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FATEFUL TRIANGLE:
HOW CHINA SHAPED U.S.-INDIA RELATIONS

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. MALONEY: Ladies and gentlemen, good morning and welcome to the Brookings Institution. I'm Suzanne Malone, I'm the interim vice president and director of Foreign Policy here at Brookings. Today we are really delighted and thrilled to be gathered to discuss Tanvi Madan's latest book, "Fateful Triangle: How China Shaped U.S.-India Relations During the Cold War." I bought my copy at the bookstore out front. You shall too, I hope.

As you all know from her bio and because you've joined here today, Tanvi is the director of the India Project and a senior fellow in the project on International Order and Strategy in our Foreign Policy program here at Brookings. Her research examines India's foreign policy, its role in the world focusing particularly on India's relationship with China and with the United States.

In two weeks, U.S.-India relations will be in the spotlight when President Trump travels to India for the first time as president. Looming in the background, will be the two countries concerns about China which have been a significant driver of U.S.-Indian partnership over the last two decades.

In her book, Tanvi takes us back and demonstrates that the centrality of China to U.S.-India relations goes back much further in the history of the two countries relationship. Through extensive archival research in India and in the United States, Tanvi disentangles how American and Indian perceptions of and policy toward China shaped the U.S.-Indian relationship throughout the Cold War.

In the finest tradition of Brookings, "Fateful Triangle" has tremendous value for both scholars and policymakers. As well as all those interested in Asia, U.S. and Indian foreign policy, diplomatic history and international relations more broadly. It really provides a unique and important contribution to the existing scholarship on the U.S.-Indian relationship, taking it beyond South Asia to the broader Asian context. Tanvi's book offers both lessons and insights about the possibilities and limits of U.S.-Indian cooperation in the context of a rising China.

Following Tanvi's opening remarks on the book and its key findings, she will join Kurt Campbell and Tom Wright for a panel discussion. We are really delighted to welcome Kurt who is the chairman and chief executive officer of the Asia Group. You have his bio as well but in addition to his time as assistant secretary of state for East Asia and the Pacific, he's also written numerous books including "The Pivot: The Future of American Statecraft in Asia."

Tom Wright who will be moderating the discussion is the director of our Center on the U.S. and Europe, a senior fellow in the project on international order and strategy. And himself, the author of a number of publications, including a fantastic book he writes extensively on great power competition. So, now without further ado, I'm turning the stage over to Tanvi and look forward to her remarks.

MS. MADAN: I guess this is going to go on. Who is doing the PowerPoint? There we go. Thank you, Suzanne, and I'm grateful to you and also to Kurt and Tom for participating in this event. Thanks also to Andrew Bois, Nora Magee, Jennifer Mason, Anna Newvie, Suzanne Shaffer, Adrianna Pita and her team for putting this event together so speedily and to all of you for coming here this morning.

So, this book has been a decade in the making. I won't thank everyone who made it possible, it will take up the rest of the event and whatever Brookings's version of Oscars wrap up music is will probably drown me out so I won't do that. But I hope you'll indulge me for at least a couple of minutes as a acknowledge two sets of people who without whom this book would not have been possible.

First, my parents Nishi and Viren Madan and my sister, Nidhi. The book is dedicated to them because their support was indispensable to this journey and to its completion, most importantly, and it has always felt more like a family project than an individual one.

Second, I want to acknowledge the support of the Brookings institution and particularly, my colleagues here at Foreign Policy. I'm incredibly fortunate to work in a place where book length research is still encouraged and to be surrounded by smart and good people.

And now, on to what you're here for. So, this book originated at another institution I owe much to, the University of Texas at Austin. More particularly, it originated in the Lyndon Johnson Presidential Library that was next door in Austin to where I was and where I was researching U.S.-India relations. I wasn't really satisfied with existing explanations of what shaped U.S.-India relations.

So, there was some things that we kind of learned, the factors like culture or U.S.-India differences over Pakistan or the Soviet Union. These factors to me didn't explain -- they did explain estrangement in the relationship, they did explain why there was continuity in the U.S.-India relationship over time. But to me and to a number of others, especially as the Indian archives were opening up, what

these existing factors didn't quite explain is why the U.S. and India nonetheless during the course of their history, why they actually did engage with each other.

And these factors also didn't explain what really explained change in the relationship. Because the standard line that everybody uses, the U.S.-India relationship has experienced many ups and down. So, if it was Pakistan, for example, those differences existed continuously, what really caused change?

And what I found in the Lyndon Johnson Library and the papers intrigued me. Two things in particular. One was, I came across documents or a set of documents that was essentially the U.S. operational plans to intervene militarily on behalf of India in 1965 during the course of an India-Pakistan war if China intervened on behalf of Pakistan.

The second set of documents that I came across were very kind of detailed and to me, boring. Logs of rain fall amounts in India and their impact on the Indian agricultural landscape and the Indian economy. But why did these people care about this and what reason these were on why LBJ and his officials were kind of going through these logs. They seem to keep a close eye on them because they wanted to make sure that India succeeded, democratic India succeeded in the '60s and especially in the context of a communist China next door that they were very worried about that it would beat India in the kind of economic race and the strategic race in Asia.

Why did this intrigue me? Today, it is almost a truth almost universally acknowledged that China drives and shapes U.S.-India relations. Indeed, broad convergence on China has been a key driver of U.S.-India relations for the last two decades across U.S. administrations and across Indian governments. Even if China was not mentioned during these visits up here on the PowerPoint presentation, during the Obama and Trump administrations, China nonetheless loomed large behind these big hugs between Prime Minister Modi and these two leaders.

But what I had found and that's why what I found in the LJB archives intrigued me. What I'd found was that China's role in shaping the U.S.-India relationship was not just a recent phenomenon restricted to kind of the last few decades. Indeed, what I found and this book lays out was that China's influence went back the early years of Indian independence.

And the book takes you back to 1949 and starts at that point. Where China was indeed

what lay behind another visit. That is Indian Prime Minister Nehru as the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Washington. When he came in 1949, he received a warm welcome on his arrival. President Truman, indeed, went to the airport to receive him taking along three cabinet members and an honor guard. You had the U.S. Congress host Nehru for a speech. Why all this fanfare behind the visit of this Indian leader?

A major was what had happened just before Nehru's visit to Washington. What American policymakers saw as the loss of China to communism. And this had happened just a few days before on October 1, 1949 when Mao Zedong establishes the People's Republic of China. The establishment in the U.S. now saw in that context a democratic India as the hope of Asia and believed it could serve as a counterbalance and contrast to Soviet backed communist China.

But during the course of this kind of visit that Nehru takes with much fanfare, it became quite clear that India did not share the same view of or the same approach to China as the U.S. did. And so, instead of convergence in China pushing the U.S. and India together, over the next few years what you really see in the U.S.-India partnership and between the two countries is divergence on the subject of China.

They've disagreed about a number of different things. Whether to recognize the People's Republic of China or not. What to do about the Chinese takeover of Tibet. China's role in the Korean War and the reasons for its intervention in that war. China's role in Southeast Asia. They also disagreed about the approach to take to China.

Even the Nehru government in India did have some concerns about China. But they thought the best way to mitigate or resolve these concerns was to engage China rather than contain it. Nehru thought that bringing China into the international community instead of isolating it would encourage it to be, in language we would perhaps use today, a responsible stakeholder. The Truman and Eisenhower administrations, of course, did not see that same approach as being the correct one to China. They did think that it should be contained.

