## 1AC v1 – Glenbrooks

### 1AC: Plan

#### Plan: The Republic of India ought to recognize an unconditional right of workers to strike.

#### Implementing a Right to Strikes solves rampant inequality by empowering collective bargaining.

Rai 20 Diva Rai 1-2-2020 "Right to Strike: Proposed Amendment in the Indian Constitution" <https://blog.ipleaders.in/right-to-strike-proposed-amendment-in-the-indian-constitution/#Strike_as_a_Fundamental_Right> (Writer at Intelligent Legal Solutions)//Elmer

Strike as a Fundamental Right **No fundamental right status has been given to the right to strike**. It is still a legal and statutory right. Article 51(c) of the Indian Constitution says that the state shall have to respect for international law and treaties and Article 253 of the Constitution says that such international laws and treaties should be ratified by the Indian parliament. All the international laws and conventions such as the International Labour Organization and Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 has adopted in its very basic structure the right to strike. Although **it is the essence of collective bargaining** which all the international conventions regarding workers talk about but no heed has been paid to these conventions by India. Even **the judiciary has failed to consider the dynamic transformation of right to strike**. **There is a dire need of right to strike to be given as a fundamental right**. Because **the right to form associations and** trade **unions** **will have no effect if right to strike is not given as a fundamental right.** Such rights will become hollow and illusory. Right to strike is **very important in the modern economic transactions.** It is the **ultimate weapon in the hands of** the **workers to get** their **demands satisfied** from the employer. Giving fundamental States to the right to strike will not only **improve** the economic structure of the country but will also improve the **economic well-being of workers, proper wages,** health and hygiene etc. In the modern civilised world, right to strike should be inalienable and inherent right to be given to the workers. The argument that the strike can lead to economic laws by virtue of dysfunctioning of the industries can be negated by the fact that if the right to strike is not given as a fundamental right, it will anyway disrupt the economic structure. The membership of the trade unions and associations will decrease resulting in economic losses to industries and eventually to the country. Recommendations In the case of Apparel Export Promotion Council vs A.K. Chopra, Supreme Court held that international covenants such as ICESCR etc are like an obligation on India to be fulfilled. It is the duty of the courts to interpret and incorporate the principles of these covenants in their judgements. The international laws clearly ask for the strike as a fundamental right of the workers. ILO, UDHR and ICESCR have in its basic structure adopted this right. India except right to strike, has adopted almost all the principles of these conventions. The need is to look at the industrial adjudication in India. In order to increase the membership of trade unions and associations formed in these industries, the collective bargaining forms a vital part which even judiciary has recognized. But such collective bargaining is only possible if the right to strike is made as a fundamental right under Article 19(1)(c). The restriction can also be attached to such right such as the strike to be peaceful and legal etc. It is a very important weapon for the employees which will help them to negotiate for their demands with employer. It will also **reduce** the **employer-employee domination** in the industries. There are **still** a large **number of industries** **in India** especially in the rural areas **which don’t provide even minimum wages to the workers**. The working environment is also in dismal state and exploitation is the ultimate result. In these circumstances, **strike becomes the ultimate remedy** to these workers. The right to strike also has some social aspects. The workers come from families. They have to earn for better livelihood. **If not adequate wages are provided** to them, it will harm their livelihood. If there is no concern for their health and hygiene, it will **impact their social needs**. Also mentioned in Part IV of the Constitution, it is the duty of the State to provide better working environment to workers. It can be concluded that in a country like India, strike should be made the fundamental right so that its industrial and economic sector flourish. Conclusion In a large democratic society like India with a huge number of economic transactions and well developed industrial sector, it is very much required to bring about policies for the welfare of people engaged as mentioned in Article 38 of the Constitution. Article 19(1)(c) may be able to provide them the right to form association and trade unions, but it is not enough. Sometimes, the circumstances require the workers to go one step beyond and start strike by stopping the work to push the employer to get the demands fulfilled. Right to strike is a statutory right in India guaranteed by Section 22 of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. There are certain conditions, which only if satisfied can the workers go on to strike. The right is an important weapon in the hands of workers for seeking redressal and safeguarding their liberties. The international laws mandates strike to be given as a fundamental right to workers. ILO, UDHR and ICESCR have in its basic structure adopted this right. India except right to strike, has adopted almost all the principles of these conventions. The need is to look at the industrial adjudication in India. Collective bargaining is the essence of trade unions and associations but it is only possible if right to strike is given the fundamental right status. Considering the dismal conditions of industries, employer domination, minimum wage issues and social aspects of the strike, it casts a legal and constitutional obligation on the State to made strike as a fundamental right under Article 19(1)(c).

### 1AC: Econ/Leadership

#### Lack of Indian Right to Strike cements low wages.

Lobo 21 Darren Lobo 1-8-2021 "By prohibiting strikes, India’s new labour codes will make employees powerless" <https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/prohibiting-strikes-india-s-new-labour-codes-will-make-employees-powerless-141083> (Lawyer with experience in contract drafting, negotiation, general corporate advisory, private equity and venture capital work.)//Elmer

On December 12 last year, thousands of workers ransacked machinery worth crores at a plant near Bengaluru run by Wistron India. Wistron, which set up the plant in 2019 amid much fanfare from the Karnataka Government, is a major contract manufacturer of Apple products. Naturally, this fiasco deeply worried the Union government. Its main concern, as noted in a statement put out by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), was to “ensure that the investor sentiment is not affected due to such one-off incidents”. In addition to voicing this concern, the DPIIT went on to direct the Karnataka government to “look into the wages and labour related matters there”. But that query smacks of an afterthought. A more pertinent question might be “What sort of systemic failure resulted in thousands of workers deciding that ransacking their “place of work is a viable option?” Initial reports suggest that Wistron had promised engineering graduates a salary of Rs 16,000 per month, which was then cut to Rs 12,000. They also allegedly changed working hours from 8 hours to 12+ hours without overtime pay, violating several other labour laws in the process. It is also alleged that Wistron did not even pay these diminished salaries on time due to what they have termed a “software glitch”. Fortunately, the wheels of justice seem to be rolling along smoothly. In accordance with DPIIT instructions, over 150 of these dastardly workers running around hurting investor sentiment are now in jail. Wistron, on the other hand, has asked one VP in charge of India operations to look for alternate employment. It may also need to pay a small fine for its alleged labour law violations. While violence cannot be condoned, the Wistron incident shows that all is not well with **serious underlying problems affecting labour** in sunny, investor-friendly India. Looking to the future, a crucial question to ask is: “Are we fixing our labour grievance redressal systems so that these sorts of events do not happen again?” The **new I**ndustrial **R**elations **C**ode, 2020 (IRC) has **made** **drastic alterations** to this labour grievance redressal process. This law was passed by Parliament in September after just three hours of debate, over deafening opposition from nearly all stakeholders and pan India protests. The Union government intends to enact into law with effect from April 01, 2021. While the IRC contains several deeply problematic provisions, this piece focuses solely on how it **effectively nullifies** labour’s most powerful grievance redressal tool – **the strike**. How existing law on strikes works Individual employees normally have a weak bargaining position. Collective bargaining, a collective strike, or the threat of a strike which can shut down production has the potential to strengthen their negotiating ability significantly. The present law on strikes, the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 (IDA), places restrictions on striking only on industries that are “public utility services” since public utilities are crucial for societal functioning. For those that aren’t employed with a public utility service, the strike process under the IDA is relatively straightforward. Here’s a simplified flowchart on how it works: As the chart illustrates, the main challenge that an employee would face is in persuading her colleague that going on strike is the best available option. Once this is accomplished, the IDA allows employees to proceed with a strike. In case the government believes that the issue would be better resolved through other means, it can order the parties to approach a government-appointed conciliation officer, or litigate their issue before a labour court, during which time striking is not allowed. By going on strike, employees risk upsetting their relationship with management. But this is precisely the point - employees take this risk only when their employment situation is difficult enough that going on strike is their only viable option. The IDA at the very least gives employees the freedom to make this decision. Because there is a legitimate possibility of production halting due to a strike, companies also have the incentive to come to a compromise when employees have major issues. Needless to say, this framework isn’t fool-proof; employers have identified several neat loopholes in the IDA to minimise this risk. For example, instead of directly hiring employees, employers can go through a contractor, who acts as a middleman. In such a situation, employees are less likely to unionise or go on strike (as they don’t directly work for the employer), and contractors are more willing to act unscrupulously when dealing with errant employees. Reportedly, our friends at Wistron had contracted nearly 85% of their total workforce of 10,000 through a contractor. Despite the existence of such loopholes, an employee’s right to strike is more or less protected under the IDA. How the IRC effectively prohibits strikes The IRC has not technically banned the strike. What it has done instead is made the process so mind-bogglingly complicated that most people would not be able to understand the procedure, let alone follow it. The (again, simplified) **process of going on strike now is as follows**: The chart above shows how the IRC has made the striking process considerably more convoluted. First, striking employees need to send at least 14 days’ clear notice to the employer and three separate governmental authorities. However, since the draft rules framed under the IRC permit only members of a trade union to send this notice, these employees need to either be a part of a trade union or form their own trade union before they can send the aforementioned notice. Forming a trade union is a long and complicated process with no fixed maximum time frame. Once the notice period has elapsed, employees are mandatorily required to attempt conciliation with the employer. While the conciliation process is required to be completed in 14 days, the IRC prescribes no consequences whatsoever if this period is exceeded. In effect, this gives employers a major incentive to delay conciliation indefinitely and **thereby stall a potential strike**. If, during or after conciliation, 60 days have passed since the notice of strike was originally sent, the IRC requires a fresh notice to be sent and the entire process must be repeated. If conciliation fails, the employer can apply for formal adjudication of the dispute before the Industrial Tribunal to be created under the IRC. The (presumably) underpaid employees, now have to hire and pay lawyers to fight their case. Bear in mind that they are also not permitted to strike either during the notice period, the conciliation period, the adjudication period, or for two months after the adjudication is complete. The IRC has both made the procedure of going on strike unnecessarily complex and expensive and has extended this procedure to every industry, as opposed to just public utilities under the IDA. Nobody is sure why this has been done. The Parliamentary Standing Committee set up to look into the IRC found “no plausible reason for expanding the ambit of this provision indiscriminately to all the industrial establishments as restrictions should not apply to all strikes and demonstrations which are meant to assure freedom of industrial actions”. **Individuals with the courage to try** and follow this process **would** soon **find** themselves in **a web of notices**, **conciliation procedures**, **and litigation** before they ever have the opportunity to actually go on strike. **Since** **there is no real threat of a strike which can halt production of a company**, **collective bargaining loses most of its effectiveness**. **In a country with** **as much of a labour surplus as India**, **nullifying the possibility of a strike,** the foundation of collective bargaining also **removes** **incentives for companies to improve working conditions.** If employees choose to ignore this convoluted process and strike anyway, they will have committed an "illegal strike", which attracts a minimum fine of Rs. 10,000 which may go up to Rs. 50,000, and potentially imprisonment. Besides these consequences, there is a **very real loss of legitimacy with committing “illegal strikes**”. Regardless of how valid the grievances of employees are; the IRC has made it that much easier to treat anyone who does not follow this process as a miscreant breaking the law. Red tape - A death knell for collective action? **Employers will** likely use the **excessive red tape** brought about by the IRC to their advantage, and experiences regarding labour rights from the United States has supported this view. Professor Jake Rosenfeld, an expert on economic inequality, in his book “What Unions No Longer Do” notes how US companies found it cheaper and simpler to delay the formal processes and skirt the rules governing employee disputes. They then priced the resulting fines imposed on them simply as a cost of fighting unionisation. Coincidentally, the fine that can be imposed on employers under IRC for “unfair labour practices”, such as threatening employees who try and join a trade union ranges from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 2,00,000. **From the perspective of an employer**, the **cost of** engaging lawyers, delaying **legal proceedings, and** **paying** meagre **fines** **is** pitifully **insignificant** compared **to** the **costs of paying fair wages** and providing adequate work conditions and benefits to employees. The fines are also a meagre percentage of the turnover of most companies, so it is unlikely to affect the sentiment of investors either. It is also far lower than the loss of profit and output that they could suffer during a strike, which could have otherwise acted as the incentive to reach an agreement with their employees. Looking at the bigger picture, there are **massive threats against** the **goal of every working-age Indian being able to obtain fair** and dignified **work**. Rising levels of automation, lack of proper education and training, and increasing employer expectations all pose a threat to adequate employee rights. The **only weapon** that employees have in their arsenal to counteract these forces **is** their **ability to negotiate with their labour**. **By denying them** the right to withhold this labour, **the IRC will** inevitably **make them powerless**. Regardless of what investor sentiment may be, employees must have this power. **Studies** by both the International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development have **noted** the **strong correlation between bargaining power and the** rise or **decrease of inequality**. The weaker the bargaining power, the higher the inequality in the country. For collective bargaining to have any hope in India, it is crucial that the strike, a cornerstone of bargaining power and the collective bargaining process, not be brushed aside by an inveterate and insidious bureaucracy.

