

**HYPERMASCULINE WAR GAMES:  
Triangulating US-India-China**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The current US security discourse “triangulates” India and China. That is, it assumes that India and China seek to ally with the US more than each other. Accordingly, the US remains superior to both and can play one against the other. Neither assumption holds, especially if we look beyond the state and its ruling elites. Instead, constructions of security restricted to competitive inter-state jousting between ruling elites perpetuate a hypermasculine war game. It oppresses and exploits those whom elites claim to nurture and protect not just materially but also discursively. That is, participation in and complicity with this discourse continues colonial power relations. Former colonizers still set the “rules of the game,” just as the formerly colonized are still demonstrating their “manhood” or other forms of “legitimacy” according to the white man’s terms. Whether women or femininity or even feminist analysis should intervene in this exclusive (neo) colonial club is beside the point. We, all of us, need to not just change “the rules” but displace “the game” altogether. One way is to recognize the larger context of social relations that already exist. And, in the case of India and China, these reflect millennia-old encounters, exchanges, and flows.

## **HYPERMASCULINE WAR GAMES: Triangulating US-India-China**

Payal Banerjee and L. H. M. Ling<sup>1</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the current US security discourse on “triangulating” relations with India and China. Drawn from its Cold War precedent involving the US, the Soviet Union, and China, this strategy casts the US in a position of “playing” the “China card” against India, or the “India card” against China, as a means of obtaining crucial concessions from each. Contrary to most treatments of the subject, however, this paper does not decipher the specifics of US-India-China geopolitics: its goals, strategies, outcomes. Nor does it seek to survey this relationship from the perspective of each state. Such analyses have been undertaken – indeed, they comprise the majority of the literature on the subject – yet they produce little new insight that is productive for considering *future* relations between the US, India, and China. They tend, instead, to rehash the same old concepts and dynamics, freezing this relationship and our understanding of it in a realist time warp as if the Cold War never ended, India and China have not *really* globalized, and national elites think the same wherever and whoever they are.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was presented at the Institute of Malaysian and International Affairs (IKMAS) in Kuala Lumpur on 25 May 2006, the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS) in Singapore on 29 May 2006, and National Sun Yat-sen University in Kaohsiung, Taiwan on 2 June 2006. We thank these institutions for making these presentations possible and their participants for enriching our analysis with their cogent questions and discussions.

<sup>2</sup> For a related argument on why we need new concepts and approaches in security studies, see Krause and Williams (1996).

We offer another approach to US-India-China relations. We examine the *social relations* behind “triangulating” these three states, particularly from the perspective of US defense intellectuals.<sup>3</sup> We do so to evaluate the merits of participating in such a discourse in the first place. In this sense, discourse *is* practice (cf. Weldes 1999; Milliken 1999).

We ask: Which identities and roles are assigned by whom to whom in this security discourse, and how are its benefits and penalties distributed systematically? Put differently, why would those who benefit least and suffer most from this discourse put up with it? Even for those who *seem* to benefit most from this discourse, what are its costs and consequences? And what alternatives could we consider instead?

Here, we focus on the security discourse that emanates from the US. As the world’s sole superpower, its constructions of world politics invariably precipitate (re)actions from others. Of course, India and China have their own security discourses vis-à-vis the US as well as each other and we will touch upon them here. Indeed, a similar, relational analysis should be conducted for each – but in due time. In this paper, we begin with the US.

John Garver’s article, “The China-India-US Triangle: Strategic Relations in the Post-Cold War Era” (*NBR Analysis* 2002) aptly illustrates “triangulation” as a national security strategy. Not only does Garver present the strategy as eminently objective, rational, and historically accurate, but also the article’s site of publication, *NBR Analysis*, comes from a well-respected, well-established source of research and intelligence on Asia. The National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR) self-identifies as “nonprofit,

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<sup>3</sup> We borrow the term “defense intellectual” from Cohn (1989). It refers to those who either make policy or advise the policy-makers on matters of national defense and/or security.

nonpartisan” and “devoted to bridging the policy, academic, and business communities with advanced policy-relevant research on Asia” (<http://www.nbr.org>). A closer examination of NBR’s Board of Directors reveals a very partisan membership composed of mega-corporations (e.g., Unocal, Coca Cola, Corning, Microsoft, Boeing, Ford) and their elite associates in the military (e.g., former US joint chiefs of staff chairman General John M. Shalikashvili), industry (e.g., Virginia Mason Medical Center), and academia (e.g., American Enterprise Institute, Woodrow Wilson Center). Furthermore, NBR makes its reports and publications easily available on-line to ensure a wide readership. Our singular focus on Garver’s article, then, is more than compensated by its *representativeness*, not just in terms of its views but also the interests and social infrastructure behind them.

We argue that the US security discourse of “triangulation” perpetuates hypermasculine war games. By hypermasculinity, we draw on Ashis Nandy’s (1988) identification of an exaggeration or distortion of those traits traditionally-assigned as masculine, like aggression and competition, at the expense of so-called feminine ones, like intellection and concern for social welfare, to justify colonial power relations. Hypermasculinity affects colonizer and colonized alike such that each becomes a co-victim of colonialism and imperialism. For both, hypermasculinity leads to an “undeveloped heart” that sanctions sexism, racism, false cultural homogeneity, and most insidiously, banal violence.