Now these differences on China might not have made a difference. But because the two countries, the U.S. and India did engage on these subjects, they ended up -- these differences on China ended up having an adverse impact on U.S.-India relations. Now just in the Truman and Eisenhower

administrations but also on Capitol Hill where these differences on China negatively affected decisions to aid India which needed aid at that time. And this, in turn, caused resentment in India that thought the U.S. was holding back because of these differences on China.

But then around kind of 1956-57, you see a change. And over the next few years, Delhi's and Washington's diagnosis of the China problem and their prescriptions of what to do about it start to converge. In the U.S., President Eisenhower in his second term starts to see the Cold War, not just primarily as a geopolitical conflict but also an ideological and economic one. And in this context, the U.S. from his perspective and his administration's perspective could not see democratic India fall behind while Soviet backed communist China succeeded. And they came to the conclusion that Washington had to help India win what was called then the fateful race between China and India.

In India, there's also change during this period. Nehru and his officials become more concerned about China as a geopolitical threat. Because of the boundary dispute between them that comes to the fall in 1956-57. And it intensifies over the course of this period between 1956 and 1962. India's concern about China's growing influence in its neighborhood, particularly in Nepal. And, of course, the Dalai Lama's escape to India heightens the tension between China and India in 1959.

India is also though concerned about the ideological and economic threat from China just as the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations are. From the Nehru government's perspective, they were concerned that communism next door would demonstrate, a communist government would demonstrate that they could, deliver the goods, so to speak, to their people. While his democratic government in India, his fledgling democratic government in India would not succeed in doing so.

The U.S. and India didn't just agree on a perception of China now. They also agree on what to do about this threat. And primarily, in their minds, that meant a partnership with each other. Now this came, this agreement on what to do about it came with a lot of American economic assistant to India which is better known. But also, military assistance that eventually culminates and, of course, U.S. direct assistance during the 1962 China-India war.

Now you'd think that this convergence would have kind of stuck around. They both kind of agreed that this was a threat and this would naturally and inevitably lead to a sustained partnership. But it doesn't really do that during the course of the next few years. Because what happens is while the

two countries agree that China is a major threat, even the number one threat even above the Soviet Union to some extent, they come to disagree on what to do about it.

Now still this time, because they both see it as a threat, there's still this aspect of dependence. India still needs the U.S. to then externally and internally balance against China. The U.S. still needs India not to fail politically, economically, or militarily while China took a leadership role in Asia. And so, the U.S. felt the need to continue to give a lot of economic assistance but also the lesson on fact that comes out in the recently declassified paper is that there is a fair amount of military assistance still provided during this period.

There's also an intelligence sharing relationship that develops. There's also the signing in existence of something that's signed in 1963 in a defense agreement that essentially commits the U.S. to mutual consultations with India in the event of another Chinese attack on India in which case the U.S. would come to India's assistance. There are also strange things. Like a joint expedition, a U.S.-India expedition up to the Himalayas where they decide that they're going to put a nuclear-powered monitoring device for reconnaissance on the kind of nuclear program that the Chinese were developing. That device is apparently still lost somewhere up there.

But there's also kind of at this point while there is this dependence and continuous need for each other that kind of keeps the two countries stuck with each other in some sense. There's also disagreement and disillusionment. And the disagreement comes on things like how to spend resources. Whether India should be spending more money on defense expenditure against India or concentrating on development needs. Whether Pakistan should be part of India's-China's solution as the U.S. was arguing. Or was Pakistan part of India's-China problem as Delhi was arguing.

There's was a difference on whether India should have a more exclusive partnership with the U.S. and its allies and partners as obviously Washington wanted. Or whether India should actually maintain a diversified portfolio of partners that included significantly the Soviet Union as obviously Delhi was pursuing.

And finally, there was a difference over whether and disillusionment about whether the other country was indeed capable of playing a helpful role in Asia in each on of these countries China strategies. Both started to get disillusioned with the idea that the other, even if they wanted to, could they

play this role as they got more and more involved in other commitments.

So, you see this kind of mix and dependence and disillusionment or you hear it very kind of significantly in a phone call that takes place in 1965 between President Johnson and his then U.S. ambassador to the U.N., Arthur Goldberg. And President Johnson is fed up with India to some extent. He says, I'm doing everything I can for them but they're not economically performing, they're not delivering, I'm fighting for them in Vietnam for all of Asia and these guys are not doing anything. The rant is a little bit more graphic, let's say but since this is kind of a PG-13 event, I won't repeat what he said.

But he goes on this rant and Goldberg just says, why don’t you just let India fail, let it go communist, why do you care? And Johnson says, no, no, no, I can't do that. That's what they said Atchison did with China. In other words, he couldn't lose India just like the Truman administration had lost China which had both a strategic and significantly for Johnson, a political impact on Democrats.

But as this time goes on during the course of this Johnson administration, towards the end of the administration, it starts to become clear that India won't quite fail or go communist and it can manage to defend itself against China. It comes off quite well during a 1967 border scrimmage with China. And there's a sense in the U.S. that India will not fail if it's left kind of on its own. India or not, its part gets a little bit more confidence and you see China's a driver in the relationship, essentially fade if not seize over time. So, you see the U.S. and India during this period, towards the end of this period, essentially kind of drifting away.

Now over the next kind of decade, the last decade that this book covers, you see overall a period of disengagement. But with one key period of divergence at the beginning once again, driven by China. But this time this divergence is different and it's in a different way thanks to China, U.S. rapprochement which takes place at the beginning of the Nixon administration.

In the lead up to and during what comes in 1971 in the South Asian context, the India Pakistan war that eventually leads to the formation of Bangladesh. The China-U.S. rapprochement means that India found that during the course of this crisis, it could not depend on the U.S. coming to its assistance if China intervened on behalf of Pakistan.

And you say Nixon and Kissinger backing Chinese partner Pakistan which was serving as a channel to China at the time. Indeed, this kind of vision of needing to back Chinese partner Pakistan

leads kind of Nixon and Kissinger not just to kind of support Pakistan but to even encourage China to intervene in the war on behalf of Pakistan.

This of course leads to the low point that many of you know about in the U.S.-India relationship that is remembered to this day. The sailing of the USS Enterprise into the Bay of Bengal. It also led to the deepening of new Indian engagement for the Soviet Union because of the treaty that's signed between the two countries in 1971.

After this period, you do see kind of a period of disengagement. Because while India's Soviet relations start to deepen, U.S.-India engagement in the final period that this book covers, is one essentially of disengagement. Not just because of the war but significantly because of the rapprochement with China, the U.S. no longer really needed India's as a counter in Asia. And India on its part now had a Soviet insurance policy and also moved towards acquiring an independent nuclear deterrent.

Nonetheless, India was wary of overdependence on Moscow. And so, it essentially sought to do two things in the Ford during the course of the Ford and Carter administrations and the Indira Gandhi and Morarji Desai governments in the case of India.

These two things were essentially to stabilize relations with the U.S. What we would perhaps today call a reset and get it back on an even keel. And the second was for the Indian governments to seek their own rapprochement with China. And essentially, the U.S. supported and even encouraged this. Because the U.S. on its part wanted to limit or Indian, the Indian partnership with the Soviet Union.

And so, during the end of this period, in particular the Carter administration, you see this kind of triangle come full circle. In 1949, you had seen India encouraging China and the U.S. to engage in that first meeting between Truman and Nehru. And now by '79, you see the U.S. encouraging China and India to engage and you see this reflected in a meeting that this book ends on.

And it's between President Jimmy Carter and the Indian foreign minister at the time, somebody called Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Who two decades after the spirit of disengagement, from going from that meeting where Jimmy Carter is saying, stay the course on rapprochement with China even though you're upset with China for the China Vietnam war that had just taken place.