#### Loss of Strike Protection effects 90% of India’s workers who work with little to no pay.

Srivastava 20 Roli Srivastava 9-23-2020 "'Historic' labour law raises fear Indian workers will pay price" <https://www.reuters.com/article/india-economy-labour/historic-labour-law-raises-fear-indian-workers-will-pay-price-idUSL5N2GK1A6> (Correspondent at Thomas Reuters Foundation)//Elmer

MUMBAI, Sept 23 (Thomson Reuters Foundation) - **India’s parliament** on Wednesday **passed** “historic” labour laws that the government says help workers and business alike, but activists fear a **loss of labour rights** in a push for profits. Experts said the laws - aimed at protecting workers and streamlining labyrinthine regulation - exempt tens of thousands of smaller firms, and **rob workers of a right to strike** or receive benefits. Almost **90 percent** **of India’s workers** **operate** **in the informal sector with no security, low pay and little or no benefits.** The new laws, in the works for years, carry measures to meet the new challenge of COVID-19, which has seen millions lose jobs under lockdown and forced many to walk thousands of miles home where they struggled to find work.

#### Stopping rampant inequality is key to long-term economic growth

**Ghosh 10/21** [Nilanjan Ghosh, Dr. Nilanjan Ghosh is Director, ORF’s Kolkata Centre, and heads the Inclusive Growth and SDG programme across the various centres of the Foundation. His previous positions at various points in time include Senior Fellow and Head of Economics at ORF Kolkata, Senior Vice President & Chief Economist at MCX (I) Limited in Mumbai, and Professor of Econometrics at the TERI School of Advanced Studies in New Delhi. He had been a Visiting Fellow at the Linnaeus University, Sweden, in 2008 and 2015, and has visited Uppsala University (Sweden), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (USA), and Stanford University (USA), at various points in time. One of the leading ecological economists and development analysts of south Asia, he is considered a pioneer in the application of neoclassical and heterodox economics in water governance. A natural resource economist and econometrician by training, Dr. Ghosh obtained his PhD from the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Calcutta. Till recently, Dr Ghosh advised WWF India for setting up their Ecological Economics practice. Dr. Ghosh was Vice President of The Indian Society for Ecological Economics (INSEE)"Is increasing wealth inequality coming in the way of economic growth in India?," ORF, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/is-increasing-wealth-inequality-coming-in-the-way-of-economic-growth-in-india/> Accessed 11/4/21] Adam

The Indian growth (or the lack of it on recent counts) story over the last three decades has been a consumption-led one. This has been [argued time and again](https://www.hindustantimes.com/business-news/india-has-a-model-of-consumption-led-growth-says-arun-jaitley/story-rh2bTMbjoTGv7yPHpNyMFK.html) in policy circles, in [empirical analysis](http://www.ashwinanokha.com/resources/1328945436--10.pdf) drawing on the causal relation between growth and private consumption, and also in a [recent paper by Abhijit Mukhopadhyay](https://www.orfonline.org/research/post-pandemic-economic-recovery-seven-priorities-india/) of the Observer Research Foundation. On recent counts, the deceleration of the Indian economy, and then negative growth during 2020-21 have been attributed to the decelerating private consumption expenditure growth, and then to lack of consumption demand, respectively (Fig. 1).

As such, the “consumption-led-growth” strategy has often been resorted by many emerging economies as one of the ways to spur investment and production within the economy. For example, China explicitly acknowledged promoting “consumption-led-growth” in their 14th five-year plan through increases in wages and salaries so as to increase purchasing powers of their citizens. This paradigm shift from “export-driven-growth” to “consumption-led growth” was compelled by the global economic slump that mostly affected the US and EU after 2008, thereby, denting demand for Chinese exports. China realised that such unpredictabilities in the external sector emerging from the risks embedded in international trade and finance cannot sustain Chinese growth ambitions. Under such circumstances, China had to resort to boosting domestic consumption demand to provide impetus to their growth. However, for India, the force of consumption demand as a driver of growth emerged organically rather than as a policy intervention. Therefore, though one may talk of the fiscal packages announced in the 2020 pandemic year as the driver of the apparent revival of the Indian economy (as Asian Development Bank (ADB) projects that the [Indian growth will be 10 percent in 2021-22](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/indias-gdp-growth-to-rebound-to-10-2021-22-moderate-to-7-5-next-year/articleshow/86418149.cms)), the force of private consumption should not get blurred in the visions of the policymakers. This is especially true for constantly feeding and sustaining economic growth in the medium and long-run.

The story of an “unequal India” is neither simple nor comfortable for New Delhi, being treated as a maverick field of research and a normative concern for policy, thereby, making it lurk somewehere in the background in the development policy discourse. In that sense, inequality, despite being a problematic developmental issue, it hardly got mainstreamed in policymaking, with the concern of high growth taking the limelight

 It is here that the story of inequality enters. The story of an “unequal India” is neither simple nor comfortable for New Delhi, being treated as a maverick field of research and a normative concern for policy, thereby, making it lurk somewehere in the background in the development policy discourse. In that sense, inequality, despite being a problematic developmental issue, it hardly got mainstreamed in policymaking, with the concern of high growth taking the limelight. The argument made here is that the increasing inequality is going to be a critical deterrent for long-term growth. The seminal and celebrated paper by Simon Kuznets in the American Economic Review in 1955 exposed the Kuznets phenomenon or the Kuznets’ curve (KC): An inverted-U or bell-shaped relation between economic growth and inequality. This implies that at the initial stages of growth, the economic inequality increases, and it starts declining after growth reaches a threshold. The Kuznets’ hypothesis has not only received empirical support, but also empirical and theoretical dissent, especially from those who began citing the East Asian Miracle in the 1980s. Yet, if the Kuznets’ hypothesis is true, India is still on the rising side of the KC conforming to its “developing nation” status.

       Be that as it may, there is no doubt that economic inequality in India is increasing, as evident from the data from [World Inequality Database](https://wid.world/country/india/). This is true for both income and wealth inequalities. Rather interestingly, wealth inequality increased at a much faster rate than income inequality, and more importantly, wealth inequality increased at a much faster rate between 1991 and 2020—i.e. in the post-liberalisation phase—as compared to its movement between 1961 and 1991. This is evident from Table 1. While the possession of wealth of the top 1 percent of the population increased from 11.9 percent in 1961 to 16.1 percent in 1991, the same proportion of population owned 42.5 percent of the wealth in 2020. On the other hand, the proportion of wealth of the bottom 50 percent of the population declined from 12.3 percent in 1961 to 2.8 percent in 2020, thereby, indicating on the increasing chasm in wealth possession amongst the population.

On the other hand, though income inequality was initially declining between 1961 and 1991 (as can be made out from Table 2), it started increasing after 1991. Hence, it won’t be incorrect to infer that the liberalisation and the high growth phase of the Indian economy have been associated with increasing income and wealth inequalities.

Reiterating fig. 1, it can be seen that the periods of high GDP growth rates of the Indian economy converge with periods of high growth in final consumption, especially after 1991. While inequality has also increased after 1991, any further increase in inequality will have serious consequences on promoting and sustaining high growth in the longer run. In order to do that, we go back to the fundamental definitions of income and wealth inequalities. Though income and wealth are related, they are conceptually distinct: Income is the flow of financial resources for an economic entity—household, firms, etc.—from wages and salaries, profits, investments, government transfers, and various other sources in a particular year. On the other hand, wealth is a stock, and is comprised of the entity’s total savings and assets from the past with additions to assets and savings in the present year. In that sense, wealth provides a metric of an entity’s net worth—total assets minus total liabilities. As such, both income and wealth are important for household financial well-being, and holding of wealth helps the households or economic agents to finance their consumption needs even when incomes dry out during economic crisis.

As per table 1, there has been an increase in the total proportion of wealth in the hands of the top 1 percent though the income inequality has not increased by the same proportion. This implies that a large portion of the incomes earned historically by the top 1 percent (or even top 10 percent) have gone into savings or asset creation rather than moving through the consumption route. On the other hand, [empirical studies](https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/202932/1/1663557349.pdf) in various parts of the world go on to show that the marginal propensity to consume (or increase in consumption expenditure with a unit increase in income or wealth) of the lower income groups is much higher than the higher income groups. This implies that an increase in income or wealth of the lower income groups has a higher chance of getting into the consumption channel of the economy than an increase in income of the higher income groups (for whom the chances are higher of getting into the savings or asset creation channel). In other words, the phenomenon of “rich getting richer” will go against the fundamental goal of achieving fast yet sustained growth, however communistic the idea might sound!

Hence, the governmental response has to be Keynesian in nature with spurring up of transfers (or providing for basic incomes whether univeral or targeted) in the short run, but also be an enabler of the market forces in the longer run. In a recent article, [Maitreesh Ghatak](https://www.theindiaforum.in/article/does-india-have-inequality-problem) suggests the government to resort to greater wealth taxation and using the money to invest in education, health, and infrastructure to create a robust human capital base for long-term growth. Yet, the governmental interventions into such systems should not be taken as the permanent solution. Rather, the governments need to enable markets to generate forces so as to create jobs and concomitantly create human capital that can live up to the challeges of the future economy. This, therefore, needs a much more integrated approach to the problems of development rather than looking at development through the reductionist lens of economic growth only.

#### Indian economic strength deters China along the India-China border---military buildup and signal of resolve diffuses conflict.

Husain Haqqani and Aparna Pande 7-10-21. Haqqani is the director for South and Central Asia at the Hudson Institute in Washington D.C. and was Pakistan’s ambassador to the United States. Pande (Ph.D) is director of the Initiative on the Future of India and South Asia at the Hudson Institute. "India has a long way to go in confronting China". The Hill. https://thehill.com/opinion/international/562397-india-has-a-long-way-to-go-in-confronting-china

India’s decision to move [50,000](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-06-27/india-shifts-50-000-troops-to-china-border-in-historic-defense-shift) additional troops to its border with China bolsters its ability to protect itself against Chinese aggression. It is a belated response to China’s actions [last year](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-57234024), when the Chinese army [surprised](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-china-military-families-insight-idUSKBN2460YB) ill-prepared Indian soldiers and occupied several square miles of Indian territory in the Ladakh region to build roads and fortify military encampments. The hope of some Indian policymakers to resolve the matter diplomatically has not so far been fulfilled. Several rounds of military and diplomatic negotiations since April 2020, when the Chinese incursions started, have yielded little result. Any willingness on India’s part to deal forcefully with China would be welcomed in the U.S., where successive administrations have sought to integrate India into America’s Indo-Pacific strategy. Several years of an India-U.S. entente cordiale has been premised on India standing up to China. After all, with a population of more than one billion, India is the only country with enough manpower to match that of China. China sees India as a potential rival and covets parts of Indian territory. China [occupied](https://www.reuters.com/article/idINIndia-43780820091108) 15,000 miles of Indian territory in the Aksai Chin section of Ladakh after war in 1962. China’s desire for influence in South Asia and the Indian Ocean Region challenges India in its backyard, setting off [competition](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09700160801886314) for the same sphere of influence. But China’s phenomenal economic growth, coupled with India’s inability to keep pace, has hampered India’s ability to respond to China strategically. Even now the moving of troops to Ladakh is a tactical maneuver not backed by a clear strategic plan. On [four](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/why-chinese-and-indian-troops-are-clashing-again/2020/09/11/c5939466-f402-11ea-8025-5d3489768ac8_story.html) occasions since 2012, China has indulged in salami-slicing along the largely un-demarcated India-China border. India’s response each time has been limited to diplomatic negotiations with limited military pushback. There is a co-relation between relative economic strength and China’s willingness to flex its muscle. Between 1988, when India and China signed a series of agreements to restore relations, and 2012, the border between India and China remained by and large quiet. During that period, the size of the two countries’ economies was not huge. In 1990, India’s GDP stood at $320 billion and China’s GDP at $413 billion. By 2012, China’s GDP had grown to $8.5 trillion, seven times larger than India’s $1.2 trillion economy. The [change](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/sunday-times/all-that-matters/chinas-rising-support-for-pakistan-and-their-collusion-may-affect-our-interests-says-former-nsa-shiv-shankar-menon/articleshow/82234601.cms) in China’s policy after 2012, encouraging its troops to use force against India along the border, coincided with the rise in China’s military and economic power and its impact on the relative balance of power with India. Like many in the West, India during the 1990s had bought into the view that deeper economic and diplomatic engagement with communist China would help maintain peace between the two Asian giants. But the India-China border dispute could not remain on the back burner as China became more aggressive in the wake of growing economic and military power. India can no longer rely solely on diplomacy to deal with China. It will soon have to build and deploy hard power to deter the Chinese. The recent deployment along the Ladakh border could mark the beginning of that process. With the latest addition, 200,000 of India’s more than a million strong army now face China along the 2,167-mile border. By way of comparison, 600,000 Indian troops are positioned along the 2,065-mile, fully fenced and fully demarcated border with Pakistan. It is inconceivable that any attempt by Pakistan to take territory would go unretaliated by India. While India’s attempts over the last year have been to convince China, primarily through diplomatic engagements, to return the border to status quo ante, most [military](https://www.orfonline.org/research/eastern-ladakh-the-longer-perspective/) and [strategic](https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/crisis-after-crisis-how-ladakh-will-shape-india-s-competition-china) experts argue that China has no interest in resolving the border dispute with India. India has for far too long acquiesced to Chinese aggression without sufficient retaliatory military action. India may not seek to provoke China into an all-out war, but it needs to find a sweet spot between ignoring and provoking. The United States and its allies, too, would like India to act like a major power in not taking Chinese provocations lightly. Western democracies and Japan have viewed India as an ideal partner and future ally in Asia and the Indo-Pacific. India has consistently been a democracy, shares pluralist values with the United States, and its embrace of free market reforms since 1992 have created an opening for expanded economic ties. India also shares America’s concerns about China’s rising power. In developing a pivot to Asia or an Indo-Pacific policy, successive U.S. administrations have assumed that a shared concern about China makes India a natural American ally. India-U.S. relations were referred to as the “[defining](https://www.google.com/search?q=obama+india+defining+partnership+of+21st+century&rlz=1C1GGRV_enUS751US751&oq=obama+india+defining+partnership+of+21st+century&aqs=chrome..69i57j33i160j33i299.7702j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8) partnership of the 21st century” under President Obama. The Trump administration’s [2017](https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf) National Security Strategy spoke of India as a “leading global power” and a strong “strategic and defense partner.” The Biden administration’s [March](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/03/interim-national-security-strategic-guidance/) 2021 “Interim National Security guidance” has described the “deepening partnership” with India as being critical to America’s “vital national interests.” But the Indo-Pacific policies of both the Trump and Biden administrations have focused on maritime security, ignoring India’s challenge from China on the continental landmass. China views India as an inward-looking democracy that has yet to focus on economic growth or military prowess. Only an expansion in India’s economy and military capability would convince China’s leaders to view it differently. Moreover, the two decades of celebrating convergence of democratic values and voicing of strategic concerns by Washington and Delhi now needs to be followed up with specific steps to counter Chinese hard power with Indian muscle.

