



India's Role as an Emerging Power: Q&A with Kishore Mahbubani

What does India's rise as an emerging power mean for the United States and the world? Will India be a counterweight to China on the world stage, or will India and China find common ground despite tensions over their disputed border? Kishore Mahbubani, former ambassador of Singapore to the United Nations and author of multiple books on global geopolitics, speaks with the India Policy Initiative on India's relations with the United States, China, and the Global South. Drawing on his extensive experience at the United Nations, Mahbubani shares his insights on India's opportunities at the multilateral level. He sheds light on how recent domestic trends in India may shape India's engagement with the world and why India is likely to seek a space for itself as an independent player rather than ally with any major power.

The views and opinions expressed in this interview are those of Professor Mahbubani and do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of The Carter Center.

IPI: Over the last several months, the U.S. and China have seen much confrontational rhetoric, including over tariffs, visits by U.S. leaders to Taiwan, the alleged surveillance balloon that flew over the U.S., and so on. But with the meeting that took place between President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping in San Francisco on Nov. 15, 2023, the two countries are trying to lower the temperature. There was an agreement during the meeting to stop the flow of fentanyl and to resume military-level communications. What may be causing this shift, and would you expect the progress to last?



India-U.S. ties have matured far beyond the China factor — that the relationship is now resilient and robust enough to function independently of the two countries' equations with China.

If U.S.-China relations improve in 2024, how might that impact India's relations with China and the U.S., given that India has a national election in 2024?

IPI: The U.S.-India partnership recorded much progress through 2023: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was accorded a state visit in Washington, and President Biden traveled to New Delhi for the G-20



India" on the border dispute, it could "flip India ... against the U.S." How likely is such a shift in India-China ties?

The Asian 21st Century



The Great Convergence

Kishore Mahbubani was with the Singapore Foreign Service for 33 years from 1971 to 2004. He had postings in Cambodia, Malaysia, Washington, and New York, where he twice was Singapore's ambassador to the United Nations and served as president of the U.N. Security Council in January 2001 and May 2002. In 2004, Mahbubani was appointed the founding dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore. In April 2019, he was elected as an honorary international member to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, which has honored distinguished thinkers, including several of America's founders, since 1780. He is presently a Distinguished Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. He is the author of nine books:

and

(co-authored with Jeffery Sng)