Two decades after that, you really do see us back again at the point of convergence on the subject. Two decades after that meeting, Vajpayee is, of course, prime minister and we see the beginning of this present phase of convergence. Whereas, former Indian national security advisor Shivshankar Menon put it, convergence on China has been and become the strategic glue in the U.S.-India relationship.

So, I'll end with saying, you know, what does all this past? This is kind of a lot of kind of detailed past stuff in the book which I enjoy doing and I hope you enjoy reading about. What does the past of this book say about the present and future? There is more detail on this in the book and we'll get to it in Q&A. But I'll essentially say two things.

One, it explains a lot of the historical baggage regarding China, regarding partnership, regarding alignment in the U.S.-India relationship. Historical baggage that to this day, affects and shapes how the two countries see each other in the context of a rising China. To give you one example, you cannot understand Indian concerns about a G-2 or a U.S.-China condominium without understanding India's sense that in 1971, essentially overnight, much like the Japanese called it Nixon shock. India had to face going from having a U.S. partnership against China to the prospect of a U.S.-China-Pakistan, facing a U.S.-China-Pakistan partnership against it.

A second thing beyond kind of the historical context that this lays out for the present day. Is this book tries to offer some insights on the possibilities and limitations of what we think of as a U.S.-India partnership with China. There's some, an ambassador Bob Blackwell who's been amongst the full motion saying this, that a U.S.-India partnership is inevitable if there's a rising China that's seen as a threat.

There are others who say it's an impossible partnership and will not happen because India doesn't do alliances or even alignments. And what this book lays out is that a U.S.-India partnership, even an alignment against China is possible but only when certain conditions are in place. And if you read the book, you'll find out what those conditions are and I will stop at that point. Thank you.

MR. WRIGHT: Great, thank you Tanvi, that was wonderful. A really magisterial overview of what is a terrific book. So, I highly recommend this to everyone. It will be on sale afterwards. Tanvi will be signing copies. There's even a discount from the Brookings bookshop so don't go to Amazon, you

can get it right here. So, I definitely recommend it to everyone. As somebody who comes from a more atlanticist background and really feels pretty steeped in Cold War, you know, history but largely from sort of the atlanticist and perspective, I have to say I learned an enormous amount from this book. Not just about the Cold War and Asia but also sort of your central argument which I found very provocative and interesting. And it's a very well written book as well so I think it's an easy sort of read for those of you who like very gripping history. And there's some big personalities in it.

And we're delighted to be joined by our friend, Kurt Campbell here today who of course has a very strong background himself in U.S. strategy toward Asia and toward India. And it's involved in many of the recent developments over the last 20 years in terms of U.S. policy toward Asia. The architect, of course, of the pivot and also has much experience dealing with India.

So before, Tanvi, we maybe get into talking to you about more details of the book and looking ahead as well to the future of U.S. India relations and U.S. strategy in Asia. Kurt, maybe we could start with you with just your reflections on Tanvi's presentation and on the book.

MR. CAMPBELL: First of all, Tom, thank you very much. It's a pleasure to be here and it's a terrific book and grateful to be able to help celebrate this with Tanvi. And can I also say, it is true the way Suzanne began. The fact that Brookings is committed to research that ends up in books is an important essential part of what scholarship is about and I want commend Brookings for doing it.

I did notice Suzanne has a new long title, sort of acting special, sort of kind of like one of those officials in Wuhan right now. So, you're not sure how long they're going to be in that job. Still, I commend her on and congratulate her for this.

So, I really like the book. I will say, I told Tanvi as we began, I was completely unconvinced when I picked it up. Because when I thought of it and I thought of this period, I thought that the two mediating powers for at least U.S. policy in the region were primarily the former Soviet Union and Pakistan. I thought those were the driving forces of both American strategy and how India thought of the Cold War in Asia more generally.

But I like the breakdown in the book and the historical dimensions, particularly the Eisenhower stuff was fascinating. And Tanvi's description of Eisenhower's historic visit to India, what it meant and what animated American strategy in this period really illuminated for me things that I didn't

understand or didn't appreciate it as fully.

I will tell you as someone who has spoken and engaged with Indian friends, I think, for a longer period of time about China and about Asia. The history that Tanvi interprets for us, this history is much better known to Indian friends that it is to Americans. And it will be recited for you in great detail. Usually the areas of disillusionment and disappointment will come up again and again.

So, I would recommend for friends who are thinking about the historical context and who are not persuaded necessarily. There is this view and again, at the beginning of the book, she talks about this idea and it was represented by our friend Bob Blackwell who is ambassador in India. The idea that there is an inevitable partnership that will define the 21st century between the United States and India.

But I think what the past suggests to us is that it's a much more complex frame. And that what India demands is not just that the United States has a nuanced and sophisticated understanding of China but that the United States deals with India on its own merits. And I think at the core of much of running through much of Tanvi's discussion is not just the role that China plays in how the United States conceptualizes the Cold War. But when the United States stops thinking about India in its own right and mediates it through another country's lens either the former Soviet Union or China, that's where we tend to run into problems.

My problems with the book really, I like the fact that she's broken it down in these sorts of segmented periods of, you know, hope and disillusionment. I'm not sure I buy it completely. I think the overarching picture which I think we can look at over a 40- or 50-year period is, on both sides, periods of hope that is almost always undercut by actions, misunderstandings on both sides. So, it's raised expectations, disappointment, withdraw and what you see is a recurring pattern that takes place over 40 or 50 years that frankly continues today and we see that again and again.

It's also the case that even though this is interpreted as about Asia, I think the concept of Asia that we now think of more naturally was less common during this period. I think there was a sense that this was South Asia and not part of Asia. I don’t think that American strategists thought of India as part of Asia more generally. I think we thought of it more as a subset of a strategy or set of interactions in South Asia. And I want Tanvi to talk a little bit more about that.

The other thing that I'm less clear about, even though she talks a lot about in the period of the '50s and '60s and early '70s about China per se. I don't think there's as much of an understanding that in American strategy we tended to think of China and the former Soviet Union as a monolete. And that China's actions in many of these places were simply thought of as tests that for a larger strategy that it was being implemented by the Kremlin. And so, I think in some respects, that undercuts elements of her overall approach.

However, the book is fascinating. Anyone who, I found, the most fascinating thing about working with Indian friends about China. Indian friends will tell you exactly what they want you to say about China. And then you will say it and they will be like, "I can't believe you said that. That's too up front, I don't want you to talk like that." And so, the dynamism of how the issue of China plays in the Indian political imagination, that's the part of the book that I found most interesting and that I would recommend readers to think about going forward.

So, it's a tremendous piece. You're going to resist at the outset, I will tell you. You'll start this by saying, I don't think this is right. But about half way through you'll think, yup, there are parts of this that are really compelling.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you. Tanvi, do you want to come back in on some of that and particularly just on the points Kurt was making about India as a subset of strategy and some of the details on the role, you know, the Soviets played.

MS. MADAN: I think, you know, one of the things the book tries to do and it lays it out up front. Which is, I'm not arguing that China was the only thing that mattered in U.S.-India relations. The good thing about being a historian is you're allowed to say there are multiple explanations.

But what the book does say is that it's a pretty big missing factor that really hasn't been covered. And whether you're trying to understand kind of engagement or estrangement in the relationship, you can't understand it without actually thinking about how these two countries saw each other in the context of China in that period.

So, it is and it looks at these other factors, including Pakistan and the Soviet Union. So, it's called "Fateful Triangle" but there are these kinds of two other actors that much like today, you know, Pakistan and Russia, they do play a role, an intervening role, a kind of a role in shaping how this triangle

played out. Including in the context of the other thing you mentioned which is the relationship between Moscow and Beijing.