#### That escalates.

Jeffrey Gettleman et al 20. Jeffrey Gettleman is The Times’s South Asia bureau chief. Hari Kumar is a reporter in the New Delhi bureau of The New York Times. Sameer Yasir is a reporter for The New York Times. “Worst Clash in Decades on Disputed India-China Border Kills 20 Indian Troops”. The New York Times. 6-16-20. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/16/world/asia/indian-china-border-clash.html

NEW DELHI — The worst [border clash between India and China](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/17/world/asia/india-china-border-clashes.html) in more than 40 years left 20 Indian soldiers dead and dozens believed captured, Indian officials said on Tuesday, raising tensions between nuclear-armed rivals who have increasingly been flexing their diplomatic and military muscle. For the past several weeks, after [a series of brawls](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/30/world/asia/india-china-border.html) along their disputed border, China and India have been building up their forces in the remote Galwan Valley, high up in the Himalayas. As they dug into opposing positions, adding tinder to a long-smoldering conflict, China took an especially muscular posture, sending in artillery, armored personnel carriers, dump trucks and excavators. On Monday night, a huge fight broke out between Chinese and Indian troops in roughly the same barren area where these two nations, the world’s most populous, had fought a war in 1962. Military and political analysts say the two countries do not want a further escalation — particularly India, where military forces are nowhere near as powerful as China’s — but they may struggle to find a way out of the conflict that does not hint at backing down. Both countries and their nationalist leaders, President Xi Jinping of China and Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/17/world/asia/india-china-border-clashes.html) of India, have taken increasingly assertive postures that pose real risks of the conflict spinning out of control. “Neither PM Modi or President Xi want a war, but neither can relinquish their territorial claims either,” said [Ashley J. Tellis,](https://carnegieendowment.org/experts/198) a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington. What’s happening along the Himalayan border is an unusual kind of warfare. As in the brawls last month, Chinese and Indian soldiers fought fiercely without firing a shot — at least that’s what officials on both sides contend. They say the soldiers followed their de facto border code not to use firearms and went at each other with fists, rocks and wooden clubs, some possibly studded with nails or wrapped in barbed wire. At first, India’s military said only three Indian troops had been killed in the clash, where the Ladakh region of India abuts Aksai Chin, an area controlled by China but claimed by both countries. But late Tuesday night, a military spokesman said that 17 other Indian soldiers had succumbed to injuries sustained in the clash, bringing the total dead to 20. An Indian commander said dozens of soldiers were missing, apparently captured by the Chinese. Indian television channels reported that several Chinese soldiers had been killed, as well, citing high-level Indian government sources. Chinese officials did not comment on that. It’s not clear what India can do now. Mr. Modi and his Hindu nationalist party have pursued a forceful foreign policy that emphasizes India’s growing role in the world and last year, after a devastating suicide attack that India blamed on a Pakistani terror group, Mr. Modi ordered airstrikes on [Pakistan](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/29/world/asia/pakistan-stock-exchange-shooting.html), bringing the two countries to the brink of war. But India is in no shape to risk a war against China — especially now, as it slips deeper into the economic and health crisis caused by the coronavirus, which has cost the country more than 100 million jobs. “Whatever India might want to do it’s not in a position to do,” said Bharat Karnad, a professor of security studies at the Center for Policy Research at New Delhi. “The Modi government is in a difficult position,” he said. “This is bound to escalate.” And, he added, “we are not prepared for this kind of escalation.” Mr. Xi has been doubling [down on China’s territorial claims across Asia](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/24/world/asia/china-hong-kong-taiwan.html), backing up arguments with the threat of force or sometimes even the use of force. In recent weeks, the Chinese have tightened their grip on the semiautonomous region of Hong Kong; menaced Taiwan; and sunk a Vietnamese fishing boat in the South China Sea.

#### Economic collapse ensures Modi puts all his eggs in the nationalist basket - the COVID blame won’t save him again.

Gupta 21 (, S., 2021. It isn't the economy, genius. India proves it by voting for Modi again and again. [online] ThePrint. Available at: <https://theprint.in/national-interest/it-isnt-the-economy-genius-india-proves-it-by-voting-for-modi-again-and-again/633329/> [Accessed 25 October 2021] Shekhar Gupta is an Indian journalist and author. He is the founder and the current editor-in-chief of ThePrint. He is also a columnist for the Business Standard and pens a weekly column which appears every Saturday. He has had long stints at The Indian Express and India Today. Shekhar Gupta has received assorted awards: the 1985 Inlaks award for young journalist of the year,[10] G. K. Reddy Award for Journalism,[11] and the Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed Memorial Award for National Integration.[12] He was awarded Padma Bhushan by the then UPA Government in 2009 for his contribution to journalism.[13] Under his leadership, The Indian Express won the Vienna-based International Press Institute's Award for Outstanding Journalism in the Public Interest thrice: The first time for its coverage of the Gujarat riots of 2002, the second time for uncovering the Bihar flood relief scam in 2009 and the third time for its sustained investigation into the Malegaon and Modasa blasts of 2008 and the alleged role of extremists and organisations.[14].)-rahulpenu

It isn’t the economy, genius. India proves it by voting for Modi again and again Flurry of economic reform suggests Modi realises his muscular nationalism script is getting jaded. Chances are he'll try for economic recovery but stick to what's worked. In his 1992 presidential campaign, Bill Clinton immortalised the line, “It’s the economy, stupid”. Does this work in Narendra Modi’s India? In election after election, across democracies in the world, the line has been repeated. The transnational appeal of the idea was also understandable because James Carville, the famous political “consultant” who coined it for Clinton, also advised dozens of leaders across the world. A kind of globalised, American Prashant Kishor. And, whatever the language or idiom, the logic passed the test of time. Or it did, until lately. For almost a quarter century, a leader who promised or delivered a better economy won, or was re-elected. In 2016, this was the promise that brought Donald Trump to power, as also Modi in 2014. But that seems to have changed worldwide now. Let’s look at India. After Modi’s first two years, the economy has stalled, and then declined. The stall began with demonetisation in 2016-17. Lately, India has had at least 7 out of 8 quarters of growth decline. Negative growth is rightly blamed on the pandemic, but it isn’t as if this patient was in the pink of health before the virus struck. On almost every economic and even social indicator, India has been posting a decline. It shows in our crashing rankings on all key global indices. Now, we know that Modi won power in 2014 on the promise of massive economic growth, jobs and development on the ‘**Gujarat** **Model’**. But barring, say, the first 24 months to some extent, he has **never** **delivered** on that promise. If the concept of “It’s the economy, stupid” worked, he should not have swept the Uttar Pradesh elections of 2017. By that time, demonetisation had already deflated India’s economy; job losses, and trade, rural and farmer distress had set in. It didn’t bother anybody but his hapless opposition and marginalised editorialists like us. By the summer of 2019, our economy had already been in a tailspin. Worse, joblessness was already reaching a high that would be alarming in a democracy. Some of the data was so embarrassing that the Modi government had to either hide it, rewrite it, or change the formula and produce friendlier data, as on GDP numbers. Every economic indicator had gone wrong except one: Inflation. And yet, Modi returned with a larger majority in that election. It is still exactly a month before we will know what the voters decide in these five assembly elections. The numbers obviously won’t be what Amit Shah is counting after each phase in West Bengal. But whatever these are, one thing they won’t reflect is the state of India’s economy. It will be the first year of **negative** — double-digit negative — **growth** in our independent history. And while this **may** be **blamed** **on** the **pandemic**, it destroyed so many lives, jobs and savings because it came on top of three lousy years. **In** **normal** **politics**, this **would** **have** **made** these **elections** a **walkover** **for** the **opposition**. They will be anything but that. Which will make us question that 1992 Clintonism. So, what is it that works for Modi, if not the economy? Or, how does he keep winning in spite of the economy? The fact is, it isn’t an India-specific phenomenon. Donald Trump, whatever else was wrong with him, lost in spite of the economy being in a pretty good place. It helped him retain and increase his voters. But other considerations weighed on the minds of a larger number of voters. The issues of identity, colour and class, and the virus, for example. Biden’s promise wasn’t an economic boom. At the other extreme is the Putin phenomenon. In fact, this week’s National Interest was sparked by this Ruchir Sharma column in the FT, where he talks about how Putin has not only made Russia sanctions-proof, but continues to keep winning despite insignificant economic growth. We record all the qualifications on Russia’s electoral process — ours still is much cleaner in spite of some vote-filled EVMs hitching a ride in a candidate’s car in Assam. Yet, there is no denying that he’s widely popular and will win a fairer election as well. How is he able to do this without growth? Putin is **riding** the **deep** **insecurities** **of** a **people** **scarred** **by** much **instability**, political and economic, **preceding** **his** **rise**. For them, therefore, **stability** becomes the **first** **priority**. The economy can wait. If we were to build on this, **stability** **brings** **nationalistic** **self**-**esteem**. Putin fought off many separatist or religiously inspired forces, insurgency and terrorism, “taught the upstart Ukrainians a lesson” by grabbing Crimea, stood up to America, and probably even played it in the Trump period. Under him, Russia is back to being a power that enough of the world still holds in awe. How does it matter that its economy has shrunk relative to the rest? Even compared to the emerging markets. For comparison, it is just about **60** **per** **cent** **of** **India**’s at $1.7 trillion (in 2019), **with** **no** **hope** **of** **catching** **up**. **But**, **if** the **nation** **is** **together**, **can** **punch** **above** its **economic** **weight** in its neighbourhood and in the global balance of power, it is because of stability and leadership. The economy is about my self-interest. I can sacrifice it for some time. **Apply** **the** **same** **parallel** **to** **India**. By 2014, **India** still **had** the **scars** **of** 20**08** (26/11) and much **terrorism** that **preceded** **and** **followed** it, going right back to the early Vajpayee years. It was like **two** **decades** **of** **humiliation** with a much weaker neighbour hurting us often, at will. All India would do, from Vajpayee to Manmohan Singh, was to go complaining to America and the rest. On top of it, we had a prime minister so weakened by his own party that he had been reduced to a caricature of that high office. Plus, the discourse across the board was all about corruption from the opposition, and inequality even by the ruling party. Between 2003 and 2009, India had built enormous pride and optimism with a booming economy. That optimism brought the UPA back to power. In the following years, it was fully reversed. It was an incredible election where the ruling party also campaigned complaining about inequality and poverty instead of its economic successes. For the Modi proposition, if the promise of taking the ‘**Gujarat** **Model’** nationwide **was** **the** **engine**, this widespread negativity provided a 200-knot tailwind. Through these seven years, he’s mostly failed to deliver on the first promise, the economy. **But**, on the second, **national** **pride**, **standing** **up** **to** **terrorism** from the neighbourhood, on **restoring** the **majesty** **of** **the** prime minister’s **office**, **he** **scores** 10 upon 10. May be even **11** **upon** **10**. Remember, we are only talking about his voters. The belated flurry of **economic** **reform** would **suggest** **Modi** has **figured** that **his** **script** **is** getting **jaded** **and** that he **needs** **a new one**. He will try for an economic recovery but still **stick** **to** **what** **has** **worked** for him so far: The three-pronged offering of massive, efficient welfarism for the poorest; hard, visible infrastructure-building; and harder, cast-in-Hindutva **nationalism**. The engines of the economy, left to idle for long, take time gathering pace. It is likely that India will get a great year anyway on the back of a terrible one. Some equivalent of the stock markets’ dead cat bounce will come in. The larger, more widespread economic gains take time. They also, inevitably, increase inequality first. Usually, it’s some successor who will benefit from this. So, can’t count on it. **Modi** **gets** **this**. The question is, do his challengers get it? Much of their attack is still over economic distress under Modi. Two large areas, **identity** (which includes religion and culture) **and** **national** **pride**, they’ve **ceded** **to** **him** altogether. Check out the Congress and Left parties’ flip-flop on Sabarimala to understand the point on identity. Or the manner of questioning over Uri, Balakot and Galwan. These **underline** their faltering on **nationalism**. **Economic** **distress** **brings** **insecurity**, **but** it **isn’t** a **fraction** **of** **the** **visceral** **emotion** a **perceived** **threat** **to** **identity** **or** **national** **pride** **brings**. This is why demagogues across the democratic world keep winning. The reason we’d prefer to say at this point: It isn’t the economy, genius.

