as both a meeting point and a bridge between the Middle East and East Asia. As external Great Powers continued to want India for both its geopolitical location and material resources, a sense of national self-importance and prestige was inculcated within India's elites, leading to an urge and expectation to play a major role in the world. The raw nature of such an aspiration was tempered by ancient Hindu practice, which instilled itself into Indian psyches as pragmatism, patience and autonomous separation. Furthermore, the ascriptive and hierarchical criteria of the Hindu caste system reinforced an expectancy of greatness among the country's elites whereby 'India's status is a given, not earned'.

When colonial rule ended, India was left with territorial issues as a legacy of the Partition of British India into India and Pakistan. The demarcation of India's northern borders through the Curzon and the McMahon lines, and disputes concerning their validity, directly led

to border issues with China and territorial claims over Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan. These issues initially confined India's interaction within the global system to South Asia, made successive Indian governments fearful of their country's Balkanization and resulted (directly and indirectly) in wars with China in 1962, and with Pakistan in 1947, 1965, 1971 and 1999. Partition therefore instilled an inherent distrust of outside forces that had formed the new borders of India and Pakistan, an action seemingly undertaken to inspire instability in the region by failing to synchronize with ethnic and state borders. The creation of a lasting legacy of multiple crossborder and internal security problems evidenced this perception. A resultant anti-imperialist attitude would go on to manifest itself into both anti-Chinese and anti-US sentiments (over their roles in Pakistan), and even anti-UN sentiment (over any attempts at mediating the Kashmir issue). These suspicions furthermore tempered a desire for India to independently gain Great Power status.

As both India's first Prime Minister and first Minister of Defence, the beliefs of Jawaharlal Nehru dominated the making of Indian foreign policy from 1947 until his death in 1964. Central to these beliefs was that India had 'special rights and duties in the management of international society based on its status as one of the world's major civilisations'. In turn, India's international interaction was to be a form of positive neutralism based upon *purna swaraj* (complete independence), consisting of an independent foreign policy and separation from big power games, also often termed as enlightened national self-interest. Such a policy was central to establishing India as an inherently self-determining, powerful and stable nation on the international stage. Mahatma Gandhi's principles of *ahimsa* (non-violence) further imbued India with an aversion to pure power approaches, influencing how she wished to achieve Great Power status. *Ahimsa* was linked to ideas of an emerging alternative world order after the Second World War in which the use of force was minimal, racialism was repudiated and countries were emancipated from imperialism.

India's leadership of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)—which it co-founded in Belgrade in 1961—endeavoured to counteract the rigid dichotomies of a Cold War world dominated by the USA and USSR.

Non-alignment also generated moral influence for India and reinforced arguments that to ally with either of the two superpower blocs would effectively mortgage India's future rise and emergence as a Great Power. In the first decades of her independence, this belief existed 'regardless of the realities of what India is',<sup>10</sup> as India's leaders saw Great Power status as based upon moral idealism rather than territorial, economic or military indicators. Employment of this language also helped to portray India as a self-assured and thoroughly independent power. As such, the NAM created a powerful forum for Indian interests and goals in international politics, where it became the second largest multilateral diplomatic organization after the UN. Overall, non-alignment became an article of faith for India's leaders and strategic community that allowed the nation to become established as an independent voice in international politics.

Non-alignment was neither isolationist nor neutral as India criticized various states over their policies in Korea, Congo, Suez and Viet Nam. Reflecting India's own experiences, such criticism targeted expansionist powers rather than specific ideologies. The policy of economic selfreliance (*swadeshi*)—often based upon socialist five-year plans and limited internal investment from outside powers—also backed-up non-alignment aims of stability and self-sufficiency. So critical was *swadeshi* that Nehru stated that 'we would rather delay our development [...] than submit to any kind of economic domination to any country'.<sup>11</sup> These notions were underpinned and exemplified by the implementation of an economic and science-and-technology policy, which included nuclear power through the establishment of the Atomic Energy Commission in 1948 and the Department of Atomic Energy in 1954. Furthermore, eschewing arms races allowed what would have been military spending to be concentrated on economic development. By leading the NAM, Indian leaders also wanted to overcome the view commonly held by external powers (such as the USA, the United Kingdom and China) of supposed India-Pakistan equality, in an attempt to free India from being purely associated with South Asia.