And I actually think what the book tries to do is lay out one of the biggest sources of difference, at least in the initial phase that this book covers is that the U.S. does see it as a monolith. The Sino-Soviet relationship as a monolith and Indian does not for Nehru. In fact, you could argue that he might have underestimated, and I do, that he underestimated the ideological kind of partner basis of that relationship and how much ideology actually factored into Chinese thinking at the time.

He thought, you know, mirror imaging. He said, China's just like India. Major goals as Asian countries that have just come out of the yoke of kind of oppression from years of colonialism in India's case, and foreign influence and domination in China's. Is that we will together kind of take over or we will together kind of focus on developing at home and building a sense of nationalism. So, he always thought a Sino-Soviet partnership and alliance was temporary. That it wasn't -- that China will eventually split and eventually will come up into its own because nationalism will matter more than communism.

Well, today we're debating that issue too, right, China, Russia and how sustainable that partnership is. And indeed, India's making the argument that the U.S. and the west should reach out to Russia and wedge it away. '49, India was making the argument that the U.S. should try to create a wedge between China and Russia.

So, I think there's a lot of awareness of that monolithic aspect. And you can argue that eventually, Nehru was right, it's just it took a while for him to be right. The Sino-Soviet split doesn't happen for years and that actually has deep repercussions for India including in the context of the 1962 war where the Soviets provide intelligence on India to the Chinse and also kind of hold back on supplying some military equipment that India had expected.

And I'll finally just kind of comment on this point about Asia. I think it's actually a lesson for India today as well. It is kind of, I never -- one of the things that I found often very different when I came to the U.S. two decades ago is that when people talked about Asia here it was East Asia and Southeast Asia. You go to most other parts of the world, including Britain, Asia does include India. India considers itself an Asian country.

But I think in the first, I think what the book tries to lay out is that in the first few years,

India is considered or thought that the U.S. policymakers think that India is an Asian country, had hoped for it to be more of an Asian country. But this starts to kind of -- it's almost like that subset gets created, the relationship gets outsourced to the Brits for at least the first few years when two things happen.

One, the U.S. actually disagrees with India's view of Asia and particularly of China. So, there's that sense that well, it doesn't really match so let's not think about it. The other thing is capability. India's very involved in a lot of Asian issues. The kind of Indo-China conflict and even the Vietnam War, the Korean War. It's actually a player in all these instances. The Afro-Asian summit in 1955 in Bandung bringing together people from what we'd call the Indo-Pacific.

But what happens is its capability. It loses sight of what it should focus on which is economic development and growth and building military capability. And, I think, that essentially in some ways doesn't just take India out of the Asian picture from the U.S. perspective but from the Indian perspective as well. India becomes much more insular and takes itself out of engagement with Asia at large, particularly South East Asia and East Asia over time.

MR. WRIGHT: Thanks. Looking ahead a little bit I'd like to pick up on a point that both you and Kurt sort of raised and it's an interesting sort of theme of the book. And you write, you know, U.S.-India partnership is neither inevitable or impossible. And in your remarks, you talked about the conditions which you left unstated. But they are, just to briefly read out to people, there needs to be five elements, you say. An eminent threat, India's inability to deal with the challenge on its own, a willing partner, the lack of other partners and sufficient political will and capacity to undertake a tilt.

And, I guess, I'd like you both to come in but Kurt, if I could start with you. What strikes me about those conditions is that all but one are basically not really to do with the United States, right. And so, I guess my question is, when we talk about India here, there's an assumption that it's sort of entirely in the gift of U.S. strategy. Right, if the U.S. has a smart strategy, it will get India on board and if it doesn't have a smart strategy it will not. And, you know, does the U.S. actually have much less agency than we think in this if there is a U.S.-India partnership because of external factors that have maybe a little bit to do with Washington but mainly to do with other things. And how much strategic choice do we really have here?

MR. CAMPBELL: So, I like the five conditions that Tanvi laid out but I actually think that

there is another condition that perhaps is implicit in this but may be unspoken but is actually more essential. I think what India's demand that would override all of this is to be treated as a great power. And I think the one issue that I think is generally the case through much of the history of U.S.-Indian relations is an Indian dissatisfaction with the level and intent of American engagement. That they see American engagement as episodic, not as sustained, not as commanding as the kind of engagement that we've had towards the former Soviet Union, Moscow and China for 30 years.

And I think there has been inevitable comparisons, the Indians in particular, have looked at the intensity with which the United States has engaged China since 1979. And they compare their own diplomacy and they find it lacking in some cases. And so, I think that what's going to be necessary is a recognition that from the United States perspective that India is not an occasional visitor and, you know, we are focused right now on President Trump's upcoming visit to Delhi.

But is has to be perpetual, it has to be a constant factor in American strategy and it's not yet. And I think that's going to be the condition that's more important than these others. That India commands the level and extent of engagement that it is among the top tier, top, you know, strategic partners and considerations for the United States. That's the first thing I would say, Tom, more generally.

I do think that what India offers to the United States, even in the 1950s and '60s is this combination of both being a developing country and a great power. And I don't think the United States ever came to terms with the conjunction there and I think the Indian dissatisfaction with the lack of engagement more generally has permeated most of the relationship overall.

One other thing I want to say, Tom, and then I'll turn it over to Tanvi. The other thing that was fascinating throughout early parts of the book is how much a sense of anxiety almost defeatism and a sense that we're playing defense that we had to save India from falling into one camp or the other animated much of American strategy.

And it seems to me that we've made the most gains in U.S.-Indian relationship when there is an optimistic sense about the United States. Not fatalistic and not a sense that India is going to fall under some, you know, sway or that we're losing a global competition. And I don't think that is factored as much in these more recent calculations here.

MR. WRIGHT: Thanks. Tanvi.

MS. MADAN: I think, you know, I think the reason the kind of peak of the relationship in the period, the entire period that I covered that really you do see convergence is in the Eisenhower second term. And kind of the early Kennedy years where that's exactly what you see which is a sense of optimism about India. And a sense that the U.S., it wasn't about stopping India from failing but helping it succeed.

What since kind of the Bush administration has essentially become U.S. policy once again was just to support the rise of India. And these days, nobody uses the C word. But the fact that both the democracy and the power aspect are mentioned. But this is what makes India different is that it is a democratic power that's developing. That it can show the democracy and development aren't mutually exclusive.

Having said that, I think where Eisenhower eventually and Kennedy succeed is because they accept that because India is a democracy, the very thing that they were supporting. It will also be difficult and have an Indian independent view of its own interests and its own ideas about how to, for example, grow, how much to spend on issues. And I think this becomes kind of a running theme which is this idea of independence, freedom of action. What often gets called non-alignment but is essentially the search for to be able to make decisions on an independent basis to be treated as a power in its own right.

And I think where you see so kind of the conditions you mentioned are really about when India tilts. Because I say, you know, this idea that India does not align is not true. We've actually seen India tilt towards certain countries or blocks, pretty significantly at least twice in the past.

But there are kind of things that the U.S. can do. Because on China, where the two countries tended to disagree was on the question of, you know, do you engage it, do you contain it. How much force do you use, how much diplomacy to you deploy? Kind of where does a country like Pakistan fit in? Should India kind of make up with Pakistan and then focus all of its resources on China? Or as India sees it, you know, do you actually see China, the China Pakistan relationship as a problem in its own right.

And then I think it comes back to this question of independence. Because for India, the whole point about having not joining an alliance of kind of maintaining kind of a diversification, including a relationship with Russia today and the Soviet Union in the past. Was this idea of not just not kind of

having questions about the reliability of the U.S., but also trying to make the most of as many relationships, and independently decide what path to follow.

