China, India and Russia –
Cooperation and Construction of the Asia-Pacific Order in the 21st Century

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the interactions between China, India and Russia as they construct the Asia-Pacific order in the 21st century. It studies the three countries’ divergent and convergent interests in order to uncover their concerns and incentives. It further identifies the Asia-Pacific order that China, India and Russia want to build, as well as the measures they have taken to alter the existing Asia-Pacific order.

Mutual suspicions between China, India and Russia keep them cautiously checking each other’s rise. But their mutual fear of America’s unilateral moves in the region bring them together in attempts to constrain American hegemony. Because they also value their economic interdependency with the United States, the best way to both limit each other’s rise while limiting American hegemony is by soft-balancing. The major means of soft-balancing are non-military tools, such as regional institutions, challenging existing norms and employing hedging policies.

Three constraining forces form the key guiding regularities to constructing the Asia-Pacific order in the 21st century. First, regional institutions such as ASEAN, SCO and the Six-Party Talks constrain China, India, Russia and the United States. Second, China, India and Russia jointly or independently constrain American hegemony in pursuing non-interventionist norms and challenging the norms of nuclear non-proliferation. Third, Indian and Russian hedging policies not only weaken the American hegemonic influence, but also limit China’s rising influence.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DECLARATION</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABBREVIATION</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER 1 --- BACKGROUND AND THESIS OVERVIEW  

1.1 Why Study China, India and Russia                                     2  
1.2 The Asia-Pacific Order                                               5  
1.3 Significances of the Study                                           10  
1.4 Structure of the Thesis                                               12  

## CHAPTER 2 --- DIVERGENCE OF INTERESTS                                 18  

2.1 The Chinese Perspective                                              18  
2.1.1 Territorial Disputes                                               19  
2.1.2 The Rise of India                                                  20  
2.1.3 The Reliability of Sino-Russian Partnership                         23  
2.2 The Indian Perspective                                               25  
2.2.1 Indo-Russian Partnership                                           25  
2.2.2 The Rise of China                                                  26  
2.3 The Russian Perspective                                              28  
2.3.1 The Inconsistent Russo-Indian Partnership                           29  
2.3.2 The China Threat                                                   30  
2.4 The Pattern of the Divergent Interests                                33  

iv
CHAPTER 3 --- CONVERGENT INTERESTS – MULTILATERALISM 39
3.1 Convergence of Interests 40
   3.1.1 Theoretical Approach 40
   3.1.2 American Hegemony and Its Discontent 42
   3.1.3 Reactions Towards American Hegemony 45
3.2 Foundations of Cooperation 47
   3.2.1 The New International Norm 48
   3.2.2 Soft Balancing 51

CHAPTER 4 --- INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF MULTILATERALISM 55
4.1 Association of Southeast Asian Nations 57
   4.1.1 Multilateralism - Constraining Hegemon 58
   4.1.2 Multilateralism - Constraining Major Powers 60
4.2 Shanghai Cooperation Organization 62
   4.2.1 The Practice of New International Norms 62
   4.2.2 Multilateralism - Constraining Hegemon 64
   4.2.3 Multilateralism - Constraining Major Powers 65
4.3 The Six-Party Talks 67
   4.3.1 Multilateralism - Constraining Hegemon 68
   4.3.2 Multilateralism - Constraining Major Powers 70
4.4 Institutional Incentive and Disincentive 71

CHAPTER 5 --- THE NEW ASIA-PACIFIC ORDER 76
5.1 The Pillars of the Asia-Pacific Order 76
5.2 The New Asia-Pacific Order 79
   5.2.1 Pursuing Non-Interventionist Norm 80
   5.2.2 Challenging Nuclear Non-Proliferation 82
   5.2.3 Hedging Security Phenomenon 84
5.3 China, India and Russia – Partners and Rivals 89