### **India's aspirations evolve: interaction and socialization**

India's misgivings about the role of both regional and global powers towards it were sustained in 1954 when Pakistan aligned itself with the USA in the Mutual Defence Assistance Pact and the US-backed South-East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO). Perceived US aims of creating Indo-Pakistani parity, in order to cancel out each other's influence through mutual animosity, facilitated and confirmed an Indian elite distrust of the USA as a core threat to her long-term status aspirations. Although the USA had encouraged Indian independence, the region's poverty and colonial past marginalized India in the post-Second World War global hierarchy. Furthermore, the USA regarded the NAM's role in the international system as a liability that circumvented its influence, leading to the US unilateral arming of Pakistan—also in part to contain the USSR and to protect the Gulf. Additionally, following Indian state visits to Moscow and Beijing in the 1950s, US officials became convinced that India was part of the Soviet bloc. India's prior recognition of the communist government in China in 1949 only underlined this opinion, as did India's socialistic orientations.

A historical spirit of civilizational amity between India and China continued in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, with India consistently voting in China's favour at the UN.<sup>12</sup> However, as the Cold War began to solidify into different power blocs, Indian leaders became fearful of the superpowers using China against it. As China began to see India threatening its perceived leadership of the Third World, relations between the two countries became more fraught, especially concerning the annexation of Tibet and Chinese aid to the nascent Mizo and Naga insurrections in India's north-east. This tension became personified by ongoing border disputes between the two sides and proved to be the stimuli for armed conflict in 1962, in which India was humiliated.<sup>13</sup> This defeat forced India to accept 'that the pursuit of a major power role in the absence of hard power or military capabilities was a chimera'.<sup>14</sup> As such, the 1962 experience 'socialized' India into the international order, as Indian leaders and strategic community learnt the limits of their conception of Great Power status. It also questioned the efficacy of non-alignment, diminished India's international standing, and led to pronounced and increased military spending. Increased Sino-Pakistani ties during the same

period (including arms and technology transfers), as well as continued US-Pakistan links amplified these factors. Much of India's newly accepted military aid also came from the two superpowers, diminishing her fully autonomous foreign policy outlook. India's humiliation was compounded when she was compelled to institute limited economic liberalization in order to develop her heavy industry and infrastructure.

Despite the 1962 setback, the belief in pursuing Great Power status remained and India's 1965 victory versus Pakistan strengthened her self-sufficiency. India's growing awareness of Great Power politics was again shown before the 1971 war with Pakistan, when she signed a 20-year Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation with the USSR. This treaty protected India from UN censure by the USA, balanced against the Islamabad-Beijing-Washington lineup, and acted as a socializing experience in Great Power realpolitik. The 1971 conflict with Pakistan and India's consequent 'liberation' of East Pakistan into Bangladesh showed India capable of successfully fighting a limited conflict and of redefining her strategic environment. Subsequently, post-1971, India emerged as the foremost power on the subcontinent; 1971 furthermore confirmed the ongoing morality present within India's aspiration to Great Power status and remains as a rare case of successful state-to-state humanitarian intervention. These events also emboldened India's acquisition of nuclear weapons, achieved through the Peaceful Nuclear Explosion (PNE) of May 1974. The tests were emblematic of its criticism of the permanent vetoes of the P-5 (China, France, the USA, the then-USSR and the United Kingdom) Permanent Members of the UN Security Council and the Non-Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1968 that protected their exclusive nuclear status.

Assuring India's regional hegemony was a key step to achieving Great Power status and was primarily carried out by denying external powers any influence in South Asia. This policy is often referred to as the Indira/Rajiv Doctrine, named after two prime ministers who led India in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. As part of this doctrine, Indian military power was used as a deterrent and as an interventionist force in the region, with India engaging in bilateral peacekeeping operations in Sri Lanka (1971 and 1987–90) and in the Maldives

(1988), as well as an economic blockade of Nepal in 1989–90. While not always wholly successful—as with the 1987–90 peace-keeping operations in Sri Lanka—India embraced such interventionist policies towards South Asia, which it abhorred if applied to itself. In the face of heightening energy needs and deeper economic relations, Indian policy towards the region changed in the 1990s, mainly through the actions of Prime Minister I.K. Gujral, who effectively gave up reciprocity in bilateral affairs. Regarded as necessary to counter the influence of states such as Pakistan, China and the USA, the Gujral Doctrine instead based regional relations upon good will and benevolence.

