

SECURITY BEYOND SURVIVAL

ESSAYS FOR K. SUBRAHMANYAM

EDITOR

P.R. KUMARASWAMY



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INDIA AND CHINA: BOUND TO COLLIDE?

J. MOHAN MALIK*

Though India ranks fourth in importance after the US, Russia, and Japan in China's national security calculus, current strategic and economic trends indicate that India's weight in China's foreign policy is increasing in the twenty-first century. China's military security concerns vis-à-vis South Asia's largest and most powerful state, India, coupled with territorial disputes and the need to protect Tibet, its 'soft strategic underbelly', provide a key to understanding Beijing's South Asia policy in general and its India policy in particular. During the last decade of the twentieth century, China's relations with India went through a rollercoaster from the highs of the early and mid-1990s to the lows of the late 1990s. Despite a dramatic increase in bilateral exchanges at the political, economic, military, and cultural levels including high-level visits at regular intervals, India-China relations remain poor, with or without a risk of confrontation. Beijing's *entente cordiale* with Pakistan continues to flourish, underpinned by nuclear and missile cooperation. Chinese leaders regularly visit Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka to demonstrate a continuing determination to remain involved in South Asia and a desire to reassure China's friends in the region that improvement in Sino-Indian relations would not be at their cost. New Delhi keeps a close eye on the political and strategic relations between China and India's neighbours. Several developments such as India's search for new allies after the Soviet collapse, China's rise and Japan's decline, and the enduring nature of the Sino-Indian rivalry

* The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Asia-Pacific Centre for Security Studies, the US Department of Defence, or the US government.

have prompted the US, Japan, and some Southeast Asian countries to woo India, seeing it as a stabilising factor to counterbalance China's growing ambitions, power, and influence in the Asia-Pacific region.

This chapter argues that despite a significant upturn in economic ties since the late-1990s, growing bilateral interaction will not lead to the abandonment of Beijing's 'contain India' policy because of the Chinese assessment that India (along with the US and Japan) poses a major obstacle to the realisation of China's regional and global ambitions in the twenty-first century. Therefore, a Sino-Indian rivalry for power and influence in southern Asia and in the northern Indian Ocean region will be a dominant feature of Asian geopolitics in the first quarter of the twenty-first century.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF CHINA'S INDIA POLICY

The major objective of China's Asia policy has always been to 'restrain Japan and contain India' so as to prevent the rise of a peer competitor, a real Asian rival to challenge China's status as the Asia-Pacific's sole 'Middle Kingdom'.¹ As an old Chinese saying goes, 'one mountain cannot accommodate two tigers'. Beijing has always known that India, if it ever gets its economic and strategic acts together, alone has the size, might, numbers, and, above all, the intention to match China. In the meantime, perceiving India as weak, indecisive, and on the verge of collapse, Beijing took the view that all that was needed was to keep New Delhi under pressure by arming its neighbours and supporting insurgency movements in India's northeast region. Thus a key characteristic of Beijing's India policy has been the establishment of strong military links with South Asian countries that border India—indeed 90 per cent of China's arms sales go to India's immediate neighbours. For its part, Beijing has justified military relations between itself and South Asian countries as legitimate and normal state-to-state relations well within the purview of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.²

Second, boundary disputes have shaped China's relations with South Asia. Whilst Beijing has resolved its disputed boundaries with Nepal and Pakistan, territorial disputes with India and Bhutan are yet to be resolved. Third, the post-colonial geopolitical landscape has

created a number of overlapping ethno-religious and linguistic problems within South Asia. Since most internal security issues in one country inevitably have external security ramifications, India has traditionally seen itself as a 'regional security manager' and resented its neighbours' strategic ties with extra-regional powers (mainly China and the US) aimed at resisting the imposition of the Indian version of the 'Monroe Doctrine'. This has led to an ongoing conflict between India and its smaller neighbours. China insists that bilateral problems and disputes should be handled strictly according to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence without resorting to force or other means. From Beijing's perspective, 'whether China and Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, or Pakistan wish any particular relation is exclusively for them to decide. For India to attempt to dictate or limit those relations is unacceptable'.³

Fourth, of all China's relations with the South Asian states, those with Pakistan outweigh and overlay any other bilateral relationship. The Beijing-Islamabad 'special relationship' is part of China's grand strategy that moulds the Asian security environment. Fifth, China remains a major economic aid donor to Bangladesh, Nepal, the Maldives, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Beijing's economic ties with South Asian states supplement and reinforce its military security objectives and goals. China's use of economic means in its rivalry with India for influence in Nepal and Bangladesh is a case in point.

INDIA AND CHINA IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: WILL THEY COLLIDE OR COOPERATE?

As ancient civilisations, India and China coexisted in peace and harmony for millennia. However, as post-colonial modern nation states, with the exception of a very short period of bonhomie (the *Hindi-Chini bhai bhai* era) in the early 1950s, relations between the two Asian giants have been marked by conflict, mutual suspicion, distrust, estrangement, encirclement, containment, and rivalry. Is there a fundamental clash of interests rooted in geopolitics between the two Asian giants? Is it a clash of civilisations? Or, is it a temporary divergence of interests between two rising powers with competing strategic interests and overlapping spheres of influence?

PAST PERFECT: ANCIENT CIVILISATIONS

India and China are the two oldest civilisations, each with the quality of resilience which has enabled them to survive and prosper through the ages against all odds. During the past 3,000 years every one of the Asian countries—some situated on the continental landmass, others being offshore islands—has at some stage been directly influenced by one or both of these two great civilisations. The burden of history indeed weighs heavily on the policy-making elites in India and China. The discourse of civilisation is also critical for the construction of Indian and Chinese identities as modern nation states. What eludes the Western understanding of Asia is the sense of national destiny that drives India and China's ambitions.

Contrary to the conventional wisdom, neither Han nor Hindu rulers were territorially expansionist. Both lacked 'martial' imperialist instincts. Both were ravaged and colonised by foreign nomadic tribes. In imperial China, much of the empire-building exercise was undertaken primarily by non-Han rulers who conquered China, Tibet, and much of central/inner Asia: the Mongols (the Yuan dynasty) and the Manchus (the Qing dynasty) who expanded traditional Han China's territories into central, inner, and northeast Asia. (The naval expedition undertaken by Admiral Zheng He to the Indian Ocean during the [Han] Ming dynasty was an aberration rather than the norm.) The Great Wall of China thus failed to keep the Mongols and Manchus of inner Asia out of Han China. In that sense, the Great Wall is at best a symbol of defence and defeat and at worst a symbol of China's territorial expansion. Likewise, much of India's empire building—with the sole exception of Emperor Ashoka—took place under the central Asian Moghuls and the British. However, unlike the Chinese who inherited, legitimised, and consolidated their control over Mongol and Manchu empires' colonial possessions by employing the sixteenth century Westphalian notion of sovereignty,⁴ India could not and did not lay claim to Myanmar or Sri Lanka on the grounds that both were parts of the British Indian Empire.

Both have a long, rich strategic tradition: Sun Zi's treatise on *The Art of War* (*Sun Zi Bingfa*) in China and Kautilya's *Arthashastra* (a treatise on war, diplomacy, statecraft, and empire) in India were written over 2,000 years ago. The traditional Chinese concept of international relations was based upon concentric circles from the imperial capital outwards through variously dependent states to the barbarians on the

outside. It bears remarkable resemblance to the Indian concept of *mandala* or circles outlined in *Arthashastra*, which postulated that a king's neighbour is his natural enemy, while the king beyond his neighbour is his natural ally. The Chinese dynasties had followed a similar policy of encircling and attacking nearby neighbours and maintaining friendly relations with more distant kingdoms (*yuan jiao jin gong*). Much like imperial China, the rightful fruit of victory in ancient India was tribute, homage, subservience, and *not* annexation.

Though Chinese and Indian civilisations reacted onto one another during the first few centuries of the Christian era, the process of religious-cultural interaction on any significant scale ceased after about the tenth century. Since then, the two countries lived, as it were, oblivious of each other's existence for over a thousand years until about the advent of the nineteenth century, when both came under the influence of European powers. In fact, until the fifteenth century, China and India were far ahead of Europe in almost all aspects of life and the flow of manufactured goods and technological know-how was mostly from east to west. Before the age of European colonisation, China accounted for about 33 per cent of the world's manufactured goods and India for about 25 per cent. China under the Song dynasty was the world's superpower. Under the Moghuls, India's economic, military, and cultural prowess too was an object of envy. Then in a complete reversal of fortune, the mighty Asian civilisations declined, decayed, and disintegrated, and were eventually conquered by European powers.

PRESENT IMPERFECT: FROM CIVILISATIONS TO NATION STATES

The gradual westward expansion over the centuries had extended imperial China's influence over parts of central and inner Asia (Mongolia, Tibet, and Xinjiang). In contrast, India lacked a central authority and did not engage in the physical subjugation of its neighbouring countries. India's boundaries shrank further following the 1947 partition that broke up the strategic unity of the subcontinent, which goes back 2,000 years to the first Mauryan empire. Then came the Chinese occupation of the buffer and tributary state of Tibet in 1950, as a result of which the two nations *for the first time* came in close physical contact and clashed. These two developments in the middle of the twentieth century also allowed China to extend its reach and

influence in South Asia, where historically, culturally, and civilisationally, it had exercised no influence at all. As a result, China-India relations have been tense ever since.

The India-China Territorial Dispute

A territorial dispute became a full-scale war in 1962 and the two countries came close to fighting another war in 1987. Several rounds of talks over the last 24 years have failed to resolve the disputed border claims.⁵ Agreements on maintaining peace and tranquillity on the disputed border were signed in 1993 and 1996 but have been frequently violated, especially since 1998 when India-China relations deteriorated following India's nuclear tests. The Indian Army reported about 120 incidents of territorial violation of the demilitarised zone of 20 km by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in 1999, 96 in 2000, 98 in 2001, and 90 in 2002. Not only that, despite repeated assurances, the Chinese side has failed to exchange maps of the Line of Actual Control (LAC).⁶ While Chinese leaders counsel patience in resolving the boundary dispute 'left over from history', Indians want the dispute to be resolved expeditiously and 'not left to history again'. The prospects of a negotiated settlement of the Sino-Indian border dispute in the near future, however, seem remote despite the elevation of talks to the political level during Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit to China in June 2003.