Because this whole idea of India never wanted to be in a situation again which its early leaders had faced. That before independence India was taken into the Second World War without any Indians being asked about how there are kind of millions that India contributed to the war, both in terms of men and material.

And so I think, you know, this idea of independence is very important, but there is a prescription for, I think, U.S. policymakers and for India ones today if they want to make this partnership different. There are these differences on, you know, Russia, on Pakistan, on engagement. When leaders, as Eisenhower and Kennedy did showed on their part kind of narrow in his -- and they did it, partly, because they had no choice. They needed the U.S. at that point.

When they've shown either a willingness to bridge the gap or a tolerance of differences that look the other side we're not going to be bring them about. Because, often, this wasn't about misunderstanding. The two countries understood each other perfectly well. They just thought the other side was wrong. So figuring out, you know, that's a view there. That's a view there. We're not going to try to kind of make the other person change their mind. We'll find a way to work on it. And then, really, then you get the time to figure out those terms of alignment that I think we're, again, trying to figure out today.

MR. CAMPBELL: The other interesting about the book from a bureaucratic reading, one of the fascinating things is the role that individuals play in this relationship. In our, you know, foreign policy national security bureaucracy there is not an Indianist group. There are a very small number of people that influence the nature of these debates.

The role of the ambassador in many circumstances, both in Washington and Delhi are central. And in each administration, the role of the leaders and generally, maybe, only one or two advisors around them play an outsider role. It reminds you that, unlike certain relationship where you have, like, a huge cadre of people that studied the Soviet Union, Soviet specialists that would animate administrations.

And on China, the only group that has historically been most engaged with India for --

that has been now, I think, roundly defeated was actually led by the former leader here of Brookings, by Strobe and his team that basically thought to view India through the prism of the nonproliferation regime.

That group, more than any other group, thought of India in that lens, but more recently, it has only been a few individual players like Bob Blackwell, like Rich Firm and others who have been able to animate the leadership around a country, a president or prime minister to drive the direction of the country and the relationship.

MR. WRIGHT: So on that, I mean, you both talked about the need to, you know, respect India as a great power, and just sort of engage it on its terms, but I'm wondering what role domestic politics in India will play in the U.S. perception? I mean, we've seen a lot already this year. A concerned about, you know, Modi and various developments. You know, that would seem, obviously, to -- if that was a factor to cut against that Indian sort of desire, you know, to be treated equally from Delhi's point of you. So, you know, is that going to be a factor in the years ahead and how should we think about it as a strategy question?

MS. MADAN: So I think this is something I think I try to bring out in the book in terms of there will be questions, I think already are, but if, you know, if the reason that you are backing India is that it's not just a great power, because then, you know, it will be a threat down the line too.

Why, you know, you have Chinese officials and kind of scholars say why doesn't the U.S. see India's rise as a threat? Well, for one, in the face of China's rise it's not as great, but this idea of it being kind of not just about this strategic driver that is China, but that it is a democracy and that it is this kind of economically advantageous to deal with. So I think the U.S. and India relationship his kind of this -- I've always thought about it as a three-legged stool, some think of it as a tripod.

It's has a strategic driver. It's had an economic driver, and it's had a values-based driver on both sides of the relationship. And I think if there's a question here about not just -- I think about both the values kind of leg of that relationship, but also the economic leg as economic growth has slowed down a little bit.

Same thing in India. India has question because the values besides for India has also meant, you know, things like immigration here, how safe its citizens feel here, but also if the economy here becomes more -- economic kind of lens becomes more protectionist here, if those two legs suddenly

start becoming wobbly, you're putting a lot of dependence on that strategic relationship. That driver to kind of keep that relationship going.

Now, having said that, in terms of if kind of people -- constituencies here that not just from the China angle, but the democracy angle, and the economic angle if they start -- you know, if they get disappointed, both in India's ability to play a contrasting role and am important role, but also kind of it's -- not just it's kind of willingness, but its ability. So if these developments in India start affecting its ability to whether that's grow economically and then spend on developing military capability. Does India become so insular once again as it did in the kind of mid to late 60s that people just start losing interest?

That, here, you might have people saying, we want India to play this role vis-à-vis China, but it's got too much going on either within India, or it's got too kind of focused on Pakistan that it's not going to play this larger role in Asia or in the Indo-Pacific, as we see it, or it doesn't have the ability to. So I think these developments could play a role.

Having said that, I think one of the reasons you're seeing limited criticism of India despite all the, like, concerns among some constituencies is because of the China aspect, is because of the strategic aspect. It is why, partly, yes, President Trump might not care about some of the, you know, democracy and human rights issue, but others in the administration would under normal circumstances.

I think one of the reasons you're seeing limited criticism not just on the part of the U.S., but a number of other countries is that India's still seen in a very kind of geopolitical sense as a potential balancer and actual balancer to China.

MR. WRIGHT: That's correct.

MR. CAMPBELL: I agree with all that Tanvi said. I'd say if you're looking for areas to be anxious about in U.S./India relations, I mean, so much of it has to do with how American politics plays out that you could note a number of things that you could be worried about. I think at the top of the list is domestic politics.

And it is interesting how few international groups have spoken out about concerns inside India. And I agree with Tanvi, I think part of that is uncertain to how much further it's going to go, and I think worried that by commenting it could get worse. But also, I think the China aspect comes to play, but it doesn't stop there.

The areas that I think we can be concerned about, I think India has a very different view about Iran then the United States does, and I think their partnership there, sense of working with Iran into the future could be in stark contrast to where the Trump Administration wants to go. I think the enduring arms relationship with Russia we've already seen some issues there.

I think the bigger issue that we could see coming up is on trade. And I think the steps that Trump has taken with various countries that, you know, causes anxiety in terms of, you know, taking punitive actions. If he takes more of those in India it could have really very significant political costs inside the country as a whole. And so it will be interesting to see what the next couple of months will be like.

I can imagine if a democratic government comes to power that issues associated with climate change, I think it has a very different conception about its historical responsibilities and what it needs to do going forward. I can imagine those issues also causing concerns.

Overall, balancing that is this larger issue of China, per say, but at the same time, I think what India wants is a clear-headed American assessment, but I think they worry about extremes. They worry about both condominium and now I think they are probably a little concerned that the United States is veering too much in a direction of open conflict which I think they would view as contrary to their own economic interests because India, of course, wants to be able to partake in some aspects of Belt and Road and engagement with China, as appropriate, while keeping its guard up in terms of its larger strategic concerns.

MR. WRIGHT: And as India sort of concerns their different than the rest of the region. I mean, we often sort of comment on that and the region being a bit anxious about sort of the, you know, the dichotomous way the U.S. debate is often sort of framed and in competition going too far. Is there something unique about India's concerns that would make it different from Japan or Australia in that regard?

MR. CAMPBELL: You know, India was brought into the East Asian summit and to the ASEAN regional forum. It's still an uncomfortable mix, to be honest. I mean, I don't think -- I think India is still learning the cultural, you know, kind of norms and, you know, what are the key issues that animate East Asia, per say.

I think the countries that have had the most luck in a nuanced discussion around China have, in fact, been Japan, Australia, and India, in which they talk carefully about a number of things, but never directly about the threat or the anxieties that all of them share with respect to China.

MS. MADAN: Can I just say, it is interesting how India sees U.S./China dynamics. And it really is that Goldilocks. You want it to be just right, neither too warm because that becomes a G-2, the U.S./China feeling too, kind of, warm and fuzzy towards each other. But then kind of not wanting to seem too cold and icy because that requires India to make chooses it doesn't want to make.

