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De-Americanizing Soft Power Discourse?

By Daya Thussu

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De-Americanizing Soft Power Discourse?

The notion of *soft power*, which is associated with the work of Harvard political scientist Joseph Nye, is defined simply as "the ability to attract people to our side without coercion." The phrase was first used by Nye in an article published in 1990 in the journal *Foreign Policy*, where he contrasted this "co-optive power," "which occurs when one country gets other countries to want what it wants," with "the hard or command power of ordering others to do what it wants."[1] In his most widely cited book, *Soft Power*, Nye suggested three key sources for a country's soft power: "its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority)."[2]

Despite Nye's focus being primarily on the United States, and the vagueness associated with the rather amorphous concept of soft power, it has been adopted or adapted by countries around the world as an increasingly visible component of foreign policy strategy. It is a testimony to the power of the U.S. in the international arena that the phrase "soft power" has acquired global currency and is routinely used in policy and academic literature, as well as in elite journalism. The capacity of nations to make themselves attractive in a globalizing marketplace of ideas and images has become an important aspect of contemporary international relations, as has been the primacy of communicating a favorable image of a country in an era of digital global flows, involving both state and non-state actors and networks.

In the past decade, many countries have set up public diplomacy departments within their ministries of foreign affairs, while a number of governments have sought the services of public relations and lobbying firms to coordinate their nation-branding initiatives, aimed at attracting foreign investment and promoting other national interests. Unlike propaganda, which retains a negative connotation in democratic societies, public diplomacy has elicited little controversy as it is perceived to be a more persuasive instrument of

foreign policy, i.e. not coercive but soft, and one which is conducted by states in conjunction with private actors as well as civil society groups. This shift has stemmed from a growing appreciation of the importance of soft power in a digitally connected and globalized media and communication environment. Since media remain central to soft power initiatives, it is worth briefly examining the global media scene, especially its televisual aspects.

Media in the Global Sphere

Despite the unprecedented growth of media and communication industries in the global South, particularly in such countries as China, India, and Brazil, the global media continue to be dominated by the U.S. Due to its formidable political, economic, technological, and military power, American or Americanized media are available across the globe, in English or in dubbed or indigenized versions. The American media's imprint on the global communication space, by virtue of the ownership of multiple networks and production facilities —from satellites to telecommunication networks, from cyberspace to "total spectrum dominance" of real space—gives the U.S. a huge advantage. As during most of the twentieth century, the U.S. remains today the largest exporter both of the world's entertainment and information programs and the software and hardware through which these are distributed across the increasingly digitized globe.[3]

In 2012, four out of the five top entertainment corporations in the world were U.S.-based (the fifth also had strong links with U.S.-based media corporations), evidence of the existence of Pax Americana, a trend which has become pronounced in the era of digital and networked entertainment. These corporations have benefited from the growth of markets in large Southern countries such as Brazil, China, and India. In almost all media spheres, the U.S. media giants dwarf their global competitors: from entertainment and sport (Hollywood, MTV, Disney, ESPN); to news and current affairs (CNN, Discovery, *Time*); and to much-vaunted social media (Google, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter). It is fair to say that these U.S. entertainment and information networks are movers and shapers of

the global media and cultural industry, one of the fastest growing industries in the world, accounting for more than seven per cent of global GDP. The sources of such "soft" media power in the United States cannot be separated from its hard power, as it is the world's most powerful country in economic, political, and military terms. This is expressed in its more than 1,000 military bases across the globe and its enormous defense budget (more than $600 billion in 2013, according to the London-based International Institute of Strategic Studies), unmatched by any other nation. American hard power has often been a vehicle for spreading the American way of life, though this process is supported by its formidable soft power reserves—from Hollywood entertainment giants to the digital empires of the Internet age. As Nye has remarked, U.S. culture "from Hollywood to Harvard—has greater global reach than any other."[4]