In the case of US-India-China triangulation, this discourse allows former colonizers to retain their role as globe-spanning arbiters of the “rules of the game.” The formerly colonized, meanwhile, are relegated to a condition of postcolonial mimicry

externally regardless of their elevated status internally. They must demonstrate forever their “manhood” or other forms of “legitimacy” according to the white man’s terms. Given this context of colonialized, racialized nationalism for ruling elites, hypermasculine war games set up a globalized hierarchy of gender, class, and culture for the rest of us. The proliferation of “desire industries” (Agathangelou and Ling 2003) all over the world, despite governmental condemnation and policing, offers one such indication. Whether women or femininity or even feminist analysis should intervene in this exclusive (neo)colonial club is beside the point. We, all of us, need to not just change “the rules” but displace “the game” altogether. One way is to recognize the social relations that already exist in contrast to those imputed by conventional security. The latter fixates narrowly on questions of states-and-borders, law-and-order, who’s-on-top competitiveness whereas a broader appreciation of the binding engagements and contestations that make up everyday life asks: How do we want to live? For India and China, we can draw from a millennia-old archive of encounters, exchanges, and flows. We conclude with implications of this history for security in contemporary world politics.

## I. TRIANGULATING US-INDIA-CHINA

Garver’s analysis follows conventional realist principles. He starts by defining the US, India, and China as states only: they are self-enclosed, self-interested units of sovereignty typically anthropomorphized as individuals (e.g., Washington or New Delhi or Beijing “thinks” or “believes” or “wants”...). Garver assumes that each state is concerned with and motivated by the same issues: that is, military or economic strategies that would enhance or undercut the relative position of Oneself vis-à-vis Others. Much

of the article, for example, is spent on details regarding state visits and/or negotiations, conducted by high-level national elites (Nehru, Deng, Clinton, Gandhi, Jiang), among the three countries on, for instance, “the India-China border dispute, establishing nuclear deterrents, the war on terrorism, relations with Pakistan, and political and economic influence in the South Asia-Indian Ocean region” (Garver 2002: 5).

Balance of power becomes the prevailing principle of interactions among the US, India, and China: “The crux of the new triangle is that each actor fears alignment of the other two against itself” (Garver 2002: 6). Garver adds: “This fear exists for all three actors but is especially strong for the two weaker state actors, China and India” (Garver 2002: 6).

All involved see themselves in a geopolitical “game.” They play it “consciously and enthusiastically” with mutually-understood “rules” (Garver 2002: 5). Indeed, this gamesmanship often takes on a tongue-in-cheek quality. Garver notes, for example: “We can expect Washington to reject the proposition that it is trying to align with one member of the new triangle against the third party, even while it is, in fact, doing precisely that. Beijing and New Delhi will also resort to similar protective coloration” (Garver 2002: 54).

Accordingly, Garver projects an individualist calculus for each state. Its basis in self-interest and self-protection against the Other seems clear-cut, well-established, and unquestionable:

China seems to have two major interests within the new triangle. The first is to prevent close Indian alignment with the United States...[The second] is to avoid paying too high a price to achieve the first objective (of uncoupling New Delhi

and Washington)...China's objective is to persuade India to disassociate itself from the United States while allowing the Sino-Pakistan strategic partnership to continue.

India for its part seems to have three primary interests within the new triangle. The first is to prevent or abort Chinese-US cooperation contrary to Indian policy objectives... A second Indian interest seems to be to play on Washington's apprehensions over China's growing power to secure US support, or at least US understanding, for strengthening India's pre-eminent position in the South Asian-Indian Ocean region via transfers of advanced military technologies, training in modern modes of warfare, and so on.....New Delhi may also play on a US desire to co-opt India into the US-led system of global power in order to secure stronger US support for Indian economic and military development...Finally, India's third interest within the new triangle is to play on Chinese fears of Indian participation in US inspired "anti-China" schemes to make Beijing more understanding of Indian objections to Chinese activities in the South Asian-Indian Ocean region (Garver 2002: 45, 47-48).

According to Garver, then, India and China fret more over their relative status with the US than the reverse. Fear of the other two ganging up against oneself seems to be the motivating factor:

The new triangle is also *asymmetrical* in two senses. First, Indian and Chinese concerns about the alignment of the other with the United States are far greater than US concerns about a possible India-China alignment...India's fears centered on US support for a growing Chinese role in South Asia. China's fears centered on the possibility of Indian participation in US-inspired containment of China...The second sense in which the new triangle is asymmetrical is that US and Chinese interests in their *mutual relationship* far outweigh the interests of



each vi-a-vis India... While China has major interests in South Asia, they pale in comparison to China's interests around the Pacific, except for those related to China's control over Tibet (Garver 2002: 7-8).

The US could worry about Sino-Indian collusion but Garver considers it highly suspect.

US policies of arrogance, economic protectionism or military aggression that threaten both India and China could conceivably force those two countries into alignment. On the other hand, there is every reason to believe that US policies sensitive to the nuances of the new triangle should be able to prevent the emergence of an anti-US, China-India bloc. It could well be in the interest of both New Delhi and Beijing to stimulate Washington's fears of a possible India-China alignment against the United States, since it would induce the United States to pay more for Chinese and Indian abstention from such a combination (Garver 2002: 51).

