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Rising India: Partner in Shaping the Global Commons?

One of the major emerging U.S. security debates is the impact of rising powers on managing global commons such as the sea, air, space, and cyberspace domains. If the U.S. command of the commons was taken for granted a decade ago,[1] current concerns include the consequences of relative U.S. decline, the rapid diffusion of technological capabilities, crowding of the global commons, and the challenge of managing the commons in a multipolar world.[2] India's significant technological capabilities and operational programs to exploit the commons are not in doubt. What is not clear, however, is whether the U.S. strategic community sees India as a potential partner in managing the global commons.

The U.S. literature on the commons is rightly focused on the role of Beijing as the most likely peer competitor to Washington. Due to the growth of the Chinese military and strategic capabilities over the last few years, Beijing's capacity to influence the commons has been significant. While some in Washington call for accommodating China to help manage the global commons, many others view Beijing as the principal threat to U.S. primacy as well as the main obstacle to reworking the international rules for managing the commons. In contrast to the sharply divided views on China, U.S. attitudes toward India remain ambivalent.

Although significant cooperation has already occurred between the United States and India in the maritime domain of the Indian Ocean, there is no

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emphasis on New Delhi as a potential partner for the United States across the commons. For example, a recent assessment simply lumps India with China and Russia as potential challenges for the United States in the global commons. As Pentagon strategists Michele Flournoy and Shawn Brimley argue, "rising powers will not simply be content to simply acquiesce to America's role as uncontested guarantor of the global commons. Countries such as China, India, and Russia will demand a role in maintaining the international system in ways commensurate with their perceived power and national interests."[3]

Other Americans see more open-ended possibilities for engaging India in reframing international global commons regimes, and call for a sustained U.S. engagement with such pivotal actors like India that share Washington's concerns to keep the commons open.[4] In India too, traditionalists who have long chafed under U.S. primacy in the commons tend to see Washington as part of the problem. And those in New Delhi who fear the post–Cold War unipolar moment would want to insure against U.S. dominance by promoting old forums like the G-77 or new instruments such as the strategic triangle with Russia and China or the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) countries.

Does the U.S. strategic community see India as a potential partner in managing the global commons?

Yet, the United States and India are natural partners in reshaping the global commons. Multilateralism and a strong universalism guide Indian views of global governance. If the drift toward third world radicalism and the excessive emphasis on sovereignty in the 1970s tended to limit India's vision of the global commons, India's globalization since the early 1990s and its emergence as a major power have begun to encourage New Delhi to reconsider its past positions. But questions remain: does the United States understand India's emerging position? Does it agree?

Beyond Universalism of the Weak

Unlike many other developing countries, India actively participated in various international debates in the middle of the last century about the creation of a new global order. After World War I, the Indian nationalist movement began to develop an abiding interest in international affairs. India's nationalist leaders, drawn largely from lawyers, joined the international discourse in the 1920s and 1930s on the tragedy of balance of power politics and the need for collective

security. Ideas about universalism, liberal internationalism, and solidarity with fellow national liberation movements deeply influenced independent India's early foreign policy thinking. Even before independence, India became a signatory to the UN Charter and played an active role in early political debates in the new world body—from drafting the human rights declaration to the management of newly-invented nuclear weapons. Indian delegates tended to emphasize universal solutions, oppose the approaching Cold War, and insist upon preserving a peaceful international environment.

The Indian delegation to the UN was surprisingly less concerned about national sovereignty and non-intervention, concerns that colored its international positions in the later decades. This brief phase of undiluted support to universalism is not recognized in most narratives about Indian foreign policy. The sweeping generalizations about India's multilateralism suggest that New Delhi "was not very enthusiastic about the post-Second World War development of international human rights law, which justified the international community intervening in the domestic affairs of states."[5]

Contesting this conventional wisdom, a recent study of India's role in the drafting of the human rights declaration underlines the extraordinary attempt by Jawaharlal Nehru to promote the universal above the national. Nehru's initiatives for international intervention against the apartheid regime in South Africa and his emphasis on the rights of migrant people underlined a very different approach than the one imposed on early India's foreign policy by current scholarship. Manu Bhagavan's path-breaking study of Indian diplomacy at the UN in the late 1940s argues that Nehru's emphasis was not:

> [O]n a modern world of competing sovereign nation-states. Instead, he sought to fashion a post-liberal order . . . (yet) Nehru was no idyllic utopian. He knew that One World was a just but distant goal. In the meantime, he was satisfied with making measured movement in this direction, by helping to shape the overall UN, as with the South Africa question, and by building smaller pieces of infrastructure, such as the human rights declaration.[6]

Beyond the issues of apartheid in South Africa and the human rights declaration, Nehru signaled his commitment to the notions of collective security and chose to take the dispute with Pakistan on Jammu and Kashmir to the UN Security Council in 1948. India's deep disappointment with the politics of the Security Council in some senses inoculated it against the temptation to find international solutions to its core national security issues.