This influence has a long history: as the home of consumerism and advertising, as well as the public relations industry, the U.S. has developed sophisticated means of persuasion – both corporate and governmental—which have had a profound influence in shaping the public discourse and affecting private behavior. During the Cold War years, "the selling of the American message" was central to U.S. public diplomacy, as Nicholas Cull notes in his history of U.S. Cold War propaganda. The U.S. Information Agency (USIA) was created in 1953 to "tell America's story to the world," a story of freedom, democracy, equality, and upward mobility.[5] Audio-visual media were particularly important in promoting American values. Voice of America (VOA), a radio station that went on air in 1942 and was a key part of U.S. information programming during the Second World War, became a crucial component of U.S. public diplomacy with the advent of the Cold War. Through a global network of relay stations, the VOA was able to propagate the ideal of "the American way of life" to international listeners. Broadcasting Americana, a staple of U.S. cultural programming during the Cold War years, persists today in the global media space.

The Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), the U.S. federal agency that supervises all non-military international broadcasting,

remains highly active, especially in geopolitically sensitive areas of the globe, through the VOA, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio and TV Martí, Radio Free Asia, and the Middle East Broadcasting Networks—Alhurra TV (Arabic for "The Free One") and Radio Sawa ("Radio Together"). In 2012, its various broadcasting arms reached 187 million people every week, while the VOA alone was broadcasting some 1,500 hours of news and information—including programs about American popular culture, celebrities, and sports—in 45 languages to an estimated worldwide audience of 134 million. Apart from having hundreds of thousands of Facebook fans, VOA also had a substantial presence on YouTube and Twitter.[6]

These government initiatives have been supported by a thriving and globalized private media. One reason for the U.S. domination of global media is that successive U.S. governments have followed a commercial model for its media. Broadcasting—both radio and television—had a commercial remit from its very inception. The commercially-driven trio of networks—CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System), NBC (National Broadcasting Corporation) and ABC (American Broadcasting Corporation)—provided both mass entertainment and public information. The entertainment element was strong in all three networks, with game shows and talent shows as well as glamour and celebrity programming becoming staples. In the post-Cold War world, the U.S.-inspired commercial model of broadcasting has been globalized, a phenomenon that Hallin and Mancini have characterized as the "triumph of the liberal model."[7]

Internationally, this has created a dynamic media, challenges to state censorship, and a wider public sphere, while at the same time also leading to the concentration of media power among private corporations. The exponential growth of multichannel networks has made the global media landscape multicultural, multilingual, and multinational. Digital communication technologies in broadcasting and broadband have given viewers in many countries the ability to access simultaneously a vast array of local, national, regional, and international television in various genres. As a recent UNESCO

report notes: "While it is undeniable that globalization has played an integrative role as a 'window on the world' mostly to the profit of a few powerful international conglomerates, recent shifts prompted by technological innovation and new consumption patterns are spurring new forms of 'globalization from below' and creating a two-way flow of communication and cultural products."[8]

Global Media and "Rise of the Rest"

The media, especially broadcasting, retains an important position as an instrument of global influence, and ever since international broadcasting became a part of foreign policy agenda during the Cold War, control over the airwaves has been fought over. Until the globalization of television and telecommunication, international broadcasters filled an important information gap, especially in countries where media were under strict state control. With the deregulation and digitization of communication and the entry of powerful private providers, the broadcasting landscape has been transformed, offering new challenges and opportunities. There are various types of new media flows, some emanating from European nations, based on old colonial patterns (notably Britain's BBC World Service and France 24), and other recent content emerging from the global South. Russia has raised its international broadcasting profile by entering the English-language news world in 2005 with the launch of the Russia Today network, which broadcasts 24/7 in English, Spanish, and Arabic, and claims to have a global reach of more than 550 million people. Ironically, its tag line—"question more"—indicates that the channel generally covers international affairs from an anti-U.S. perspective and therefore questions the dominant Western media discourses. But when it comes to domestic Russian political issues, RT is cautious, as it does not want to upset the Kremlin, where its ultimate editorial control rests.