Building on its paramount subcontinent status and pre-existing treaty-based security relationships with Bhutan and Nepal dating from 1949–50, Indian leaders also attempted to initiate some forms of Asian multilateralism. These efforts dated from Nehru's Asian Relations Conference in March 1947 and calls in 1967 for an Asian Council. As such, India stepped up multilateral links within the region in order to improve her stability and trade links and most importantly to increase India's global standing. This policy included joining various multilateral bodies such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in 1985,

BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation—formerly Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand Economic Cooperation) in 1997, and links with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) from 1992 onwards. These latter links rested upon India creating further military, economic and diplomatic ties with South-East Asia through the 'Look East' policy, which built upon her religious, artistic, linguistic and political legacies to the region. Through such policies India steadily extended her regional dominance beyond South Asia, emboldening her global Great Power aspirations. In general (and by the 1990s), such eastern-looking policies held greater importance to India's policy-makers than her relations towards West Asia.

India's aspirations to achieve Great Power status also contained engrained beliefs of her natural supremacy in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Apart from inheriting the British colonialists' Curzonian arc

from Aden to Singapore, this domination rested upon historical elements whereby British, Dutch and French colonialists had all invaded India from the sea. As such, India insisted that the Great Powers leave the Indian Ocean, and in the 1960s and 1970s endeavoured to declare the IOR a Zone of Peace. After this approach failed, India joined the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation (IOR-ARC) in 1995, a trade association composed of 18 member states. By the 1990s the security importance of the IOR was underscored as India became the biggest consumer of natural gas from the Gulf, Central Asia and South-East Asia. Corresponding increases in her economic growth ameliorated her Great Power aspirations. Rising strategic competition with Pakistan and China increased this importance, and was underpinned by India having the most developed navy in the Indian Ocean.

On a wider spectrum, India remained suspicious of foreign investment, multinational corporations and a gradually globalizing economic order. Such external financial mechanisms were regarded as threatening *swadeshi* through coercive and restrictive multilateral organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). However, the 1980s were also marked by selective foreign capital and technological investment in India as the ties of non-alignment were re-defined by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to indicate the basis for a new international economic order. Such changes took advantage of India's largely apolitical relationships with Africa and Latin America and the legacy of the NAM. India's gradual liberalization would be resolutely spurred on by the 1991 balance of payments crisis.

In these ways, the advantages of economic liberalization in terms of status acquisition were gradually being acknowledged by India's leaders, especially as a way to engage with the international system's Great Powers, such as the USA. Such understandings also recognized the realities of a post-Cold War world, which had disrupted existing Indo-USSR links, increasingly made the NAM irrelevant and demanded new foreign policy dimensions if Great Power status was to be achieved. However, anti-US sentiments remained as India's perception of the USA directly acting against her interests continued during the 1980s, particularly as the USA sent arms via Pakistan to counter the Soviet

invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. As the Cold War ended, US strategic disinterest grew, in conjunction with the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989. China would, however, continue to support Pakistan throughout this period and their aid indirectly helped Pakistan, in turn, to support the insurgency that erupted in Indian-controlled Kashmir during the 1980s.

Overall, by the 1990s India was steadily increasing her regional and international status en route to her goal of acquiring Great Power status. In response to its interaction internationally, India's core belief in becoming a Great Power remained in place, now characterized by an injection of *realpolitik* and continued anti-imperialism towards the USA and China. These attitudes had enabled India's successful dominance of South Asia, and a gradual spreading of her influence eastwards into South-East Asia and the Indian Ocean. On a wider scale, however, she remained an outlier in the international system, separated from the supremacy of the P-5 powers of the UN Security Council.

#### **Post-1998: India's aspirations evolve**

The 1990s witnessed the emergence of Hindu nationalism under the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as India's domestic politics shifted away from the dominance of the Indian National Congress (INC) Party. In 1998 the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition gained power, breaking decades of INC rule. Through a *Hindutva* emphasis on regaining India's glorious Hindu past, the BJP wished to reverse the perceived failure of India to successfully impose itself regionally and globally, and they resuscitated calls for India to reclaim her rightful place in the world. Explicit nuclear weapon testing was deemed necessary to fulfil these aims and to ensure for India, as BJP manifestos stated, 'a role in world affairs commensurate with its size and capability'.

