

# Who will lead the Green World Order- India Vs China

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## Abstract

This paper attempts to study upholding the free trade system, **China and India should** start with bilateral relations, deeply engage in the Green World Order value chain. The rise of China, along with India and Japan, indicates that 21st century is destined to be an Asian century. There are, however, disruptions. Will China become as much of a super power as the United Kingdom and the United States? One of the thinkers of world politics, Richard Haass, explained that a super power needs to have economic and military powers apart from the ability to intervene politically in any part of the world. Another qualification is the use of nuclear weapons. China fails flatly on both the parameters. The second disruption against the 'rising China' theory is that there are more than two powers emerging on the landscape of the international system. The concept of middle powers such as India, Germany, Japan, South Africa among others is inching up to shape the world system together. Chinese aggressions in many parts of Asia are showing its utter desperation to become the unparalleled power in the region.

If there is a world order that could be developed beyond the conventional theory of the world system, then that is the 'Green World Order'— one that creates a pitch for fossil fuel-free energy system. It appears more promising. The world is sitting on the brink of a catastrophe. Neither the US nor China is keen to safeguard the world through its roadmap of the Green World Order. India's most ambitious renewables venture so far, a global solar grid linking 140 countries, will be announced at the forthcoming Conference of Parties (COP26) climate meet in Glasgow. The venture will be partnered by the United Kingdom. The project, titled Green Grids Initiative-One Sun One World One Grid (GGI-OSOWOG or OSOWOG), aims to harness solar energy wherever the sun is shining as the earth completes its 24-hour rotation around its axis, and transporting the electricity generated to areas that need it. The grid is to be developed in three phases. With India facing an energy crisis due to coal shortage, the focus has returned to the increased need for renewable energy resources. Regional grids are not a new idea: There is the Australia-Singapore energy sharing project; China's GEIDCO that aims to link Asia, Europe and Africa through an intercontinental grid by 2035 and Nord Pool, already functional, which connects Scandinavian countries. But OSOWOG will be the first attempt at creating a global solar energy network. The details of how this international solar grid will be set up and managed are likely to emerge after reports of the International Solar Alliance (ISA)-commissioned studies are out. The ISA is an alliance made up of 98 solar resource-rich countries aiming to share solar power with each other and the rest of the world.

*Key words: India, China, rising China, Green World Order, International Solar Alliance*

## Introduction

If the world is to transition to a climate-compatible future, much will turn on new innovations in clean energy and whether they can be deployed at a large scale. This is especially critical for emerging economies, which are developing their infrastructure and undergoing economic growth and urbanisation at an unprecedented scale and pace, yet still often lack the support for technological innovation found in wealthier countries.

Six of these emerging economies – Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico and South Africa – contributed more than 40% of the global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in 2019. That's 1.5 times the combined emissions from the US and Europe. Yet at the same time China, India, and Brazil were the first, fourth and sixth largest producers of renewable electricity. These three countries – the largest emerging economies – are now at a crucial juncture, faced with immense potential to become major innovators in the development of clean energy technology.

In a new paper we explored how fast-growing countries can not only develop their own sustainable systems but provide a source of learning and knowledge to influence global trends. We did this by investigating specific clean energy success stories in the three countries. India's remarkable transition to LEDs. Fossil fuels have a 60% share in India's total energy mix; non-fossil fuels contribute 37.9% and nuclear 1.7% (as on September 30). Among non-fossil fuels, hydro makes for 12% of the load while wind, solar and other renewable energy sources make up for 25.9% of the mix. India's domestic solar power capacity has increased by more than 11 times in five years from 2.6 GW in March 2014 to 30 GW in July 2019.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had, at the first assembly of the ISA in 2018, envisaged the creation of a transnational solar energy grid. OSOWOG too is an initiative of the alliance.

The OSOWOG project works on the idea that solar energy can be sent across high-voltage direct cables across continents, even from under the ocean, to needy countries. It envisages India at the centre of the solar spectrum, flanked by two broad zones: the "Far East", including Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand and Cambodia, and the "Far West", covering the Middle East and Africa.

In May 2019, the UK and India agreed to combine their green initiatives--the UK's green grid initiative or GGI that supports the agenda of a clean-powered future whose details will be announced at COP26, and OSOWOG, which has been pushing for global solar energy sharing at many international forums. The combined initiative is also a part of the India-UK 2030 roadmap for co-operation across various sectors and was discussed at the Energy for Growth Dialogue held virtually on October 8, 2019.