Tensions caused by the territorial dispute have been compounded by rivalry between the two for power and influence in Asia. Nor can China brush aside third party (its ally, Pakistan's) interests in the territorial dispute.⁷ This was not the case with the settlement of China's territorial boundaries with Russia or Vietnam. For, a resolution of the Sino-Indian border dispute would lead to the deployment of India's military assets on the India-Pakistan border, thereby tilting the military balance decisively in India's favour, much to Pakistan's disadvantage. This would deprive Beijing of powerful leverage in its relations with Pakistan and undermine its old strategy of keeping India under strategic pressure on two fronts. The result is that the 4,004 km frontier, one of the longest inter-state borders in the world, remains the only one not defined, let alone demarcated, on maps or delineated on the ground, following the negotiated settlement of China's territorial disputes with Russia, the central Asian states, and Vietnam in the late 1990s.

Even if the territorial dispute were resolved, China and India would still retain a competitive relationship in the Asia-Pacific region. Other factors, apart from the territorial dispute, contribute to the fractious and uneasy relationship, including China's ties with India's South Asian neighbours, especially Beijing's military alliances with Pakistan and Myanmar; nuclear and missile proliferation issues, unrest in Tibet and Kashmir; differences over Sikkim,⁸ multipolarity, and the expansion of the UN Security Council; power asymmetry; Chinese encroachments into what India sees as its 'sphere of influence', as evident in Beijing's plans for a naval presence in the Indian Ocean and India's counter-moves to establish closer strategic ties with 'China-wary nations' (such as Mongolia, Japan, Vietnam, Taiwan, Indonesia, and Australia) as part of its 'look east' policy; their ties with the US and Russia; and more recently, the war on terrorism.⁹

The Sino-Pakistan Nexus

Chinese policy makers' preference for a balance of power approach in inter-state relations has led them to provide military and political support to those countries that can serve as counterweights to Beijing's perceived enemies and rivals. It is not a sheer coincidence that nearly all of China's friends and allies in Asia happen to be India's neighbours in southern Asia. Recognising India as one of its major strategic rivals, China has since 1963 firmly aligned itself with Pakistan and made heavy strategic and economic investments in that country to keep the common enemy, India, under strategic pressure on two fronts.¹⁰ Though the roots of the India-Pakistan animosity are deep-seated in religion, history, culture, and the politics of revenge, and thus pre-date India-China hostility, China's strategists have long recognised the enduring nature of India-Pakistan enmity and exploited it to Beijing's advantage. In fact, Beijing has long been the most important player in the India-Pakistan-China triangular relationship.

Despite steadily improving relations with India since the late 1980s, China has not become less friendly to Pakistan, primarily because the combined strategic and political advantages China receives from its relationship with Pakistan (and, through Pakistan, other Islamic countries) easily outweigh any advantages China might receive from a closer relationship with India. Above all, Pakistan is the only country that stands up to India and thereby prevents 'Indian hegemony' over the region, thus fulfilling the key objective of China's South Asia policy.

The Chinese believe that as long as India is preoccupied with Pakistan on its western frontier, it will not stir up trouble on the Tibetan border. A secure and stable India at peace with Pakistan would, on the other hand, make New Delhi focus on China and East Asia. John Garver has succinctly summed up China's Pakistan policy:

China's overriding strategic interest is to keep Pakistan independent, powerful, and confident enough to present India with a standing two-front threat Were India able to dissolve this two-front threat by subordinating Pakistan, its position against China would be much stronger [This would amount to] conceding South Asia as an Indian sphere of influence. Such a move would spell the virtual end to Chinese aspirations of being the leading Asian power and would greatly weaken China's position against Indian power.¹¹

Through Pakistan, China also retains the option of continuously creating momentums that sap India's military power. It was the provision of Chinese nuclear and missile shield to Pakistan during the late 1980s and early 1990s (at the height of India-China rapprochement) that emboldened Islamabad to wage a 'proxy war' in Kashmir without fear of Indian retaliation.¹² Moreover, a staunch ally such as Pakistan also provides China with a secure access to naval bases (Karachi, Ormara, and Gwadar) close to the entrance of the Persian Gulf.

The Chinese capital remains a favourite destination for the Pakistani leadership whenever India-Pakistan tensions escalate because Islamabad does not talk war or peace without consulting Beijing. At the time of heightened tensions between India and Pakistan following the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001, Pakistani President, General Musharraf made three trips to Beijing in a span of less than a year (in December 2001, January and August 2002) for urgent security consultations with President Jiang Zemin and Premier Zhu Rongji and reportedly obtained 'firm assurances of support in the event of a war' with India.¹³ Beijing rushed two dozen F-7 jet fighters, nuclear and missile components, and other weapon systems to shore up Pakistani defences in the tense border face-off and concluded 'joint defence' and 'futuristic arms development cooperation' agreements with Islamabad.¹⁴

The Indian government was so irked over Musharraf's playing of 'the China card' that when Chinese President Jiang Zemin pressed Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee to enter into direct talks with Pakistani President Musharraf to prevent the Kashmir conflict from exploding into a full-scale war at the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia in Kazakhstan held in early June 2002, Vajpayee refused to budge. Later, in an interview with *The Washington Post*, Vajpayee complained that he saw 'no basic change in China's policy. China continues to help Pakistan acquire weapons and equipment.'¹⁵ For its part, New Delhi expressed its displeasure with Beijing by postponing the Indian Army Chief, Padmanabhan, and Prime Minister Vajpayee's scheduled visits to China in October–November 2002.¹⁶ For India, Pakistan is not and cannot be a threat without China's military support just as Taiwan cannot constitute a threat to China without the support of the US. As India's outspoken Defence Minister George Fernandes told a party convention in Mumbai, 'Pakistan's military has always depended on support from China ever since it was carved out as a homeland for South Asia's Muslims in 1947 following decolonisation of British India. Everyone knows what Pakistan will be without China. Its ego is boosted purely by the support it gets from China.'¹⁷ Beijing's policy towards the subcontinental rivals is based on the classic strategic principle of 'make the barbarians fight while you watch from the mountain top' (*zuo shan guan hu dou*).¹⁸

Furthermore, Beijing's concerns about separatist Islamic influence in Xinjiang also explain China's indulgence towards Pakistan. China apparently feels strongly that engaging Pakistan's government, and even its fundamentalist religious parties, is an important part of keeping control in its own restive Muslim northwest. There are signs, however, that given its Tibet and Xinjiang problems and the Western interests in exploiting them, China may have started viewing Pakistan's obsession with Kashmir bothersome. For example, President Jiang Zemin advised Pakistan in 1996 to defer solutions to problems such as Kashmir to future generations and not to encourage extremist forces. In 1999, during the limited border war in Kashmir provoked by its ally, Beijing had adopted cautious neutrality but did not condemn Islamabad.

In the short to medium term, Beijing will certainly continue to prop up Pakistan since it is vitally important to China's *energy security* (by providing access to and bases in the Persian Gulf), *military security*

(by keeping India's military engaged on its western frontiers), *geopolitics* (given its geostrategic location at the intersection of South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East), *national unity and territorial integrity* (Tibet and Xinjiang), *maritime strategy* vis-à-vis India and the US, as a staunch *diplomatic ally* (in regional and international fora, including the Islamic world), a *buyer and supplier of conventional and unconventional weaponry*, and above all, a powerful *bargaining chip* in China's relations with India and the US. The Chinese know that Pakistan is their 'last and best bet' to prevent Indian dominance of southern Asia from the Persian Gulf to the Malacca Straits.¹⁹

Nuclear and Missile Proliferation

Despite the Chinese efforts to justify nuclear and missile assistance to Pakistan as part of 'normal state-to-state relations', India has remained unconvinced, seeing it as 'hostile and threatening' in both intent and character. Beijing has not only helped Islamabad with its nuclear weapons programme (all three Pakistani nuclear plants—Kahuta, Khushab, and Chasma—have been built with Chinese assistance) but also its delivery systems: ready-to-launch M-9 (Ghaznavi/Hatf), M-11 (Shaheen), and a number of Dong Feng-21s (Ghauri) ballistic missiles.²⁰ This cooperation has continued despite Beijing's growing concerns over the Talibanisation of the Pakistani state and society. As Ehsan Ahrari put it: 'In enabling Pakistan to become a nuclear power China has already created a very painful long-term reality for India. The strategic parity with India that Pakistan has gives it tremendous potential to emerge as a major factor in Southwest and Central Asia, if it could set its economy in order.'²¹

When India weaponised its nuclear capability through a series of tests in May 1998, Defence Minister Fernandes argued that India's aim was to counter China's capability rather than Pakistan's, describing how his country was being 'encircled' by military alliances with Pakistan and Myanmar and Chinese military activities in Tibet. He also called 'China the mother of Pakistan's nuclear bomb', which drew protests from Beijing.²² For their part, Chinese analysts have accused India, particularly since May 1998, of pursuing a policy of military expansion since attaining independence, in order to become a global military power, contain China, and dominate and control South Asia and the Indian Ocean region.