Despite the Kashmir fiasco, India continued to advocate universalist solutions to many global issues. Non-discriminatory, comprehensive, and universal disarmament became the key words of Indian vocabulary on arms control. On the nuclear question, it took the lead in promoting a test ban, freezing production of fissile materials, and promoting a nonproliferation treaty. It

repeatedly sought a ban on space weapons. It actively participated in the negotiation of the Antarctic Treaty, the Outer Space Treaty, and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

In all these treaties, India placed a special emphasis on protecting and preserving the "common heritage of mankind." It also emphatically supported the comprehensive ban against deployment of weapons in the global commons like Antarctica, sea beds, and outer space. It insisted on just rules of the road for governing the commons, and was critical of attempts by major powers to create loopholes in the agreements that limit the demilitarization of the commons. As a country with relatively more advanced diplomatic resources, and one which saw itself as a leader of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the G-77 grouping in the UN General Assembly, India also believed it was speaking for the rest of the developing world.

The Indian universalism articulated so powerfully by its first prime minister, Nehru, acquired a different and somewhat limiting tone after his death in 1964. The new tone emphasized national and territorial sovereignty. As Indian leaders graduated from a liberation movement with idealistic notions about how the world ought to run, they had to learn to deal with the harsh realities of international politics. If Nehru had the domestic political standing and an international vision to elevate universal considerations above state security in the drafting of the human rights declaration in the late 1940s, his successors had to necessarily be more conservative in trying to restrict the capacity of the international system to interfere in India's internal affairs.

India's globalization and emergence as a major power have led New Delhi to reconsider its role.

By the end of the Cold War, India had drifted away fully in the opposite direction from Nehru. Thanks to the bitter experience of the diplomatic intervention by the Anglo-Saxon powers in Kashmir, India began to reject all multilateral attempts at increasing the power of the UN and other bodies vis-à-vis the state. India, which took the Kashmir dispute to the Security Council with the hope that the great powers would take their responsibility to reverse aggression, seriously learned the hard way that the Security Council was very much part of the power politics in the world system. India's extraordinary emphasis on state sovereignty seemed justified on the basis of repeated and relentless intervention by the major powers in the internal affairs of the newly independent nations.[7]

India's emphasis on state sovereignty also reinforced a peculiar kind of universalism in New Delhi's multilateral diplomacy from the 1970s. As India became a target of a variety of nonproliferation and technology denial arrangements, its resistance to these regimes was framed in terms of universal principles. Having been reluctant to exercise the nuclear weapon option before the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) came into force in 1970, and hemmed in by the international treatment of India as a proliferation risk, New Delhi rejected the nonproliferation arrangements as discriminatory. New Delhi insisted on respecting such first principles as equity and equality in regimes. India then sought to pit the notion of universal and comprehensive "disarmament"—the elimination of a particular category of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs)—against the "arms control" arrangements that sought to limit rather than abolish the arsenals of the major powers. India also developed the argument that the global regimes, such as the NPT, were about the divide between "nuclear haves and have not's" and that the vertical proliferation in major power arsenals was more dangerous than the horizontal spread of WMDs.[8] To the skeptical, India's emphasis on the first principles of equity and fairness among nations and the emphasis on universal regimes had the effect of protecting India's own options on WMDs. While that is certainly true, the emphasis on fairness in the making of global regimes became central to the articulation of Indian positions.

At another level, India steadily shifted toward demanding limits on universal application of regimes on a number of multilateral issues to accommodate concerns of territorial and national sovereignty. This was partly influenced by the radicalization of Indian foreign policy during the 1970s. The emphasis on third world solidarity movements and opposition to the dominance of the West or the North emerged as major themes of Indian foreign policy, at a time when New Delhi actively pursued economic autarky and severed its links with global markets. This new economic orientation had its effect on how India thought and negotiated about the global commons. New Delhi considered that the emphases on sovereignty and self-reliance were effective antidotes to the perceived emergence of "neocolonialism." In the negotiation of the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea during the 1970s for example, India was on the side of those seeking expansion of the territorial jurisdiction over ocean spaces.[9]

Similarly, in the debates on outer space in the 1970s and 1980s, India tended to focus on strengthening state sovereignty. Like most other developing countries, India sought to limit the use of direct broadcast satellites based in outer space. Although India was a strong producer of cultural products and significant exporter of songs and films, New Delhi was carried away by the rhetoric of the "new international information order" and a fear that new space

and information technologies would reinforce the dominance of the West.[10] The "third worldism" of the 1970s often blinded India to the possibilities that many of the new technologies might help India improve its own standing in the world and benefit from them economically and politically.