The just-concluded fourth assembly of the ISA discussed the operationalisation of OSOWOG and held a technical session on it. Key subjects deliberated included a \$1-trillion Solar Investment Roadmap for 2030, and approval of a 'Blended Financial Risk Mitigation Facility'. Bloomberg Philanthropies (BP), a New York-based charitable organisation, announced a partnership with ISA to mobilise the sum of \$1 trillion.

First is India's 130-fold expansion of its market for light emitting diode (LED) bulbs in just five years. LED bulbs are more energy efficient and last much longer than incandescent bulbs, tube lights, and compact fluorescent bulbs. In India they are primarily being used for residential lighting and street lamps.

India's LED transition is estimated to save more than 40 terawatt hours (TWh) of electricity each year – roughly enough to power 37 million average Indian households or the whole of Denmark for one year. In three years, the country grew from a negligible share of the global LED market to about 10%.

### Objective:

This paper intends to explore and analyze whether the **world can** change engaging **China and India** in the climate negotiations so as **to** reach **global green** order with green technologies than in traditional sectors, like coal, steel, and heavy industries.

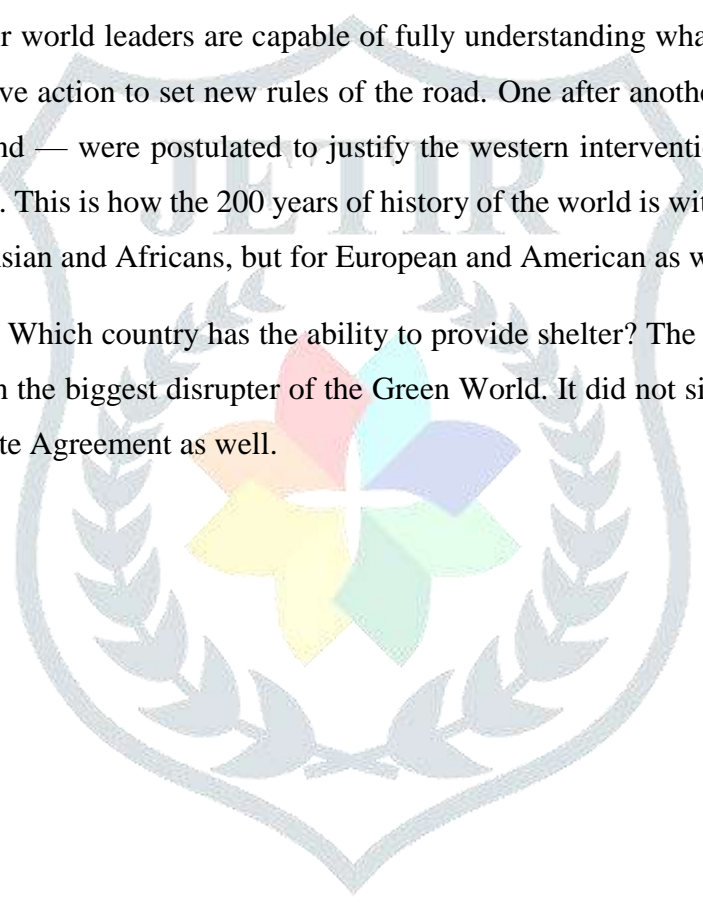
### Green World Order

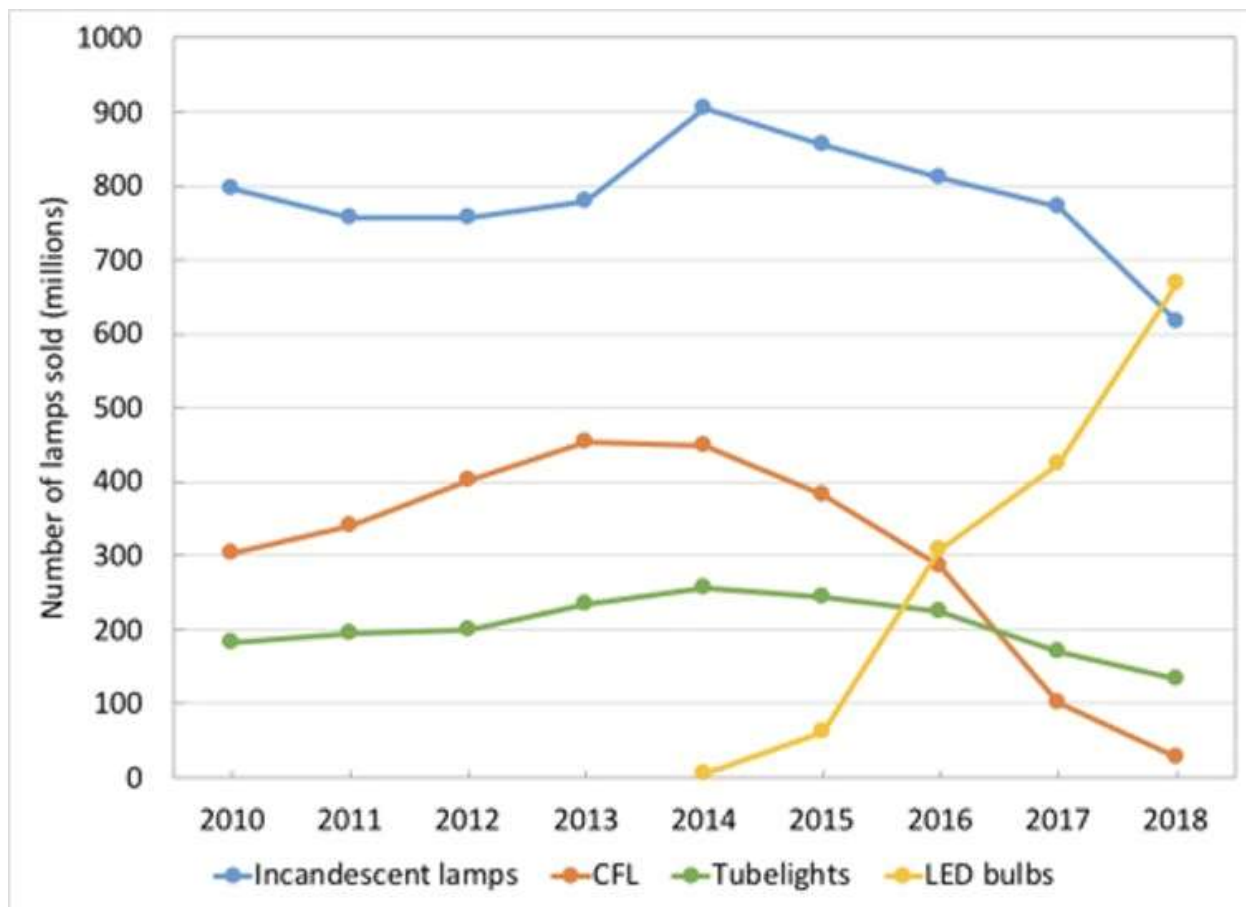
At least three competing versions of the future world order crashed together at the World Economic Forum's gathering in Davos last week. There was the one peddled by a combative Donald Trump, calling for a full-scale US retreat from the current order. Another came from Chinese leaders who proposed a new global economic system built around Beijing. Meanwhile, Canada's Justin Trudeau and France's Emmanuel Macron urged western leaders to double down on the current liberal order.

It would be a mistake to dismiss their speeches as empty grandstanding. This debate is deadly serious. The outcomes will likely determine the future of global stability and the security and prosperity of everyone. If the leaders of major countries and international organizations cannot see eye to eye, we are in for a very rough ride. Rather than withdraw, what is needed more than ever are new ideas, institutions and blueprints to navigate the coming storm.

We are living in abnormal times. The global liberal order is in an advanced state of meltdown. And as the world rapidly shifts from a uni-polar to a multi-polar reality, the international system itself is exposed to profound instability. If the situation is not handled with extreme care, the potential for a major collapse is real. The question is whether our world leaders are capable of fully understanding what is happening in real time and can muster the collective action to set new rules of the road. One after another geo-political theories — from Heartland to Rim Land — were postulated to justify the western interventions and shaping the world system on western interests. This is how the 200 years of history of the world is with us: It has created a threat of existence, not only for Asian and Africans, but for European and American as well.

Now the larger question is: Which country has the ability to provide shelter? The United States is absolutely an odd-man out. It has been the biggest disrupter of the Green World. It did not sign the Kyoto Protocol and withdrew from Paris Climate Agreement as well.