While major Western powers have, however grudgingly, accepted the reality of India's nuclear capability, there is no sign of Beijing softening its demand that New Delhi initiate a complete rollback of its nuclear weapons programme and unconditionally sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as per UN Security Council resolution 1172 of 6 June 1998.²³ New Delhi, in turn, wants China and other nuclear powers to take the lead in nuclear disarmament. When Pakistan came in the firing line following revelations in the US media about the missiles-for-nukes barter deal with North Korea, New Delhi argued that blame should also be put on China for making Pakistan a nuclear weapons state.²⁴

The Sino–Pakistan–Bangladesh–Myanmar Axis

That the 'strategic space' in which India traditionally operated has become increasingly constricted due to Chinese penetration becomes further evident from Beijing's forays into Myanmar and the Bay of Bengal since the early 1990s.²⁵ China and Pakistan have entered into intelligence sharing agreement with Myanmar regarding India's force deployments in the northeast and the Bay of Bengal and both are major suppliers of weaponry to the military regime in Yangon. In China's national security calculus, Myanmar now plays the same role in South/Southeast Asia that Pakistan plays in South/Southwest Asia. Interestingly, General Musharraf paid an official visit to Yangon in April 2001, the first ever by a Pakistani leader and expressed his country's 'desire to get closer to Myanmar'. Musharraf's visit was preceded by port calls by three Pakistani naval ships (a frigate, a submarine, and a fleet tanker) to Myanmar ports following the first ever Bangladeshi–Pakistani joint naval exercises in the Bay of Bengal in 30 years (since East Pakistan became the independent state of Bangladesh).

Since neither country had given New Delhi prior notification of the naval exercises, India's strategic community concluded that the Pakistan–Bangladesh–Myanmar naval rendezvous had 'Beijing's blessings' (unconfirmed sources claimed that a Chinese submarine was docked at one of the Myanmar ports at that time).²⁶ If during the 1970s and 1980s, Beijing used Pakistan's enmity with India to transform it into its surrogate, Myanmar's isolation was exploited during

the 1990s to transform it into China's client state. The same pattern now seems to be repeating itself with respect to Bangladesh in the first decade of the twenty-first century. At a time when India-Bangladesh ties were strained over such issues as trade, transit rights, illegal immigration, and the alleged presence of the Al-Qaida in Bangladesh, China concluded a comprehensive Defence Cooperation Agreement with Bangladesh in December 2002, thereby marking 'the beginning of the transformation of the Bay of Bengal into the Bay of Beijing for all practical purposes'.²⁷

Maritime Rivalry

The Sino-Indian rivalry has now acquired a maritime dimension, thus further adding to strains generated by differences over Pakistan, Kashmir, Tibet, Myanmar, and nuclear and missile proliferation. Both are forging new and offensive military strategies underpinned by growing economies and expanding defence budgets and are seeking new allies in Asia. Nearly 70 per cent of China's trade is carried by sea through the Strait of Malacca, the Indian Ocean, and the Suez Canal, and the predominance of the Indian Navy along these sea-lanes is viewed as a major threat to Chinese security. As China's demand for energy resources increases, so will its dependence on energy sources in the Persian Gulf. As a major trading nation and a future world power, China is now laying the groundwork for a naval presence along the Malacca Straits, the Indian Ocean, and the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf to protect its long-term economic and security interests. From Beijing's perspective, a closer alliance relationship with Cambodia, Myanmar, Bangladesh, the Maldives, Pakistan, and Iran would contribute towards a stable balance of power in the Indian Ocean region, secure the country's oil supply and trade routes from the Persian Gulf to the South China Sea, challenge India's great power pretensions and counter the US presence in the Indian Ocean.²⁸

Beijing is investing heavily in developing the Gwadar deep-sea port in Pakistan and the naval bases in Myanmar to establish a larger naval presence in the Indian Ocean. Speaking at the Institute of Strategic Studies in Islamabad on 15 November 2000, General Musharraf outlined the rationale: 'Pakistan security interests lie in maintaining a regional balance The main objective of letting the Chinese develop the Gwadar Port was that as and when needed the Chinese navy would be in Gwadar to give a befitting reply to anyone [read, India].'²⁹

China's naval encirclement of India would be complete if and when Beijing is successful in persuading the strategically located Indian Ocean island nation of the Maldives to grant a naval base at Gan, south of Sri Lanka and north of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.

In what is tantamount to playing the 'Islamic card' to secure naval bases, Chinese leaders and PLA generals visiting the Maldives and Bangladesh have stressed that both South Asian countries should be 'in China's camp because China has always had special ties with Islamic countries'.³⁰ Apparently, to compensate for the lack of a true blue-water naval capability, the Chinese have devised a superior naval strategy that would give them the ability to control and/or dominate critical maritime chokepoints through acquisition of naval bases in Cambodia, Myanmar, the Maldives, and Pakistan in the future. However, a Chinese naval presence in Pakistan at the very entrance to the Persian Gulf or the Indian Ocean has security implications not just for India but also for the US, Iran, and the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). To counter China's strategic moves, India has launched its own flanking manoeuvre against the China-Pakistan nexus with improved military relations with Iran, Oman, and Israel in the west while cultivating better ties with Myanmar, Vietnam, Japan, and the US in the east.³¹

Economic Competition

China's comprehensive national power has grown exponentially over the last two decades, and based on current trends, China is projected to become the world's biggest economy well before the twenty-first century reaches its midpoint. This will make China a genuine global great power—something that the former Soviet Union never was. As such, it will exercise enormous influence on the international stage, most notably on its Asian neighbours and its major trading partners. In the economic sphere, Indian and Chinese economies are competitive rather than complementary. India and China are the two most populous nations in the world, both struggling to get the heavy hand of the state out of their fast-growing economies. Both look to the West and Japan for advanced technology, machinery, capital, and investment. Nonetheless, Beijing and New Delhi have tried to expand trade and economic cooperation with some success. In 1994, India displaced Pakistan to become China's largest trading partner in South

Asia and in 2003 China displaced Japan as India's largest trading partner in East Asia.

However, considering their size and potential, two-way trade has only grown from \$271 million in 1989 to \$7 billion in 2003. China's electric consumer goods companies like Hai'er, Konka and India's Information Technology (IT) and pharmaceutical companies such as Infosys, NIIT, Ranbaxy, and Dr Reddy's have established some presence. Several joint ventures in power generation, consumer goods, chemicals, metals, minerals, mining, transport, IT and telecommunication sectors are in the pipeline.

While there are many similarities in Indian and Chinese strategic cultures, nothing illustrates differences better than the fact that China has emerged as a hardware superpower while India as a software superpower in the new 'knowledge economy'. Beijing is watching with interest India's economic growth, especially its growing prowess in IT, as the country could emerge as a potential competitor for foreign investment, technology, trade, and markets. Many Chinese still remain contemptuous of India's growth prospects over the long term, believing that just as they left India behind in the nuclear arena (where India had an edge in the 1950s), they will be able to leave India in the dust in the IT software sector as well.³² Besides, China has a 13-year lead over India, having embarked upon market- and investor-friendly economic policies in 1978 while India's economic liberalisation programme was launched only in late 1991.

Some argue that India-China economic relations could serve as a positive inducement to China that it could gain more from a more even-handed policy in South Asia than it would by supporting Pakistan against India.³³ However, the forces impelling India and China towards continuing suspicion and competition are much more powerful and deeply rooted in their very different domestic political systems, competing interests and in their positions in the international system. As in the case of Sino-US ties, these competitive tendencies rooted in geopolitics cannot be easily offset or overcome, even by growing economic links.

India's Counter-Containment Strategy

Since the end of the Cold War and the collapse of its ally—the Soviet Union—India has been working on new alignments and security arrangements, shopping around for new relationships, demonstrating a

new flexibility in its foreign policy. India has made it clear that it intends to challenge China's dominance in Asia via its 'look east' strategy, which seeks to enhance military and economic cooperation with 'China-wary nations' in East and Southeast Asia so as to countervail China. The Indian Navy has been holding joint naval exercises with Vietnam, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, and Australia at regular intervals.

Defence Minister George Fernandes has declared an 'area of interest' that extends 7,000 miles from Africa and the Arabian Peninsula in the west to the South China Sea in the east and described Japan and Vietnam as India's key 'strategic partners' in maintaining the safety of sea-lanes of communication and countering piracy on high seas.³⁴ The Vietnamese and Indian militaries have performed jungle-training exercises, conducted joint naval exercises, and concluded agreements to step up nuclear energy cooperation. India's decision to sail into the South China Sea is clearly a tit-for-tat response to China's moves into the Bay of Bengal. The foray into the South China Sea comes as a counterpoint to China's setting up of naval and intelligence bases on Myanmar's Coco Islands off the northern tip of India's Andaman and Nicobar islands. It is a further indication of India's determination to offer itself as an economic and military counterweight to China and thereby assert itself as an important factor in the Asian balance of power—nuclear and naval.³⁵

Competition between India and China has intensified in Southeast Asia as both view this region as a vital source of natural resources and a market for their goods while Southeast Asian nations seek to exploit the Sino-Indian rivalry to gain infrastructure, economic, and technology assistance to their own benefit. In the competition stakes, Beijing currently has an edge over New Delhi by virtue of the fact that China is part of ASEAN + 3 (Association of Southeast Asian Nations plus China, Japan, and South Korea), while India remains a dialogue partner. Economically, trade between ASEAN and China amounts to \$41.6 billion a year, nearly five times that of the \$8.5 billion a year trade between ASEAN and India.³⁶ Nowhere is the India-China rivalry more evident than in Myanmar, which Beijing sees as its gateway to the Indian Ocean and India sees as the land bridge to Indo-China and Southeast Asia, over which goods, people, and ideas have travelled for centuries. While China is developing a north-south transport corridor along the Irrawaddy River in Myanmar that will provide Beijing access to the Indian Ocean, India is seeking to gain

an entry into Indo-China and Southeast Asia by building an east-west corridor cutting horizontally through Myanmar towards Thailand and Vietnam.³⁷

Both India and China have put forward their own proposals for multilateral cooperation in the region. China, with its Kunming initiative, is trying to develop the Mekong river basin, which involves six countries. The Mekong river starts out in Tibet and flows through China, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. In response, India in 2000 unveiled its own proposal for Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) involving India, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. The exclusion of China from this grouping did not go unnoticed. During his April 2002 visit to Cambodia, Prime Minister Vajpayee offered to assist Cambodia with trials of former Khmer Rouge leaders, a move that annoyed Beijing because of its potential to unveil China's role in the genocide of the late 1970s.³⁸ India is also part of the Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Thailand Economic Community (BIMSTEC) that involves Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand—a kind of Bay of Bengal community. Seeing the region as their backyard, the two Asian giants are seeking to strengthen their strategic positions and draw Southeast Asia into their respective spheres of influence. India and China have offered closer security ties ranging from anti-drug, anti-terrorism cooperation to joint anti-piracy maritime patrols. Security concerns regarding a rising China have prompted many Southeast Asian countries to cultivate India as an alternative power both in the economic and security spheres. As one Singaporean analyst observed: 'Economically and in terms of security, China and India are two huge blocs for Southeast Asia. ASEAN has no defence-related problem with India but is conscious of China's ambitions and intentions.'³⁹

