

**India Rising:
And the Changing Global Balance of Power
Featuring
Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns
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Ambassador Burns started out by declaring the United States a world leader; one indispensable to tackling global problems. Transnational challenges that affect everybody such as climate change, human and narcotics trafficking, crime, cyber attacks, and pandemic disease require multilateral cooperation. Yet revisionist actors in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia are pushing boundaries that risk drawing the U.S. and others into conflict. He illustrated and discussed these conflict-generating states on a series of three maps.

First was a map of Europe, home to most of the world's powers over the last 400 years. Since WWII the most inviolable rule in international relations is that you can't invade another state for the purpose of seizing territory. Yet Russian President Putin is currently redrawing and redefining Europe, having seized Crimea from Ukraine. Crimea, along with Eastern Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Belarus form an arc of countries functioning as a buffer zone between Russia and Europe. Russian presence in these countries has moved right up next to NATO's new entrants, and further attempted encroachments cannot be ruled out.

Second was a map of the Middle East. In Ambassador Burns' view, of the 22 countries undergoing some type of revolution during the Arab Spring, only Tunisia (perhaps Morocco) is better off than before. In addition to civil-military strife and state disintegration, the region is cleaved by a power struggle between Saudi / Sunni and Iranian / Shiite forces. This takes the form of a proxy war in Yemen, and is also influencing events in Syria. In Syria alone, 12 million of 22.4 million persons there are homeless, and the country has spawned 5 million refugees.

- Many of these refugees are straining European Union solidarity precisely at a time when resolve opposite Russian pressure is called for.

The third map was of the Indian Ocean portion of Asia. Ambassador Burns judges that the power concentration which has resided in Europe over past centuries will increasingly reside in this region in the 21st and 22nd century.

- Burns is bullish on India's upward sloping power trajectory, citing the capacity of Indian democracy to solve problems.

Opposite India is the continent's powerhouse, China. Beijing is acting unilaterally and often militaristically in its adjacent seas, particularly the South China Sea. Such peremptory behavior is not without blowback.

- Delhi is increasingly cooperating closely with the United States, and Japan, as well as Australia, Singapore, and Vietnam.

Burns advocates peace through strength, and suggests that the U.S. is in need of resolute actions in the three regions just discussed.

- In Europe, Washington has to demonstrate to and convince Moscow that it will fight on behalf of NATO allies.
- In the Middle East the U.S. must play an active role in helping to cope with the turmoil there, in particular by taking in refugees more in line with historical levels.
- In Asia the U.S. must turn aside Beijing's attempt to curtail legal principles such as freedom of navigation.

Lest audience members be left with the impression that the world knows only struggle, Ambassador Burns laid out a number of reasons for hope. They are:

- The alleviation of poverty - with the number of people globally living on less than \$1.25 per day being slashed during the last quarter century.
- Global public health - with a number of dreaded diseases such as polio about to be eradicated.
- The fostering of young peoples' ideas and creativity - in many settings youthful entrepreneurship and venture capital are coming together to drive innovation.
- The advantages enjoyed by North America - the U.S., Canada, and Mexico enjoy energy resources, trade, and peaceful interstate relations.

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