China is developing a huge green-energy infrastructure. It produced almost 170 Giga Watt of solar energy in 2018 when India was struggling in double digit. But it has a dubious character. It wants to keep its house clean, but litters other parts of the world with fossil fuels.

The Chinese system does not think magnanimously to safeguard the planet through its inclusive approach. The COVID-19 pandemic has completely eclipsed the Chinese credentials in the international system. The way China has manipulated the World Health Organization in view of the pandemic, its 'green and humanitarian' face has been unmasked.

Rest of the countries are not as big to shape the Green World Order. The only country which shines out in the crisis is India.

India will have the largest population in the world by 2024. It has tested democratic credentials and strong constitutional framework. The ancient Indian wisdom is based on *Vashudhaiva Kutumbkam* (the world in one family), which encapsulates each country in its fold.

India has displayed its commitment for the resolutions of Paris Agreement. The eight-fold jump in solar energy in the last six years has proved the point. India is touted to generate more than 450 GW of energy through renewable sources by 2030.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi was awarded the 'Champion of Earth' by the United Nations Secretary General in 2018. India has made important progress towards meeting the United Nations Sustainable Developmental Goals, notably Goal-7, on delivering energy access.

India's per capita emissions today are 1.6 tonnes of carbon dioxide — well below the global average of 4.4 tonnes.

### **Need for Green World Order**

The world politics has been driven by the greed of oil and gas so far. Churchill, after the end of World War I, ventured to use imported oil in place of coal for British fleets. Since then, oil has been the driving force of world politics.

Geo-Politics of oil embargos are common. Oil and gas have not only been used as 'sticks' to hurt or deter foes, but also as 'carrots' to reward allies and ensure their allegiance.

The 25<sup>th</sup> UN climate conference in Madrid to switch over from fossil fuels to renewable sources of energy served as a reminder to the bigger economies. But things have not moved as much. The US president Donald Trump, meeting with chief officers of the companies during the pandemic, assured them of carbon-led economic development in future.

The impact of fossil-fuel economy is visible. The trade war between the US and China is pitching for carbon-led energy system. Climate disruption has reached to the tipping point.

The whole world is severely under its grip. But certain parts of the world are more prone to climate change: Southeast Asia and South Asia will potentially face more severe consequences of climate change than other parts of the world.

To get to grips with the seismic shifts taking place, consider these five facts.

1) China is in the process of surpassing the US economically. By one measure, 35% of world growth from 2017 to 2019 will come from China, 18% from the US, 9% from India, and 8% from Europe. By 2050, the top five largest global economies are most likely to be China, India, the US, Brazil and Indonesia. Is the west even remotely prepared for this kind of world?

2) China is leading the largest urbanization and infrastructure development scheme on earth. Already in its fifth year, the \$900 billion "One Belt and One Road" (OBOR) project includes new roads, shipping lanes and building projects stretching to over 65 countries. The idea is to literally rewire global trade from China throughout Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe. While details are hazy, OBOR is being financed by

Chinese state banks, with a modest strategic contribution by a new Chinese-backed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank in partnership with other institutions.

3) China is set to become a global green powerhouse. China signalled its intention to take the lead on climate change reduction after signing the 2015 Paris climate agreement. By 2025, most new cars in China will be fully electric vehicles. China is aggressively cutting coal usage. Already, over 60% of high speed rail in the world is in China (10 times the length in Japan, for example). China also recently committed to achieving blue skies in all of its major cities within three years. The changes are already being felt: Beijing air is 30% cleaner this winter than last winter.

4) China is also setting the global pace on a digital economy, including cashless payments. In major cities, up to 90% of all commercial and retail transactions in convenience stores and cafes are occurring through Alipay and Wechat. E-commerce delivery in large Chinese cities through Alibaba is the currently the fastest in the world. One company, Alibaba, racked up sales of \$25 billion in just one day – dwarfing the returns of so-called Black Friday and Cyber Monday in the US.

5) Chinese universities are also vaulting to the top of the international rankings. Two schools – Peking University and Tsinghua University – leapfrogged from well below the top 200 to the top 30 within five years. There are another 40 universities that are not far behind and are set to enter the elite in the coming years. While Chinese students are still seeking out educations in top schools in North America and western Europe, soon they won't have to.