#### Greenlights diversionary war - overwhelming evidence.

Humayun et al. 20 (, F., Walt, Quinn, Tatar, Katerji, Crabtree, Agrawal, Maqsood, Walt, Gao and Moody, 2020. After India’s Skirmish With China, Is Pakistan Next?. [online] Foreign Policy. Available at: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/29/india-skirmish-china-modi-pick-fight-pakistan/> [Accessed 25 October 2021] Yale University, Ph.D., Political Science 2022 Dissertation: “Democratic Institutions & International Crisis Behaviour” Committee: Steven I. Wilkinson (Yale), Alexandre Debs (Yale), Vipin Narang (MIT) Yale University, M.A., Political Science 2019 University of Cambridge, M.Phil, International Relations 2013 London School of Economics, B.Sc, International Relations & History 2011. Research is supported by the MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies, the Yale South Asian Studies Council, and International Security Studies at Yale)-rahulpenu

After India’s Skirmish With China, Is Pakistan Next? **Looking** **to** **reinvigorate** **support** at home, **Modi** could **pick** a **fight** **with** his country’s **traditional** **enemy**. The worst border skirmish between India and China in the Himalayas in decades has abated for now, but the **potential** **for** **crisis** still **looms** **large** **over** a **nuclear**-**armed** **South** **Asia**. Last week, India announced it was formally downgrading relations with its other adversary and neighbor, Pakistan, by reducing the staff at its High Commission by 50 percent. The last time India asked for a similar reduction of embassy staff was in 2001, following an attack on the Indian Parliament. Bilateral ties between the two states have been shunted since New Delhi unilaterally revoked the special status of the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir on Aug. 5, 2019, and intensified a heavy-handed crackdown in the valley. So what exactly does the dust-up with China have to do with Pakistan’s relationship with India? In short, there are five reasons why this month’s Himalayan standoff increases the likelihood of a fresh India-Pakistan crisis. First: India’s muted response to China in the aftermath of the Galwan Valley skirmish has raised difficult logistical questions and reputational concerns about New Delhi’s much-touted role as counterweight to China in the Indo-Pacific. Although New Delhi adopted a position of nonalignment for much of the Cold War, its potential as a regional diplomatic and military bulwark against a rising China took on new significance after U.S. President George W. Bush sought to enlist it as a strategic partner and approved the sale of U.S. nuclear technology to the country. More recently, New Delhi and Washington announced an expanded defense partnership, including $3 billion in arms sales. Yet hostile encounters with China in both 2017 and again this year have underscored for Indian policymakers the need to get along with Beijing if only to sustain a mutually feasible cohabitation; informal summits such as those in 2018 and 2019 were driven by this strategic necessity. In the aftermath of the most recent crisis, corps commander-level talks and diplomatic negotiations between Beijing and New Delhi mean India is likely to prioritize a minimum-working engagement with China over an unambiguous geopolitical rivalry that would come with fully partnering with the United States. Meanwhile, the political compulsion to demonstrate military capability—especially in the face of a conventional balance of forces that has shifted in China’s favor—may impel India to look elsewhere to offset suggestions of strategic impotency. If military capabilities drive policy choices, then the theater with Pakistan is a suitable foil for perceived Indian weaknesses compared to China. Second, since coming to power in 2014, Indian Prime Minister Narendra **Modi** has **demonstrated** both a **willingness** **and** a **capability** **to** **deliver** **on** **nationalistic** **pledges** at home, **especially** **when** his government’s **ability** **to** **deliver** **on** the **economic** **front** has **hit** **snags**. Although India has seen its GDP growth fall to its lowest rate in the last 11 years, Modi’s Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has sought to **consolidate** its political **base** **by** **doubling** **down** on its **nationalist**ic pledges—from revoking the special status for Jammu and Kashmir (disputed between India and Pakistan since 1947) to building a Hindu temple to the god Ram on a disputed holy site where the Babri Masjid once stood. Research shows that **leaders** looking to **divert** **attention** tend to **target** **traditional** **enemies** and enduring rivals (as conflict against such persistent adversaries is most likely to promote in-group solidarity), and **diversionary** **conflicts** are particularly **likely** to **take** the **form** **of** **territorial** **disputes**. Since the controversial measures in Kashmir last year, India’s politicians have systematically upped the bilateral ante with Pakistan by declaring intent to “secure” the Pakistani administrative areas of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. Earlier this year, India’s new Army chief said the Indian Army was “**ready** **to** **seize** **control**” of Pakistan-administered Kashmir if directed by the Indian government; the same month, **Modi** **said** India needed **seven** **to** **10** **days** **to** **defeat** **Pakistan** **in** **war**. Two weeks ago, India’s defense minister reiterated that taking Pakistani Kashmir was now a “stated goal of India’s Parliament.” **Ordinarily**, **such** **statements** **might** **be** **put** **down** to cheap talk—**except**, **in** **this** **case**, the **BJP’s** own track **record** of **follow**-**through** **suggests** these **threats** should be **taken** **seriously**. Operationally, the Indian **Army** has **begun** to **set** **up** **artillery** **strikes** deep into Kashmiri villages to launch **long**-**distance** **fire** into Pakistan-administered territory. In May, after months of deliberation, the India Meteorological Department began to list several areas on the Pakistani side of the border, in its own internal weather reports—an unprecedented development. Third, while tempers and temperatures arguably cool on the Sino-Indian front, memories of a short but tense air duel between India and Pakistan last February are still fresh in both Islamabad and New Delhi. While Pakistan shot down an aging, Soviet-era Indian MiG-21 Bison and captured and returned an Indian pilot in the dogfight, India claimed it had downed a Pakistani F-16. The air duel over Kashmir quickly escalated into a war of narratives: Pakistan rejected India’s allegations and asserted it had lost no jets. In the days after the dogfight, the New York Times ran a story about the implications of India losing a plane to a country whose military was half the size and received a quarter of the funding. India’s right-wing Shiv Sena has since called for more “**surgical** **strikes**” on Pakistan to consolidate the BJP’s grip on Kashmir. Furthermore, when Indian papers ran headlines of India having killed “300-400 terrorists” in an airstrike on Balakot last February, Pakistan countered that the targets had been “little more than rocks and trees.” Since last year, India’s opposition too has on various occasion taken swipes at Modi for the Balakot episode; pollsters meanwhile have disputed the extent to which the Balakot strikes actually buoyed the BJP in its 2019 electoral victory. The “decider’s dilemma” for Modi is that the **unfinished** **business** from the Balakot standoff needs a less ambiguous final chapter, short of which the BJP risks being domestically perceived as having backed away prematurely from a weaker enemy. This leads to a fourth and crucial point: Successive **regional** **crises** **under** the **BJP** mean that the domestic costs for India’s leaders to not be seen as backing down against external adversaries are growing, not diminishing. In the standoff with China, losses incurred by the Indian Army have been a shot in the arm for India’s opposition politicians, who have been quick to condemn the BJP for its lack of preparation and in some cases for surrendering entirely. **Conflict** **with** **Pakistan** could be a **much**-**needed** **salve** **for** a **disheartened** Indian **media** that is largely controlled by the Indian ruling party: According to analysis conducted after an attack on a military convoy in Kashmir last February, **Modi** got **near**-**total** media **coverage** despite energetic campaigning by India’s opposition at the same time. Bringing up the threat of a salient out-group could help the BJP reenergize its patriotic and supportive base and paper over divisions in its coalition. A final factor that explains why the China-India **standoff** may **spill** **over** **into** **tensions** with Pakistan has to do with the White House’s current occupant: President Donald Trump. Proponents of a strong Indo-U.S. relationship have lobbied hard to present a positive image of bilateral ties, buoyed largely by symbolic spectacles. On the critical economic front leading up to the COVID-19 crisis, however, both the Indian economy and U.S.-Indian economic relations were on a downward trajectory. Trump has at least thrice offered to mediate the India-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir, the highest U.S. official to do so since President Bill Clinton after the two sides fought a short war over Kargil. New Delhi has traditionally been allergic to the idea of third-party mediation, referring to the 1972 Simla Agreement between India and Pakistan under which both sides agreed to bilaterally resolve outstanding disputes. Ironically, the same Simla Agreement also held that neither party would unilaterally alter the situation in Jammu and Kashmir—a position India itself compromised by revoking Kashmir’s special status last August. Ties between the United States and Pakistan, meanwhile, have seen a steadying in recent years, in part because of Pakistan’s facilitation in helping the United States reach a truce with the Taliban in Afghanistan. The absence of guaranteed validation from Washington on New Delhi’s position toward Pakistan thus makes India less, not more, secure and likely more convinced that it will need to rely on its own strength and power to clearly delineate its territorial and political interests for the foreseeable future. While an India-Pakistan crisis so soon after India’s standoff with China is by no means a forgone conclusion, current trends suggests it could. In the past, **troubled** **leaders** have rationally **pursued** risky, **high**-**variance** **strategies** of **initiating** another **conflict** to gloss over the failings of earlier scrambles. With the domestic and regional environment ripe for the taking, South Asia’s next crisis may happen **sooner than we expect.**

#### Structural Reforms to India’s Economy by eliminating inequality would boost India’s Rise.

Leng 21 Alyssa Leng 1-29-2021 "Domestic reform key to India’s rise" <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/domestic-reform-key-india-rise/> (Research Associate, Power, and Diplomacy Programme, at the Lowry Institute)//Elmer