Qatar's *Al Jazeera* and Iran's English language network, Press TV, are other recent players to emerge, though the latter is perceived, accurately, as a propaganda channel reflecting the viewpoints of the Iranian government. The most significant example of a new network

to appear from the non-Western world is of course *Al Jazeera*, which was launched in 1996 by the Emir of Qatar with a $150 million grant, and has grown into a major global broadcaster with annual expenditure on the network's multiple channels reaching nearly $650 million by 2010. Based in Doha, Al Jazeera broadcasts news and current affairs in Arabic, English, Turkish, and in the languages of the Balkans. Al Jazeera English, in operation since 2006, reaches 260 million homes in 130 countries, and in 2013 launched Al Jazeera America, thus entering the lucrative U.S. television market.[9] Qatar, a nation of just two million residents, of which only 250,000 are citizens, has leveraged this channel to increase its geopolitical leadership in the region. Al Jazeera's coverage of the NATO-led invasion of Libya in 2011 and the campaign against the Syrian regime in 2012-2014, as well as recent support for Hamas in Gaza and Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, shows how it has used its visual power to influence Middle Eastern politics. Al Jazeera English claims to privilege the global South in its coverage of international affairs, and its emergence as a broadcaster of substance has not only changed journalistic culture in the region, but has also provided a space for a wider conversation in the global communication arena.[10]

With nearly 200 round-the-clock news channels and a strong tradition of English-language journalism, Indian perspectives on global affairs are accessible via such private channels as News 18 India, part of the TV-18 group, as well as NDTV 24x7. However, the Indian state broadcaster, Doordarshan, remains one of the few major state news networks not available in important global markets at a time when global television news in English has expanded to include inputs from countries where English is not widely used, including Japan and Iran. The absence of Doordarshan in the global media sphere can be ascribed to bureaucratic apathy and inefficiency, though in an age of what Philip Seib has called "real-time diplomacy," the need to take communication seriously has never been greater.[11] Paradoxically, Indian journalism and news media in general are losing interest in the wider world at a time when Indian industry is increasingly globalizing and international engagement with India is growing. For private news networks, the

need for global expansion is limited, since, in market terms, news has a relatively small audience and therefore meager advertising revenue. However, the Indian government is beginning to realize the importance of external broadcasting. An eight-member committee headed by Sam Pitroda, Advisor to the Prime Minister of India on Public Information Infrastructure and Innovation, has recommended that Prasar Bharati, India's public sector broadcaster, should conduct "global outreach."[12] Its vision is ambitious:

> Create a world-class broadcasting service benchmarked with the best in the world using next-generation opportunities, technologies, business models and strategies. The platform should be designed for new media first and then extended to conventional TV. Outline an effective content strategy for Prasar Bharati's global platforms (TV and Radio) focused on projecting the national view rather than the narrow official viewpoint.[13]

Arguably the most significant development in terms of "the rise of the rest" is the growing presence on the international news scene of Chinese television news in English for a global audience. This is an important component of what Joshua Kurlantzick has termed China's "Charm Offensive," which is the process of promoting the Chinese model of development with an extensive and intensive program of external communication: "As China has looked outside its borders, it has altered its image across much of the globe, from threat to opportunity, from danger to benefactor."[14] The Chinese version of an image makeover, consistent with its rise as a global power, is rooted in an official discourse aimed at making Sino-globalization a palatable experience for a world not used to Chinese communication culture. As a civilizational state with an extraordinary cultural continuity, China wants to present itself as a peaceful and progressive nation and to ameliorate the country's image, especially in the West, as a one-party state which suppresses freedom of expression and individual human rights.