In contrast, China detects possible containment by surrounding states. "Were Russia to continue its post-September 11 move toward the West," speculates Garver, "China might eventually find itself confronting a chain of US-friendly states around its entire periphery" (Garver 2002: 47). Indeed, Garver admits to US intentions of just such a strategy: "US efforts toward all three powers (India, Japan, and Australia) help create a structure of power that will be less inviting to Chinese aggression in the decades ahead – or at least, this seems to be the unspoken thinking that dominates US policy" (Garver 2002: 49).

For this reason, China seeks to ally with the US even at the expense of India. "For Beijing the prospect of cooperation with the United States against India is a far more

attractive prospect than cooperation with India against the United States” (Garver 2002: 50). Such an alliance would grant China the first-class status that every state desires: “Cooperation with the United States in the South Asian region would be a very big step toward the Chinese goal being accepted as the peer of the United States as a global power” (Garver 2002: 50).

Garver asserts that China’s hegemony is its “historical destiny” (Garver 2002: 45). But it’s defined by and modeled after Europe’s experiences with state-formation and nation-building. “The case of Germany’s rise in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries comes to mind” (Garver 2002: 56). Garver further advises a suitable leader to guide the Chinese nation to great power status. Here, he is most specific:

Unless China can produce a statesman closer to the caliber of Otto von Bismark, the *sine qua non* of whose diplomacy was to keep Russia, France, and Britain from uniting against Germany, the future may be gloomy, or to return to the narrower theme of this essay, alignments within the new post-Cold War Triangle may become rigid (Garver 2002: 56).

## II. REALISM’S IMPLICIT SOCIAL RELATIONS

Subjective social relations underpin Garver’s seemingly objective, rational analysis of US-India-China “triangulation.” These are not just masculine and elitist but also distinctly Western and colonial. Let’s see how.

Garver’s analysis breaks down to realist renditions on three main elements: borders, strategies, and histories.

A. BORDERS:  
The State as Hobbesian Individual

Garver assumes the state as the only unit of analysis for world politics. Moreover, the state reflects the self-enclosed, self-interested Hobbesian individual,<sup>4</sup> operating in a Leviathan-less world of inter-state relations where competition and anarchy rule. Life in this State of Nature environment is, in Hobbes' words, "nasty, brutish, lonely, poore, and short."

Borders, in particular, exemplify these differences. The Hobbesian individual/state constantly strategizes to "survive" by "securing" his hoard of resources with weapons and other artillery. Other dichotomies emerge: precious law-and-order "inside" vs. the thieving chaos that rages "outside," the "high" politics of military and strategic affairs vs. the "low" politics of everything else, the "rationality" and "goodness" of the Self vs. all "rampaging," "suspicious" Others. Yet realists impute an implicit relationship between these supposed binaries. In centralizing what's "inside," they deplete what's "outside" into empty, anarchic space. Realists may concede on the existence of "frontiers," but they have no concept of "borderlands" or that that these could have anything to do with what's "inside." No connections, histories, or co-productions between Self and Other could be considered.

Feminists have long pointed out the patriarchal assumptions behind this realist conception of the Hobbesian individual/state (cf. Pateman 1988, Peterson 1992). Casting it as springing *de novo*, like "mushrooms after a rain," without parents, siblings, spouses, or children, realists parallel the state as an idealized image of the patriarchal household.

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<sup>4</sup> Though realist in origin, the state-as-individual concept also permeates other schools of thought, like one branch of constructivism in international relations (IR). See, for example, Wendt (2005). The point is that methodological individualism cuts across the Anglo-American tradition of social scientific inquiry for IR (cf. King, Keohane, and Verba 1994).

That is, the Hobbesian individual/state, like the patriarchal household, pretends that it protects rather than depends on, often exploiting, the surplus labor and resources of “women, children, and chattall.” Yet without these, neither Hobbesian individual/state nor patriarchal household can function, not to mention “spring” from or to anywhere. Only an ideological and economic system founded on patriarchy could such a deceptive double move be allowed to continue, not to mention *accepted*.

Postcolonial feminists, in particular, have highlighted the significance of borderlands, not just borders, in daily life (cf. Moraga and Anzaldua 2002; Anzaldua and Keating 2002). Though all genders and races experience the complexities of borderlands – defined as that space in-between “majority” and “minority” cultures, seemingly belonging nowhere yet pervading everywhere – women and especially women of color, enduring the double yoke of patriarchy and colonialism, are most cognizant of how borderlands position them into assigned identities and roles, not to mention languages and practices. Nonetheless, it is also the various mixings that go on in borderlands that give them a rich inventory of multiple ways of seeing and doing that becomes a resource for postcolonial peoples (cf. Ling 2003). Accordingly, when realists deny the incompleteness of borders in governing social relations, they are revealing not just a privilege based on colonial constructions of gender (masculine) and race (white) but also a cognitive and social *deprivation* that comes with it.