The year 2020 proved tumultuous for India, as it did for most countries. COVID-19 precipitated significant domestic challenges on all fronts, with India shouldering one of the world’s highest caseloads and staring down the barrel of its first recession in decades. Externally, tensions boiled over along its border with China, while the international environment at large became more fraught. But even before the pandemic, economic challenges had begun to emerge. Financial stability issues persisted in the shadow-banking sector and reform momentum slowed following the shock of demonetisation. The process of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s political consolidation continued in the meantime, including clamping down on Kashmir. All this while the Indo-Pacific came into fashion as a geographical and geopolitical concept, with attention and interest shifting towards India’s neck of the woods as a result. Especially in the context of a rising China, **many** are **betting on India’s economic rise** and its integration into regional security arrangements, most notably the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue with the US, Japan and Australia. All this while the Indo-Pacific came into fashion as a geographical and geopolitical concept, with attention and interest shifting towards India’s neck of the woods as a result. The confluence of all these factors puts **India at an increasingly critical juncture**. For its own economic development, as well as to remain relevant and competitive in a dynamic geopolitical landscape, India must get the COVID-19 pandemic under control and **should** **prioritise structural economic reforms to unlock future growth**. Doing so will **improve domestic living standards** and **give** it **more economic power abroad**, **providing India with more policy space to choose how it engages with the world**. **Focusing on domestic economic development** **will** also **be necessary for cities like Mumbai to function as significant regional hubs.** Containing the coronavirus should be an immediate priority to limit the pandemic’s economic damage and to facilitate a quicker economic recovery. The Indian economy contracted significantly in the first and second quarters of 2020, though there are signs that the worst may have passed. But for economic activity to resume meaningfully, the spread of COVID-19 must be slowed, especially given the government’s limited fiscal space to lead the recovery process. Mitigating the degree of permanent economic damage from the pandemic and enabling recovery will be crucial for people’s livelihoods as well as India’s economic heft internationally, both now and going forward. Focusing on domestic economic development will be necessary for cities like Mumbai to function as significant regional hubs. In the longer term, India must change gears economically if it hopes to sustain rapid growth in the coming years. So far, India has urbanised and industrialised slower compared to the East Asian miracle economies, even at similar levels of economic development. The single hit of big-bang reforms in 1991 contrast to the multiple rounds of significant policy changes that successful developing economies have undertaken, and substantial room for improvement remains in its infrastructure and institutions. These foundations are necessary not just for broader economic development, but also for cities like Mumbai to develop as substantial regional hubs. Despite demographics being on its side, structural reforms are crucial for India to grow faster going forward. The **geoeconomic benefits of** working towards more robust **growth**, both now and in the future, **are multiple**. Though the Indian economy is already relatively large, it remains less than half the size of China in PPP terms, and about a fifth of China’s size at market exchange rates as of 2019. Faster economic growth would **help India catch up to China** in terms of both size and sophistication, as well as **boosting** **India’s** **economic power more broadly**. Size in turn would accord other rewards. The **sense of gravity felt** **by neighbouring states** in the region **may pull more towards India** as it grows, increasing the degree of its economic influence through avenues like trade, regardless of its attitude towards deals like the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). It may also help develop hubs like Mumbai further and elevate them in the region as sources and destinations of investment. All this would **afford India more choices in how it wishes to utilise its power**. Faster economic growth would help India catch up to China in terms of both size and sophistication, as well as boosting India’s economic power more broadly. There are longer term geopolitical reasons to lay the foundations of good growth now too. As Chinese growth slows gradually over the coming decades, in line with its ageing population and approach to the technological frontier, scope exists for India to be the next economic powerhouse and great power in the region. Such status will not accrue by default and will depend substantially on the **foreign policy choices** made in coming years. But much of the foundation for such choices — including economic size, and the scope to fund other elements of power including military and diplomatic capabilities — **will rely greatly on the state of the Indian economy**. If those are the geopolitical carrots incentivising faster growth, what is the stick? Unless India works on its economic foundations, its pull relative to China’s weight is likely to remain limited, and its economic influence in its backyard will diminish as a result. China is already the largest trade partner of Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal and the largest foreign investor in the latter two countries. It also continues to exert significant levels of both economic coercion and persuasion in the Indo-Pacific at large. The longer it takes for India to undertake substantial reform and improve its growth performance, the more geoeconomic advantages it cedes, and the opportunity for hubs like Mumbai to remain competitive in the broader Indo-Pacific may be lost. In the long run, the ability of cities like Mumbai to develop into regional hubs will also hinge on the implementation of deep structural reforms. India faces challenging domestic circumstances as well volatility abroad in the Indo-Pacific. To ensure that development continues and living standards rise, as well as to shore up its geopolitical position in the region, domestic economic performance and reform should be India’s top priority. In the long run, the ability of cities like Mumbai to develop into regional hubs will also hinge on the implementation of deep structural reforms.

#### That’s key to ensure a peaceful U.S.-China power transition and solve global risks

GPC 17 – Greater Pacific Capital, investing institution designed to identify and develop investing opportunities in and between India and other international economies, 7/17/17, “Path to Power: India’s Great Opportunity in the Changing World Order,” https://greaterpacificcapital.com/path-to-power-indias-great-opportunity-in-the-changing-world-order/

Last month’s Sign of the Times highlighted what appear to be a series of US retreats from global leadership positions. With the geopolitical cards apparently being reshuffled across a wide range of defence, political and economic areas, America’s apparent withdrawal is creating opportunities for countries seeking to fill the resulting void, with China currently taking the most proactive steps among the potential contenders. Beijing has already made clear its intent to play a more active role in matters of globalisation, international trade and climate change, global issues that also align well with China’s domestic agenda and where it can leverage significant political and financial assets. Despite China’s head start over others and its apparent desire to lead, its efforts will likely face not only resistance from the West but also competition from a number of countries, both within Asia and abroad. Further, China’s inability to lead on a broader set of issues related to matters such as human rights or regional security acts as a counter-weight to its leadership efforts and provides opportunities for other countries to fill the gaps being left by the United States. Among potential contenders for regional and international leadership, India, as the world’s fastest growing economy, the largest democracy and (potentially[1]) the most populous country, clearly has critical assets to leverage across a number of spheres. Bringing these to bear though will require India to be far more bold and strategic in handling both international affairs and in making strong domestic progress, both are matters that have proved elusive to date. However, if India can achieve this, it has the potential to create a virtuous circle of domestic development and international leadership similar to the one that has underwritten US prosperity for over two generations.

The Need for Renewed Leadership

One of the most dangerous geo-political circumstances is a power vacuum and America’s actions in the last six months in particular, suggest that the execution of the Trump Administration’s ‘America First’ vision is creating vacuums across an increasingly broad range of fields. These are further being exacerbated by the accompanying weakening of (formerly US-led) international and multi-lateral institutions that have until recently underwritten the global order. This order consisted of, among other things, a shared commitment to liberal capitalism, clear rules of engagement in trade, policy and war, a high-level security architecture focused on nuclear non-proliferation, a recognition of states’ fundamental sovereignty and shared access to the earth’s global commons. A number of the key elements of this order were already under attack before America’s current retreat. In fact, the recent withdrawal by the US from what has historically been a muscular international leadership is in many ways a reaction to its own domestic challenges and the global economic, political and security issues that have built up over the past few decades. As pointed out in a previous Sign of the Times[2], many of these challenges are the direct consequences of the current world order, including, the lack of international and national policies to compensate for the uneven nature of growth based on globalisation which while being the key driver of the unprecedented rise in prosperity has also created increasing income divides and continued to cause massive environmental impacts from mass industrialisation. Among the challenges facing the world today are a number of issues of global scope and scale that will require coordinated international action, and that is unlikely to be achieved in the absence of clear leadership by either one country or a small group of tightly aligned countries. The issues, which require this vision and leadership, include:

1. Trade Protectionism and Fairness. The continued growth of global industrial trade is being threatened by increasing protectionism (e.g. a 51% increase in G20 country trade protectionist measures from 2010-15) and major withdrawals by countries from trade frameworks (e.g. the US withdrawal from the TPP and the UK’s Brexit). While this is based on a perception of the unfairness of trade or an infringed sovereignty, it is clear that the countries that have voted for more isolationist leaders and policies have been among free trade’s biggest historic beneficiaries with their economies still reliant on its continued growth.[3]

2. Income Inequality. The gaps between the have and the have nots globally is sharpening across a number of key dimensions, with the traditional north-south divide between countries being exacerbated by growing inequality within nations, too, with the GINI coefficient, a traditional measure of inequality rising by 10% across OECD countries and the ratio of top income decile to bottom income decile reached its highest level in 30 years. [4]

3. Climate Change and Rising Pollution. The global fight against climate change and greenhouse gas emissions, which have increased by 80% since 1970, and has been damaged by the US withdrawal from the Paris Climate Change Accord.

4. Food and Water Security.5bn people today lack adequate access to sanitation, and of the 3bn people projected to be added to the world’s population by 2050, most will be born in countries facing severe food and water shortages.

5. Cross-Border Terrorism. Cross-border terrorism is at an all-time high today, causing nearly 40,000 deaths per year, and creating an urgent need for global co-operation on intelligence and security.

6. Cyber-Crime. Cyber-crime, with over 45m+ incidents annually, is an increasingly critical threat to the global economic and political order.

7. Displacements and Increasing Refugee Flows. Collective action is required to effectively process and integrate refugees and economic migrants around the world, which today total 65m – the highest number in human history.

As pointed out in previous Sign of the Times papers, these issues are interrelated, with the feedback loop between them accelerating the demise of the current US led world order and its governance framework underwritten by multilateral institutions. As the single most powerful nation on earth, America’s current unwillingness or inability to reinvent the rules and institutions that have failed to solve the world’s issues satisfactorily to date creates an opening for other countries to either reform and save or to reinvent these institutions based on a set of new values. China has clearly recognised the importance of the major issues facing the world and shown an interest in leading across a number of them, in particular in the areas of climate change and free trade. However, China’s willingness to lead is neither comprehensive in nature nor universally welcomed, particularly by the established participants of the current global order who fear that increases in China’s influence would come at a cost to their own positions. While unipolar world orders (such as the Pax Britannica in the 19th century or the shorter Pax Americana post the collapse of the Soviet Union) can underpin periods of peace and prosperity, most countries today lean towards preferring one led by a pre-Trump America or a multi-polar order to one dominated by China. However, where ambitious nations form the leadership of a multipolar order, their competitiveness can drive conflict and instability, whereas in a unipolar world, the rivalry is kept in check. Despite the US having built a broader armoury of hard and soft power than China, the two countries seem set up for conflict across a number of issues. So, unless a third country seeks to also enter this fray and create a three-way tug of war, new entrants to the power game will need to think differently about how to participate. It would seem though that given the diversity of global issues today there is space for multiple leaders employing multiple approaches.

In terms of who the new power players might be, while some of the world’s major western countries in theory might partially fill America’s shoes, most will likely be held back by a combination of domestic and geopolitical issues, even if they were able to overcome their fundamental and long-standing lack of willingness to lead. The EU needs more time to recover from its separation from the UK, the UK has been in increasing political and economic turmoil since the Brexit referendum, France is beginning its own domestic political revival and Germany and Japan remain mostly unwilling to be overt leaders for a combination of historic reasons. Having said that, Germany is positioning and being welcomed as a voice of reason by many in favour of salvaging the best of the current liberal world order. However, none of these countries are yet able to provide a credible alternative to China’s bids for leadership or stem its increasing influence and, in the face of American withdrawal, they may have no choice but to welcome another power player.

In the absence of credible alternatives from established economies, there are few with the positioning to play a more central role in world affairs. Among these, India stands out clearly due to its size, growth and most importantly its potential. The country has been an important part of the United States’ ‘Asia Pivot’ strategy, is growing rapidly with an increasingly outward foreign and trade policy, has embarked on an aggressive security and defence programme, has established strong relationships with major Asian countries and is committed to the principles of democracy. In the absence of a renewed American interest in world leadership, which one should certainly not rule out, India alone has the scope and scale to offer credible alternatives to China’s leadership bids across a number of fronts. Moreover, given the imbalance in power that a US withdrawal would leave in the Asia-Pacific region, India will have little choice but to play a more active role in the region and the world if it is to achieve its ambitions. However, while India’s potential to become a more important voice on the international stage is unlikely to be questioned, its actions to date are not yet in line with a country that has global leadership aspirations.

#### Extinction

Shivshankar Menon 18, distinguished fellow at Brookings India, 12/26/18, “China-US contention has opened up space for other powers, including India,” https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/china-us-contention-has-opened-up-space-for-other-powers-including-india-118122500454\_1.html

We live in an amazing, paradoxical age – an age of contrasts, an age of extremes, and an age of rapid change. Never before in history has such a large proportion of humanity lived longer, healthier, more prosperous or more comfortable lives.

And yet, we have probably never had a stronger sense of standing on the brink of a precipice, of possible extinction and of the fragility of human life — by climate change or nuclear war or other violence. Global battle deaths are back up to the highest levels since the Cold War and the 68.5 million displaced persons around the globe in 2017 are at the levels of 1945-46 (after World War II and during the Chinese civil war).

The global prospect

The world today is between orders. The so-called “rule-based liberal international order” – which was neither liberal, nor particularly orderly for most of us – is no longer attractive to those who created and managed the order from WWII until the 2008 global economic crisis. At its height, that order brought unprecedented prosperity to a large segment of humanity while simultaneously exacerbating inequality, bringing identity, emotion and demagoguery to the fore in politics, and making possible technological revolutions (in energy, information technology, digital manufacturing, genetic engineering, artificial intelligence and other fields) which promise to upend our lives, economies and societies in fundamental ways in the near future.

Indeed, if the world seems out of joint there is an objective reality to support that conclusion. Today the world is effectively multipolar economically — relative shares of global GDP, the location of economic activity in the world, and the contribution of large emerging economies to global growth all show this to be so. At the same time, it remains unipolar militarily. The Royal Navy, at the height of Empire, had a two-power standard, that the Royal Navy should be at least as large as the next two biggest navies put together. The US Navy today is equivalent to the next 13 navies put together, and the US defence budget is equal to the next seven largest national defence budgets in the world.