But also, it decreases India's utility. And in that sense, I mean, one of the things you've seen is that India leaders, both current and in the past which the book reflects, have often talked about how to use U.S./China conflict or competition. And I think you're seeing it today where, you know, you're seeing, kind of, India put itself forward in a way that it wouldn't have in the past. As, you know, saying it's willing to kind of take on more of a role, to join things like the Quad, to move forward with something.

Kurt was present as the created of the U.S./India/Japan trilateral which also has a military dimension now. But India's doing it for its own good and for its own purposes vis-à-vis China, but also to kind of try to elicit benefits from the U.S., including access to more advanced technology we didn't have access to in the past.

And so you are seeing kind of India policymakers do what they have done fairly consistently. And it is worth remembering that of all the Quad countries, India's actually had the most consistent view of China since the late 1950s which is seeing it as a challenge alone and in conjunction with Pakistan.

So I think it is also why they, in some ways, are happy that the Trump Administration has taken a more forward learning approach towards -- or at least a view of China as a challenge. They do disagree about the kind of approach, and particularly the trade war aspects of it, I suspect.

MR. CAMPBELL: Tom, one of the things that we have not discussed that's interesting. We're really at the beginning stages of this which is the activization of the Indian-American diaspora in the larger political context. And, really, President Trump has really energized this group.

Now, historically, as a block, they have tended to be a little bit more on the democratic side, but I'm not sure that's going to hold. We'll see how it plays out. But I think as a group, they have

domestic concerns, but also I think are going to be increasingly interested in the nature of the relationship between the United States and India. And I would expect both parties will be more attentive to that going forward.

MR. WRIGHT: So just one thought, Tanvi, if we're relying on a Goldilocks approach, you know, the U.S. and particularly the President I don't think do that particularly well. It tends to be one end of the dial or the other, but hopefully.

I guess I have one more question before we go to all of you for questions and it's on President Trump's visit. I mean his visits to any country, I think, are always very consequential because it places him at the center of the narrative. His team, I think, is less influential. When he's on the road he usually makes news. Usually goes in directions you don't expect. You know, he often sort of shapes and policy.

And so beyond the general sort of strategic questions and the future of U.S./India relations, what in particular can we expect from his trip? What worries you about it? What excites you about it? What are you sort of looking for, and how are those personal, you know, dynamics between President Trump and Modi likely to unfold? Either of you can.

MS. MADAN: So I think President Trump will get a very warm welcome from the India Government. And it is because of -- now, look, my book ends by saying it's unhealthy for the U.S. and India relationship to depend so much on a strategic driver that is China. But I think the large reason why he will get a warm welcome is that India needs and wants the U.S. to continue to stay committed to playing a balancing role in Asian, to be committed to help, you know, India build up its military capability.

And so I think you are going to see -- there isn't any other choice. India doesn't know what Russia's going to do with China. Yes, it's developing a relationship with Japan, with Australia, with France, but the U.S. still is for Indian strategy, for the Indian economy, for the people to people reasons continues to be, if not the most important, at least a kind of first amongst equal partner for India. So I think you will see a welcome.

I think the Indian prime minister who, himself, is used to taking center stage will be more than happy to give President Trump center stage. I think from the reports we're getting about whether it's people lining up in the streets to greet President Trump, or it is over 100,000 people in a stadium. Part of

that is recognizing what will go down well.

MR. WRIGHT: He'll call it 200,000.

MS. MADAN: 200,000, yes. And it does recall, actually, a visit that took place 60 years ago with President Eisenhower. And I know you and Rich Varner put together an event especially on this in December, but this visit took place just as they had finally been -- not finally been, but there were deaths. They were shooting at the China/India border. The boundary dispute had kind of essentially become kinetic and India needed support and welcomed Eisenhower.

Some people say a million people that had been produced into the streets to show kind of Indian -- an Indian welcome to President Eisenhower, who did get quite carried away in his subsequent statements. So I don't think India's any stranger to figuring out what it is that a leader would like to hear.

I think what I will -- I think we will see because there's a recognition in India that India has not made large defense purchased from the U.S. recently, while it has done so from the Russians and others and the French. We will see some defense deals announced. I think you'll see, I hesitate to call it a trade deal, maybe a trade package, that will at least put this on -- an attempt to put this on ice for the next few months, and take it out of the kind of the, you know, the kind of concerns that -- I don't think they'll solve any of the big issues that have come up recently on that front.

What concerns me in terms of how it might play out, I do think they'll be some trepidation about what President Trump might say, what he might do before or after vis-à-vis Pakistan and Afghanistan. And so I think that's the kind of thing, you know, probably wouldn't want a Trump speech to the 100,000 people saying, you know, you got a great prime minister here. I've been encouraging him to also talk to my great friend Aman Khan. You know, things like that.

So I think they'll be some trepidation, but I do think the government, at least, they will -- you know, the government at least is going to try to ensure that it will do its best to make sure this visit goes off well. It is worth remembering, President Trump has gone to India before, though not as president.

MR. WRIGHT: Kurt?

MR. CAMPBELL: I agree with everything Tanvi said there. I will say this, I can't think of any other leader who has had excellent relations with both President Obama and President Trump.

Almost every leader in Europe and elsewhere have tended one direction or the other, and the fact that Modi and his team have very effectively engaged, to a degree that I think both leaders would say, no, he liked me best. So I think that's a real mark of the sophistication of Indian strategic diplomacy and understanding the personal dimension that Tanvi talked about.

And I do think the Eisenhower -- like, it's clear Eisenhower was in the midst of some domestic criticism. They rolled out the red carpet for him. And if you listen to some of his speeches he was really overwhelmed by what he heard and what he saw in India, and I wouldn't be surprised if we see a little bit of that in play.

And I do think, you know, there is -- one of the things that happens when other countries get together, I think, privately, is that they share what works well in terms of Trump diplomacy. And, you know, I think Prime Minister Abe is very close to Prime Minister Modi.

MR. WRIGHT: It's a WhatsApp group?

MR. CAMPBELL: You know, it's pretty well-known how to carry favor and how to get out of the dog house on issues that are concerning, and I think we'll probably see some of that in play.

MR. WRIGHT: Okay. We'll open it up. So just state your name and ask a question which means your statement has to end with a question mark. So the gentlemen here and then the woman down the back. We'll take two together.

QUESTIONER: Chris McCray. So my Scottish grandfather, Kenneth Kemp actually wrote up the legalese for India's dependence after 20 years of working with Mahatma Gandhi, so I agree with your analysis up to '68. I'm really interested what you think actually happened in '68. Some people in Harvard tell me that actually the Chinese completely gave up on wanting to have -- to be so connected with Russia from 1968 onwards because they realized 50 million people had starved to death behind nuclear weapons. So I'm interested in the '68 onward analysis, and how you see that part of the relationship. Is there any more you can say on that?

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you. I'm going to take the woman down the back.

QUESTIONER: Dezi Schaffer. Thank you, Tanvi. I want to underline something both Tanvi and Kurt said which is the importance of India being treated like a great power, and the importance of what they now call strategic autonomy as part of that package.

But there was one dimension that I thought was missing, maybe it's in the book, and that is what the Chinese think about India? My limited experience when I was interviewing for the book Howie and I wrote is that the India watchers in China basically took a very superior attitude. Yes, the poor dears have been trying to become more of a great power, but they really aren't ready for primetime. What's your judgement over the years, but more importantly, now?

MR. WRIGHT: Great, two great questions. Tanvi, why don't we start with you and then Kurt.