#### B. STRATEGIES: World Politics as Gentleman’s Chess

Realists also infuse class distinctions into the Hobbesian individual/state. Garver places the US, India, and China in a playful yet wary “game” of world politics. Chess

serves as the usual metaphor for realists. It seems to approximate best the “rules” of world politics given realism’s cold, hard strategizing to “win” or “lose,” “check” or “check-mate” between self-interested opponents. But historically, we ask, *who* gets to play at *whose* expense, and for *what*? What’s the *relationship* between the “players,” the “pieces,” the “chess board,” the table on which the game is played, the room, the lights, and so on? Who *produced* what? For instance, who cooks the food and brings it to the players as they ponder strategies for the game, who cuts the wood for the fireplace, who lights it? (Or, in an alternative setting, who makes the fan to cool the players with, the rattan chairs on which they sit, the silver tray from which they drink their tea or cognac?) Certainly, the players come not from the same population as those who provide and sacrifice for the game through their resources, labor, and even physical bodies. These non-players typically come from society’s marginalized: e.g., peasants, women, workers, and the poor. In contrast, players are privileged and protected: i.e., the ones usually in charge. One could almost see the cigar smoke and smell the cognac fumes amid the gentlemanly laughter in Garver’s realist club.

Of course, not just elite masculine subjects in the West conceive of politics as games or bets. Note how Japanese noblemen in the 11<sup>th</sup>-century novel, *The Tale of Genji*, utilize similar tactics to vie for power and status or simply to demonstrate both. But Garver’s analysis reveals its Western and colonial roots by defining world politics as the colonized’s desire to emulate the colonizer.

C. HISTORIES:  
White Man's Burden for the Western Self  
Colonial Mimicry for the Non-Western Other

Garver depicts India and China as seeking an alliance more with the US than each other. Two assumptions underlie this construction: 1) India and China gain more from their relationship with the US than with each other, but 2) each offers relatively the same to the US. Two sub-assumptions underlie these: 1a) India and China have no prior history with each other that is independent of their relations with the US, and 2a) the US remains relatively immune to relations with either India or China. Together, these assumptions lead to two inferences: 1) given its relative indifference, the US can easily play one party against the other (as Garver claims, the US is so removed that it risks being provoked by India and China into closer relations to one or the other), and 2) the only reason the US chooses to deal with these two countries in the first place is to maintain world peace. Thus the US, in performing as the hegemonic Self, is really making sacrifices for the Other.

Note Garver's treatment of history. It begins with World War II and proceeds linearly to the present. He describes India and China, for example, in "deep geopolitical rivalry" due to their border dispute in 1962. Where a deeper sense of the past does play a role comes in the form of European History or, more specifically, a reproduction of 19<sup>th</sup>-century German history on the Asian landmass. For this reason, Garver firmly believes, Chinese leaders must emulate that Teutonic icon of hypermasculine statesmanship, "Iron Fist" Bismark, if they seek successful attainment of world-power status. Clearly, Garver supposes that neither the almost five millennia of Chinese history, nor the Asian continent as whole, has any such exemplar to offer.

In sum, Garver's article tells more about its author – and this pattern of knowledge production – than its subjects. Such narcissism combined with naiveté could be relegated to the dustbin of history were not for its representation of strategic thinking in the world's only superpower. Put differently, because it emanates from the US, "triangulation" has become *the* security discourse regarding the West (led by the US), India, China on the "international" agenda at the moment (cf. Frankel and Harding 2004, *US News & World Report* 20 June 2005; Friedman and Gilley 2005).

Given its implicit privileging of the white man's rules, leaving Others to catch up and prove "their manhood," why would Indian and Chinese state elites, with their anti-colonial, anti-imperialist histories, *accept* such colonial power relations? One typical answer from realists is: There is no alternative.<sup>5</sup>

Maybe. The issues raised by Garver, specifically, and realist IR, generally, are important. There's no denying that border disputes, nuclear power, and economic globalization deserve serious consideration. Nonetheless, this focus unnecessarily constrains our thinking both in terms of problem-solving and problem-framing. Consequently, we remain locked in an exclusively Hobbesian world of fear and competition leading, invariably, to policies of annihilation and/or conversion between Self and Other (Agathangelou and Ling forthcoming).

Recent postcolonial literature offers another way to envision our future by reinterpreting our past. Speaking from multiple disciplines, this scholarship has directed attention towards imperialist ideologies of conquest and control, the deployment of linguistic and discursive strategies of representing the Other/Native, and the practices of

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<sup>5</sup> For the perspective from defense intellectuals within China about such triangulation efforts, not regarding the US and India, but another key security triangle – US-China-Taiwan – see Hwang and Chen (forthcoming).

colonial governance, to name only a few (Said 1979, Prakash 1990, Guha 1998, Sen 2002, Lewis and Mills 2003). Not confined to critique only, postcolonial literature also demonstrates how the state and neo-liberal elites have reconstituted inequalities of gender/sexualities, classes, and races on a transnational scale (cf. Prakash 1999, Chakrabarty 2000, Duara 2002, Ling 2003, Agathangelou and Ling 2004). As such, this literature has provided key analytical tools to understand: 1) the critical importance of the colonial experience for current socio-economic and political circumstances, 2) Eurocentrism in knowledge-making and the creation and continued reconfiguration of an array of boundaries, binaries, and categories surrounding a relatively stable core of racist and sexist epistemology, 3) historicist claims about colonized/third world people's "insufficiencies" in stagist theories of development (e.g., "modernization"), 4) systematic omission or devaluation of pre-colonial history, and 5) the persistence of colonial methods of control, both discursively and administratively, in so-called independent, post-colonial states and societies.