Politically, the world is confused rather than being orderly or structured. It is the imbalance between the distribution of economic, military and political power in the world that is the source of our sense of insecurity, of events being out of control, and that creates spaces that groups and local powers like the Islamic State and Pakistan exploit. In the past, such imbalances were settled by conflict and war. Today nuclear deterrence prevents conflict at the highest level and pushes it down to lower levels of the spectrum of violence – into civil wars, small wars, asymmetric violence and conflict and the non-state domain.

Since the 2008 crisis, we have seen a slow, weak and hesitant economic recovery in most of the world. We should probably get used to the post-miracle world since the global boom from WWII to 2008 was a blip in historical terms. The world (but not India) now faces depopulation, deleveraging and de-globalisation.

Despite grim prospects for the world economy as a whole, the UN forecasts that if China grows at 3%, India at 4% and the US by 1.5%, by 2050, China’s per capita income would be 40% of US levels, and India’s at 26% – where China is today. China would be the world’s largest economy (in PPP terms), India the second, and the US the third.

By that time, both India and China will be overwhelmingly urban.

This would be an unprecedented situation where the largest economies will be among the most powerful states, but will not also be the richest.

China’s rise and the shifting balance of power

Asia is no exception to the great transition at the global level, indeed it is where the transition is most marked as Asia returns to global centre stage, economically and politically speaking.

What we see in Asia today as a result of decades of globalisation and the rise of China, India and other powers is an unprecedented situation: the continental order in Asia is being consolidated under new auspices and the maritime order in the seas near China is contested.

The balance of power in Asia and the world has shifted. For the first time in history, China is comfortable enough on land – with no real enemies now that the West has pushed Russia into her arms – to turn to the oceans on which she depends for her prosperity. China seeks primacy in the seas around her. This is a historic transition that she has never successfully managed before. Her only previous attempt in the early Ming dynasty failed. What is new for Asia is the attempt to centre both continental and maritime orders on one single power.

The response of existing power holders to this shift in the balance, like Japan and the US, has been to tighten the first island chain security and other ties that China sees as containing her, and to seek partners for a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific”, an ill-defined concept that implicitly concedes the continental order to China, and does not fully meet India’s security needs since we are both a continental and a maritime power. Several voices in the present US administration also seek to limit China’s rise by using the US’s technological and other superiorities.

The reaction of other countries in the region such as India, Indonesia and Vietnam has been to balance and hedge against rising Chinese hard power by building military strength and by working together in defence, security and intelligence. This is a natural balancing phenomenon, that has resulted in the world and history’s greatest arms race in Asia in the last three decades, fuelled and made possible by the wealth that globalisation brought to the hard Westphalian states east of India.

#### Indian leadership is key to stability in the South China Sea.

**Bhalla 21** [Abhishek Bhalla, Abhishek Bhalla is an Editor with India Today TV chasing news stories on defence, strategic affairs, security and conflict. His work takes him to military zones to report accurately on the ground realities. Working as a journalist since 2005, his experience spans working across platforms -- newspaper, magazine, broadcast and now trying new things on the digital space. In the past has extensively covered crime, investigationg agencies and courts. 6-16-2021, accessed on 11-2-2021, India Today, "India supports freedom of navigation in int’l waterways like South China Sea: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh ", <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/india-navigation-south-china-sea-defence-minister-rajnath-singh-china-1815476-2021-06-16>] Adam

India supports freedom of navigation, over flight, and unimpeded commerce in these international waterways, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Wednesday as he spoke about maritime security challenges and made a reference to developments in the South China Sea hinting at China’s expansionist policy.

“The sea lanes of communication are critical for peace, stability, prosperity and development of the Indo-Pacific region. In this regard, developments in the South China Sea have attracted attention in the region and beyond,” Rajnath Singh said in his address at the eighth meeting of defence ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

Rajnath Singh was referring to the escalating territorial conflict in the South China Sea. China lays claim to nearly all of South China leading to tensions over territorial rights in the waters with Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam.

Earlier this month, Malaysia scrambled jets to intercept Chinese aircraft it accused of breaching its airspace.

“India hopes that the Code of Conduct negotiations will lead to outcomes that are in keeping with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and do not prejudice the legitimate rights and interests of nations that are not a party to these discussions,” he said.

India calls for a free, open and inclusive order in the Indo-Pacific, based upon respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations, peaceful resolution of disputes through dialogue and adherence to international rules and laws, Rajnath Singh said.

The ministers gathered online for a meeting hosted by Brunei, this year's Asean chair.

“India has strengthened its cooperative engagements in the Indo-Pacific based on converging visions and values for promotion of peace, stability, and prosperity in the region,” the minister said.

The minister added that India supports the utilisation of Asean-led mechanisms as important platforms for the implementation of our shared vision for the Indo-Pacific.

India’s engagement with the South East Asian region, of which ASEAN has been a primary component, is based on its ‘Act East Policy’ announced by PM Narendra Modi in November, 2014.

Key elements of this policy are to promote economic cooperation, cultural ties and develop strategic relationships with countries in the Indo-Pacific region through continuous engagement at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels.

Talking about terrorism, Singh said terrorism and radicalization are the gravest threats to peace and security that the world is facing today.

He said India shares global concerns about terrorism and believes that in an era when networking amongst terrorists is reaching alarming proportions, only through collective cooperation can the terror organizations and their networks be fully disrupted, the perpetrators identified and held accountable, and strong measures are undertaken against those who encourage, support and finance terrorism and provide sanctuary to terrorists.

“As a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), India remains committed to combat financing of terrorism,” the minister said.

He also asserted that cyber threats loom large, as demonstrated by incidents of ransomware, Wannacry attacks and cryptocurrency thefts and are a cause of concern.

A multi-stakeholder approach, guided by democratic values, with a governance structure that is open and inclusive and a secure, open and stable internet with due respect to the sovereignty of countries, would drive the future of cyberspace, Singh said.

He also said that India shares a deep connect with Asean and has continued its active engagement in many areas contributing to regional peace and stability, particularly through Asean-led mechanisms.

#### SCS disputes are uniquely likely to escalate.

**WION News 9/19** [WION News, WION is a news agency specializing on global issues with in-depth analysis. 9-19-2021, accessed on 11-2-2021, WION, "Can South China Sea dispute escalate into a full-scale war?", <https://www.wionews.com/world/can-south-china-sea-dispute-escalate-into-a-full-scale-war-414263>] Adam

For several years, South China Sea seems to have become a bone of contention. After China militarised some artificially constructed islands in the area to assert its claim over the waterway, several countries of the world seem to have been making concerted efforts to push back the Chinese.

Be it the formation of the Quad or Aukus, the focus of the major powers in the region has been to keep a tab over the increasingly aggressive China.

Calling it ‘freedom of navigation’, the US, the UK and other countries have been sending their warships to the region as a show of power but with little or no effect on the adversary China. They regularly pass through the area to demonstrate the right to sail through what is considered to be international waters. It seems to have been only making the Beijing more aggressive.

The China has been militarising the region by allegedly deploying anti-ship cruise missiles, anti-aircraft guns, surface-to-air missiles and electronic jamming equipment on the disputed artificial islands in the South China Sea.

It has also constructed airstrips and harbours, capable of housing military aircraft and warships. The stationing of missiles has effectively put all of the South China Sea within range of the military.

The Chinese have also been carrying out military drills in the region. They have been making all attempts to protect its occupation of these islands. For this, it has been sending its vessels to the area in large number to either terrorise other navies or sink the fishing vessels to discourage people from venturing into the area.

The China’s actions in the busy shipping lane, which is contested by several countries, has raised many eyebrows.

China has wrangled with ASEAN countries, such as the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei over the resource-rich South China Sea in a bitter territorial spat that has flared on and off for decades.

China and Taiwan claim most of the sea, through which around $5 trillion in maritime trade passes every year, while the other countries also have competing claims.

The Chinese have an upper hand in the area as the other claimants, such as Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei, are not as powerful as China, and they also have a crucial economic relationship with the Beijing, which they can’t afford to jeaopardise.

These factors have been working in the favour of the Chinese. But this has also been giving sleepless nights to several in the other parts of the world.

It has also forced the UK to shift its foreign policy and concentrate on Indo-Pacific. India has also been doing the same.

The current situation is such that one small clash can lead to a full-scale war anytime as none of the parties to the dispute seem to be in a mood to deescalate easily. Only time will tell about what will happen in future.

#### Indian leadership’s under-appreciated---they’re gradualist strategy accounts for alt-causes but sustained economic growth is key.

Dhruva Jaishankar 19, Director of the US Initiative at the Observer Research Foundation, 10/5/19, “On climate, connectivity, maritime security, India is reshaping the world order,” https://www.orfonline.org/research/on-climate-connectivity-maritime-security-india-is-reshaping-the-world-order-56189/

Currently, the major centres of world power are self-absorbed. The United States (US) is preoccupied with the possibility of President Donald Trump’s impeachment by the House of Representatives. The United Kingdom is in the throes of deliberating its withdrawal from the European Union, with implications for the rest of that 28-country bloc. China continues to witness demonstrations in Hong Kong, while experiencing the adverse effects of massive tariffs by the US.

Amid these developments, questions are being raised about India’s role in international affairs. Where does India stand on supporting or opposing what has, in recent years, been a US-led international order? Is India willing, and able, to assume a leadership position of its own, at least on certain issues and in certain areas?

At the outset, it should be clear that Indians, by and large, do not view a US-led international order with the nostalgia of many Americans or Europeans. The Cold War was a trying time for India, and even when it was in the right — as on disarmament, decolonisation, or managing rivalries — it often lacked the power to impose its will upon the world. For India, the Cold War era was defined by divisions, hunger, warfare, and nuclear isolation, often enabled or encouraged by the world’s leading powers.

A much stronger case can be made in favour of New Delhi supporting a post-1991 international order. India was arguably one of the top beneficiaries (along with China and the US) of the post-Cold War system, which coincided with India’s initial economic liberalisation. Indian opportunities for growth and development widened and its security increased. However, the changing distribution of power in India’s favour contrasted with the intransigence of important global institutions. It is naturally frustrating from New Delhi’s perspective that the global governance of security, international economics, and technology is still based on antiquated organisations that serve vested interests.

These realities — the shifts in world power coming into conflict with anachronistic institutions — provide the context for Indian engagement with world affairs today. Hints of the kind of international order that India seeks are apparent in several developments over the past few years. Consider three examples.

The first relates to climate change. India was often portrayed as a reluctant actor by the West in committing to a global climate agreement, as in Copenhagen in 2009, even when its per capita emissions were only a fraction of the West’s. But the situation has changed dramatically. Today, it is the US that has unilaterally withdrawn from the Paris Climate Treaty. India has responded by doubling down on its commitment to sustainable development. Not only has India shown leadership through initiatives such as the International Solar Alliance, but it has made commitments at home. The Climate Action Tracker — an independent assessment of climate commitments of countries — rates Europe’s actions as insufficient, China’s and Japan’s as highly insufficient, and US and Russian measures as critically insufficient. India is among only a handful of countries whose measures are rated satisfactorily.

A second example of Indian leadership relates to connectivity. In 2017, when every major country — including the United States, Japan, and most Europeans — sent representatives to China’s Belt and Road Forum, India decided not to participate. Instead, it articulated a set of normative principles for connectivity. These included the sustainability of financing, employment, and the environment; greater transparency; and respect for sovereignty. Today, these principles have formed the basis for norms laid out by several others, including the US, Europe, and Japan. India could certainly do more to elaborate on and assess these values, and work with others to enforce them. But New Delhi was ahead of the curve in anticipating the resulting challenges.

A third example of Indian leadership relates to maritime security, where action has been most pronounced, particularly in the Indian Ocean. Over the past several years, India has increased its naval patrols; improved its logistics network from East Africa to the Gulf to South-east Asia; enhanced its ability to monitor maritime traffic; invested in military infrastructure and maritime assistance to less capable states; and elevated interoperability and information-sharing with key partners.

These signs of Indian leadership are indicative of India’s broader world view when it comes to global affairs, even if they are not always well appreciated either in India or elsewhere.

Of course, many obstacles to Indian leadership remain, and they mostly arise from within. Economic growth and the prosperity of one’s population offer the basic foundations of international power, and the recent growth figures for India have been underwhelming. The amendment of Article 370 and its implications for Jammu and Kashmir have generated urgent new priorities. Resource and capacity constraints persist inside and outside government, requiring any progress to be gradual and ambitions to remain in line with capabilities. Nevertheless, it should be clear from recent developments that India is not just sitting on its hands as the world turns.