From these perspectives, BJP policy fitted with voices within India's strategic community who believed that the pre-eminence of the UN Security Council P-5 was only guaranteed by their exclusive possession of strategic nuclear forces. BJP leaders and these elites contended that India would only be heard (and gain a permanent veto on the UNSC) when she explicitly had nuclear weapons capability, something that had not been achieved with her earlier tests. An additional background

of continued US sanctions from India's 1974 PNE and sustained nuclear discrimination against her from the P-5 powers concerning the NPT and Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), contributed to pressures to test. As such, and barely two months after the BJP had formed a new government in March 1998, a series of nuclear tests were carried out in the Pokhran desert bordering Pakistan on 11 and 13 May, 'nuclear nationalism' and 'nuclear imagination' in operation.<sup>18</sup> Pakistan responded with her own nuclear tests shortly afterwards at Chaghai Hills in Baluchistan on 28 and 30 May.

The impact of the Pokhran tests on India's desire for Great Power status was immense and transformed much of its foreign diplomacy. In particular, the far more pragmatic and singleminded outlook of the BJP concerning foreign policy made India proactive and expectant in its Great Power status acquisition by forcing international engagement. As BJP Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee stated at the time, 'India is now a nuclear weapon state [...] it is not a conferment that we seek; nor is it a status for others to grant [...] it is India's due, the right of one sixth of humankind'.<sup>19</sup> This greater sense of International Relations (IR) realism and realpolitik supplanted the earlier idealism and ahimsa typical of Nehru and the Congress Party, yet maintained the core principles of India gaining Great Power status, namely the protection of India's autonomy and independence. BJP beliefs in an emergent and strong India were underpinned by elite recognition of India's increased economic power and international significance by 1998. As such, India could withstand the pressure of sanctions, as her financial linkages to international corporations and other countries would protect her from complete economic isolation. Indeed, while the USA (and Japan) issued sanctions in the aftermath of the tests, Russia, France, China and the United Kingdom did not. By questioning the dominant global nuclear consensus (and being the first country to proclaim a new nuclear status since China in 1964), the Pokhran tests brought India into the global political, economic and strategic mainstream.

High levels of Indian diplomacy also came to characterize India's mainstream re-integration, as Indian officials and leaders endeavoured to maintain the momentum of the tests to make India a global power.

Thus, Indian government and Ministry of External Affairs officials undertook a policy of 'total diplomacy' with all states. Through this approach, and the catalyst of the 1998 tests, India aimed to inculcate new and deeper relationships across the world. Such a proactive approach often involved reference to an emergent ranked hierarchy in Indian diplomacy, whereby greater attention was given to the P-5 powers and second/middle-tier powers such as Japan, Australia, the European Union (EU) and Israel. This ranking differed from earlier Indian policy-makers, who had given equal status to all countries, regardless of (current or potential) political and economic relations. New diplomatic groupings (often with countries also striving for increased international status) also began to emerge, such as the Russia-China-India (RCI), Brazil-Russia-India-China (BRIC), and India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) formations. Such pragmatic and strategic developments were now a signal to other states 'that India's strategic frontier may not be coterminous with its political borders'.

By the beginning of the 21st century, India's Great Power aspiration was ascendant as her political, diplomatic and trade links increased exponentially: 'India matters', in a phrase. As such, India's international relations improved across the board, especially those with the USA, as the two countries' leaders talked of India and the USA as 'natural allies', a phrase first used by India's Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in his speech, 'India, USA and the World', made in New York to the Asia Society in September 1998. While this change was not straightforward to achieve and while Indian elite distrust of the USA remained, the 1998 nuclear tests forced US attention onto South Asia—particularly given India's significance as the largest military (and now nuclear) power between the USA's two major military presences in the Persian Gulf and East Asia. Critically, the USA began to accept the new consequences of India in terms of her economy, nuclear capabilities, stable democracy and large middle class. Such respect and acceptance increased India's international standing and made closer US ties a new pillar of India's foreign policy. In turn, India became a key strategic partner of the USA, witnessed in their bilateral Defence Agreement drawn up in 2005.

As India's international profile increased, heightened trade levels and greater military-to-military

links (including the signing of ‘strategic partnerships’ with many major and great level powers) personified her international interaction. Such ties have helped expand and strengthen India’s links to the international community and international economy, confirming her status as a rising international force. Typical of this expansion, Indian policy-makers broadened the scope of India’s security horizons, with officials talking of India’s ‘extended neighbourhood’ (Central Asia, South-East Asia and Africa), ‘Look East Phase 2’ (towards East Asia and Australasia), a more even-handed approach to West Asia (between Israel and the Arab states), as well as better links with the EU. A rising presence in the IOR has underlined this expansion of Indian diplomacy along with a more explicit emphasis on combating terrorism and piracy, and protecting international trade routes. While regional problems still exist (especially territorial disputes with Pakistan over Kashmir and China over Arunachal Pradesh), India’s political and economic links with her neighbourhood have become more stable.

