

## **Chicago Council Releases Major Study of Opinion on the Rise of China and India**

October 12, 2006

### **Chinese and Indians Optimistic about their Growing Role in the World**

### **Asians and Americans Favor Cooperation with China, not Containment**

The [Chicago Council on Global Affairs \(CCGA\)](#) has conducted the most extensive study ever published of Chinese and Indian public opinion on their countries' role in the world and a wide range of international issues. The Council, in partnership with the Asia Society, also conducted parallel polls in the United States, South Korea and Australia.

The study by CCGA (formerly known as the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations) finds that the Chinese enthusiastically embrace their rising economic and military might and believe their country will match the United States in global influence within a decade. Indians are also bullish about their country's future. Although other Asians and Americans perceive these countries as rising powers, they express little concern about their economic growth despite some anxiety over the prospect of China expanding its military might. Majorities favor engaging China, rather than trying to contain its power.

GlobeScan, an international polling firm, fielded the Chinese and Indian surveys, interviewing about 2,000 people in each country. The East Asian Institute in Seoul undertook a more limited poll of South Korea, which was fielded by the Hankook Research Company with a sample of about 1,000 while the Lowy Institute in Sydney, working with Market Focus International, undertook a similar poll of 1,000 Australians. Polling took place in the summer of 2006.

The study is the largest investigation now in the public domain of attitudes in the world's largest two emerging powers. Together China and India already include 40 percent of the world's population and within the next two decades each is expected to become one of the four largest economies. China is a major global manufacturing power and has displaced the United States as the primary trading partner of many countries. India has used its highly educated workforce to become a leader in global technology and services.

### **China's Rising Influence**

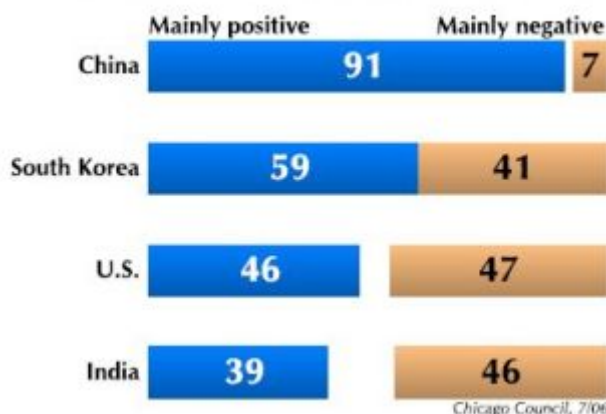
The Chinese believe their country is already a significant power and express strong support for its economic and military ascendance. Asked about their country's global influence today, the Chinese give themselves a mean rating of 7.8 on a zero-to-ten scale, second only to the United States (8.6). Asked how influential they will be in ten years, the Chinese give themselves an 8.3, the same as the United States, followed by Russia (7.5) and the European Union (7.3).

Overwhelming majorities in China support their country’s rising international profile. Nearly nine out of ten (87%) favor China taking an active role in world affairs. Ninety-one percent of the Chinese see their country’s growing economic power as positive and ninety percent see their increasing military strength as positive.

Nonetheless, the Chinese do not put increasing their global influence at the top of their foreign policy priorities. When presented a list of eleven foreign policy goals, the Chinese tend to place more importance on economic concerns. Protecting the jobs of Chinese workers is the top objective (chosen as very important by 71%), followed by promoting economic growth (64% very important) and securing adequate energy supplies (61% very important). The goal of building superior military power in Asia came last—seen as very important by 40 percent of Chinese respondents.

Americans and Asians agree that China’s power is on the rise, though they do not think it will be able to match U.S. global influence over the next decade. Americans see China’s influence rising from 6.4 on a ten-point scale today to 6.8 in ten years, putting it second to the United States’ 8.0. Indians see China rising from 6.0 to 6.2, even with Japan but behind the United States and India.

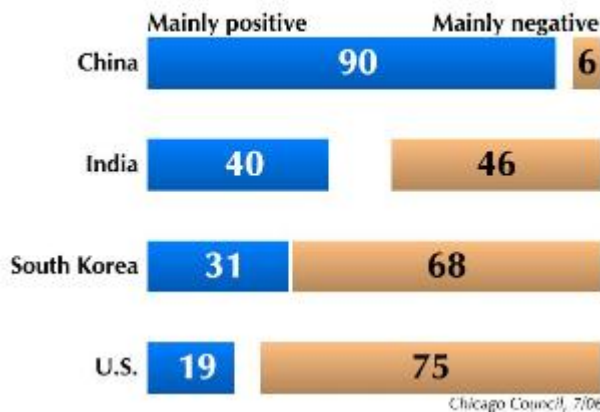
#### View of an Increase in China's Economic Power



On the question of China’s growing economic power, however, Americans and South Koreans are even more confident that China will catch up with the United States than the Chinese are themselves. Sixty percent of Americans and 61 percent of South Koreans believe it is likely that China’s economy will someday grow to be as large as the United States’ compared to 50 percent of the Chinese. Indians are uncertain that China will catch up to the United States economically: 22 percent say it will, 36 percent say the United States’ economy will remain larger and 42 percent say they don’t know.

Although both Asians and Americans are relatively sanguine about China’s increasing economic power, they show some anxiety about its potential to become a stronger military power. Most South Koreans see the prospect of Chinese economic growth as “mainly positive.” Americans are evenly divided about greater Chinese economic clout: 47 percent say it would be positive, 46 percent say negative. A plurality of Indians see it as positive (46% vs. 39% negative).