In Northeast Asia, suspicions about China are the subtext of the quest for a 'global partnership between India and Japan in the 21st century' and the prime mover of the efforts to ensure the safety of sea lanes of communication (SLOC) and energy and trade routes.⁴⁰ The Indian and Japanese economies are complementary rather than competitive. India and Japan have held joint naval manoeuvres off their respective coastlines as part of the burgeoning strategic relations between the two Asian democracies. Common security concerns over China, Pakistan, and North Korea feature prominently in the bilateral talks. In May 2002, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan called

for a broadening of Japan's security cooperation with India.⁴¹ The growing *entente cordiale* between Japan and India is based on the understanding that united they contain China and divided they are contained by China and its allies (North Korea and Pakistan). The Indian Navy has also participated as an observer during Taiwan's naval exercises and the two have a growing military relationship.⁴² Much to China's chagrin, Taiwan has come out in support for India's bid for a permanent UN Security Council seat. According to Taiwan's Foreign Minister, Eugene Chien, 'India is qualified and competent to be a permanent member of the Security Council and deserves to be supported by UN members'.⁴³

Furthermore, there has been a remarkable improvement in India-US relations since President Bill Clinton's visit to India in March 2000. Clinton's description of India and the US as 'natural allies' confirmed Chinese fears that the logic and pull of geopolitics is pushing India, much like Japan, to a strategic alliance with the US so as to contain China.⁴⁴ For India, which has always regarded China as a strategic adversary, the Bush administration's characterisation of China as a 'strategic competitor' rather than as a strategic partner, was not only a welcome development but also a vindication of its long-held belief that China's patronage of militarist, rogue regimes poses a serious threat to global and regional security. In addition to 'the China factor', there are other areas of convergence of interests between the two powers: both the US and India are threatened by the nuclear and missile proliferation activities of the China-Pakistan-North Korea axis; both have been targeted by Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaida terrorist network and regard the Islamist militancy as a menace to Asian and global stability; both have achieved economic synergy, especially in the high-tech sector; and last but not least, the two are the world's largest multi-ethnic, multi-religious, pluralist democracies. Washington, therefore, sees closer ties with New Delhi essential to securing the geo-strategic and economic interests of both countries.⁴⁵

For their part, the Chinese are concerned that India is playing the 'democracy' and 'second-largest market' cards to gain US support for a greater Indian role in global and regional affairs and to make 'India a potential junior partner in a US global strategy to contain China'. Some Chinese strategists even argue that India's nuclear tests in 1998 had the tacit approval of the US, which wants to enlist India as a frontline state against China. For example, Zhang Wenmu believes that 'in order to ease pressure from the US (regarding its nuclear tests),

India must challenge China because India and the West have similar strategic aims concerning containing China'.⁴⁶ The Chinese continue to caution Washington against watering down its opposition to India's entry into the exclusive nuclear club or the UN Security Council permanent members club.⁴⁷ Beijing is also alarmed over the growing talk in conservative policy circles in Washington and New Delhi of India emerging as a counterweight to China on the one hand and the fragile, radical Islamic states of West Asia on the other.⁴⁸ Earlier, when President Bush had unveiled his missile defence plan, New Delhi had responded far more positively than most US allies. Some Indian strategic thinkers even see in the emerging US–India quasi-alliance an opportunity for 'payback' to China. As former Indian ambassador to Pakistan and Myanmar, G. Parthasarthy, put it: 'Whether it was the Bangladesh conflict of 1971 or the Clinton–Jiang Declaration in the aftermath of our nuclear tests, China has never hesitated to use its leverage with the Americans to undermine our security'.⁴⁹ At a minimum, New Delhi would use its strategic ties with Washington to bolster its position in its dealings with China.

China's initial optimism that the new Sino-US-Pakistan triangular cooperation against terrorism in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 attacks on the US mainland would wean Washington away from New Delhi turned out to be wishful thinking as the Bush administration assured India that America's intensifying alliance with Pakistan would not be at India's expense. If anything, the twin threats of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) have strengthened the American commitment to building stronger relations, including defence ties, with India. Growing Chinese strategic pressure on the Malacca Straits has already led to maritime collaboration between India and the US with their navies jointly patrolling the Straits. More significantly, US–India strategic engagement has scaled new heights with the announcement of a series of measures such as joint military exercises and sale of military hardware. Washington gave the green light for Israel to proceed with the sale of Phalcon airborne early warning and control system (AWACS) to India—something that was earlier denied to China for fear of enhancing Beijing's air surveillance and early warning capabilities in the Taiwan Straits. All these measures send an implicit signal to China of India's growing military prowess.⁵⁰ A cover story in the authoritative *Beijing Review* by China's noted South Asia specialists expressed concern over the US sale of arms to India, which 'enables it to become the first

country to have close military relations with the world's two big powers—the US and Russia'.⁵¹

Beijing fears that if the US–China relationship deteriorates into a new Cold War, India could play the same role in the US security calculus vis-à-vis China that China played against the Soviet Union from 1971 to 1989. However, a number of developments will have to occur before India emerges as a pivotal player that plays a significant role in the eventual outcome of the US–China–Russia rivalry in Eurasia, that will determine who keeps power and influence in Eurasia. These include the deterioration in Sino-Indian and Sino-American relations, a decline in US support for Pakistan, and the growth of India's economy.⁵² The logic of geopolitics also dictates that the US would want to circumvent the formation of a tripartite alliance (suggested first by Russian Premier Primakov in 1993) comprising Russia, China, and India. Such an axis by the three continental powers of Eurasia would threaten American dominance in the world. Should Russia and China (with the backing of Germany and/or France in Europe) formalise an alliance to counter the US-led bloc, a strong alliance with India would then be a significant asset to the US in offsetting Sino-Russian power and for influence in Eurasia.⁵³ Many in the US see a strong and prosperous India serving Washington's long-term interests by ensuring that there will be countervailing powers in Asia—China, India, and Japan—that will prevent the domination of the region by any one power.⁵⁴ The Bush administration is seeking to encourage India's involvement in an Asian security system to balance a rising China and a declining Japan.

And finally, India's counter-containment posture vis-à-vis China has led New Delhi to cultivate Central and Inner Asian states bordering China (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Mongolia) as potential allies sharing common security concerns regarding China, energy security, Islamist extremism, and terrorism emanating from Pakistan.⁵⁵ Despite China's opposition, Russian, Kyrgyz, Kazakh, and Tajik leaders have repeatedly endorsed India's membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

FUTURE TENSE: GEOPOLITICAL RIVALRY INTENSIFIES

When Chinese and Indian elites speak of restoring their country's rightful place in the world, they give expression to a concept of

'pre-eminence' or 'centrality' in Asia and the wider world that prevailed before the European colonisation of Asia. This concept reflects their perception that as the founders of regional cultural patterns, their rightful place is at the apex of world hierarchy. Both identify the present pattern of international relations with a world order designed to perpetuate the world domination of the status quoist Western powers. Both are non-status-quoist powers: China in terms of *territory*, power, and influence; India in terms of *status*, power, and influence. To a considerable extent, this drive explains the Asian giants' national security policies and their conflictual relations with each other. Their underlying power rivalry and their self-images as natural great powers and centres of civilisation and culture continue to drive them to support different countries and causes.

Whilst opposing the growing economic and political dominance of the US in world affairs, both remain suspicious of each other's long-term agenda and intentions. Interestingly, both are also courting the US to help balance their relationships with each other until they are strong enough to do so on their own. Much as Beijing would like to cooperate with Washington to contain New Delhi, the reality is that there is greater conflict of interests between China and the US than between India and the US. While Washington sees India as a rising Asian power that needs to be cultivated, Beijing shares Islamabad's deep mistrust of India's strategic ambitions and sees India as a rising power that must be contained. Both India and China want to avoid an entangling alliance so as to maximise their options and freedom of action. Both have practised 'tilted non-alignment' while preaching independent, non-aligned foreign policies.

China and India have already attained regional power status and have attempted to establish a sort of 'Monroe Doctrine' in their neighbourhoods without much success. Both are unable to reassert their traditional suzerainty over their smaller neighbours, as any attempt to do so encounters resistance from regional and extra-regional powers. Both claim that their attitude towards their neighbours is essentially benevolent while making it clear that they must not make policies or take actions, or allow other nations to take measures in their territory, that they (China and India) deem to be against their own interest and security. If such neighbours do so, both are willing to apply pressure in one fashion or another to bring about desired changes. Both accuse each other of pursuing hegemony and entertaining imperial ambitions. A classified section of the 'Vision 2020' document drafted by India's

planners and defence experts contends that 'India will be growingly threatened by the rising economic and military strength of China', and calls on the leadership to 'join regional or global defence pacts' that will protect its national interests.⁵⁶ Indian and Chinese leaders are often seen as talking at, rather than talking to, each other. Chinese leaders and officials are loath to admitting that their policies and actions are seen as threatening to their neighbours. They continue to call on India to 'change its attitude towards China' without acknowledging any need for China to do the same.⁵⁷ As Andrew Scobell points out: 'Few if any of China's strategic thinkers seem to hold warm or positive views of India for China's future.'⁵⁸