China is investing heavily in its external communication, including broadcasting and on-line presence across the globe. In

2011, two years after President Hu Jintao announced a $7 billion plan for China to "go out" into the world, Chinese broadcasting has expanded greatly, with CCTV News's Beijing headquarters appointing English-fluent foreign journalists to develop a global channel. By 2012, CCTV News was claiming 200 million viewers outside China and broadcasting in six languages, including Arabic. In the same year, CCTV also opened a studio in Nairobi and has plans to increase the size of its overseas staff dramatically by 2016. New production centers in Europe, Asia-Pacific, and the Middle East are also planned. Xinhua, among the largest news agencies in the world, with more than 10,000 employees in 107 bureaus, has recently launched an English-language TV channel, CNC World, which plans to expand into 100 countries. However, Chinese television news has yet to acquire global credibility, as an observer noted: "The perception of being propaganda vehicles for the Chinese government is hard to shake off...CCTV has yet to be the international authority on China, let alone being a credible alternative to the BBC, CNN, or Al Jazeera on world affairs."[15]

These key examples of news from "the rest" provide an interesting foundation for an oppositional discourse on global news: Russia Today's coverage of the Syrian conflict, for example, is strikingly different from the dominant U.S.-UK media discourse, probably because the only military base that the Russians have in the strategically significant Middle East is in Syria. Similarly, Al Jazeera has contributed to improved coverage of the Arab world and of Africa on the global television scene. And yet, in terms of audience, news networks have a relatively small impact on global media flows, most of which are centered on entertainment and which continues to be dominated by the U.S. However, other players are increasingly visible.

Entertainment and Public Diplomacy

Leveraging its Ottoman legacy and its subsequent evolution as a modern democratic Muslim nation, Turkey has exerted its traditional influence in central Asia, the Balkans, and in parts of the Middle

East. Sharing linguistic, religious, and cultural traditions and a long history with countries in central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Arab world, Turkey is increasingly using the power of its mass media to promote its geopolitical and cultural interests. Its television dramas and historical teleplays are very popular in the Arab world: one hugely successful example was the 175-episode soap opera *Gümüş* ("Silver"), renamed *Noor* ("Light") and dubbed into Arabic in 2008, which attracted over 85 million Arab viewers and triggered a new wave of tourism from Arab countries to Istanbul, where it was filmed. More recently, *Muhtesem Yuzyil* ("Magnificent Century"), a lavish costume drama set in Suleiman's Ottoman world of the sixteenth century, was broadcast in 47 countries. By 2012, more than 20 countries were importing Turkish television soaps.

Brazil's successful television industry centers on the telenovela format, and has spread to most of Latin America as well as internationally to more than 100 countries, where they have been dubbed into other languages and have inspired many television mini-series. Japan's strong creative and cultural industries—notably in the form of anime—have a global presence and influence, as does its lucrative gaming industry. Since the late 1990s, interest in Korean popular culture, including television dramas, popular music, and films, has increased in Asia and around the world, triggering the "Korean Wave" or "Hallyu," a "breath-taking export growth in its media cultural production."[16] The economic value of the Korean wave is estimated to increase from $10 billion in 2012 to $57 billion in 2020, according to Korean government sources. The global visibility and popularity of K-pop music was highlighted by the "Gangnam Style" music video by Korean artist PSY—the most downloaded video on YouTube in 2012.[17] The success of media exports from South Korea has encouraged China to promote its own creative industries: already, the Chinese film and television industry has an international dimension with audiences in the global Sinosphere, including the world's largest diaspora, as well as regional centers in Hong Kong, Taipei, and Singapore. Such international hit movies as *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, *Hero* and *House of Flying Daggers* have created a Chinese presence in the global entertainment arena.

The Soft Power of Bollywood?