For example, discussions about India and China typically begin with the present (the last decade or two). They rarely take into account the history of colonialism and imperialism in these two countries. Mainstream analyses also confine these two countries to various "indices of development," such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), export income, growth rates, and so on, comparing each to the other as well as with the "developed" countries. China ("the Dragon") and India ("the Elephant")<sup>6</sup> are cast as perpetually trying to "catch up" with each other and/or with the West. Continuing the blood-line of historicist claims about the various deficiencies of colonized/third world peoples and their consistent "runner-up" status in this race for progress, mainstream

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Elliot (2006).



media and academic sources cite how both India and China are still plagued by the absence of key markers/symbols of true (read western) modernity and progress. Authors take stock of the two countries' antiquated infrastructure, adult literacy, lack of democracy or thriving but corrupt and bureaucratic democracy, rate of HIV/AIDS infection, malnutrition, rural underdevelopment etc. as evidence of their persistent pre-modern conditions. Fuelled by the pragmatism of self-interest, successive questions on the subject of these two countries' meteoric "superpower" growth and simultaneous backwardness follow the course of some variant of "what this means for the US." In sum, these analyses preclude a thorough understanding of the encounters, exchanges, and flows that have marked India and China, as geographies and civilizations, over the centuries.

### III. INDIA AND CHINA: ON THEIR OWN TERMS, IN THEIR OWN TIME

Let us look again at India and China. We juxtapose them *now* with their relations *before* the onset of the West. This is not a romantic return to an idyllic, golden past between the Heavenly Kingdom and the Middle Kingdom. Clearly, neither these times nor their societies refrained from violence, oppression, exploitation, and destruction. Rather, we delve into this Sino-Indian history to draw from its wealth of experience, accumulated over two millennia, of very different approaches to and visions of thinking, acting, being, and relating.

A small but growing body of literature is in the process of offering another understanding of relations between India and China. Using archives derived from monks, scholars, traders, and emissaries deputed to animate the ideas and activities trafficked

between the Heavenly and Middle Kingdoms, these scholars have constructed a narrative that takes us far beyond post-WWII, Eurocentric, and patriarchal visions of the world. A key project in this regard has been conducted by D.P. Chattopadhyaya, Tan Chung, D. Devahuti, and A. Rahman. They have assembled a multi-volume work that traces the extensive interactions among India, China, Central, and West Asia from the 8<sup>th</sup> century onwards (Rahman 2002). Likewise, Tan Chung's edited volume, *Across the Himalayan Gap: An Indian Quest for Understanding China* (1998), provides a sophisticated analysis of not just the co-imbricated histories of these two countries, but also their encounters with and critiques of Western colonialism and its enlightenment. Amartya Sen comments on the broad historicity of Indian and Chinese interactions and collaborations in fields trade, religion, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, medicine, and public health, just to name a few:

The intellectual links between China and India, stretching over two thousand years, have had far-reaching effects on the history of both countries, yet are hardly remembered today.... A broader understanding of these relations is greatly needed, not only for us to appreciate more fully the history of a third of the world's population, but also because the connections between the two countries are important for political and social issues today (Sen 2004).

We begin to see another possibility for understanding India and China that comes from their own time, in their own terms. Amidst the tropes of economic and military competition so emphasized in the mainstream US security discourse, we find other definitions of and venues for even these same concerns.

A. BORDERS:  
A Product of Postcolonial Nationalism and Cold War Politics

The Sino-Indian border dispute of 1962 must be seen within the context of British colonialism and US-USSR Cold War politics. While the Sino-Indian war has engendered an anti-Chinese rhetoric in mainstream India since the 1960s, this specific element in India's postcolonial nationalism, however, is part of a larger narrative ensconced by British colonialism. The legacy of British imperial politics, conquests, and cartographic disruptions deeply infuses the border disputes between India and China, and their subsequent politics, war, and desires of nation-building.<sup>7</sup>

Using "borders," British rule reified what constituted "India" and "China." British entanglements in the region's politics involving India, Afghanistan, Russia, China, and Tibet and interests in maintaining hegemonic stronghold in the area effectively created Tibet as a protective buffer between British India and its rival Russia at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Liu 1994). These imperial desires informed the demarcation of a formal border between British India and China, which disrupted the existence and notion of a porous border based on cultural/traditional understandings and carved out, territorially and politically, within the limits of British India in that region.

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<sup>7</sup> The significance of the British imperial presence in the region and upon subsequent political outcomes can be assessed from the numerous references made to import of treaties, events, conquest, policies, laws, cartographic projects and demarcations, and their collective outcomes from the time of British rule in India. See, Government of India (henceforth GOI), Ministry of External Affairs, *Prime Minister on Chinese Aggression, 1963* (New Delhi: GOI Press, 1963), GOI, Ministry of External Affairs *The Chinese Threat, 1963* (Delhi: GOI Press, 1963, 9-31), *Documents on the Sino-Indian Boundary Questions* (Peking, 1960, 1-28), GOI, Publications Division, *The Sino-Indian Dispute: Questions and Answers* (Delhi: GOI Press, 1963, 7-19), GOI, Ministry of External Affairs, *Notes, Memoranda and Letters Exchanged between the Governments of India and China: White Papers*, vols. 1 to 16, (1954-1968), and John Lall, *Indian and Chinese Foreign Policies in Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Surjit Mansingh (New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1998, 442-456).