That ideology—not self-interest—guides many of India's negotiating positions in the multilateral forums is a compelling thesis that has been developed elsewhere.[11] Given India's past record on global issues and its strong preference for the third world, many in the United States might wonder if New Delhi is really ready to play a leading role in shaping the global commons in partnership with other countries, especially the United States. The following analysis suggests that change might be on the way as India begins to adapt, even if incrementally, to its increased weight in the international system and the responsibilities that come with it.

Toward Internationalism of the Strong

In all the major areas considered to be global commons—sea, air, space, and cyber domains—India's capabilities are significantly rising and are poised to influence the outcomes in the not too distant future. The Indian Navy is emerging as one of the largest in the world and is beginning to make an impact on the maritime politics of the Indian Ocean, making interesting forays into the Pacific and drawing the attention of other major powers, especially China and the United States.[12] An ambitious but cost-effective space program is positioning India as a strong space power that today launches satellites to near earth and geosynchronous orbits, is at the forefront of space-based remote sensing and communication, and has a lunar exploration program that has helped discover water on the Moon.[13] India has carved out a niche for itself in the global civilian information technology industry, although it lags well behind China, Russia, and the United States on cyber warfare capabilities.[14]

If Washington is ambiguous about cooperation with India on global commons and is focused more on the challenges of engaging China, New Delhi too has had little public debate on the new issues relating to global commons, let alone defining policy positions for the government. Speaking about the rise of China and India, and the importance of their cooperation, India's national security adviser, Shivshankar Menon, has asked if Beijing and New Delhi were "willing and capable of contributing to global public goods in terms of security, growth and stability" that Asia and the world require. In this rhetorical question, Menon wanted to know how the two rising powers could "help preserve security in the global commons."[15] The significance of Menon's comments, probably the first ever by a senior Indian government official on global commons, is that New Delhi is beginning to ask the right questions. It will be a while, however,

until India comes up with productive answers. As Menon said, "Asia has proved that she can do the economics. Can she also do the politics that come with power?" India's capacity to respond to the issues relating to the commons is constrained by an unresolved tension between the inertia of its policy positions framed during the early years of building the post-colonial state and the logic of its emerging major power status. The tension expresses itself in at least three important ways:

New Delhi is beginning to ask the right questions.

Autonomy vs. Responsibility

One set of contradictions in the evolving Indian policy toward the global commons is between the traditional Indian emphasis on limiting the constraining impact of the international system on its freedom of action and the emerging prospect of New Delhi contributing to rule-making in the international system. Any survey of the writing on India's foreign policy objectives would quickly identify a defining phrase: "strategic autonomy."

For four generations of post-colonial Indians, an independent foreign policy was the touchstone of a newly-won political freedom. The capacity to resist the dominance of the great powers was central to the very conception of nation building in India, as in so many other states in Asia. Today, as India's weight in the international system grows and New Delhi emerges as one of the pivotal states in the international system, there are growing demands to take up the responsibility for writing new rules and help maintain them. Not all these demands are coming from the outside; quite a few are being made at home as well.[16]

The external pressures were illustrated by Western efforts to get India to change its approach to the mitigation of global warming. Traditional positions demanded that India simply blame the West for carbon emissions, but the United States and Europe were now demanding that India share part of the burden. As the Obama administration made global warming a major priority for its diplomacy vis-à-vis China and India during 2009, New Delhi began to adapt, though slowly. In an internal government memo, the environment minister of India, Jairam Ramesh, called for aligning India's positions with those of the major powers and distancing itself from the G-77. When this note was leaked, there was uproar within the Indian public square.[17]

Abandoning the G-77 was what India seemed to do finally at the December 2009 Copenhagen summit. India, of course, did not align itself fully with the West either. By working with China and middle powers like Brazil and South Africa, New Delhi expanded its leverage in the climate change negotiations and

emerged as a critical player in Copenhagen. The nuanced shift in India's position should bode well for how New Delhi might think of its own international role in the future, especially in the global commons.