The most notable example of global entertainment emanating from outside the Western world is perhaps the Indian Hindi film industry, popularly known as "Bollywood." It remains the most prominent manifestation of Indian content in global media and is today a $3.5 billion industry, which has helped to make the country an attractive investment destination. Its movies watched by audiences in more than 70 countries, Bollywood is the world's largest film factory in terms of production and viewership: every year a billion more people buy tickets for Indian movies than for Hollywood films. Though India has been exporting films to countries around the world since the 1930s, it is only since the 1990s and in the new millennium that Bollywood has become part of global popular culture. The rapid liberalization, deregulation, and privatization of media and cultural industries in the world's largest democracy, coupled with the increasing availability of digital delivery and distribution technologies, have ensured that Indian films are increasingly visible in the global media sphere. At the same time, the unprecedented expansion of television—from a single state channel in 1991 to over 800 channels in 2013—was a massive boost for the movie industry, not only because of the emergence of many dedicated film-based pay channels, but also because of the potential for coverage of the film industry itself, given the huge demand of the new channels for content. The ensuing corporatization and the synergies that it created made it possible for Bollywood to be available on multiple platforms, including satellite, cable, on-line and mobile**,** resulting in complex, globalized production, distribution, and consumption practices among the 35 million strong South Asian diaspora, which is scattered across all continents.

According to industry estimates, the Indian entertainment and media industry was worth $29 billion in 2013. In addition to exporting its own media products, India is increasingly a production base for Hollywood and U.S. media corporations, especially in areas such as animation and post-production services.[18] These growing cultural links with U.S.-dominated transnational media

corporations also facilitate the marketing and distribution of Indian content. As international investment increases in the media sector, with the relaxation of cross-media ownership rules, new synergies are emerging between Hollywood and Bollywood: Indian media companies, too, are investing in Hollywood productions. In 2008, Reliance Entertainment, owned by Anil Ambani, one of India's leading industrialists, invested as much as $500 million in Steven Spielberg's flagship DreamWorks Studios, heralding a new era of partnerships. Their most prominent collaboration was the 2012 Oscar-winning film *Lincoln*. The changing geopolitical equation in Asia, which has led to a closer economic and strategic relationship between Washington and New Delhi, has given a boost to this process.

Beyond the Western world, and from a cultural diplomacy perspective, Bollywood is perhaps more effective than other countries of the global South. The promotion of family and community-oriented values, in contrast to Western individualism, has made audiences more receptive to Indian films in many other developing countries. Their religiosity and gender representation make Indian films culturally accessible to Muslim audiences, for example in Arab countries and in south and Southeast Asia. Muslim-dominated northern Nigeria has a long-established interest in Hindi cinema. The mushrooming of Hindi-to-Hausa video studios, where Indian films are adapted or copied for the "Nollywood" market, indicates their value as cultural artifacts which can be reworked to suit local tastes and sensibilities. The visual affinities of dress, gender segregation, and the absence of sexual content in Hindi films are attributes which Nigerian audiences appreciate. In Indonesia, where Indian cultural and religious influence has a long history, Bollywood films and music are popular, influencing local music. *My Name Is Khan*, a 2010 film about the trials and tribulations of an innocent Indian Muslim man living in the U.S. who is accused of terrorism, was released in 64 countries and was listed by *Foreign Policy* magazine as one of the top ten 9/11-related films. Shashi Tharoor, India's Minister for Higher Education and a pioneering proponent of its soft power

discourse, has consistently argued that India has a "good story" to tell and that its popular culture is well-equipped to tell that story.[19]

The Bollywood brand, adopted by India's corporate and governmental elite and celebrated by members of its diaspora, has come to define a creative and confident India. Gone are the days when diasporic communities felt embarrassed about the cinema of their country of origin, which was perceived by many in host nations as little more than garish, glitzy, and kitschy. Today, Hindi films are released simultaneously across the globe, and its stars are recognized faces in international advertising and entertainment. There are many festivals and functions centered around Bollywood, and prestigious universities offer courses and conduct research on this form of popular culture. Indian industry and government have recognized and endorsed the potential power of culture at the highest level; as India's scholarly Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, told Indian Foreign Service probationers, the "soft power of India in some ways can be a very important instrument of foreign policy. Cultural relations, India's film industry—Bollywood—I find wherever I go in the Middle East, in Africa—people talk about Indian films. So that is a new way of influencing the world about the growing importance of India. Soft power is equally important in the new world of diplomacy."[20]

In the digitized world, film entertainment in India is no longer just an artistic or creative enterprise but a global brand, contributing to the reimagining of India's role on the international stage, from that of a socialist-oriented voice of the Third World to a rapidly modernizing, market-driven democracy.