All the while, the west seems to be asleep at the wheel. There is a certain irony in our current predicament. On the one hand, the world is experiencing unparalleled levels of prosperity and connectivity, due in no small part to the US-backed global liberal order. Yet these advances are associated with ever greater complexity and systemic risks, increasing the liberal order's vulnerability to collapse. The world's global and national institutions are increasingly incapable of managing stresses to the system. Democracies, it turns out, lack the incentive systems to address higher-order and longer-term imperatives.

Faced with threats ranging from climate change to massive technological advancement, the world is in desperate need of stable and able global governance. And yet there is surging opposition to liberal governance due to rising inequalities and frustration with the perceived failures of the liberal order. Francis Fukuyama and

Jan-Werner Müller view populism and the rise of parochial economic nationalism as among the gravest threats to future stability. The risk of a disorderly collapse of the system is more real than ever.

### **Why can China not become a Global Green World Power?**

The climate action tracker gives China a very poor grade, for the country has continued reliance on coal. China has failed to stop new coal-fired plants and is financing them outside of the country, increasing emissions elsewhere.

It remains the world's largest producer of carbon emissions. It plans to finance and build roads, railways, bridges, ports, and industrial parks abroad, beginning with its neighbours in Central, South, and Southeast Asia and eventually reaching Western Europe and across the Pacific to Latin America.

While China has imposed a cap on coal consumption at home, its coal and energy companies are on a building spree overseas. Chinese companies are involved in at least 240 coal projects in 25 Belt and Road countries, including Bangladesh, Pakistan, Serbia, Kenya, Ghana, Malawi and Zimbabwe.

It had been eyeing the coal resources of South Asia, Southeast Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and the Russian Far East. Second, the Chinese political system is not transparent. Its next move is unpredictable.

Third, China is very keen to settle its historical scores. Therefore, its intentions are based on self-interests that would generate more conflicts in the international system.

Inequality and climate change are two sides of the same coin: Climate change is also related with lifestyle.

Western economist Thorstein Veblen, who coined the terms 'conspicuous consumption and invidious comparisons', pointed out how individuals use luxury goods to show off their status. Adam Smith, the father of economics, explained in his path-breaking book *The Wealth of Nations* that it is the industry that makes a country rich.

But ancient Indian wisdom contradicts the view. Gandhi once said that India cannot afford to follow the British economic policy of greed. If two-thirds of the planet failed to satisfy the UK's greed, India — with four times the UK's population — would need four planets to fulfil the greed.

Unfortunately, independent India copied the western pattern of development. That is why this government is working on to reintroduce the ancient wisdom of its own. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar stated that climate change is not merely a fuel issue but has a larger context.

Unsustainable consumption is the fundamental cause of pollution and ecological destruction. India has increased its solar energy capacity 12-fold since 2014. Indian stands are not contradictory. It says what it does.



The democratic credentials are well-respected. This government has prepared a blue print of Green World Order. It is secure, sure and pure.

## Conclusion

The Indo-China relation is going through a rough patch at the moment, fueled by a border dispute and retaliatory ban on Chinese apps by India. If this continues, the economic stability and amicable relations of the two Asian powerhouses look bleak. Diplomatic talks and compensatory mechanisms by the cooperation of both nations are urgently required for peaceful coexistence with our neighbor. India and China should accept the other's rise as inevitable and learn to live with it, accommodating each other. And India must try to put in place the means to make that the reasonable choice for China. Even though the conflict has waned to some degree as compared to the peak reached a few months ago, the overall bilateral relationship is the equivalent of 'antagonistic cooperation'. It can only be said that the crisis has transformed into a long term challenge.

The undeniable fact, that India and China are neighbours, make them intrinsically dependent both economically and ecologically. At the same time, they are the giant Asian competitors in the political and security theatres particularly in the subcontinent and the Indian Ocean region (IOR). Thus, India needs to draw multiple lines in deciding the appropriate mix of formal and informal negotiations, defensive and offensive strategy; track one and track two diplomacies; and degree of engagements with non-regional powers like the USA, European Union. Another significant prerequisite is to reach a mutually agreed interpretation of the Line of Actual Control. In matters of territorial integrity, India needs to adopt a stern and non-negotiable approach. Diplomatic acumen should be shown by India in building 'indirect pressure' through international organisations like the United Nations, ASEAN, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation; and also through friendly countries like Russia and Iran who also share good relation with China.

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