MS. MADAN: On 1968, I think the Sino-Soviet split comes before and it comes -- in fact, the U.S. and India, one of the things that policymakers do throughout is they talk a lot about these kind of global and regional issues, and they're constantly checking in with each other. They might disagree. What is the nature of the China/Soviet relationship? Because it has implications for both the U.S. and for India's interest.

By kind of '68, the Sino-Soviet split has happened, and what that does, interestingly, it causes a difficulty in '67, '68, '69 in particular for India that actually involves Pakistan. Which is that because of the Sino-Soviet split, in the kind of mid to late 60s you actually see not just kind of the U.S. trying to -- and at that point had given up -- by this point the U.S. has given up trying to get India to make peace with Pakistan.

This time it's the Soviets telling India -- the other Indian partner, the Soviet Union saying, we want to create a wedge between China and Pakistan because now the Soviets and the Chinese are in competition. And so this means that Moscow's actually encouraging India to make peace with Pakistan and the Indians resent it.

And what also happens is that Russians, then Soviet, that much like today, started flirting with military assistance relationship with Pakistan. So the Sino-Soviet split, yes, on the one hand it's something that gets the Soviets to say to India let's sign this treaty. Because '69 is when not only is there a split, there are clashes between the Chinese and the Soviets. That makes India -- they want to keep India on the side.

And so they say, look, let's sign this treaty. India, for all the strategic, (inaudible) reason Indira Gandhi refuses to sign that treaty for two years. She said, nope, it will mean that I will become too

dependent on the Soviets. I want to stay independent. I want to continue to try to maintain a relationship with the U.S.

But the Soviets put a lot of pressure because of that split, so it does have kind of a interesting dynamic where it makes the Indians both resentful of the Soviet relationship with Pakistan because of China, and also makes them more useful to the Soviets in some ways.

I think Dezi's point about -- Dezi, I do kind of -- there are references in the book to kind of Chinese thinking, but this is -- both the fact that the book would have been much longer than it is, and second, I don't have the linguistic skills to have been able to add the dimension of what China was -- the Chinese were thinking and doing at that time. But there is kind of references to it in the book in the sense of in the past, you actually saw in the beginning of the period of discover the Chinese first kind of think of India much like the Soviets do as kind of a running dog of imperialism and bourgeois lackeys of the U.S. and UK. They think that India and the U.S. will collude, especially on the subject of Tibet.

But then they become convinced that India can actually be useful as it's trying to engage China. That India can help kind of un-isolate China as everybody else was trying to do. But then, of course, things get very tense and China actively tries to see India, once again, as potentially colluding with the U.S. on the subject of Tibet. Things go really badly.

And then once they defeat India in the war they really do -- I think that idea that India kind of goes out of the Chinese mindset saying it's not useful. In the 70s you do see the Chinese wanting to engage India because they, too, don't want to see an India too dependent on the Soviet Union. And so they, took, asked the U.S. to kind of broker some sort of kind of rapprochement between China and India.

But largely, I think Susan Sherk's point of view that she's written about, but after that for the longest time China didn't really think about India very much. And today I think there is a sense that India is, I think especially over the last decade and a half as India acquired nuclear weapons, as its economy started to grow, and particularly as it developed a relationship with the U.S. and its allies and partners that China is taking another look at India, and actively either trying to -- sometimes trying to create a wedge between the U.S. and India.

But also, on the other hand, you know, trying to also see where it can push India when necessary. And basically try to expose the U.S. in terms of whether or not it will come to India's

assistance.

MR. CAMPBELL: Dezi, to your general point, I really like the way Tanvi -- I think for the longest time what really pissed the Indians off is when you'd ask the Chinese, you know, what -- or when you ask then what do you think China thinks about you, and the truth is they're not thinking that much about them. That really bothers the Indians. I think that's changed gradually.

There's a civilizational dimension to it. There's a power dimension but, essentially, until quite recently. And the Chinese were quite, I think, effective at communicating, gee, we're not thinking about you that much. And that had an impact on how the Indians perceived the dynamic, per say.

MR. WRIGHT: Great. Thanks. So we've got a few more. So we'll take this gentlemen here and these two gentlemen in this row, fourth row from the front. And then we'll come over here afterwards.

QUESTIONER: Hi. Thank you. How we look at China or we look at India through the eyes of China is right, but there's a reason because to this very day, China is sending its people to be educated over here in our universities, in our places of higher learning. And so they go back. What are they doing? They're promoting trade all over the world. Look at Africa.

And you see United States mirrored as it was years ago through the eyes of China. And so you are right and I applaud you for your position which I've never heard before. United States is the leader in the world and China follows our lead.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you. And gentlemen on the row here.

QUESTIONER: My name's Ankur. So there seem to be some uncertainty in the panel on how far Modi's hardline anti-Muslim policies would go. But assuming that they do follow the current trend and go much further, and also assuming that inevitably at some point, whether it's next year or five years and nine years from now there will be an American Administration with slightly different principles and outlook on the world. How far can those hardline policies in India go before that values leg of the tripod becomes untenable? Even assuming that a democratic administration has the same strategic priorities, how far can that go before the stool tumbles?

MR. WRIGHT: And there's two more right besides, so we'll just take those two together as well.

QUESTIONER: My name is Elliot Horowitz. I want to thank the panel for a very good presentation. I just want to look back to Mrs. Madan's comments on India seeking access to more advance technologies. From whom? Those could be available from the PRC. They could be available from Russia. They could be available from the United States. They could be available from a lot of other places.

MR. WRIGHT: Great. Thanks. Woman besides you then. Yes.

QUESTIONER: Thank you. I'm Ginny Win with Voice of Vietnamese Americans. Thank you, Dr. Campbell for being here. I would like to bring back to the future, moving forward. Where do you see U.S., India, and China in the Southeast Asia, especially with a new landscape in the sea, in India Ocean, Pacific Ocean, and also space and AI and technology? Thank you.

MR. WRIGHT: Great. Thanks. There's a lot there, so you don't need to address each one, but we'll try to cover them all between us. So, Tanvi, do you want to go first?

MS. MADAN: Sure. I think India's seeking to access to technology. India, ideally, wants to develop its own technology, its own capabilities, but it recognizes that it doesn't necessarily have the capability to do it independently, and so it wants to kind of get as much as possible from as many different partners.

In the case of the Chinese, I mean there's a debate going on right now. It's a different kind of technology. It's a discussion of whether or not to let Huawei into kind of the 5G network. So, yes, it's seeking some kind of technology from China, but not of the defense variety, for understandable reasons that India sees China as its main strategic competitor and has had a pretty fraught relationship with it for kind of decades now.

I think this aspect of seeking access, there is -- I mean, it comes out in the book. I mean there's a long running thing between the India and U.S. about what technology India can have access to. And I think it comes to this fundamental difference between how the U.S. and India see technology and trust.

So in the U.S. case, and this how -- you know, the U.S. is used to thinking about allies and adversaries and India thinking about non-alignment which is for the U.S. the idea is through these kind of alliances and partnerships you build trust and then we give you access to technology. For India, a

country's willingness wants the technology first and that helps build trust. But for India, it's always been a sign that the U.S. not just unwillingly sometimes to provide technology to India, but sometimes in the active cases to kind of sanction India or to prevent India from acquiring certain technologies was seen in India as one way of the U.S. actually preventing India's rise, of holding it back.

So you are seeing, I think, this idea of access to technology, not just actually helping build capability, but I think it's changed mindsets in India about the U.S., about the U.S. taking India seriously, about the U.S. trusting India. And it's now helping to build, going back to something Kurt said, it's important not just for a few individuals within the strategic framework. It's important for the institutionalization of the relationship where it's more than one or two individuals. And I think that technology aspect is helping. The fact that they've opened up is helping develop that in some ways.