In their dialogues with Asian and Western leaders, Chinese leaders and officials are often very contemptuous of India's socio-economic achievements and dismissive of New Delhi's claims as 'the world's largest democracy'. For instance, in a meeting with American academics, Vice-Foreign Minister Wang Yi dismissed as meaningless all talk of learning from India's democratic experience, describing India as 'a tribal democracy', which poses a serious threat to that country's existence in the long term.⁵⁹ A section of the Chinese national security bureaucracy continues to entertain doubts about the prospects of India's survival as a nation state over the long term seeing it as a 'soft state characterised by abject poverty, religious and linguistic cleavages and regional faultlines' and cautions against any initiative that will augment India's power (such as support for an Indian permanent seat on the UN Security Council).⁶⁰ There exists in the Chinese mind a deep distrust of India—with the converse also holding true. A recent study on the contemporary Chinese perceptions of India notes that 'China's rivalry with India may also be based on other historical factors, like the challenge of Buddhism to Chinese core beliefs, jealousy about the achievements of India's ancient empire, or India's large population and territory.'⁶¹ Interestingly, while the Indians never tire of speaking of India and China as the 'two oldest civilisations', the Chinese side purposely avoids using the term 'oldest' or 'ancient' civilisation in relation to India. The Communist leadership, long wary of foreign religious and cultural influences on the Chinese nation, at best only grudgingly and reluctantly acknowledges India's religious-cultural influence over Tibet and China, and at worst sees it mostly as 'foreign influences which had a mixed, by and large, negative impact as is evident in Tibet's separatist tendencies'.⁶²

China sees itself as the rightful pre-eminent power in Asia and considers India as its major medium- to long-term challenger for this position, given India's long-term goal to become a world power.⁶³ An article in the influential Chinese newspaper *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao* quoted India's Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani as telling a domestic audience: 'The 20th Century belonged to the west, China wants to become the world leader in the 21st Century, but the years at the end of the century will belong to our India.'⁶⁴ The Chinese Communist Party has set the year 2049—marking one hundred years of the founding of the People's Republic—when China would re-emerge as the global superpower overtaking the US economically and militarily, if not earlier, and it would hate to see India spoil the Middle Kingdom's celebration party.⁶⁵

Just as the Chinese accuse the Americans of pursuing a policy of containment, Indians are convinced that China is using every opportunity to contain India while publicly professing support for friendly bilateral ties. At the heart of Sino-Indian antagonism is the familiar Indian suspicion, which has now matured into a certainty, that China is seeking to deny India its proper stakes in the game of international politics by boxing it in the narrow confines of the subcontinent through China's military alliances with Pakistan in the west and Myanmar in the east. That China does not want India to emerge as an equal is evident from its opposition to India's membership of the P-5 (UN Security Council), N-5 (Nuclear Club), ASEM (Asia-Europe Summit), APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), ASEAN + 3, and the SCO. This contrasts not only with Beijing's stated commitment to build 'a just and equitable world order' but also with India's past support for China's entry into both the UN and the Security Council as well as its observer membership in the NAM, and more recently, the WTO. As Table 6.1 shows, China's complaints and grievances about the US are a mirror image of India's complaints and grievances about China. It reinforces the argument that established great powers do not like to see any challenge to their power and influence in the international system. Thus, China's behaviour towards India is not much different from that of the US' behaviour towards China for the simple reason that China is a status quoist power with respect to India while the US is a status quoist power with regards to China. The future of the Asian security environment depends a great deal on how and in what ways the US manages the rise of China and how and in what ways China, in turn, manages the rise of India and accommodates

India's interests. The past record of China's India policy does not give one much cause for optimism.

Table 6.1
A Tale of Two Non-status Quoist Powers: China and India

<i>China's complaints and grievances about the United States</i>	<i>India's complaints and grievances about China</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise the course of history: Status-quo is untenable; China's rise is inevitable • Recognise the sphere of China's influence to improve ties • Do not preach to an ancient civilisation • Stop arming China's neighbours against it • Dismantle US military alliances with China's neighbours and end US encirclement and containment policy • Show sensitivity to China's security concerns; Do not exploit/play up differences between China and its neighbours • Recognise China's special historical and cultural ties with East and South-east Asian countries • Bipolarity/multipolarity is better than unipolarity • Be less hegemonic, less arrogant and share the leadership of the Asia-Pacific Region • Shed anti-China policies and resolve all outstanding issues to China's satisfaction • Strictly abide by the three joint communiqués (1972, 1978, 1982) • Follow a one-China policy; Do not interfere in the internal affairs (Taiwan, Tibet, Xinjiang) • Accept China as an equal and treat it accordingly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise the course of history: Status-quo is untenable; India's rise is inevitable • Recognise India's sphere of influence to improve ties • Do not preach to an ancient civilisation • Stop arming India's neighbours against it • Dismantle China's military alliances with India's neighbours and end China's encirclement and containment policy • Show sensitivity to India's security concerns; Do not exploit/play up differences between India and its neighbours • Recognise India's special historical and cultural ties with South and Southeast Asian countries • Bipolarity/multipolarity is better than unipolarity • Be less hegemonic, less arrogant and share the leadership of the Asia-Pacific region • Shed anti-India policies and resolve all outstanding issues to India's satisfaction • Strictly abide by the three bilateral agreements (1955, 1993, 1996) • Follow a one-India policy; Do not interfere in internal affairs (Kashmir, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh) of India • Accept India as equal and treat it accordingly

Both India and China yearn for a truly multipolar world that will provide the space for growth and freedom of action as befitting a great power and support the reform of the UN Security Council, but disagree sharply on the ways and means of doing so. Indians contend that just as the US opposition to China's membership of the UN Security Council did not prevent China's rise, China's opposition to India's bid for a permanent membership of the Security Council is likewise counter-productive and cannot prevent India's rise as a great power over the long term. The 'multipolar' world sought by Beijing is based on an 'inner core', which includes China, the US, and Russia.⁶⁶ Japan and India figure in more as allies of the US and Russia or as sub-regional powers than as independent poles. (The Chinese continue to underestimate India's determination to emerge as an independent regional and global actor.) In the Asia-Pacific context, Beijing's vision of regional order is basically bipolar (the US versus China) and therefore at odds with India's view of multipolarity at *both* the regional and global levels.⁶⁷ That is why, Beijing initially rejected Moscow's proposal of a Russia-China-India axis and alternatively proposed the formation of a strategic triangle consisting of Russia-China-Iran (or Russia-China-Pakistan) to counter the global influence of the US.⁶⁸ After the 1991 Gulf War, China made a strategic decision to move closer to Iran and to build up its defences as a counterweight to US influence in the Middle East. From China's perspective, the emergence of additional power centres, albeit far from its borders (such as Iran in the Middle East), will preoccupy the US, leaving South and Southeast Asia to be dominated by China.

Furthermore, the Chinese Communist Party's national goal of 'rich country, strong military' (*fuguo qiangbing*) bears remarkable resemblance to the BJP slogan of 'prosperous and powerful country'. Conversations with officials and strategic analysts reveal that the Chinese are concerned over the rise of the BJP as a major political force in Indian politics. Both parties also share remarkable similarity in economic outlooks and policies. Both India and China desire a peaceful security environment to concentrate on acquiring comprehensive national strength underpinned by solid economic-technological base. Both suffer from a siege mentality borne out of Indian and Chinese elites' acute consciousness of the fissiparous tendencies that make their countries' present political unity so fragile. After all, much of Chinese and Indian history was made up of long periods of internal disunity and turmoil when the centrifugal forces brought down even

the most powerful empires. China has as much interest in the stability and sustenance of multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-religious states as India, leading each to embark on a resurgence of nationalistic sentiments to maintain control. The combination of internal issues of stability and external overlapping spheres of influence will forestall the chances for a genuine Sino-Indian rapprochement.

In the power competition game, while China has surged ahead by acquiring economic and military capabilities underpinned by a clear policy to achieve broader strategic objectives, India has been impeded in its great power quest by its incessant political instability and economic weakness. The existing asymmetry in international status and power serves Beijing's interests very well; any attempt by India to challenge or undermine China's power and influence or achieve strategic parity will be strongly resisted through a combination of military and diplomatic means. China does not want to see India raising its power, stature, and profile regionally or internationally. That is why Chinese strategists have long argued that China's pursuit of great power status is a historical right and perfectly legitimate but India's pursuit of great power status is illegitimate, wrong, dangerous and a sign of hegemonic, imperial behaviour.⁶⁹ For its part, New Delhi has long accused Beijing of doing everything it can to undermine India's interests and using its ties with other states to contain India.

In the triangular power balance game, the Sino-Pakistan military alliance (in particular, the nuclear and missile nexus) is aimed at ensuring that the South Asian military balance of power is neither pro-India nor pro-Pakistan but remains pro-China. Unrestrained Indian power could eventually threaten China's security along its soft underbelly—Tibet and Xinjiang. Allowing India to do anything that alters the South or Southeast Asian strategic balance so significantly in favour of India is not something that China can swallow without retaliating in kind.⁷⁰ And Beijing will take all means possible, including war, to ensure that the regional power balance does not tilt in India's favour. For instance, China is now openly using its nuclear and missile technology transfers to Pakistan both to intimidate India and coerce the US into curbing its arms sales to Taiwan. Senior Chinese foreign policy adviser Yan Xuetong has publicly attributed China's increased missile transfers to Pakistan to a recent pro-India shift in US's South Asia policy, especially 'the US acceptance of India as a *de facto* nuclear state'.⁷¹ While most Chinese remain sceptical about India's future believing that India's fractious polity will limit its economic and

military potential, others call for the strengthening of China–Pakistan–Myanmar axis because acceptance of South Asia as India's sphere of influence would undermine China's role and stature as the pre-eminent power in Asia. Most agree that China has very limited expectations from India, which can be broadly described as 'four no's':⁷²

- (a) do not align with the US and/or Japan to contain China;
- (b) do not hinder the Sino-Pakistani strategic partnership;
- (c) do not support Tibet or Taiwan's independence; and
- (d) do not see and project yourself as an equal of China or as a counterweight to China.

