

Hamdullah Baycar

Master candidate in Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University

## **Anja Manuel, *This Brave New World: India, China and the United States***

Simon & Schuster, New York 2016.

I reviewed this book during a stay in China. I stopped at a rest area when I was traveling to one of the Buddha Temples in the Sichuan province. At the rest area — a place where one can find all shapes and sizes of Chinese tea products —, an apothegm of the entrepreneur Lee Rie Ho attracted my attention. “The 21<sup>st</sup> century is the era for the revival of China and also the time for globalization of Chinese tea.” Throughout the last decade many academics, journalists, and politicians have claimed that China has the potential to be a superpower. Some commentators believe that China should be stopped before emerging as a superpower, while others call for the enhancement of cooperation between China and other countries. There is also discussion of how powerful India will be in the next two to three decades. People who believe that China and India do not have the potential to be the next superpowers often refer to current problems and handicaps in these countries. This book, *This Brave New World: India, China and the United States*, examines what the current superpower - that is the USA's - policies should be towards these two emerging powers, China and India.

During my stay in China, I linked insights from this book to the lectures and conversations that I participated in. My interactions with academics and experts, and with ordinary citizens encourages me to say that Anja Manuel is an expert on the issues discussed in her book. Even though the argument of the book is not very new in academic and political circles, her coherent analyses are worth reading. Manuel has had extensive experience in this particular area in Asia, in general, and in China and India, in particular. She first lived in Pakistan as her parents' worked there. Then she worked for the US State Department specializing South Asian Policy. She was involved in negotiations for the US and Indian Nuclear Accord. Also, she gives lectures at Stanford University on US Foreign Policy in

Asia. She is a co-founder of a strategic consultation firm which helps American companies in emerging markets, including, but not limited to, China and India.

At first glance, one can assume that the book is targeting a particular audience — i.e. Americans (especially policy makers) — because it deals specifically with whether the US should change its policies or not. Although this book is mostly about the US's relationships with China and India, it would be an underestimation, however, to say that the target audience of this book is only Americans. Since the possibility of there being future superpowers concerns all countries, and since the US is the leading power of today's world, Manuel's book is worth reading regardless of where one is from. Another assumption about the target readers of this book is timing. This book was published just before the elections for the US presidency during a time when both China and India are receiving much attention in candidates' debates and pledges. Although the author herself is aware of this timing, one should not assert that this book was written as propaganda for any particular candidate; instead, the book simply aims to influence the next president's policies regarding both China and India. This book will be interesting for undergraduate and graduate students, people who are interested in foreign policy and international relations, and people who want to learn basic information about the histories, ideologies, and administration systems of China and India. It may not be the best book, however, for those who already have a great amount of knowledge about these three countries and their relationships.

How the US should act towards future superpowers? Can, and should, the world's countries — especially the US — stop China and India from becoming future superpowers? Should new policies be made for China and India? Those are only some of the questions that are answered in this book. Manual argues that the Asian continent will be more significant in 2030 than it is today. She also claims that the US and Europe will not be able to solve global problems. Moreover, they will not be able to make decisions about universal topics without the Asian powers, especially China and India. Manual draws some possible scenarios in her book. Two of them are not desirable for the US, while the other one is the best option for the US. The first worst scenario is a conflict, including military conflict, between the US and China. The second one is a full collaboration between China and India which excludes the US. The best scenario is the US, China, and India cooperating with one another, but under the US's leadership, without excluding the US and the US-supported international system. Even though these are not the only options, they can be summed up using these three scenarios.

Manual suggests that in 2030, China and India will be among the most influential countries in the world economy. They will also be the most important actors in world-related problems, especially with regards to the environment, climate change, and pollution. Since these two countries will be the most important economic powers after the US, the best options for them is to cooperate and avoid conflicts with one another. By 2030, India and China will have released much pollution into the air and water, which could, and will, affect the entire world. Therefore, it will be impossible to solve the environmental problems by excluding these two countries. The book elaborates about why the US and China and India should cooperate with one another. Manual is aware, however, of the many difficulties

that they might face. It will be harder for the US to cooperate with China because of their having vastly different political and economic systems and histories, whereas it would be easier for the US to cooperate with India since it is a relatively democratic country. Nevertheless, gender inequality, income injustice, and conflicts with neighboring countries, especially with China and Pakistan, are handicaps for US-Indian relations.

The book consists of twelve chapters divided into three sections. The first section, which has three chapters, relates basic knowledge about both India and China's ancient and modern histories, current governmental systems, and their contemporary economic importance. The Chinese are more selective about their long history. Whereas they tend to not to think about the times when their country was humiliated, they are extremely proud of their ancient achievements. Indians, on the other hand, are more unbiased about their history. They express both their past achievements and failures. British colonialism has not caused them to hold hostility against the British. These different perspectives about their own histories shapes their perspectives for the future as well. China sees itself as one of the future's most influential powers, while India sees itself in a much humbler way. Democracy has never been part of Chinese tradition or history. It is not very surprising, therefore, to see that the founding father of the modern Chinese state, Mao Zedong, established a strongly centralized, authoritarian government. Although China does not have a democratic government, it is more cautious about corruption and more eager to adopt some particular laws against corruption. India's founding father, Mahatma Gandhi, on the other hand, created a strong democratic government with a system of checks and balances. Even though the existence of democracy in India is an advantage for better US-Indian relationships, its strict checks and balances system slows down the introduction of much needed reforms and some other projects that the government is attempting to implement. Therefore, the US government should ensure that the reforms and developments made in China should continue. The Chinese and Indian economies have been experiencing booms throughout the last half century. In Manuel's opinion, if the Chinese and Indian governments achieve some economic and social reforms, they will be the two most important economic powers other than the US by 2030. Manuel argues that this improvement is not contrary to US interests. For when these two economic giants achieve more prosperous lives for themselves, they will most probably increase the amount of imports from American companies, thereby creating more jobs in the US. Another significant advantage of the economic interdependence between these three powers is the decreased risk of military conflict because creating more economic ties between themselves will cost them more in possible interventions.

