



## RISE OF ASIA (CHINA, INDIA, AND JAPAN): A CHALLENGE TO WESTERN HEGEMONY?

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### **Abstract**

*The rise of three powers China, India, and Japan brought the world's attention to Asia. All the three countries, rich and divergent in history, civilization, culture, resources, and demographics have paved their way to dominance in geopolitics via popular theories and discourses of international relations. The rise of these three Asian powers was not on the same level, each country followed a different path and strategy based on the available political, military, and economic resources, which resulted in a shift of power from West to East. Soft power politics too played an important part in the rise of these three countries. The Western and European power's involvement and formation of grand strategies like Quad (US-India-Japan-Australia), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and AUKUS (Australia-UK-US) in the Asian region are examples of power-shift in the global politics. The primary objective of this paper is to analyse the rise of China-India-Japan and its implications on the present world order. This paper also focuses on the downfall of US hegemony and the rise of Asian civilizations.*

**Keywords: Rise of Asia, Civilization, Panda Diplomacy, NAM, Hegemony and World Order.**

### **An assertive CHINA**

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, China being the only dominant communist country faced isolation from the West and European world. However, China liberalized its economy without altering its political system, which led to the transformation of its economy from a state-controlled economy to an open economy. China integrated into the world economy through foreign trade, investment, and adopting free-market reforms. Integration to world-capitalism, modernization, industrialization, and development of technology and communication also contributed to China's growth. The communist regime in China is also very successful in using its UNSC permanent membership and alliance with Russian Federation to achieve its geopolitical and strategic interests at the global level. It also played a significant role by extending its sphere of influence in Asia, Africa, and Latin American regions by forming multilateral arrangements such as Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Russia-India-China (RIC), and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to promote Chinese model of world order. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) also contributed to the emergence of China as the second-largest economy in the present world order. The soft power politics of China are also a calculated move from the government to build good relations with countries by using, the panda diplomacy<sup>1</sup> tool (Lind, 2017). Culture can be best understood with the food and language of that nation. Chinese cuisine is dear to people around the world, it is one of the most preferred and loved foods. Another important observation is the growing

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<sup>1</sup> Panda diplomacy is a favourite foreign policy of China since the 1950s when pandas, an animal that's natural habitat is entirely in China are given as loans to countries.



prominence of Mandarin in the last decade. With the rise of China as a superpower, the importance of the language and the demand for Confucius institutions<sup>2</sup> have also risen. The British council has also listed Mandarin as one of the top 10-languages to know in the future for economic dealings, trade, and the potential for further growth (The Importance of Mandarin, 2016). The people's republic of China led by President Xi Jinping is not just aiming to be an economic superpower, but also trying to dominate the world by spreading its soft power.

### **A Challenging JAPAN**

Japan had to rebuild its economy and society in the post-Second World-War period. It followed a unique model of development and made major political, social, and economic reforms that lead to the modernization of the country. In the process of rebuilding its economy and political system, Japan adopted the western model of development. It borrowed democratic political values and liberal economic principles which modernized its industrial sector. The trade relations with Western and European states, technological growth, and rise of soft power led to the emergence of Japan as a technological giant. Japan is the world's leading power in producing and exporting automobile and electronic devices including cars, mobiles, and cell phones from branded companies such as Honda, Toyota, Sony, and Panasonic. In the 21st century, Japan emerges as one of the advanced economies of the world. However, due to its proximity and strong trade relations with western countries, geographically Japan became very significant for US and UK to counter Chinese expansionist policies in the Asian region by forming grand alliances such as Quad (US-India-Japan-Australia).

Japan's tentacles are spread across the world via its cultural and soft power influence. The young population around the globe is very fascinated with Japan's popular culture of video games, comic books called Manga, and Japanese animated movies called the Anime. Japan recently hosted the Olympics 2020 successfully in 2021 after postponing it due to the outbreak of the pandemic. This too has diplomatic ties and foreign policy attached to it from the past. Japan has essentially been lobbying, bidding, preparing for, or hosting the Olympic Games almost constantly since the 1930s, 2020 Games was the fourth Olympic Games to be held in Japan, after the 1964 Tokyo Summer Olympics, the 1972 Sapporo Winter Olympics, and the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympics. Japan's assiduous interest in hosting the Olympics is an interesting approach to foreign policy as this event brings the world's attention towards the country and gives international recognition. Japan's educational system gives great importance to physical education too (Kietlinski, 2016).