The future independent Indian state would inherit this imperial border and deploy it to define the nation's territoriality, which was invoked during the war to forge a national identity.<sup>8</sup> As such, British security interests and colonial cartography left a legacy for postcolonial territorial politics, which would be used to build a nation and its nationalism. This made the Sino-Indian border dispute an eventuality of colonial artifacts.<sup>9</sup>

One result is an internalization of the external Other. Indian nationalism within the context of this war constructed the image of an ideal Indian nation/citizen over and against the image of the Chinese Other in India. The Indian government subsequently institutionalized internment, deportation, and disenfranchisement of Chinese immigrants based on the 1960s newly revised legal definitions of national origin (internal others). This is also a form of engagement with the other: the Chinese Other is embedded into the template of Indian nationalism and self-identity in one way or the other, and since the 1960s has been subject to many revisions depending on alterations in geo-political circumstances.

There was no comparable Indian diasporic community in China. This lack made it easier for the state to erase its historic ties with and social, political, religious, and intellectual indebtedness to India. Some Chinese, however, are re-analyzing this relationship by placing it explicitly within the context of Cold-War, colonial politics.

Xuecheng Liu's *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute and Sino-Indian Relations* (1994)

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<sup>8</sup> Colonial legacies continue to intersect with the historicity of postcolonial political, economic, and social agendas in reconfiguring material and ideological strategies for nation-building. See, for instance, Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Mohanty's Introduction to *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures* (NY: Routledge, 1997, xiii-xlii).

<sup>9</sup> See Gopal Malviya's *Sino-Indian Relations: Security Environment in Nineties* (Madras: Madras University Press, 1992, 7, 21-40). Also, see Zhou Enlai's letter to Nehru in *Documents on the Sino-Indian Boundary Question* (1960, 1-17). Prior to the out-break of the Sino-Indian war in 1962, Zhou marked the McMahon Line as a legacy of British imperialist desires and made references to those historical realities in these letters.

departs from the larger framework of politics among the US, Soviet Union, and China to read the context of postcolonial historical formations in the politics of the Sino-Indian war. Liu argues that Cold War and post-Cold War legacies actively shaped political relations between not just China and India, but also with Pakistan, simultaneously implicating Cold War politics alongside those of British imperial designs in transforming and contextualizing Sino-Indian relations.

#### B. STRATEGIES: Beyond “Gaming”

Likewise, geo-political strategies between India and China cannot be contained within a simplistic realist narrative of chess-like “moves” and “counter-moves.” For one thing, the Sino-Indian border war neither began nor ended. Besides the co-imbrication of British colonialism and Western neo-imperialism through Cold War politics before the Sino-Indian war, one must take into account as well as the deep cultural and personal understandings of what it means to be an Indian over and against the image of the Chinese after this war (Banerjee 2003). These socio-cultural and psychic dimensions offer a dimension to India-China relations that redefine the “rules,” the “game,” and most importantly, the “players.”

Note this letter from Zhou Enlai to Nehru dated December 17, 1959. In it, Zhou invoked the shadow of Cold War on Sino-Indian relations in clear terms. An excerpt merits quoting in length:

We have no need to create tension between our two friendly nations or between us and any other country, this dissipating and diverting our people’s attention from

domestic matters. The peoples of our two countries and the overwhelming majority of the people of the world are inspired by the fact that the world situation is developing in a direction favorable to peace. But unfortunately there are still not a few influential groups in the world who obstinately oppose this trend; they are trying to poison the international atmosphere, continuing the cold war and creating tension to place barriers in the way of East-West talks; they are slandering the peace policy of the socialist countries and inciting discord between the Asian-African countries and socialist countries, so that they may profit thereby. At present, they are obviously exerting their utmost to sow discord between China and India (Zhou quoted in *Documents on the Sino-Indian Boundary Question* 1960: 27-28).

In short, Zhou Enlai stressed to Nehru: We have much in common. For this reason, *they* are opposed to us not being opposed. Let us not be fooled.<sup>10</sup>

This story continues with another episode. That is, the unfolding of neo-liberal trade and commercial exchanges, among other things, that mark India-China relations today (cf. *Beijing Review* special report 2005). For example, China has now surpassed the United Arab Emirates to become India's second-largest trading partner:

[Sino-Indian trade reached] US\$13.6 billion in 2004, up by 79% over the total trade volume of 2003. India enjoyed a comfortable trade surplus of \$1.75 billion, according to Chinese customs statistics. If growth remains at current levels, India-China trade could cross \$17 billion by end of 2004-05. In contrast, India's trade with the United States - its largest trading partner - has grown by just over 23% in

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<sup>10</sup> Cold War politics, however, ultimately dismantled the non-aligned movement.