### View of an Increase in China's Military Power



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In contrast, a large majority of Americans (75%) see a significant increase in China’s military might as “mainly negative.” Most South Koreans (68%) also see this as negative while Indians are divided, with 46 percent viewing it as negative and 40 percent saying it is positive.

Both Americans and Asians express concern that China’s increasing military power could destabilize the region’s balance of power. Asked whether it was likely that the growth of China’s military capabilities would cause conflict between the major powers in Asia, nearly nine out of ten South Koreans said it was either very likely (40%) or somewhat likely (48%). Seven out of ten Indians said it was very (39%) or somewhat (33%) likely. Americans show even higher levels of concern: 50 percent said it was very likely an increase in Chinese military power was a potential source of conflict while 38 percent said it was somewhat likely.

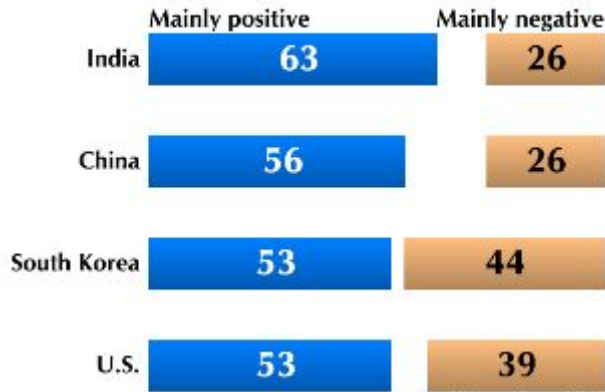
Nonetheless, neither Asians nor Americans think their countries should actively work to limit China’s influence in the world. A strong majority of Americans (65%) believe the United States should “undertake friendly cooperation and engagement with China” rather than to “actively work to limit the growth of China’s power.” A plurality of Indians (40% to 23%) also favors cooperation.

### Indian Ambitions and Concerns

Indians see themselves as already playing a major role on the world stage, second only to the United States. On a ten-point scale, Indians on average give themselves a 6.3, below the United States’ 7.3, but roughly equal to Japan (6.2) and ahead of China (6.0). They also believe that India has a large and positive influence on Asia, giving themselves again a 6.3, after the United States (7.1) but above China (5.9).

Although most Indians (69%) see their role in Asia as positive, they are less sure than the Chinese about the desirability of expanding their international influence. Fifty-six percent of Indians say they want India to play a more active role in the world, compared to 87 percent of the Chinese who say China should win international influence. Solid majorities of Indians believe that increasing their country’s economic and military power would be positive (63% and 65%, respectively) compared to the overwhelming majorities of Chinese (91% and 90%, respectively).

### View of an Increase in India's Economic Power

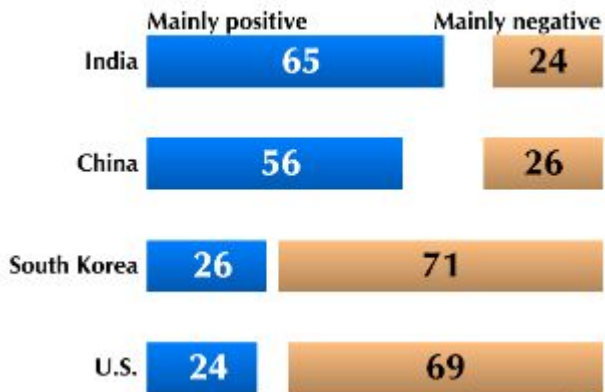


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Indians are more concerned about regional security threats than their Chinese neighbors, who put economic issues at the top of their foreign policy priorities. Combating international terrorism is viewed as an important goal by 60 percent of Indians, followed by preventing the spread of nuclear weapons (56%). Protecting Indian jobs, promoting economic growth and combating world hunger are priorities for 54 percent of Indians, followed by securing adequate supplies of energy (52%).

Although Indians see themselves as already an important player in the world, second only to the United States, other countries give it a less exalted global role. Chinese, American and South Korean respondents all ranked India as the least influential among nine powerful countries: the United States, China, Japan, the European Union, France, Great Britain and Germany. Chinese and Americans expect India's influence to rise, but not by much. The Chinese see India as rising from an average of 6.1 to 6.5 but remaining in last place. Americans see it as rising from 4.8 to 5.4, surpassing France.

### View of an Increase in India's Military Power



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Both Asians and Americans view India's economic growth as a positive. Fifty-six percent of Chinese and 53 percent of both South Koreans and Americans say India's growing economic power is good. Opinions are mixed about the prospect of increased Indian military capabilities, however. In China, 56 percent see Indian military power as a plus—despite the two nations' ongoing dispute along their Himalayan border. Americans and South Koreans are less optimistic.

Seventy-one percent of South Koreans see India's military build-up as negative and 69 percent of Americans do.

Most Americans consider India a partner, rather than a rival. Sixty-one percent of Americans see India as mostly a partner and 55 percent of Indians view the United States in the same way. Americans wrongly assume, however, that India and China are rivals. The Chicago Council survey shows that a majority of Chinese (56%) see India as a partner and that a plurality of Indians (46%) view China the same way. Most Americans (66%), in contrast, believe China and India are rivals.