The Indian government needs to learn from the State Department's promotion of American cultural industries internationally. As a major information technology power, Indian government and corporations could deploy new digital delivery mechanisms to further strengthen the circulation of Indian entertainment and infotainment in a globalized media world; in 2013 there was more material on YouTube about Bollywood than about Hollywood, and yet Hollywood has a substantially larger global presence.

The Rise of "Chindian" Soft Power?

Jairam Ramesh, India's Rural Development Minister, is credited with coining the term "Chindia," a phenomenon representing what has been termed as the "rise of the rest" in a "post-American world."[21] This neologism seems to be catching on; a Google search for the word "Chindia" shows more than 800,000 hits. Any meaningful discussion of global media and soft power ought to take into account the rapid growth of these two large nations and their potential to influence the emerging global scene. Writing in 2010, a leading economist noted: "In 1820 these two countries contributed nearly half of world income; in 1950 their share was less than one tenth; currently it is about one fifth, and the projection is that in 2025 it will be about one third."[22]

As in many other fields, the emergence of China and India, coinciding with the crisis in the neoliberal model of U.S.-led Western capitalism, will challenge traditional thinking and paradigms for international media and communication. The combined economic and cultural impact of China and India, aided by their extensive global diasporas, may create a different form of globalization, one with an Asian accent and flavor.

The growing globalization of media content from China and India – in terms of international television news emanating from China and the further globalization of Bollywood—offers new opportunities for soft power discourse, given the scale and scope of changes in these two countries. As the global power equation shifts, the increasing importance of China and India in global communication and media debates and the rise of Chindia pose a challenge to the current discourse of soft power as emanating from the West. As Fareed Zakaria notes: "On every dimension other than military power— industrial, financial, social, cultural—the distribution of power is shifting, moving away from U.S. dominance. That does not mean we are entering an anti-American world. But we are moving into a post-American world, one defined and directed from many places and by many people."[23] The peaceful rise of China

as the world's fastest growing economy has profound implications for global media and communication, taking place in parallel with the transformation of international communication in all its variants—political, intercultural, organizational, developmental, and corporate.[24] Since 2006, China has been the largest holder of foreign currency reserves, estimated in 2012 to be $3.3 trillion. On the basis of purchasing power parity (PPP), China's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will surpass the United States by 2016, making it the world's largest economy, according to the International Monetary Fund. When the country opened up to global businesses in the late 1980s, its presence in the international corporate world was negligible, but by 2012, China had 89 companies in the *Fortune* "Global 500"—a traditional preserve of Western companies—just behind the U.S., which boasts 132. Moreover, in 2012, three of the top ten global corporations were Chinese. China is a key member of the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), whose annual summits since 2009 have been increasingly noticed outside the five countries which together account for 20 per cent of the world's GDP. The BRIC acronym was coined in 2001 by Jim O'Neill, a Goldman Sachs executive, to refer to four fast-growing emerging markets and was joined by South Africa in 2011. In its 2013 summit, the group announced the establishment of a BRICS Bank, which will fund developmental projects and potentially rival the Western-dominated Bretton Woods institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

China, which is the driving force behind this idea, has been able to transform from a largely agricultural and isolated society into the world's largest consumer market. Much of this has been achieved without major social or economic upheavals. China's success story has many admirers, especially in the developing world, and already there is talk of replacing the "Washington consensus" with what has been termed the "Beijing consensus."[25] India's economic growth is no match for China's, but on the basis of purchasing power parity, it was the world's third largest economy in 2013. What is the relationship between the two Asian giants?