From Universal Multilateralism to Selective Coalitions

India's performance at the Copenhagen summit on global warming also demonstrates another conflict in India's worldview. In the past, New Delhi was an unflinching champion of multilateralism and collective rule-making by a democratic process in the UN General Assembly. Not being a member of the Security Council, this seemed a sensible position. India, however, soon found that despite an overwhelming majority in the General Assembly, the initiatives in favor of a new international economic and international information order were going nowhere. India's frustrations got worse as the Security Council began to appropriate many functions of international rule-making in the post–Cold War world.[18]

India's ambivalence toward the Security Council was reflected in its determination to find a way to sit at the high table, while simultaneously deploring it for becoming a concert of great powers at the expense of democratic decisionmaking. As India's power potential improved throughout the first decade of the twenty-first century, the tension between multilateralism and smaller groups is being slowly resolved in favor of the latter. Although India has not abandoned the NAM or the G-77, these organizations have long ceased to dominate the foreign policy priorities of New Delhi.

At the end of the Cold War, India first sought to make the NAM efficient by promoting a grouping within it called the G-15 of leading developing countries. Without a change in the framework, which was no longer relevant for the post–Cold War world, tinkering with the NAM framework was not going to do the trick for India. New Delhi's focus slowly began to shift away from the NAM and G-77 to East Asian multilateralism, where India sought to integrate itself with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other forums of the globalizing Southeast Asia.[19] At the global level, India began to experiment with even smaller groupings like the triangular strategic forum with Russia and China, and the IBSA (India, Brazil, and South Africa) forum, the BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India, and China) forum on issues relating to global warming, and the short-lived Asia-Pacific "democratic quad" (with the United States, Japan, and Australia) during 2007–2008.

Working in these smaller forums is very different from India's traditional multilateral activism in the NAM and G-77 and is more focused on practical outcomes. This experience should shape India well as it prepares to deal with the prospect of working with other major powers in rule-making for the global commons. In the past, New Delhi tended to accept international rules where it did

not have capacity to change them, resisted those like in the nuclear domain that were in direct conflict with India's core national security interests, and champion (if unsuccessfully) idealistic approaches such as the new international economic order or complete abolition of nuclear weapons. As it becomes a great power, India is learning to work with other powers to develop norms, even if they are not comprehensive, and implement them against the wishes of many past fellow travelers from the Third World.

Order vs. Equity

As it adapts to the logic of major power status, India has been compelled to discard some of its past baggage about equity and justice in the construction of global regimes. The arguments against discrimination in global regimes have been among the most important ideas developed by independent India's foreign policy. Nowhere was this stronger than in arms control. After the initial attempt by Nehru to promote such measures as a test ban and partial and comprehensive nuclear freezes, India's positions became increasingly fundamentalist. Indian positions emphasized all or nothing, as New Delhi insisted that it would not accept arms control measures short of the total abolition of nuclear weapons.

> New Delhi is moving from emphasizing equity and justice to order and stability.

After it declared itself a nuclear weapon state in 1998, New Delhi slowly began to downplay the notions of equity and equality in the construction of global nuclear regimes, and emphasized India's role as a "responsible" nuclear weapon state. This in turn opened the door for the negotiation—if painful—of a nuclear deal with the United States during 2005–2008. Under the deal, India separated its civilian and military nuclear programs, put the former under international safeguards, and extended strong support to the global nonproliferation regime in return for access to commercial nuclear markets. Selling the deal within India became an uphill exercise, as the champions of conservative positions on the left and right as well as entrenched anti-Americanism almost derailed the initiative. That Prime Minister Manmohan Singh put his political life on the line, in an attempt to get the nuclear deal approved by the parliament, exhibited the painful political transformation in India's worldview.

One of the important elements of the transformation was New Delhi's recognition of the need to defend the existing international order, even if it was unjust from India's own past criteria. This dilemma became acute when India had to vote repeatedly against Iran in the International Atomic Energy Agency amidst Western attempts to mobilize the world for collective action against Tehran's

nuclear transgressions. Iran's justification for its nuclear program, especially the plans to enrich uranium, were at least superficially similar to those against discrimination developed by India in earlier decades. New Delhi was now buying none of that; it insisted that proliferation of WMDs in its neighborhood was a security threat, and that Tehran must abide by its commitments under the NPT. New Delhi came under intense criticism at home for abandoning an autonomous policy toward Iran under U.S. pressure.