April-August 2004 (*Asia Times*, 11 February 2005,  
[http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South\\_Asia/GB11Df07.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/GB11Df07.html))

In turn, India has become one of China's top ten trading partners. These developments suggest less competition against each other for the hallowed US or other Western markets and more cooperation with each other *for* each other.

Indeed, the leaders of both countries are re-defining the contours of their relations. In 2005, a joint statement was signed the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Contrary to what Garver identifies, this formal statement is replete with references to mutual cooperation, partnership, friendship, building trust, and so on. For example, section three of the statement highlights the following:

In the light of the development of their bilateral relations, in order to promote good neighborliness, friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation and taking into account the profound changes in the regional and international situation, the two sides agreed that China-India relations have now acquired a global and strategic character. The leaders of the two countries have, therefore, agreed to establish an [sic] China – India Strategic and Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Prosperity (cf. *People's Daily* 2005).

The statement continues with emphasis on political exchanges, mutual connectivity, economic, technical, and scientific cooperation, a potential regional trade agreement, cultural activities, and youth exchange programs (cf. *People's Daily* 2005).

In this sense, India and China are continuing what they have always done for centuries: exchanged cultures, ideas, peoples, and commodities.<sup>11</sup>

[O]ver the centuries, [Chinese and Indian] ethnicity, religious faiths, and administrative control straddled and blended across a porous border. The ruling authorities exercised authorities in limited ways and that too in small habitats. The idea of a firm line of control came as a by-product of the Great Game of the rival European empires (Mehta 1998: 467).

Other heuristics for dealing between Self and Other are revealed when we excavate these deeper layers of Sino-Indian relations.

### C. HISTORIES: Other Worlds, Other Visions, Other Ways of Being

Sino-Indian relations before the onset of the West teach us the existence of other worlds, other visions, and other ways of being. To understand these differences, let us keep to the same categories of borders, strategies, and histories set by realists.

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<sup>11</sup> John H. Grose, a civil servant of the East India Company wrote in his report titled, "The state of affairs in the Kingdom of Bengal, in the years 1756-1757," that there were "great many number" of Chinese merchants, among other ethnic and religious groups, in Bengal (1772). See, Ellen Oxfeld, in *Blood, Sweat and Mahjong* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993, 71), marks the arrival of a Chinese sailor, Acchi or Yang Da Zhao, in Calcutta in 1770 and his subsequent establishment of sugar plantations and sugar and liquor factories, with the help of imported Chinese immigrant labor, as the starting point of early Chinese settlements in modern India. See Pradip Sinha's *Calcutta in Urban History* (Bombay, India: Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd., 1978, 43) for the Calcutta police census of 1837, which lists 362 Chinese people in the city. The Chinese population in Calcutta is estimated to be five hundred in an article published in 1858 by Alabaster, see Pradip Chaudhury and Abhijit Mukhopadhyay *Calcutta: People and Empire* (1975, 137). Economic difficulties during the 1930s and 1940s led a number of Chinese people to migrate to India, among other places. Census reports estimated the Chinese population in India to be about 9214 in 1951 and 14,607 in the 1960s (Oxfeld, 1993, 76).



We discover, for example, the centrality of the “borderland” to the “capital.” Dunhuang, now in northwest China, anchored “Serindia,” writes Tan Chung (2002: 130). It provided a site for 7<sup>th</sup>-century Indians and Chinese to meet, exchange, and flourish through Buddhism, leading to the notion of “*nizhong you wo, wozhong you ni*” (“I in you and you in me”) (Chung 2002: 130). Chung asserts that China’s entire northwest, now labeled Xingjiang, was and can be again, a center of the cotton industry (Chung 2002: 166), given its introduction to the plant by Indian traders in exchange for Chinese silk. Other locations like Tashkent transited caravans from the Silk Road to Kashmir and Punjab through the Khyber Pass (Chung 2002: 138). And Khotan, writes Devahuti (2002: 94), “was a most important centre of Buddhist learning and research, frequented for that purpose both by the Chinese and the Indians.”

A focus on borderlands necessarily shifts our attention to other ways of life and living. Though patriarchy prevailed throughout, borderland societies showed alternative venues for women’s agency precisely given their cultural mixing. Devahuti notes, for example, that “[a]part from the professional shaman it was women who were responsible for the intellectual life of the steppe” (Devahuti 2002: 69). They were seen as “a shaman by nature, and requires no special preparation” (Devahuti 2002: 69). Besides performing rituals of nature and other cathartic acts, a shaman “looks after the needs of individuals and families as well as of the tribe as a whole” (Devahuti 2002: 69). It was a resourceful woman, for instance, who started the silk industry in a borderland outside the “center” of Chinese empire:

The monastery Mo-she or Lu-she to the south-west of the capital [of Khotan] was reputed to have been built by the Chinese consort of a local prince. She

successfully introduced the silk culture of her country to this region by smuggling mulberry seeds and the eggs of the silk-worm, perhaps when she first set out for her new home. She might have heard stories of how earlier princesses in similar circumstances had pined for their favourite material” (Devahuti 2002: 93).

Borderland trade enriched the lives of those there and beyond. Exotic commodities like cotton cloth, sugar, black pepper, lotus, pineapple, walnut, spinach, jack fruit, mango, sandalwood, tumeric, jasmine, medicinal herbs crossed from the subcontinent up north and northeast. Likewise, tea, dates, chestnuts, and persimmons flowed from the Chinese interior out to the world.