The millennium-old relationship between the two countries has always had a cultural and communication dimension, and Buddhism was at the heart of this interaction. An interest in Buddhist philosophy encouraged Chinese scholars, most notably Huen Tsang, to visit such places as Nalanda (an international Buddhist university based in eastern India between the 5th to 12th centuries) to exchange ideas on law, philosophy, and politics. Indian monks also visited China on a regular basis, and such cultural interactions led to the translation into Chinese of many Sanskrit texts. These exchanges continued for centuries, and even today Buddhism remains a powerful link between the two civilizations, though mutual suspicion remains. Apart from the contentious border dispute, the countries also vie for resources and the leadership role of the global South. And yet there are growing commercial and cultural links developing between the two: trade between China and India—negligible in 1992—had reached more than $70 billion by 2012, making India's eastern neighbor one of its largest trading partners. Such economic flows, and Chindian globalization, rarely get noticed in the international media and, ironically, are neglected even in the Chinese and Indian media.[26]

One area where a Chindian contribution will be particularly valuable is development communication. Despite robust economic growth, both countries continue to be home to a very large number of poor and disadvantaged people—almost double-digit for nearly a decade in case of China—and in many instances, this inequality has increased under neo-liberalism. India was the first country to use television for education through its 1970s Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) program. SITE was designed to provide basic information on health, hygiene, and gender equality among some of India's poorest villages, and it is well-equipped to deploy new digital media technologies to promote sustainable development. However, these issues have continued to stunt India's progress. China's aid for developing countries in Asia and Africa, especially in such areas as telecommunications, may contribute to formulating a Chinese version of development discourse. It is a fact that Xinhua is particularly strong in the developing world, especially

in Africa, and, unlike its Western counterparts, it avoids negative and stereotypical stories from Southern countries. Traditionally, development debates have been devised and developed in the West and conform to a Western sensibility of what constitutes development. Would a Chindian development perspective be less affected by the colonial mindset?

As the world becomes increasingly mobile, networked, and digitized, will Chindian cultural flows erode U.S. hegemony? In his 2011 book *The Future of Power,* Nye explored the shift in global power structures from state to non-state actors. In an age when, as he suggests, "public diplomacy is done more *by* publics," governments have to use "smart power," which is "neither hard nor soft. It is both."[27] They must make use of formal and informal networks and draw on cyber power, an arena where the U.S. has a huge advantage, as it invented the Internet and remains at the forefront of its technological, political, and economic governance.

However, the rise of China and India is also visible in cyberspace. At the beginning of 2014, according to industry estimates, only 42 per cent of China's 1.3 billion people were online and just 17 per cent of India's 1.2 billion population were using the Internet. And yet the world's largest number of Internet users were Chinese, while India was already second only to the U.S. in terms of visitors to key sites, accounting for about nine per cent of all visitors to Google and eight per cent each for YouTube, Facebook, and Wikipedia. Industry estimates suggest that the number of Internet users in India will surpass 500 million by 2016, increasingly driven by wireless connections. In China, growth is forecast to be even higher. It is interesting to speculate what kind of content will be circulating on the World Wide Web and in which languages when 90 per cent of Chinese and Indians are online. It is particularly striking in the context of India's "demographic dividend," which refers to the fact that over 70 per cent of Indians are below the age of 30. As their prosperity grows, a sizeable segment of young Indians are increasingly going online, where they produce, distribute, and consume digital media, aided by their skills in the English language, the vehicle for global communication.

Will a Chindian media emerge as an alternative to the U.S.' or as a supplement to it? It is safe to suggest that, at least in the short term, the multi-faceted U.S. domination of the world's media is likely to continue. However, as Jack Goody has observed, "the Western domination of the world of knowledge and of world culture persists in some respects but has been significantly loosened. Globalization is no longer exclusively Westernization."[28] This suggests the importance of serious engagement with "the rest," especially with emerging media flows from large countries with old histories and new global aspirations, and of deepening the soft power discourse beyond its American remit.

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