For its part, India seems equally determined to disappoint China on all four counts. Reversing its past official stand that India's 'look east' policy had nothing to do with any threat or competition from China, in November 2002 Vajpayee for the first time publicly acknowledged that there is a 'healthy competition' between India and China. This statement indicates that India is going to adopt an aggressive strategy to counter China's influence in Southeast and East Asia.⁷³ It is also a sign that unlike in the past, India's approach towards China is no longer timid and deferential. India's 'look east' policy clashes with long-term Chinese objectives and interests in Southeast Asia, making the two competitors for influence in Asia. India has already made it clear that if Beijing asserts its presence in the Indian Ocean, then New Delhi would be more assertive in the East and South China Seas. There seems to be little give-and-take in the bilateral relationship. Though many Indian analysts claim that China's five-decade-long India policy has failed because 'China has not succeeded in its strategic objective of either unravelling India or boxing it within the subcontinent,' the Chinese believe that their 'contain India' policy has paid rich dividends over the decades by keeping New Delhi preoccupied with subcontinental concerns.⁷⁴ The ongoing policy debates in Beijing indicate that there has been no perceptible shift in China's India policy. If anything, China's stance towards India may have somewhat hardened. Nuclear India now seems to have assumed the same place in the Chinese calculus of deterrence, war-gaming, and military exercises that the former Soviet Union had during the Cold War years. In other words, in terms of large-scale ground military operations, India

is now seen as China's number one land-based threat since Beijing's other military engagements (for example, in the Taiwan Straits and the South China Sea) are primarily air/maritime in nature.

In short, the root cause of the volatile and strained Sino-Indian relationship lies in Beijing's determination to prevent India from playing a role it once played as a civilisation and New Delhi's counter-containment strategies. Just as Chinese strategists advise their government to nurse its grievances and bide its time vis-à-vis the US, India's hardliners want their country to nurse its grievances regarding China and bide its time and strike at an opportune moment in the future. Many Indian strategic analysts and opinion makers want their country to take a leaf out of China's book and vigorously pursue its national interests in the same way the Chinese pursue theirs. They argue that⁷⁵

- (a) if the Chinese claim to have a 'flexible and evolving policy' on Sikkim, India too should have a 'flexible and evolving position' on Taiwan and Tibet—issues left over from history;
- (b) if Beijing does not adhere to a 'one India' policy, New Delhi need not stick to a 'one China' stance;
- (c) if China does not show respect for India's territorial integrity by showing three states of the Indian Union outside India's borders in China's official map, then India's official maps should show imperial China's territorial acquisitions—Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjiang—from the alien Mongol and Manchu empires outside China's territory;
- (d) if the Chinese play a double game on the Kashmir issue, India should do the same on the Taiwan issue;
- (e) if China backs Pakistan's stand on Kashmir or supports its resolution as per the UN Security Council Resolution, India should play 'the Tibet card' and demand the implementation of UN General Assembly Resolution 1353 (1959) on Tibet and the safe return of 200,000 Tibetan refugees living in India;
- (f) if the PLA claims that the Indian Ocean is not India's ocean, the Indian Navy cannot accept the South China Sea as China's sea. If China acquires naval bases in Pakistan and Myanmar, India should seek the use of naval bases in Vietnam, Taiwan, and the Philippines for forward deployment of Indian naval assets.

- (g) just as Chinese leaders offer military support and economic aid to 'India-wary countries', India could take a leading role in 'the China-wary club';
- (h) if China can justify nuclear/missile assistance to Pakistan as part of 'normal state-to-state relations', India can do the same with respect to its 'all-weather friends' Vietnam and Mongolia. After all, they argue, China has not taken out an exclusive patent on trade in nuclear/missile technologies;
- (i) if Beijing plays host to Pakistani or Bangladeshi leaders at the time of heightened tensions in South Asia, New Delhi should play host to Taiwanese, Vietnamese or Filipino leaders at the time of tensions across the Taiwan Strait or in the South China Sea; and
- (j) if China chides India for raising its defence spending, India should do the same for Beijing's double digit increases in its military outlays.

Should India engage China in a tit-for-tat game, bilateral relations will remain adversarial for a long time to come as both strive for great power status in the same geostrategic region. This means that a resurgent India will face a rising China, which will ensure a conflict of interests between the two giants unless their power competition is managed carefully. An indication of India's growing confidence and assertiveness came on 17 January 2001 when New Delhi timed the successful test-fire of its *Agni-II* ballistic missile, which is capable of reaching China while Chinese leader Li Peng was still on Indian soil. From New Delhi's perspective, this was a tit-for-tat for Beijing's nuclear detonation during the Indian President's state visit in 1992. Furthermore, the day Li Peng arrived in India on an official visit, Prime Minister Vajpayee was holding talks with leaders in Vietnam—the country that was attacked by China when Vajpayee as India's Foreign Minister was visiting Beijing in 1979. More recently, much to Beijing's chagrin, India attempted to spoil China's party by offering to set up a Free Trade Area (FTA) with ASEAN over the next 10 years, a day after the signing of a China-ASEAN FTA in Phnom Penh in November 2002. In other words, China-India relations will be marked more by rivalry and competition than cooperation even though both will want to keep the competition as muted as possible and for as long as possible.

While they are potential competitors for power and influence in Asia, China, and India also share common interests in maintaining

regional stability (for example, combating the growing Islamic fundamentalist menace), exploiting economic opportunities, maintaining access to energy sources and markets, and enhancing regional cooperation. Cooperation could allow them to balance US influence and increase their negotiating positions with the sole superpower. On economic, environmental and cultural issues, they may have far more reason to cooperate than to collide. As the two largest developing countries, China and India also seek a more equitable, just, and fair international economic order so that the developing world can better benefit from globalisation. Improvement in China-India relations will also depend upon Beijing's assessment of India's evolving political cohesion, economic growth, and military potential. It is possible that an economically prosperous and militarily confident China and India might come to terms with each other eventually as their mutual containment policies start yielding diminishing returns.

Economic growth underpinned by growing strategic might is making India's foreign policy increasingly assertive whereas China's regional surrogate, Pakistan, is fast becoming an economically bankrupt and politically dysfunctional state.⁷⁶ In its revised appraisal of the South Asia policy, China may well realise that its strategy of check-mating India through Pakistan (or Myanmar) is no longer a viable one. Beijing is already concerned that the US will reach out to India as part of a larger balance of power effort to develop a strategic partnership with key Asian states to counter a rising China. A desire for stability on its southwestern flank and fears of an Indian-Pakistani nuclear arms race have also caused Beijing to take a more even-handed approach, while still favouring Islamabad. There is little doubt that future relations between India and China, the world's two most populous nations, are critical both to Asian and global security. A lasting global and regional security structure cannot be built without finding a place for both China and India. There is a growing consensus, as Li Peng told President Narayanan, that 'big issues in the world cannot be resolved without China and India'⁷⁷ and the Asia-Pacific region is certainly big enough to accommodate both China and India.

However, unless and until a genuine attempt is made to resolve contentious issues (such as the territorial dispute, Beijing's nuclear and missile proliferation in India's neighbourhood, Sikkim's status, and India's bid for a permanent UN Security Council seat) amicably, the future of Sino-Indian relations remains bleak and there can be no genuine Sino-Indian rapprochement. India will continue to react to

China's policy initiatives—whether on Pakistan, Tibet, Myanmar or on the nuclear and missile proliferation front. If overt nuclearisation was an attempt to break free of the straitjacket put on India by China and the West, New Delhi's efforts to form strategic partnerships with the US, Japan, Taiwan, and Vietnam are a response to Beijing's containment and encirclement strategy. As noted earlier, Chinese policy makers' preference for a balance of power approach in inter-state relations has led them to provide military and political support to those countries that can serve as counterweights to Beijing's perceived enemies and rivals. However, this 'containment through surrogates' strategy can be a win-win strategy as long as it does not drag China into regional conflicts and/or impinges negatively on China's strategic and economic interests. Unfortunately, Beijing's choice of its regional allies and balance of power politics in the nuclear age has turned out to be a double-edge sword; it cuts both ways. The net result is more insecurity for China.⁷⁸ If the past is any guide to the future, Beijing's attempts to force New Delhi to play second fiddle are doomed to fail because historically, culturally, and civilisationally, India never played second fiddle to China.

Asia has long seen a strong China and a weak India. There have been numerous occasions in history when China and India were simultaneously weak; there have been occasional moments of simultaneous cultural efflorescence; but for more than half a millennium, Asia has not seen the two giants simultaneously economically and militarily powerful, and that too in close proximity with overlapping spheres of interest. That time seems to be approaching fast. And it is likely to result in significant new geopolitical realignments in the region. Much as India would like to remain an independent power picking and choosing its own friends, China's grand strategy, especially Beijing's choice of regional allies to achieve its broader strategic goals, is pushing India into the coalition of anti-China states. It is not so much a clash of civilisations as a clash of the two 'Middle Kingdoms', which had historically dominated in eastern and southern Asia respectively, or rather a clash of identical worldviews, similar aspirations and interests of two giants. One China-watcher has succinctly summed up Chinese attitudes towards India: 'China perceives India to be an ambitious, overconfident yet militarily powerful neighbour with whom it may eventually have to have a day of reckoning.'⁷⁹ By the year 2025, the two Asian giants will have acquired formidable power-projection

military capabilities containing weapons of increasing range, accuracy, and destructiveness for the conduct of high-intensity conflict.

CONCLUSIONS

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, India and China are poised for an intense geopolitical rivalry as both strive for great power status. Historic rivalries and their strategic cultures suggest that a fair amount of tension between these continent-sized neighbours is inevitable. In the international status stakes, it is China with which India wants to achieve parity. India and China share similar aspirations towards status and influence, with China further advanced in its achievement than India. And this inevitably introduces a more competitive aspect into the Sino-Indian relationship. The Chinese know India is the only Asian country determined to resist China's pre-eminence in Asia by developing the full spectrum of economic and military capabilities. Despite some improvement in the rhetoric and the atmosphere, Sino-Indian ties remain fragile and unstable, and as vulnerable as ever to sudden deterioration as a result of misperceptions, unrealistic expectations, accidents, and eruption of unresolved issues.