A cosmopolitan outlook extended beyond the borderlands. Geographically, the Silk Road linked “Europe with eastern China, the maritime route between Chinese ports and eastern coast of Africa, and a southern Silk Road linking southwest China with South Asia and extending further west from eastern Indian cities and ports over land and seas” (Chung 2002: 137). Internally, this cosmopolitanism heightened tolerance from ruling elites. Chung argues, for instance, that Buddhism along with the Silk Road helped the Han-dominated bureaucrats in China obtain a means to deal with those from other ethnic and linguistic groups under their rule. Externally, “silk diplomacy” has often been used to solidify relations between Han Chinese and others, like the Huns in 2 AD (Chung 2002: 139). In the 7<sup>th</sup>-century, King Harshavardhana, ruler of what is now northern India, and the Tang Emperor Taizong (reigning AD 626-49) engaged in a series of exchanges involving monks and scholars as well as tradesmen. It was during this period that India and China enjoyed their most prolific, profound, and productive interaction. Religious pilgrimages from India brought knowledge of math, astronomy, calendrical science, and

medicine to the Tang court. Similarly, the subcontinent learned of key Chinese technologies like silk and sericulture, paper making and printing, use of the compass, and gunpowder.

How the Tang Emperor Taizong came to initiate this relationship offers insight into an alternative heuristic for inter-state relations.

The Tang Emperor Taizong ...believed the dream in AD 64 of the Han emperor Ming (AD 57-75), that a golden deity was flying over the palace. He asked the courtiers to explain this dream and obtained the answer that it was a signal from the Buddha of India. The emperor, then, sent out a mission headed by Cai Yin to go to India to invite Buddhism to China (Chung 2002: 132).

We do not suggest that dreams and other extra-sensory visions serve as better strategies for national decision-making. Rather, our point is that conventional IR's so-called realism invariably locks the Self into endless cycles of hypermasculine war games whose purpose is to either annihilate or convert the Other (Agathangelou and Ling forthcoming). For the colonized Other, hypermasculine war games induce a state of colonial mimicry even when rejected – that is, if the terms of discourse remain those of the colonial Western Self. Here, we see the significance of dreams and other so-called irrational heuristics. Precisely because they force us out of the familiar into the “fantastical,” they stimulate innovations to redress problems, perhaps even reframe the problem itself.

## CONCLUSION

Western knowledge-making, whether academic, state-diplomatic, or policy-oriented, has continued to thrive upon both erasures and racialized, feminized constructions that project the non-Western Other as simplistic (chaotic but not complex), dehistoricized, decontextualized, and thoroughly demarcated and limited by the parameters of Western interest. The current security discourse on India and China, clearly, has not deviated from this central tendency. To disrupt the narrowly-conceived and intellectually vacuous discursive climate centered on India and China today, this paper identifies the bankruptcy of realist and imperialist approaches to understanding the subject and provides insights about the multiple points of entry and exchange that underscore relations between China and India. It is this postcolonial-feminist and India-China-centered understanding that enables a critical shift from the hypermasculine and imperialistic “triangulation” of the US security discourse towards a radical re-envisioning of India and China.

**Table A**  
**Comparing Discourses: Triangulation and India-China**

	<b>Triangulation Discourse</b>	<b>India-China Discourse</b>
<b>Borders</b>	<p>Hobbesian individual/state:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. self-enclosed, self-interested</li> <li>b. driven by fear and competition</li> <li>c. inside vs. outside, high politics vs. low politics, Self vs. Others</li> </ul>	<p>Intersubjectively-produced borderlands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. not contained or congealed, elastic, plastic, and organic, twists and turns</li> <li>b. driven by curiosity, trade, politics, knowledge, spiritual needs</li> <li>c. “I in you and you in me”</li> </ul>
<b>Strategies</b>	<p>Chess:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. instrumentalist</li> <li>b. aristocratic patriarchy</li> <li>c. well-defined rules: e.g., balance of power</li> <li>d. to order and control, annihilate or convert</li> </ul>	<p>Beyond gaming + other heuristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. beyond the strategic and intellectual (e.g., dreams, visions, etc)</li> <li>b. aristocratic patriarchy + matriarchy + others (e.g., monks, scholars, shamans, consorts)</li> <li>c. explorations + pilgrimages</li> <li>d. to enlighten, exchange, and learn (e.g., public health, governance)</li> </ul>

Histories	Western/European	Himalayan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. state formation, nation-building</li> <li>b. post-WWII to present</li> <li>c. hierarchical relations: white man's burden for the Western Self, colonial mimicry for the non-Western Other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. religious/cultural relations (e.g., Buddhist-Confucian exchanges), trade and commercial histories (e.g., the Silk Route involving Middle East-Central Asia-South Asia), educational histories, anti-colonial nationalist histories</li> <li>b. ancient (e.g., 2 A.D.), medieval (e.g., Silk Route) to modern (e.g., anti-colonial, non-aligned movements) to present times (e.g., neoliberal trade)</li> <li>c. vertical + horizontal relations, ruler-centric but also knowledge-centric, broadly based and fluid</li> </ul>

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