## Conclusions

Over the last 60 years, an aspiration to achieve Great Power status has become a normalized feature of Indian foreign policy. Through the legacies of colonial powers and Nehru, this aspiration developed through continued international interaction. Much of this development came from learning the lessons of systemic realpolitik, such as India’s defeat by China in 1962, wars in 1965 and 1971 with Pakistan, and forcing the world’s attention towards India with the nuclear tests of 1998. From these events we can expect India’s Great Power aspiration to continue and to become more heightened, while being tempered by a suspicion of outside powers and the maintenance of Indian autonomy in all areas. The core sentiments within India’s Great Power aspiration—anti-imperialism, self-reliance and being unaligned—will remain integral to such a disposition. As such, the very nature of India’s Great Power aspiration may be potentially debilitating to its full integration into the global economy (for fear of losing self-reliance), and will certainly militate against any all-weather alliances. Instead, strategic partnerships will flourish where the political and economic gains for India are clear. Of note here is that despite different political parties being in power in India, this consensus on Great

Power status has remained unchanged, suggesting a normative durability in the belief and approach to the acquisition of Great Power status.

According to Nayar, power has 10 features. Four of these are ‘hard’ features: the military; the economy; technology; and demographics. Six of these are ‘soft’ features: norms (which can be defined as beliefs, hopes, fears); leadership of international forums; culture; state capacity; strategy and diplomacy; and national leadership. In symbiosis, these virtues translate into power and influence within the international system concerning security provision, the determination and style of financial institutions, and the control of knowledge acquisition and dissemination. Currently the USA is the only complete power in regard of all these power virtues.

In comparison with other states—both the P-5 powers and other second-tier (and aspirant great) powers from each continent—how does India measure up? A cursory comparison can be seen in Table 1.1, below, which shows India’s relative strength in terms of ‘hard’ virtues—its physical landmass, population, economic performance and military expenditure. While looking certain to surpass Japan in the next decade to become the world’s third largest economy, maintaining current rates of growth indicate that by the middle of the 21st century the size of the Indian economy will surpass that of the USA and perhaps eventually China. It is India’s comparatively younger (and in the future, given current growth rates, larger) population and continued growth in gross domestic product (GDP) that are essential to this surpassing of other Great Powers.

In turn, India has the third highest rate of military expenditure, and the world’s fourth largest army. This expenditure can rise in line with her economic expansion, which is dominated by India’s expertise in software, but also growing strength in industrial production, satellite technology and arms manufacture.

Growth will also be aided by the preponderance of English language usage in India and its increasing cultural exports in terms of film, cuisine, music, dance and literature—all ‘soft’ power attributes. A democratic tradition additionally increases India’s international legitimacy. In turn, it is important to note that ‘Great Powers are not just made by their material capacities

but also by their dispositions, that is, by their willingness to articulate a vision of a preferred world and to accept the burdens of shaping that vision'. Here, India needs to achieve more, to be more proactive in its global interaction and to lead debates in international forums on topics such as global warming and energy security. Such leadership may often appear paradoxical in the face of India's economic needs and will demand new, innovative yet balanced diplomatic approaches. Having a clearer national security strategy would also facilitate India's international rise, and a nascent National Security Council (NSC) and National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) (both founded in 1998), as well as a Draft Nuclear Doctrine (first issued on 17 August 1999) are all steps that ameliorate this factor.

### **Chris Ogen**

While India is accurately seen as a candidate Great Power, her border issues are stumbling blocks to freeing her influence away from South Asia and into the international system. These issues (and ongoing fractious relations with Pakistan, China and often Bangladesh) are continued influences on separatists

within India, especially the Naxalites who early in the 21st century were active in a third of the country, as well as other groups in her north-east. India's population is also India's potential Achilles' heel as it modernizes, draining resources for a population that currently remains generally highly illiterate, unskilled and impoverished. The challenge to ameliorate such conditions seems even harder when comparisons with other major powers are made, and it will take some time to achieve higher living standards. High incidences of corruption, bureaucratic lethargy and apathy in law implementation, all exacerbate these factors. However, as India's economy continues to expand and investment continues to filter out through the country's states to its vast population, it is reasonable to expect that, with time, many of these issues can and will be resolved. Although India may never achieve a permanent seat on the UNSC (given that the P-5 would have to implement any reforms, which would by definition diminish their own influence), we can expect India to emerge as one of the major poles, and hence Great Powers, of the 21st century.