For all the controversy that surrounded India's policy toward Iran's nuclear proliferation, it is quite clear that New Delhi is moving away from the traditional emphasis on equity and justice to the imperatives of order and stability. India, of course, has some distance to travel before it unambiguously commits itself not only to making rules but also enforcing them. This transition, unfolding inch by inch, is critical for India's future participation in constructing and maintaining regimes for the global commons.

First Steps: Maritime Cooperation

Just as the changes in India's approach to the global commons are the most marked in the maritime domain, Indo-U.S. strategic cooperation has similarly expressed itself most vigorously in the high seas. The naval contact and exchanges between the two nations began tentatively in the late 1980s and have been pursued more fervently from the early 1990s. The United States suspended military contacts with India in May 1998 after New Delhi's nuclear tests, but resumed them in 2001 as part of the Bush administration's strategic outreach to India.

Neither the Clinton administration nor its successor framed naval and maritime engagement with India in terms of the global commons. But the rapid expansion of Indian and Chinese naval capabilities and the United States' own search for maritime partners have lent a special significance to the expanding cooperation between New Delhi and Washington in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Through the first decade of this century, these include India's naval support for the U.S. Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan during 2002, and New Delhi's coordination with Canberra, Tokyo, and Washington on tsunami relief operations in the Indian Ocean at the end of 2004. Naval cooperation was at the center of an ambitious Indo-U.S. defense cooperation agreement in June 2005 and the announcement of a maritime security framework during the visit of President George W. Bush to India in March 2006.[20] Maritime security and promotion of public goods in the ocean spaces has also been part of India's security partnerships with Japan and Australia.[21]

The significance of the Indian naval, and more broadly defense, engagement with the United States can only be understood when seen against the

background of India's military isolationism and prolonged opposition to foreign military presence in newly independent countries in general and the Indian Ocean littoral in particular. For nearly two centuries before its independence, the armies of India were the principal instruments for preserving order and stability in the Indian Ocean littoral.[22] Colonial India's expeditionary tradition and its contribution to global peace reached its high water mark when nearly a million Indian soldiers participated in both World War I and II on behalf of the allied forces.

Cooperation is expanding between New Delhi and Washington in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Given nationalist resentments against a colonial power using Indian troops without local consent and the imperatives of an independent foreign policy and non-alignment, post-colonial New Delhi rapidly moved toward military isolationism and steadily stripped off its long-standing links with the United Kingdom. While it made new partners with Russia, the contacts were limited to equipment purchase and training. There was little interaction between the two armed forces on issues of doctrine, operations, and missions. Despite its dependence on Russian military supplies, New Delhi supported calls within the NAM and G-77 for the withdrawal from the Indian Ocean of all the naval forces belonging to "external" powers. India also opposed, as a matter of principle, all foreign bases and other military presence in the territories of the developing world.

Against this background, the Indian decision in 1991 to launch a full-spectrum engagement with U.S. armed forces, especially between the two navies, marked an important step in the evolution of modern Indian military thinking. The leadership of the Indian Navy was the first among the Indian services to recognize the significance of adapting its approach to the larger national economic strategy of globalization that New Delhi launched in the early 1990s. The Indian Navy began to reach out to both the major naval powers in the Indian Ocean as well as the smaller countries in the littoral. Moving away from the traditional notions of sea-denial and its diplomatic component of keeping other naval powers out of its neighborhood, India began to value cooperation and contract with other navies. Given the flexible nature of naval power, the Indian navy was quick to adapt a variety of roles for itself—disaster relief, humanitarian operations, building capabilities of smaller navies, protecting common maritime spaces from the challenges of piracy and terrorism, and supporting the sovereignty of island states.

Although the Indian Navy was much smaller than its U.S. counterpart, its post–Cold War naval doctrine was not dissimilar to that adopted by the U.S. Navy in the middle of the last decade, emphasizing widest possible engagement and multilateralism. Besides a dramatic expansion of bilateral and multilateral naval exercises in the Indian Ocean, New Delhi also chose to lay the foundation for a region-wide discussion of the possibilities for cooperative and collective security. In 2008, it took the initiative to convene the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium by bringing together the naval chiefs from the littoral. As with Washington, New Delhi now finds itself in the happy situation where its national interests are converging with those of others in sustaining an open maritime commons. As the Indian economy began to grow rapidly amidst the liberalization and globalization of its economy, its sea-borne trade began to grow by leaps and bounds during the last two decades. For the Indian Navy then, protecting the sea-lines of communication in the Indian Ocean became an important objective. That was also an objective widely shared by other trading nations and the dominant naval power in the Indian Ocean, the United States.