Very quickly, on U.S., India, China, Southeast Asia I'm going to let Kurt answer that, but we also have an event here on February 25. I think that will look exactly at the question of how major powers are seeing China and including in the context of Southeast Asia. I hope you'll attend that.

I'll just go back to the question of kind of how sustainable is this. I think one thing that's important is to see both sides. That, you know, I'm not saying that both sides is -- but just that I want to reflect that Indians have concerns about what's happening here too. And so this could happen on either side. So what I'm going to say.

I think really it does depend, to some extent, on China's behavior. Because that, I think, will help to make both the U.S. and India decide where that strategic stuff gets prioritized. You know, if China continues to behave in a manner that both sides see as assertive I think you will see different people, a difference, perhaps. If something like climate change becomes far more relevant then I think you might see a U.S./India/China kind of conversation about all these things where you can see the three countries actually agree on.

And you'll see a U.S. that is far more interested in engaging China if, example, climate change. You could see a Bloomberg, for example, also say I don't care about these issues with either the kind of democracy, human rights with either China or India. But I think there's an aspect of it that might make it not just unsustainable from the U.S. side, at some point if a Modi government wants to take certain positions domestically, and it decides that the U.S. is asking too much of it or putting too much

pressure it will just say go fly a kite. These are my priorities.

And, you know, I will just -- even if it means that, this is kind of an extreme scenario, that I will find a (inaudible) with China that you might not like. And if the Chinese are smart, they'll take the Indians up on it. You could also see the Indians actually say, look, the Chinese, in some ways on the value side, we're both sovereignty hawks. We both think everybody should mind their own business. That you can actually find common cause with that. So I think you could play this out in many different directions. That's why I think the jury's still out on where this goes.

MR. CAMPBELL: So my guess is the period ahead, in some respects, will be a golden age for middle powers. And what I mean by that is that, you know, a lot of people think that the dominant arenas of maneuver are by the United States and China. I'm not sure that's the case. I think what we're seeing are subtle plays by Japan, India, Australia, and a couple other.

And most of those countries are trying to figure out a balance between engagement between Washington and Beijing in a very subtle, complex way. And so if you look at the United States, we'd say, well, undeniably our closest ally and friend in Asia, the country that's completely with us is Japan. But if you're Japan, the country that you're really involved in a very interesting project with is China right now in terms of the upcoming.

We don't know what's going to happen coronavirus, but if, at some point in the near future, Xi Jinping visits Japan will that relationship be stabilized? And, you know, the economic dimension is so important to both countries.

So sophisticated leader, middle players are learning how to balance, at least for the near term. For the long term, it's going to be hard. But how to play up, how to maneuver, how to maximize both the political relationship with the United States to be able to extract as much of the economic and political engagement from Beijing, more generally.

So my expectation will be -- my guess is that President Trump will have a triumphant visit in Delhi. But remember, his primary interest is not about America's role in the world, his primary interest is about President Trump's reelection. It's how that will manifest in terms of his potential reelection in November. But I believe almost immediately after Modi will pivot and then talk and engage a little bit more in terms of how to use that engagement effectively in his ongoing relationship with President Xi in

China.

And so my guess is that we will see more of that among the middle players. And that it shouldn’t surprise. And we should be attuned to it and play an effective role accordingly. I don't think it necessarily hurts American interests either. I think it can actually play a mediating role in the relationship between the United States and China that could be, ultimately, stabilized.

MR. WRIGHT: Thanks. We have time for maybe two really brief questions. So we'll take the gentlemen up the front here and then the lady down the back. Sorry, we just can take two. Why don't you come up the front and this gentlemen here. Yes. And then we have about three minutes.

QUESTIONER: Thank you. I'll be brief. My name is Donald Camp. There's an alternate way of looking at U.S./India relations. Maybe it's a little cynical which is that Washington cares about India when there's a crisis. And that's true even today. So my question to Tanvi is, was our relationship with India more intense in the period you're covering here or was China more part of the crisis mentality? The Sino-Indian War and the '65 and '71 war?

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you. And second one.

QUESTIONER: My name is Piper Campbell. You spoke briefly about the Quad. I'm curious what your comments would be about India's decision to withdraw from the RSUP negotiations just as they seemed to be concluding. And that really pulls them out of a major part of the institution of Southeast Asia. I'm curious whether you see the Quad being enough to counterbalance that?

MR. WRIGHT: Great. Two great final questions. We just have a couple of minutes left, so if you both would like to address those, or just closing remarks as well.

MS. MADAN: On the question -- Don and Katherine here are two of the kind of folks who have been India fellows, so they do exist in the system, especially in recent times. And I'm looking forward in my next book to actually coming and interviewing you both about the more recent years.

I think one of the things that I had expected because that's the history we grew up with, that this China stuff mattered in the course of crises, and particularly in 1962 and even 1971. That, look, China mattered when the U.S. had to pay attention. What I was actually surprised to find that it wasn't just this momentary phenomenon. How consistently these people were thinking about. Sometimes they gave up on India, but both in the U.S. and India this question of China keeps coming up.

I didn't expect to find it, so I didn't go in there looking for it. But you do see this kind of -- and the one document that really lays this out to me is in 1957 in January. Go read the Eisenhower, the policy NCS, I think 5701 which lays out U.S. policy towards South Asia. And the fundamental assumption is China's a problem. We need to support India's rise. So I found it much more consistent.

On the Quad and RCEP, I see this as kind of reflecting a little bit of a problem with how, kind of, the security and the economic relationship in Asia are playing up. I actually think the Quad shows Indian willingness, it's also reflected in U.S./India deep engagement on the defense and security side.

But I think on the defense and security side you're seeing a much more forward leading India willing to engage in the trilateral, engage on the Quad. It is actually the Quad has not just stuck around, but it's deepened in the last few months. But that's kind of its defense security side.

I think the RCEP reflects kind of the fact that India's not as forward leaning on the economic side, and particularly the trade side. RCEP itself has major problems for India which is that India largely sees it as a free trade agreement with China. And it has not said that it's -- it has said it will not sign it for now. But they've left the door open that if China makes certain commitments or concessions, give them more time, create certain exceptions then India will kind of come back to the table. and there are a lot of other kind of members who want that.

So I think RCEP does show that there's this kind of mixed engagement that India has in the region. I don't think it's sustainable for India to not take a more forward leaning approach on the economic and trade side, as everybody else is. But I think for domestic political reasons we're seeing -- and for economic reasons, we've seen it take that very different approach.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you.

MR. CAMPBELL: I'd agree with that. I will say the Quad is an interesting dynamic, mostly about foreign policy national security. What is clear to me more generally is that what India and other countries are looking to, even though they have deep concerns about American strategy and trade and economics, there is a sense in the region that although our ticket to the big game is our defense and security commitments and support, ultimately, what they want from the United States is an open, optimistic trade and economic strategy which is largely lacking and believed to be lacking in Asia. And that without it, it's going to be hard for the United States to be effective strategically in Asia going forward.

And I think that that's clear in almost every economic engagement in the region, by and large.

MR. WRIGHT: Great. Well, that brings us to a close. Tanvi, thank you for a really terrific presentation and for conversation. And, Kurt, thank you so much for coming back here and to talk about the book and U.S./India relations more generally. Tanvi will be signing copies of the book which is on sale just outside the door.

MS. MADAN: Inside.

MR. WRIGHT: Just inside. So we'll ask you to let her get down there as quickly as possible rather than pitching her off stage and do buy the book. And thank you all for coming. With that, we are adjourned.

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