#### Nuclear war causes extinction

* Checked

PND 16. internally citing Zbigniew Brzezinski, Council of Foreign Relations and former national security adviser to President Carter, Toon and Robock’s 2012 study on nuclear winter in the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, Gareth Evans’ International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament Report, Congressional EMP studies, studies on nuclear winter by Seth Baum of the Global Catastrophic Risk Institute and Martin Hellman of Stanford University, and U.S. and Russian former Defense Secretaries and former heads of nuclear missile forces, brief submitted to the United Nations General Assembly, Open-Ended Working Group on nuclear risks. A/AC.286/NGO/13. 05-03-2016. <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/OEWG/2016/Documents/NGO13.pdf> //Re-cut by Elmer

Consequences human survival 12. Even if the 'other' side does NOT launch in response the smoke from 'their' burning cities (incinerated by 'us') will still make 'our' country (and the rest of the world) uninhabitable, potentially inducing global famine lasting up to decades. Toon and Robock note in ‘Self Assured Destruction’, in the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists 68/5, 2012, that: 13. “A nuclear war between Russia and the United States, even after the arsenal reductions planned under New START, could produce a nuclear winter. Hence, an attack by either side could be suicidal, resulting in self assured destruction. Even a 'small' nuclear war between India and Pakistan, with each country detonating 50 Hiroshima-size atom bombs--only about 0.03 percent of the global nuclear arsenal's explosive power--as air bursts in urban areas, could produce so much smoke that temperatures would fall below those of the Little Ice Age of the fourteenth to nineteenth centuries, shortening the growing season around the world and threatening the global food supply. Furthermore, there would be massive ozone depletion, allowing more ultraviolet radiation to reach Earth's surface. Recent studies predict that agricultural production in parts of the United States and China would decline by about **20 percent** for four years, and by 10 percent for a decade.” 14. A conflagration involving USA/NATO forces and those of Russian federation would most likely cause the deaths of most/nearly all/all humans (and severely impact/extinguish other species) as well as destroying the delicate interwoven techno-structure on which latter-day 'civilization' has come to depend. Temperatures would drop to below those of the last ice-age for up to 30 years as a result of the lofting of up to 180 million tonnes of very black soot into the stratosphere where it would remain for decades. 15. Though human ingenuity and resilience shouldn't be underestimated, human survival itself is arguably problematic, to put it mildly, under a 2000+ warhead USA/Russian federation scenario. 16. The Joint Statement on Catastrophic Humanitarian Consequences signed October 2013 by 146 governments mentioned 'Human Survival' no less than 5 times. The most recent (December 2014) one gives it a highly prominent place. Gareth Evans’ ICNND (International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament) Report made it clear that it saw the threat posed by nuclear weapons use as one that at least threatens what we now call 'civilization' and that potentially threatens human survival with an immediacy that even climate change does not, though we can see the results of climate change here and now and of course the immediate post-nuclear results for Hiroshima and Nagasaki as well.

### 1AC: Framing

#### Ethics begin a posteriori.

#### 1] Knowledge is based on experience – I wouldn’t know 2+2=4 without experience of objects nor the color red without some experience of color. We can’t obtain evidence of goodness without experience.

#### 2] Indifference – Even if there are apriori moral truths, I can choose to ignore them. Cognition is binding – if I put my hand on a hot stove, I can’t turn off my natural aversion to it.

#### The standard is maximizing expected wellbeing or act hedonistic util.

#### Prefer:

#### 1] Pleasure and pain *are* intrinsic value and disvalue – everything else *regresses* – robust neuroscience.

Blum et al. 18

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**Pleasure** is not only one of the three primary reward functions but it also **defines reward.** As homeostasis explains the functions of only a limited number of rewards, the principal reason why particular stimuli, objects, events, situations, and activities are rewarding may be due to pleasure. This applies first of all to sex and to the primary homeostatic rewards of food and liquid and extends to money, taste, beauty, social encounters and nonmaterial, internally set, and intrinsic rewards. Pleasure, as the primary effect of rewards, drives the prime reward functions of learning, approach behavior, and decision making and provides the **basis for hedonic theories** of reward function. We are attracted by most rewards and exert intense efforts to obtain them, just because they are enjoyable [10].

Pleasure is a passive reaction that derives from the experience or prediction of reward and may lead to a long-lasting state of happiness. The word happiness is difficult to define. In fact, just obtaining physical pleasure may not be enough. One key to happiness involves a network of good friends. However, it is not obvious how the higher forms of satisfaction and pleasure are related to an ice cream cone, or to your team winning a sporting event. Recent multidisciplinary research, using both humans and detailed invasive brain analysis of animals has discovered some critical ways that the brain processes pleasure [14].

Pleasure as a hallmark of reward is sufficient for defining a reward, but it may not be necessary. A reward may generate positive learning and approach behavior simply because it contains substances that are essential for body function. When we are hungry, we may eat bad and unpleasant meals. A monkey who receives hundreds of small drops of water every morning in the laboratory is unlikely to feel a rush of pleasure every time it gets the 0.1 ml. Nevertheless, with these precautions in mind, we may define any stimulus, object, event, activity, or situation that has the potential to produce pleasure as a reward. In the context of reward deficiency or for disorders of addiction, homeostasis pursues pharmacological treatments: drugs to treat drug addiction, obesity, and other compulsive behaviors. The theory of allostasis suggests broader approaches - such as re-expanding the range of possible pleasures and providing opportunities to expend effort in their pursuit. [15]. It is noteworthy, the first animal studies eliciting approach behavior by electrical brain stimulation interpreted their findings as a discovery of the brain’s pleasure centers [16] which were later partly associated with midbrain dopamine neurons [17–19] despite the notorious difficulties of identifying emotions in animals.

Evolutionary theories of pleasure: The love connection BO:D

Charles Darwin and other biological scientists that have examined the biological evolution and its basic principles found various mechanisms that steer behavior and biological development. Besides their theory on natural selection, it was particularly the sexual selection process that gained significance in the latter context over the last century, especially when it comes to the question of what makes us “what we are,” i.e., human. However, the capacity to sexually select and evolve is not at all a human accomplishment alone or a sign of our uniqueness; yet, we humans, as it seems, are ingenious in fooling ourselves and others–when we are in love or desperately search for it.

It is well established that modern biological theory conjectures that **organisms are** the **result of evolutionary competition.** In fact, Richard Dawkins stresses gene survival and propagation as the basic mechanism of life [20]. Only genes that lead to the fittest phenotype will make it. It is noteworthy that the phenotype is selected based on behavior that maximizes gene propagation. To do so, the phenotype must survive and generate offspring, and be better at it than its competitors. Thus, the ultimate, distal function of rewards is to increase evolutionary fitness by ensuring the survival of the organism and reproduction. It is agreed that learning, approach, economic decisions, and positive emotions are the proximal functions through which phenotypes obtain other necessary nutrients for survival, mating, and care for offspring.

Behavioral reward functions have evolved to help individuals to survive and propagate their genes. Apparently, people need to live well and long enough to reproduce. Most would agree that homo-sapiens do so by ingesting the substances that make their bodies function properly. For this reason, foods and drinks are rewards. Additional rewards, including those used for economic exchanges, ensure sufficient palatable food and drink supply. Mating and gene propagation is supported by powerful sexual attraction. Additional properties, like body form, augment the chance to mate and nourish and defend offspring and are therefore also rewards. Care for offspring until they can reproduce themselves helps gene propagation and is rewarding; otherwise, many believe mating is useless. According to David E Comings, as any small edge will ultimately result in evolutionary advantage [21], additional reward mechanisms like novelty seeking and exploration widen the spectrum of available rewards and thus enhance the chance for survival, reproduction, and ultimate gene propagation. These functions may help us to obtain the benefits of distant rewards that are determined by our own interests and not immediately available in the environment. Thus the distal reward function in gene propagation and evolutionary fitness defines the proximal reward functions that we see in everyday behavior. That is why foods, drinks, mates, and offspring are rewarding.

There have been theories linking pleasure as a required component of health benefits salutogenesis, (salugenesis). In essence, under these terms, pleasure is described as a state or feeling of happiness and satisfaction resulting from an experience that one enjoys. Regarding pleasure, it is a double-edged sword, on the one hand, it promotes positive feelings (like mindfulness) and even better cognition, possibly through the release of dopamine [22]. But on the other hand, pleasure simultaneously encourages addiction and other negative behaviors, i.e., motivational toxicity. It is a complex neurobiological phenomenon, relying on reward circuitry or limbic activity. It is important to realize that through the “Brain Reward Cascade” (BRC) endorphin and endogenous morphinergic mechanisms may play a role [23]. While natural rewards are essential for survival and appetitive motivation leading to beneficial biological behaviors like eating, sex, and reproduction, crucial social interactions seem to further facilitate the positive effects exerted by pleasurable experiences. Indeed, experimentation with addictive drugs is capable of directly acting on reward pathways and causing deterioration of these systems promoting hypodopaminergia [24]. Most would agree that pleasurable activities can stimulate personal growth and may help to induce healthy behavioral changes, including stress management [25]. The work of Esch and Stefano [26] concerning the link between compassion and love implicate the brain reward system, and pleasure induction suggests that social contact in general, i.e., love, attachment, and compassion, can be highly effective in stress reduction, survival, and overall health.

Understanding the role of neurotransmission and pleasurable states both positive and negative have been adequately studied over many decades [26–37], but comparative anatomical and neurobiological function between animals and homo sapiens appear to be required and seem to be in an infancy stage.

Finding happiness is different between apes and humans

As stated earlier in this expert opinion one key to happiness involves a network of good friends [38]. However, it is not entirely clear exactly how the higher forms of satisfaction and pleasure are related to a sugar rush, winning a sports event or even sky diving, all of which augment dopamine release at the reward brain site. Recent multidisciplinary research, using both humans and detailed invasive brain analysis of animals has discovered some critical ways that the brain processes pleasure.

Remarkably, there are pathways for ordinary liking and pleasure, which are limited in scope as described above in this commentary. However, there are **many brain regions**, often termed hot and cold spots, that significantly **modulate** (increase or decrease) our **pleasure or** even produce **the opposite** of pleasure— that is disgust and fear [39]. One specific region of the nucleus accumbens is organized like a computer keyboard, with particular stimulus triggers in rows— producing an increase and decrease of pleasure and disgust. Moreover, the cortex has unique roles in the cognitive evaluation of our feelings of pleasure [40]. Importantly, the interplay of these multiple triggers and the higher brain centers in the prefrontal cortex are very intricate and are just being uncovered.

Desire and reward centers

It is surprising that many different sources of pleasure activate the same circuits between the mesocorticolimbic regions (Figure 1). Reward and desire are two aspects pleasure induction and have a very widespread, large circuit. Some part of this circuit distinguishes between desire and dread. The so-called pleasure circuitry called “REWARD” involves a well-known dopamine pathway in the mesolimbic system that can influence both pleasure and motivation.

In simplest terms, the well-established mesolimbic system is a dopamine circuit for reward. It starts in the ventral tegmental area (VTA) of the midbrain and travels to the nucleus accumbens (Figure 2). It is the cornerstone target to all addictions. The VTA is encompassed with neurons using glutamate, GABA, and dopamine. The nucleus accumbens (NAc) is located within the ventral striatum and is divided into two sub-regions—the motor and limbic regions associated with its core and shell, respectively. The NAc has spiny neurons that receive dopamine from the VTA and glutamate (a dopamine driver) from the hippocampus, amygdala and medial prefrontal cortex. Subsequently, the NAc projects GABA signals to an area termed the ventral pallidum (VP). The region is a relay station in the limbic loop of the basal ganglia, critical for motivation, behavior, emotions and the “Feel Good” response. This defined system of the brain is involved in all addictions –substance, and non –substance related. In 1995, our laboratory coined the term “Reward Deficiency Syndrome” (RDS) to describe genetic and epigenetic induced hypodopaminergia in the “Brain Reward Cascade” that contribute to addiction and compulsive behaviors [3,6,41].

Furthermore, ordinary “liking” of something, or pure pleasure, is represented by small regions mainly in the limbic system (old reptilian part of the brain). These may be part of larger neural circuits. In Latin, hedus is the term for “sweet”; and in Greek, hodone is the term for “pleasure.” Thus, the word Hedonic is now referring to various subcomponents of pleasure: some associated with purely sensory and others with more complex emotions involving morals, aesthetics, and social interactions. The capacity to have pleasure is part of being healthy and may even extend life, especially if linked to optimism as a dopaminergic response [42].

Psychiatric illness often includes symptoms of an abnormal inability to experience pleasure, referred to as anhedonia. A negative feeling state is called dysphoria, which can consist of many emotions such as pain, depression, anxiety, fear, and disgust. Previously many scientists used animal research to uncover the complex mechanisms of pleasure, liking, motivation and even emotions like panic and fear, as discussed above [43]. However, as a significant amount of related research about the specific brain regions of pleasure/reward circuitry has been derived from invasive studies of animals, these cannot be directly compared with subjective states experienced by humans.