The newly-elected PM of Japan Fumio Kishida will be the leading this industrialized world power and a cultural phenomenon with growing geopolitical prominence in the world where the eyes are in Indo pacific region, Japan being a major ally to The United States of America and an important economic partner to China is at the forefront to dominate the world.

### **A diplomatic India**

After independence in 1947, India adopted a Western model of the political system and followed the mixed economic development model. It witnessed the transformation from the British colony to nuclear power. In the present world order, India emerged as one of the largest democracies and economic super-power. Indian foreign policy also witnessed the shift from non-alignment to multi-alignment. Simultaneously, India followed unique and independent foreign and security policies such as

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<sup>2</sup> Confucius Institutes are public educational and cultural promotion programs funded and arranged currently by the Chinese International Education Foundation and formerly by Hanban, an organization affiliated with the Chinese government.



Panchsheel, Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Look East Policy (renamed as Act East Policy), Neighbourhood Policy, Look West Policy, and Connect Central Asian Policy to expand trade, political, defence and cultural relations with countries across the globe. India can maintain and balance its relations with major powers such as the US, China, and France through its neutral policy. As a developing economy, India emerged as a leader of third-world countries and advocated for equal opportunities at the global level. India also initiated a movement for New International Economic Order (NIEO) by reforming global organizations like UNSC, IMF, and World Bank. India is one of the leading contributors to UN forces to fight against common challenges like terrorism, climate change.

With a great vision in foreign policy, India is popular for cultural aspects too. From the art of Yoga to Bolly wood and to being known as the land of software gurus and mathematical geniuses, India has a diverse culture that the world adores (Tharoor, 2009). The revenue earned overseas from Indian movies runs in millions and trillions. In 2017, box office collections for Indian films overseas took \$367 million-up almost three times from \$125 million the year before (Vohra, 2018). The declaration of International Yoga Day on 21 June since 2015, following its inception in the United Nations General Assembly in 2014 is a calculated move by India in terms of soft power influence to the World. Prime Minister Narendra Modi since the time of taking charge has been persistent about strengthening foreign relations with various countries by promoting partnership and investments at various levels. The political aspirations combined with its foreign relations will take India to further heights.

### **The downfall of Western Hegemony**

The end of communism, the presence of NATO, and democratization of the third world led to the domination of the west in global politics. The United States represents the Western interest on the global level. However, the rise of new power poles, violent non-state actors, terrorism, climate change, covid-19, and failure of undemocratic global governing institutions challenged the West-dominated world order. The post-Brexit crisis in the EU, withdrawal of US involvement in Afghanistan and the Middle East, withdrawal from climate protocols, Russia's re-emergence as a Eurasian power and US-China trade war indicates the downfall of western hegemony in world politics. The rising tensions in the Indo-pacific region are highly concerning. China by using its vast military and navy is growing assertive in this region, if China invades Taiwan, this can lead to catastrophic issues for not only the people of Taiwan but the allies of the US like Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines as they could be invaded from Taiwan as well. Since the pandemic, every country and the respective government's true potential was evident to us. Monumental efforts are required from the US to combat the rising powers of Asia and to protect its hegemonic status.

### **Conclusion**

Despite several ethnic, religious, economic, political, and cultural differences many Asian countries especially the three major powers China-India-Japan share common foreign policy objectives. Three countries are aspiring economic powers, advocating multipolar world order, promoting NIEO, fighting against common challenges such as terrorism, extremism, and climate change, promoting peaceful and stable world order. Even though they follow the western model of development policies for the process of modernization, it cannot be considered as Westernization. The rise of Asia (China-India-Japan) will lead to the power-shift and downfall of US hegemony in the world.



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