



Can Asia Challenge Chinese Dominance and Avoid Europe's Past ?

Guest Speaker:
Prof. AMITAV ACHARYA

Amitav Acharya is the UNESCO Chair in Transnational Challenges and Governance and Professor of International Relations at the School of International Service, American University, Washington, D.C., and the Chair of its ASEAN Studies Initiative. He was a fellow of the Asia Center, Harvard University, and a Fellow of Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government and held the inaugural Nelson Mandela Visiting Professorship in International Relations at Rhodes University, South Africa during 2012-13. He was elected to the Christensen Fellowship at St Catherine's College, Oxford University in 2012. In 2014, he became the first non-Western scholar to be elected as the President of the International Studies Association (ISA), the largest and the most well-known scholarly association in international studies worldwide.

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The spectacular rise of China has kindled fears about an epic power struggle in Asia whereby a Chinese move towards regional hegemony is challenged by the US and its allies, causing a breakdown of Asia's security order in a manner similar to Europe's two World Wars. But challenging traditional geopolitical thinking, especially neorealism, Amitav Acharya argues that rising powers do not shape regions, but regions shape rising powers. His argument rests on the fact that Asia has seen several other fundamental changes, other than and predating China's recent rise. There is also an emerging military equilibrium in Asia brought about not only by the US rebalancing strategy, but also by the defense policies and interactions of others. Moreover, Asia's ideological make-up challenges both the Western Democratic Peace idea and the traditional Sinocentric ideals of international order. While these conditions may not prevent regional conflicts, they work against Chinese regional hegemony, and might spare Asia Europe's catastrophic 20th century wars.



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