Despite customary denials by Beijing and New Delhi to the contrary, India-China relations will remain competitive, if not conflictual, for the simple reason that the two giants are engaged in a battle for supremacy in overlapping areas of influence and are determined to emerge as major powers on the world stage. India's 'look east' policy, which envisions high-level engagement with the ASEAN, Japan, Taiwan, and the US, is bringing Indian military and economic interests into China's claimed sphere of influence, including the East China Sea and the South China Sea. Any US tilt towards or alignment with India will prompt the Chinese to tighten their embrace of India's smaller neighbours, which will, in turn, prompt India to respond in kind. It is in their dealings in their immediate neighbourhoods that the patterns and perceptions of the past appear most obvious, and provide contradictions and conflicts for the present and future. Just as Pakistan and Bangladesh see China as a stabilising influence in South Asia, East Asian countries, such as Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Australia see a strong India as a stabilising influence in the wider Asia-Pacific region. The net result is that India and China are locked

into a rivalry which appears unavoidable, inexorable, and is a rivalry which could result either in the voluntary submission of one of the rivals to the other, or a test of wills, or an agreement on keeping out of each other's sphere of influence or perhaps, a trial of strength by ordeal of battle.

It is safe to conclude that as in the past, China's foreign and defence policy initiatives will continue to be designed to reduce India to the status of a sub-regional power by increasing Chinese influence and leverage in India's general neighbourhood. If the twenty-first century's first decade indeed turns out to be India's decade (in terms of a rapid increase in its economic and military might) just as the 1990s were China's and the 1980s were Japan's, Beijing will have to devise new military and diplomatic strategies to keep India in check. Although India and China are likely to remain long-term, if not permanent, adversaries, their aspirations appear to be manageable. Just as the US and the Soviet Union did not go to war to counter each other's power or spheres of influence, India and China need not resort to use of force to neutralise each other's aspirations. The Asia-Pacific region is not only big enough to accommodate both India and China, it is in fact too big for any one country to dominate it without that domination having repercussions at the regional and global levels. The restoration of Tibet's autonomy and a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute could be powerful mitigating factors in Sino-Indian rivalry. Greater exposure and interaction at all levels will definitely help ease some of history's burdens. Constructing a bilateral relationship based on common security that jettisons the push and shove of balance of power politics could be a way out of the security dilemma. As Andrew Nathan and Robert Ross point out: 'The problem, for both the Chinese and their neighbours, is to find the balance point of common interests where security can be achieved for all.'⁸⁰ Otherwise, India and China will remain locked in competition for political, economic, and strategic supremacy with all the potentially destabilising consequences for regional security in Asia.

NOTES

1. For details, see J. Mohan Malik, 'China's Asia Policy: Restrain Japan, Contain India', *Japan Times* (Tokyo), 12 June 1999, p. 21.

2. Interestingly, China saw the former Soviet Union's military alliances with Mongolia, Vietnam, and Afghanistan not as part of 'normal state-to-state relations well within the purview of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence' but as 'containment' and made an end to such alliances a pre-condition for normalisation of Sino-Soviet relations in the 1980s.
3. John W. Garver, 'China and South Asia', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 519, January 1992, p. 72.
4. For example, China's territorial claims today in the South China Sea or on Tibet are based on the European notion of sovereignty. But in old Asia, there were no sovereign nation states with clear legal boundaries of jurisdiction and control. The inter-state order in pre-modern Asia was based on the principle of suzerainty and hierarchical, tributary political order.
5. The Indian position is that China continues to illegally occupy 38,000 sq. km of Indian territory in Aksai Chin in Indian Kashmir, besides the 5,180 sq. km in Shaksam Valley in Pakistani-held Kashmir ceded by Pakistan to China. On its part, Beijing lays claim to 90,000 sq. km of territory in Arunachal Pradesh. See J. Mohan Malik, 'China-India Relations in the Post-Soviet Era: The Continuing Rivalry', *The China Quarterly*, No. 142, June 1995, pp. 317-55; and John W. Garver, 'China and South Asia', pp. 68, 71.
6. P. Sawhney, 'Quiet as Gunpowder', *The Pioneer*, 21 November 2002; A. K. Joseph, 'India, China Fail to Exchange Border Maps of Western Sector', *Rediff.com*, 19 June 2002.
7. In an ever-expanding notion of Forward Defence, 50 years ago China could not feel secure if Tibet was not secure and under Beijing's control. Now China does not feel secure if Pakistan and Myanmar are not under Beijing's influence and control. See John W. Garver, 'The Future of the Sino-Pakistani Entente Cordiale', in Michael R. Chambers (ed.), *South Asia in 2020: Future Strategic Balances and Alliances* (Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, November 2002), pp. 385-447.
8. On the Sikkim issue, see P. S. Suryanarayana, 'China Stays Firm on Tibet, Sikkim', *The Hindu*, 27 June 2003 and J. Mohan Malik, 'India's Dragon Delusions', *Asia Times Online*, 17 October 2003, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/EJ17Df03.html>
9. For almost a decade, Beijing rejected India's proposal to issue a joint declaration against terrorism lest it was interpreted as a condemnation of Pakistan. For conflicting Sino-Indian perspectives on terrorism, see J. Mohan Malik, 'The China Factor in the India-Pakistan Conflict', *Parameters: US Army War College Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 1, Spring 2003, pp. 35-50.
10. In fact, within months of the Dalai Lama's flight to India following a failed uprising in Tibet, Chinese ambassador Pan Tzu-li wrote to Prime Minister Nehru in May 1959 warning that China would make common cause with Pakistan, thereby forcing India to face military and diplomatic pressure on two fronts. Apparently, the Indian government failed to see the writing on the wall. For details, see Steven Hoffman, *India and the China Crisis* (University of California Press, 1990), p. 61.
11. John W. Garver, 'China and South Asia', pp. 80, 83, 85.
12. For details see J. Mohan Malik, 'South Asia in China's Foreign Relations', *Pacific Review*, Vol. 13, No. 1, February 2001, pp. 73-90.

13. In an article titled 'Beijing as Guarantor of Pakistan's Security', a Russian weekly, *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* (*Independent Military Review*), reported that new security commitments were made to Pakistan by China post 9/11. Cited in PTI, 'Pak Offers China Monitoring Facilities on Makrana Coast', *The Hindustan Times*, 29 June 2002, p. 1.
14. On Chinese arms transfers to Pakistan, see PTI, 'China Steps Up Defence Supplies to Pak amid Tense Stand-Off', *The Hindustan Times*, 8 January 2002, p. 1; T.V. Parasuram, 'Chinese Entities Helped Pak in Nuke Weapon Production: CIA', *The Hindustan Times*, 9 January 2003, p. 1; 'China Must Stop Missile Supplies to Pakistan: US', *Reuters*, 30 November 2001; J. Leahy, 'US Warns China over Weapons of Mass Destruction', *Financial Times* (London), 22 January 2002, p. 6; J. Vandehei, 'Bush to Press China on Sales of Gear for Weapons of Mass Destruction', *Wall Street Journal*, 21 February 2002, p. 1; and B. Chellaney, 'China Frets over Indo-US Ties', *Washington Times*, 2 February 2002, p. 1.
15. 'Vajpayee: Keep Your Promise', *Washington Post*, 23 June 2002, p. B1.
16. For China's response to the India-Pakistan crisis post 9/11, see J. Mohan Malik, 'The China Factor in the India-Pakistan Conflict'; and PTI, 'China's Call for Restraint should be Directed at Pakistan: India', *The Hindustan Times*, 26 December 2001, p. 1.
17. R. Devraj, 'China Behind Pakistan's Missile Tests, Says India', *Pakistan Today*, 11 October 2002, p. 1.
18. J. Mohan Malik, 'Nuclear Proliferation in Asia: The China Factor', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 53, No. 1, July 1999, p. 37.
19. John W. Garver, 'China and South Asia', p. 81.
20. 'The China-Pakistan Alliance', *Jane's Intelligence Digest*, 7 June 2001; and J. Mohan Malik, 'China and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 22, No. 3, December 2000, pp. 445-78.
21. E. Ahrari, 'Nuclearised South Asia Faces an Uncertain Future', *Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter*, December 1999, p. 19.
22. In the past, successive Indian governments had carefully avoided publicly raising controversial issues with a view to maintaining cordiality in the negotiations between both countries.
23. Ye Zhengjia, 'Sino-Indian Relations in the Last Five Decades: Experiences and Lessons', *International Studies* [Beijing], Nos 12-14, 1999, pp. 17-27; and 'No Change in Stand on Nuclear Issue: China', *The Hindu*, 2 March 1999, p. 11.
24. R. Devraj, 'North Korea: China Also to Blame, Reminds India', *Asia Times Online*, 23 October 2002 <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/DJ23Df03.html>
25. R. Karniol, 'Myanmar Bolsters Coco Island Naval Facilities', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 8 January 2003; and J. Mohan Malik 'Myanmar's Role in Regional Security', in M.B. Peterson, E. Rudland, R. J. May (eds), *Myanmar: Strong Regime Weak State?* (London and Adelaide: C. Hurst & Co/Crawford House Publishing, 2000), pp. 241-77.
26. E. Ahrari, 'Strategic Moves in Southern Asia', *Far Eastern Economic Review* (hereafter, *FEER*), 28 June 2001; and D.R. Sands, 'China Suspected in Port Deal', *Washington Times*, 31 May 2001.