In an attempt to resolve the controversy regarding the causal contributions of mesolimbic dopamine systems to reward, we have previously evaluated the three-main competing explanatory categories: “liking,” “learning,” and “wanting” [3]. That is, dopamine may mediate (a) liking: the hedonic impact of reward, (b) learning: learned predictions about rewarding effects, or (c) wanting: the pursuit of rewards by attributing incentive salience to reward-related stimuli [44]. We have evaluated these hypotheses, especially as they relate to the RDS, and we find that the incentive salience or “wanting” hypothesis of dopaminergic functioning is supported by a majority of the scientific evidence. Various neuroimaging studies have shown that anticipated behaviors such as sex and gaming, delicious foods and drugs of abuse all affect brain regions associated with reward networks, and may not be unidirectional. Drugs of abuse enhance dopamine signaling which sensitizes mesolimbic brain mechanisms that apparently evolved explicitly to attribute incentive salience to various rewards [45].

Addictive substances are voluntarily self-administered, and they enhance (directly or indirectly) dopaminergic synaptic function in the NAc. This activation of the brain reward networks (producing the ecstatic “high” that users seek). Although these circuits were initially thought to encode a set point of hedonic tone, it is now being considered to be far more complicated in function, also encoding attention, reward expectancy, disconfirmation of reward expectancy, and incentive motivation [46]. The argument about addiction as a disease may be confused with a predisposition to substance and nonsubstance rewards relative to the extreme effect of drugs of abuse on brain neurochemistry. The former sets up an individual to be at high risk through both genetic polymorphisms in reward genes as well as harmful epigenetic insult. Some Psychologists, even with all the data, still infer that addiction is not a disease [47]. Elevated stress levels, together with polymorphisms (genetic variations) of various dopaminergic genes and the genes related to other neurotransmitters (and their genetic variants), and may have an additive effect on vulnerability to various addictions [48]. In this regard, Vanyukov, et al. [48] suggested based on review that whereas the gateway hypothesis does not specify mechanistic connections between “stages,” and does not extend to the risks for addictions the concept of common liability to addictions may be more parsimonious. The latter theory is grounded in genetic theory and supported by data identifying common sources of variation in the risk for specific addictions (e.g., RDS). This commonality has identifiable neurobiological substrate and plausible evolutionary explanations.

Over many years the controversy of dopamine involvement in especially “pleasure” has led to confusion concerning separating motivation from actual pleasure (wanting versus liking) [49]. We take the position that animal studies cannot provide real clinical information as described by self-reports in humans. As mentioned earlier and in the abstract, on November 23rd, 2017, evidence for our concerns was discovered [50]

In essence, although nonhuman primate brains are similar to our own, the disparity between other primates and those of human cognitive abilities tells us that surface similarity is not the whole story. Sousa et al. [50] small case found various differentially expressed genes, to associate with pleasure related systems. Furthermore, the dopaminergic interneurons located in the human neocortex were absent from the neocortex of nonhuman African apes. Such differences in neuronal transcriptional programs may underlie a variety of neurodevelopmental disorders.

In simpler terms, the system controls the production of dopamine, a chemical messenger that plays a significant role in pleasure and rewards. The senior author, Dr. Nenad Sestan from Yale, stated: “Humans have evolved a dopamine system that is different than the one in chimpanzees.” This may explain why the behavior of humans is so unique from that of non-human primates, even though our brains are so surprisingly similar, Sestan said: “It might also shed light on why people are vulnerable to mental disorders such as autism (possibly even addiction).” Remarkably, this research finding emerged from an extensive, multicenter collaboration to compare the brains across several species. These researchers examined 247 specimens of neural tissue from six humans, five chimpanzees, and five macaque monkeys. Moreover, these investigators analyzed which genes were turned on or off in 16 regions of the brain. While the differences among species were subtle, **there was** a **remarkable contrast in** the **neocortices**, specifically in an area of the brain that is much more developed in humans than in chimpanzees. In fact, these researchers found that a gene called tyrosine hydroxylase (TH) for the enzyme, responsible for the production of dopamine, was expressed in the neocortex of humans, but not chimpanzees. As discussed earlier, dopamine is best known for its essential role within the brain’s reward system; the very system that responds to everything from sex, to gambling, to food, and to addictive drugs. However, dopamine also assists in regulating emotional responses, memory, and movement. Notably, abnormal dopamine levels have been linked to disorders including Parkinson’s, schizophrenia and spectrum disorders such as autism and addiction or RDS.

Nora Volkow, the director of NIDA, pointed out that one alluring possibility is that the neurotransmitter dopamine plays a substantial role in humans’ ability to pursue various rewards that are perhaps months or even years away in the future. This same idea has been suggested by Dr. Robert Sapolsky, a professor of biology and neurology at Stanford University. Dr. Sapolsky cited evidence that dopamine levels rise dramatically in humans when we anticipate potential rewards that are uncertain and even far off in our futures, such as retirement or even the possible alterlife. This may explain what often motivates people to work for things that have no apparent short-term benefit [51]. In similar work, Volkow and Bale [52] proposed a model in which dopamine can favor NOW processes through phasic signaling in reward circuits or LATER processes through tonic signaling in control circuits. Specifically, they suggest that through its modulation of the orbitofrontal cortex, which processes salience attribution, dopamine also enables shilting from NOW to LATER, while its modulation of the insula, which processes interoceptive information, influences the probability of selecting NOW versus LATER actions based on an individual’s physiological state. This hypothesis further supports the concept that disruptions along these circuits contribute to diverse pathologies, including obesity and addiction or RDS.

#### 2] Death is bad and outweighs – a) agents can’t act if they fear for their bodily security which constrains every ethical theory, b) it destroys the subject itself – kills any ability to achieve value in ethics since life is a prerequisite which means it’s a side constraint since we can’t reach the end goal of ethics without life

#### 3] Actor spec—governments must use util because they don’t have intentions and are constantly dealing with tradeoffs—outweighs since different agents have different obligations—takes out calc indicts since they are empirically denied.

#### 4] Weigh magnitude times probability---“probability first” framing is rooted in psychological biases and leads to mass death

Clarke 08 [Lee, member of a National Academy of Science committee that considered decision-making models, Anschutz Distinguished Scholar at Princeton University, Fellow of AAAS, Professor Sociology (Rutgers), Ph.D. (SUNY), “Possibilistic Thinking: A New Conceptual Tool for Thinking about Extreme Events,” Fall, Social Research 75.3, JSTOR]

In scholarly work, the subfield of disasters is often seen as narrow. One reason for this is that a lot of scholarship on disasters is practically oriented, for obvious reasons, and the social sciences have a deep-seated suspicion of practical work. This is especially true in sociology. Tierney (2007b) has treated this topic at length, so there is no reason to repeat the point here. There is another, somewhat unappreciated reason that work on disaster is seen as narrow, a reason that holds some irony for the main thrust of my argument here: disasters are unusual and the social sciences are generally biased toward phenomena that are frequent. Methods textbooks caution against using case stud- ies as representative of anything, and articles in mainstreams journals that are not based on probability samples must issue similar obligatory caveats. The premise, itself narrow, is that the only way to be certain that we know something about the social world, and the only way to control for subjective influences in data acquisition, is to follow the tenets of probabilistic sampling. This view is a correlate of the central way of defining rational action and rational policy in academic work of all varieties and also in much practical work, which is to say in terms of probabilities. The irony is that probabilistic thinking has its own biases, which, if unacknowledged and uncorrected for, lead to a conceptual neglect of extreme events. This leaves us, as scholars, paying attention to disasters only when they happen and doing that makes the accumulation of good ideas about disaster vulnerable to issue-attention cycles (Birkland, 2007). These conceptual blinders lead to a neglect of disasters as "strategic research sites" (Merton, 1987), which results in learning less about disaster than we could and in missing opportunities to use disaster to learn about society (cf. Sorokin, 1942). We need new conceptual tools because of an upward trend in frequency and severity of disaster since 1970 (Perrow, 2007), and because of a growing intellectual attention to the idea of worst cases (Clarke, 2006b; Clarke, in press). For instance, the chief scientist in charge of studying earthquakes for the US Geological Service, Lucile Jones, has worked on the combination of events that could happen in California that would constitute a "give up scenario": a very long-shaking earthquake in southern California just when the Santa Anna winds are making everything dry and likely to burn. In such conditions, meaningful response to the fires would be impossible and recovery would take an extraordinarily long time. There are other similar pockets of scholarly interest in extreme events, some spurred by September 11 and many catalyzed by Katrina. The consequences of disasters are also becoming more severe, both in terms of lives lost and property damaged. People and their places are becoming more vulnerable. The most important reason that vulnerabilities are increasing is population concentration (Clarke, 2006b). This is a general phenomenon and includes, for example, flying in jumbo jets, working in tall buildings, and attending events in large capacity sports arenas. Considering disasters whose origin is a natural hazard, the specific cause of increased vulnerability is that people are moving to where hazards originate, and most especially to where the water is. In some places, this makes them vulnerable to hurricanes that can create devastating storm surges; in others it makes them vulnerable to earthquakes that can create tsunamis. In any case, the general problem is that people concentrate themselves in dangerous places, so when the hazard comes disasters are intensified. More than one-half of Florida's population lives within 20 miles of the sea. Additionally, Florida's population grows every year, along with increasing development along the coasts. The risk of exposure to a devastating hurricane is obviously high in Florida. No one should be surprised if during the next hurricane season Florida becomes the scene of great tragedy. The demographic pressures and attendant development are wide- spread. People are concentrating along the coasts of the United States, and, like Florida, this puts people at risk of water-related hazards. Or consider the Pacific Rim, the coastline down the west coasts of North and South America, south to Oceania, and then up the eastern coast- line of Asia. There the hazards are particularly threatening. Maps of population concentration around the Pacific Rim should be seen as target maps, because along those shorelines are some of the most active tectonic plates in the world. The 2004 Indonesian earthquake and tsunami, which killed at least 250,000 people, demonstrated the kind of damage that issues from the movement of tectonic plates. (Few in the United States recognize that there is a subduction zone just off the coast of Oregon and Washington that is quite similar to the one in Indonesia.) Additionally, volcanoes reside atop the meeting of tectonic plates; the typhoons that originate in the Pacific Ocean generate furiously fatal winds. Perrow (2007) has generalized the point about concentration, arguing not only that we increase vulnerabilities by increasing the breadth and depth of exposure to hazards but also by concentrating industrial facilities with catastrophic potential. Some of Perrow's most important examples concern chemical production facilities. These are facilities that bring together in a single place multiple stages of production used in the production of toxic substances. Key to Perrow's argument is that there is no technically necessary reason for such concentration, although there may be good economic reasons for it. The general point is that we can expect more disasters, whether their origins are "natural" or "technological." We can also expect more death and destruction from them. I predict we will continue to be poorly prepared to deal with disaster. People around the world were appalled with the incompetence of America's leaders and orga- nizations in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Day after day we watched people suffering unnecessarily. Leaders were slow to grasp the importance of the event. With a few notable exceptions, organi- zations lumbered to a late rescue. Setting aside our moral reaction to the official neglect, perhaps we ought to ask why we should have expected a competent response at all? Are US leaders and organiza- tions particularly attuned to the suffering of people in disasters? Is the political economy of the United States organized so that people, espe- cially poor people, are attended to quickly and effectively in noncri- sis situations? The answers to these questions are obvious. If social systems are not arranged to ensure people's well-being in normal times, there is no good reason to expect them to be so inclined in disastrous times. Still, if we are ever going to be reasonably well prepared to avoid or respond to the next Katrina-like event, we need to identify the barriers to effective thinking about, and effective response to, disas- ters. One of those barriers is that we do not have a set of concepts that would help us think rigorously about out-sized events. The chief toolkit of concepts that we have for thinking about important social events comes from probability theory. There are good reasons for this, as probability theory has obviously served social research well. Still, the toolkit is incomplete when it comes to extreme events, especially when it is used as a base whence to make normative judgments about what people, organizations, and governments should and should not do. As a complement to probabilistic thinking I propose that we need possibilistic thinking. In this paper I explicate the notion of possibilistic thinking. I first discuss the equation of probabilism with rationality in scholarly thought, followed by a section that shows the ubiquity of possibilis- tic thinking in everyday life. Demonstrating the latter will provide an opportunity to explore the limits of the probabilistic approach: that possibilistic thinking is widespread suggests it could be used more rigorously in social research. I will then address the most vexing prob- lem with advancing and employing possibilistic thinking: the prob- lem of infinite imagination. I argue that possibilism can be used with discipline, and that we can be smarter about responding to disasters by doing so.