Text below in response to prompt: Two of the world’s giants—the first and second most populous nations—share a single continent, but vastly different visions of their region and the world. China and India each have a legitimate claim to hegemony, to leadership, and to a shared or competitive future. We asked our panel of global experts which nation would emerge as Asia’s leading power in the future. 

Full article can be found at [http://www.worldpolicy.org/journal/winter2013/bigquestion](http://www.worldpolicy.org/journal/winter2013/bigquestion)

**Showdown Looming**

Steven Lewis

There does, indeed, appear to be a showdown looming between India and China. The Chinese People’s Liberation Army Navy sends task forces to patrol the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Aden and has created bases for its fleets in Pakistan and Myanmar. India, in turn, has sent naval ships to conduct training missions with the Vietnamese navy in the seas bordering Southern China. Both countries have modernized and stepped up their land and air forces in previously contested border areas near Kashmir and eastern India. Although some hawks in China and in India may secretly want to dominate the other, these two emerging superpowers and titans of the global economy will have no choice but to ultimately work with each other in one critical arena—energy security.

To maintain their current levels of economic growth into the next decade, China and India alone will need as much fossil fuels and renewable energy as the advanced industrial economies of Europe, the Americas, and Asia combined. Their thriving economies are currently tied to low-cost, reliable supplies of oil and gas from the Persian Gulf, Africa, and Southeast Asia, but also to the secure and free flow of these precious commodities through the Indian Ocean and the South China and East China Seas. Fortunately for both countries, their development thus far has been safeguarded, at enormous expense, by the U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf and the generosity of the American taxpayer. Unfortunately for these Asian powerhouses, the oil and gas boom in the United States and the development of heavy oil and tar sands in Canada, mean America will fill fewer of its hydrocarbon needs from the Middle East, which today supplies barely 10 percent of its oil imports. Meanwhile, China, India, and the rest of Asia receive more than half of their oil from that region. The United States will most likely look to sell its surplus of liquefied natural gas to Japan, a high-paying customer and close military ally, which needs the fuel to offset the shutting of its nuclear plants. This will leave China and India tied in maintaining a free flow of oil and gas from the Middle East to South and East Asia—forcing each to work together to guarantee the safety and security of these vital sea-lanes. Since both are nuclear powers, with strong military forces actively participating in the liberal world economic order, they will have no choice but to forge a Pax India-China for energy security in Asia.

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