The U.S. and India may have much to overcome before they can jointly shape the global commons.

The Indo-U.S. convergence in securing the open maritime commons in the Indian Ocean stands in a bit of contrast with the growing divergence between U.S. and Chinese maritime interests in the Pacific Ocean. For Beijing, for whatever reasons, extending its maritime sovereignty, restraining the U.S. Navy's freedom to operate close to its shores, seeking to regulate the presence of foreign navies in its exclusive economic zone, and gaining a measure of control over its adjacent waters up to the first island chain have become central. But they run counter not just to U.S. objectives in the region, but to all those others in the region that depend on the open seas of the Western Pacific for trade and economic prosperity.

It is possible that some day, a rising China might recognize its natural interests, as a great power, in an open maritime commons. There might even be reason to hope that its recent forays into the Gulf of Aden, where China has sent its naval units since the end of 2008 to counter the growing menace of piracy, are the beginning of a process that will move away from its traditional obsessions with sovereignty, limiting its contributions to the maintenance of global commons.[23]

Meanwhile, India has already begun to move away from the past emphases on sovereignty. This is reflected in the title of its current maritime strategy: "Freedom to Use the Seas."[24] Today, the contrast in U.S. thinking about rising

Chinese and Indian maritime power is real and sharpening. While many in Washington see Beijing's anti-access strategy unleashing a negative dynamic in the Western Pacific, the Pentagon commends New Delhi's rising profile in the Indian Ocean and beyond.[25]

Breaking Stereotypes

The positive experience of Indo-U.S. cooperation in the maritime commons, one would expect, might lead naturally toward a partnership between the two nations in other commons such as outer space and cyberspace. Such expectations, however, may turn out to be unrealistic without some fundamental changes in both countries.

At first glance, Washington and New Delhi would seem to share many attributes critical to the maintenance of global commons. Although some might believe common democratic values could help facilitate cooperation to manage the global commons, this is not a widely shared proposition in Washington today. Many in the Obama administration believe that the excessive emphasis on democracy by neoconservatives in the Bush era was disastrous for U.S. foreign policy. To be fair, there is also considerable skepticism within India on the advantages of structuring a relationship with Washington on the basis of political values. The reality, however, is that the recent conflict between Google and the Chinese government demonstrates the enduring relevance of internal regime orientation for the management of global commons.[26] While cooperation among democracies alone might not be enough to promote sustainable institutions in the global commons, such cooperation could shape and nudge non-democratic great powers toward moderation and accommodation.

Beyond the question of political values, the two countries share a number of other traditions that are likely to draw them together on global commons in the future. These include their adherence to the common law tradition that offers predictability and prevents large-scale legal misadventures by the state. The respect for property rights is another feature that will come in handy for cooperative thinking about global commons. The growing interpenetration of the two economies in the knowledge and IT sectors makes them natural partners in devising a regime for the cyber commons, on which a large and growing part of the two economies rely. More broadly, as India becomes a major power, its worldview could become increasingly similar to the Anglo-American traditions on openness and rule of law in the global commons. India either has or is acquiring the major attributes of the successful Anglo-Saxon model—entrepreneurial capitalism, liberal democracy, and a maritime orientation.[27]

For all these converging trends, New Delhi and Washington may have much to overcome before they can embark upon a joint effort in shaping the global commons. The central obstacle appears to be the unfinished agenda of reconciling Indian and U.S. positions on nonproliferation. Although Bush's civil nuclear initiative has sought to reconcile the two positions, India remains the target of sanctions and export controls administered by the nonproliferation bureaucracy in Washington. This, in turn, continues to feed New Delhi's suspicions that the United States is not really interested in building a partnership with India.

As a result, India and the United States forego many opportunities for working together in building norms and institutions in such commons as outer space. On one hand, there is widespread recognition of the possibilities for expanded Indo-U.S. cooperation in the development of space technologies as well as international space law; on the other, there is discord over U.S. nonproliferation restrictions on technology transfers to the Indian civil space program.[28]

One would have thought that the emerging stakes for the United States in cooperating with India—one of the world's largest economies and potentially a producer of advanced technologies—in the global commons are higher than the bureaucratic inertia holding Indo-U.S. political and strategic cooperation hostage. If the Obama administration completes the accommodation of India into the global nonproliferation order, and begins to engage India on the global commons, New Delhi might be more than eager to respond.

Notes

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