The second section of the book consists of the next six chapters. This part portrays the difficulties and necessities of building a "new brave world." One of the biggest difficulties for India is that of income injustice. With relation to this issue, China has achieved a greater amount of success than India, as there are 300 million people living with under \$1.25 in India compared to only 84 million people in China. The reason why Europe and the US should help these two giants to reduce their poverty levels is not only for the benefit of China and India. Poverty and humiliation can result in extreme nationalism and unrest—something which would affect the entire world. Since the majority of China's population

is of working age, a huge population may not be a problem for the country today. With the population's getting older and older, the Chinese economy will be prone to suffer in the future. Indeed, it is expected that only 47% of the population will be of working age in 2030. One possible solution to this problem is that of abolishing the one child policy in order to increase the number of people of working age in China in the future. In addition, this aging population can be a new market for European and American insurance and health providers. Even though India does not have an aging population problem, it has a considerable number of uneducated people. India has created a large sector for educated and skilled employees, but it has not generated enough skilled people at the same rate. Therefore, the US should encourage and assist India to achieve this task.

The issue of women is still one of the most tragic issues for India, in contrast with China. For instance, women work less in India than in China. Furthermore, they are more abused and discriminated in India than in China. Women in China, on the other hand, gained a significant role due to the communist leadership of Mao. He considered women to be one of the most important tools for economic development. Manuel has an interesting suggestion here when she called for the US to support the women in India. She does not see the issue of women as being simply a Western value alone. She also believes that the more women come to power, the more stable the world will be.

Manuel is most concerned about environmental issues. China and India are polluting the atmosphere and water. Since their first concern at the moment is not the environment but increased production and industry, this pollution will increase. Pollution does not only affect India and China, but it also affects Japan, South Korea, and even the US. It is very obvious that stopping climate change cannot be achieved without these two countries, even if the US and Europe allied themselves in this regard.

The third section of the book consists of three chapters. This section explains how these two future superpowers will attempt to undertake new roles in the world. India and China both give generous aid to their poor neighboring countries. China invests an extraordinary amount of resources outside of China. Both countries attempted to take upon themselves more responsibilities and roles in international organizations, including the United Nations. New emerging powers should be provided the ability to represent themselves in international organizations, from the World Bank to the International Monetary Fund. Many international organizations were founded after World War II; nevertheless, the conditions of the time have changed dramatically from that time and today. Therefore, China, India, and other emerging countries should have more powerful voices than they have today. Otherwise, it will prompt these countries to create alternative ways outside the current international system. This, no doubt, will harm US and European interests. China and India traditionally lived in peace despite their long border. Recently, tension has arisen between with regards to some areas. The US's priority should keep the peace in Asia, not only between China and India, but between other Asian countries as well because any possible military conflict can force America to take a side.

Anja Manuel argues that when a new power is in the process of emerging, conflict with the current power becomes more likely. She provides the example of Britain and United States. When the United States arose as a new power, Britain felt itself threatened

but, after consideration, the British decided to cooperate with the US instead of creating a conflict. Manuel suggests that the US should follow the same path with China and India as the British did with the US. They should create new possibilities for cooperation and avoid the issues that they might conflict on.

The book, *This Brave New World: India, China, and the United States* contains significant analyses. The comparison of the two Asian powers is only rarely made in other books, so it gives the audience the opportunity to understand two Asian powers as a whole. Manuel does not lose objectivity in most of the book. She criticizes or praises India, China, and the US on the basis of their achievements or shortcomings. Giving background knowledge about India's and China's histories and administrative systems is also another advantage of the book. Her personal background, combined with her academic and non-academic experiences, gives her a better ability to understand the region. Finally, this book is worth reading because it brings India onto the world's agenda.

Manuel repeatedly calls for cooperation between the US and China and says that this does not mean that the US has to accept everything that China says. Nevertheless, she does not draw any limitations. How the Chinese and US relationship will be affected after refusing or disagreeing about something is unclear. Manuel also suggests that the increasing population and the middle classes of India and China will help American companies sell more goods so as to create more jobs in America. She also argues, however, that the industries of both countries are developing and will be among the most influential industries in the world. If that is the case, their industries may be able to sustain their countries and may lead to job cuts in Europe and the US. The book does not deserve to be labeled as a piece of propaganda for the US presidential elections. However, the argument that the US should not create any conflicts with China and the claim that enhancing the position of women can foster world peace both seem to be related to the elections.