27. See P. Sharma, 'Delhi Wary of Dhaka-Beijing Defence Deal', *Telegraph*, 28 December 2002; and H. Habib, 'Defence Deal with China will not Hurt Ties with India', *The Hindu*, 30 December 2003, p.1.
28. In the mid-1980s, the Chinese foreign ministry toyed with the idea of renaming the Indian Ocean as Afro-Asian Ocean. A senior diplomat and South Asia expert, Zheng Ruixiang, asked the author about India's possible reaction to such a proposal. However, the Chinese apparently did not find any takers of the idea at that time. Besides, any proposal to rename the Indian Ocean would have opened a Pandora's Box with some Southeast Asian countries wanting to rename the South China Sea as the Southeast Asian Sea. Conversation with diplomat and academic Zheng Ruixiang, Australian National University, Canberra, August 1986.
29. G. Parthasarathy, 'The Growing Sino-Pakistan Nexus', *The Pioneer*, 23 May 2001.
30. Private conversation with Maldives' diplomats and officials, September 2002-January 2003.
31. A. de Borchgrave, 'Strategic Stuff Happens', *Washington Times*, 10 February 2003, p. 21.
32. 'We Will Defeat India in Software Battle: China', *Sifynews.com*, 10 March 2002; and I. Basu, 'Move Over Japan, China Beckons Indians', *Asia Times Online*, 15 February 2003.
33. Smita Purushottam, 'Can India Succeed in Overcoming the Chinese Colossus?', *Financial Express*, 9 July 2002.
34. Faced with growing Chinese strategic pressure as well as piracy on Japan's sea routes from the Persian Gulf to the South China Sea vital for its energy imports, some Japanese strategists have called for alignment with India and Vietnam. See Tomoda Seki, 'A Japan-India Front', *FEER*, 25 May 2000, p. 38; Jane's Information Group, 'Japan-Vietnam-India Ties', *Foreign Report*, 2 June 2000; and *Strategic Forecasting*, 'India Challenges China in South China Sea', *Stratfor.com*, 26 April 2000 <<http://www.stratfor.com/SERVICES/riu2000/042600.ASP>>
35. B. Barber, 'Indian Navy Exercises Seen Apt to Irritate Beijing', *Washington Times*, 8 May 2000.
36. Stratfor, 'Southeast Asia To Benefit From India-China Rivalry', *Stratfor.com*, 15 April 2002.
37. C. Raja Mohan, 'China's Back Door', *The Hindu*, 7 April 2002.
38. PTI, 'China Unhappy with India's Offer', *The Hindu*, 12 April 2002, p. 1.
39. Cited in 'India's "Look East" Policy: Changing the Asian Strategic Landscape', *AsiaInt Special Reports*, March 2001, p. 9.
40. Diwakar, 'India Plays China Card in Japan', *The Economic Times*, 12 December 2001, p. 1; and Stratfor, 'Japan, India Looking to Counter China', *EIU ViewsWire*, 12 December 2001.
41. Also see J. Mohan Malik, 'Japan Wary of Assertive China', *Jane's Intelligence Review* (hereafter, *JIR*), Vol. 12, No. 12, December 2000, pp. 22-25.
42. AFP, 'Taiwan, India in Secret Military Cooperation: Report', 2 January 2002. Full report in 'Wo he Indu mimi zhan kai junshi hezuo', *Lianhe xinwen* (Taipei), <<http://udnnews.com/CB/NEWS/FOCUSNEWS/POLITICS/647735.shtml>>

43. See 'India Deserves UN's Permanent Seat: Taiwan', *The Indian Express*, 5 September 2002, p.1. Taiwan's move came soon after Beijing reversed its decades-long position on not backing the candidature of any country and came out in support of Germany's permanent membership in April 2002 despite the fact that 'rich and white Europe' is already over-represented in the UN Security Council. Perhaps, Taiwan's move was also aimed at discrediting China's pro-Third World credentials. Ironically, India had played a leading role in getting China into the UN, which resulted in Taiwan losing its membership in the world body.
44. See J. Mohan Malik, 'Missile Defence Shield Set to Boost US-India Partnership', *JIR*, Vol. 13, No. 6, June 2001, pp. 50-51 and J. Mohan Malik 'China Edgy Over Clinton's India Visit', *The Pioneer*, 2 March 2000, p. 9; M. Pillsbury, 'Chapter 3: Japan and India: Dangerous Democracies', in M. Pillsbury, *China Debates the Future Security Environment* (Washington, DC: National Defence University Press, 2000), pp. 62-81; Zhai Dequan, 'Current Situation of International Disarmament and Arms Control', *International Studies* (Beijing), Nos 7-10, 2000, p. 39.
45. Z. Khalilzad, Jonathan D. Pollack and David T. Orletsky, *The United States and Asia: Toward a New US Strategy and Force Posture* (Santa Monica, CA.: Rand Corporation, 2001), pp. 203-31; and M. Moran, 'Why We Should Play the India Card: An Opportunity Squandered', MSNBC.com, 18 July 2001.
46. Cited in M. Pillsbury, *China Debates the Future Security Environment*, p. 63; and 'India's N-Plan Has US Support', *People's Daily Online*, 7 September 2001.
47. Song Yimin, 'Opportunities and Challenges China Faces before 2010', *International Studies* (Beijing), Nos 7-10, 2000, p. 9.
48. Ren Xu, Qian Feng, Fang Hua, 'Mei Ri dou la long Indu: Genben mudi shi ezhi Zhongguo' ('America and Japan Rope in India: Their Basic Objective is to Contain China') *Renmin Ribao* (*People's Daily*), 30 April 2001, p. 4; and P. Chawla, 'Desperately Seeking India: Indo-US Military Alliance', *India Today*, 19 November 2001, pp. 12, 15.
49. G. Parthasarthy, 'Tomorrow's Security—Missile Defence', *The Pioneer*, 10 May 2001, p. 8.
50. J. Mohan Malik, 'The China Factor in the India-Pakistan Conflict'; E. Luce, 'Indian Navy Agrees to Protect US Shipping', *Financial Times* (London), 6 February 2002, p. 10; and V. Thapar, 'India, US Begin Joint Patrolling', *The Hindustan Times*, 19 April 2002, p. 1.
51. See Rong Ying, 'Can India Become a Military Power?' *Beijing Review*, 28 February 2002, pp. 14-15. Beijing has also cautioned Israel and France against expanding their military collaboration with India as it could 'endanger peace and stability in South Asia'. PTI, 'China cautions Israel against selling AWACS to India', *The Times of India*, 28 December 2001, p. 1.
52. See G. Friedman, 'India and the Great Eurasian Game', Stratfor.com, 4 June 2001. Currently, the Sino-US economic ties are much stronger than Indo-US economic links.
53. G. Freidman 'India and the Great Eurasian Game'; and Stratfor, 'US and India Seek to Boost Military Relations', Stratfor.com, 30 May 2001.
54. Khalilzad et al., *The United States and Asia*: A. Perlmutter, 'Upgrading India', *Washington Times*, 28 March 2000; and M. Ayoob, 'India Matters', *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 1, Winter 2000, pp. 27-39.

55. Tajikistan shares India's concerns regarding the China-Pakistan nexus. India has reportedly set up a military base in Tajikistan and the two countries have scheduled joint military exercises. Despite the negotiated settlement of the territorial dispute between China and Tajikistan, there remain strong undercurrents of resentment over the border deal, which made Tajikistan surrender more than 1,000 sq. km of its territory to China. Remarks by Dr Abdullayev, Tajikistan Institute of Strategic Studies, Honolulu, 13-14 February 2003. Also see, Stratfor, 'India Stepping Up Diplomacy in Central Asia', Stratfor.com, 9 August 2002.
56. 'China serious threat to India: Vision 2020', Newsinsight.com, 10 December 2002.
57. D. Padgaonkar, 'China Wants India to Shed Old Ideas', *The Times of India*, 5 October 2002, p. 1.
58. A. Scobell, "'Cult of Defence" and "Great Power Dreams": The Influence of Strategic Culture on China's Relationship with India', in M.R. Chambers (ed.), *South Asia in 2020: Future Strategic Balances and Alliances* (Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College: November 2002), p. 342.
59. Conversation with an American academic, January 2002. Similar views are often expressed by Chinese diplomats and policy analysts at various fora.
60. M. Pillsbury, *China Debates the Future Security Environment*, pp. 70-73; and A. Scobell, "'Cult of Defence" and "Great Power Dreams"', p. 343.
61. M. Pillsbury, *ibid.*, p. 148. The wariness with which many Chinese view India is evident in the tongue-in-cheek observation made decades ago by the Chinese writer and philosopher, Hu Shi: 'India conquered and dominated China culturally for twenty centuries [via Buddhism] without ever having to send a single soldier across her border'. Quote is taken from <<http://www.quotesandsayings.com>>
62. This assessment is based on the author's conversations with China's South Asia specialists and policy makers during 1998-2000.
63. 'India's ambitions [are seen] as threatening China's fundamental security interests', writes Jing-dong Yuan, 'India's Rise After Pokhran II: Chinese Analyses and Assessments', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 41, No. 6, November/December 2001, p. 993; and Shao Zhiyong and Xu Xiangjun, 'Interview with Professor Hu Siyuan of NDU', *Guangming Ribao*, 15 November 2000, in Foreign Broadcasting Information Service—China (FBIS-CHI), 20 November 2000.
64. Chen Tieyuan, 'People are Concerned over India's "Dream of Becoming a Great Power"', *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao*, 8 May 2001, cited in A. Scobell, "'Cult of Defence" and "Great Power Dreams"', p. 342.
65. Conversations with Chinese analysts, Beijing, 1-4 September 2001. However, it is certain that China will not be under the rule of the Chinese Communist Party in 2049.
66. See Zou Yunhua, *Chinese Perspectives on the South Asian Nuclear Tests*, Working Paper, Centre for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University, January 1999, p. 21.
67. In China, 'multipolarity' is often expressed in terms of 'saving' others from 'US hegemony' while in India, 'multipolarity' is expressed in terms of 'saving' itself and others from US and Chinese 'hegemony'.

68. One reason, of course, was that India-China ties are the weakest link in the proposed triangle because of 'the Pakistan factor', which hinders fostering close ties between New Delhi and Beijing.
69. The Chinese do not want to see India playing a role beyond South Asia. See Chen Tieyuan, 'People are Concerned over India's "Dream of Becoming a Great Power"', *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao*, 8 May 2001 trans. in *FBIS-CHI*, 8 May 2001; and Shao Zhiyong, 'India's Big Power Dream', *Beijing Review*, 12 April 2001, p. 10.
70. Chinese analysts argue, 'growing Indian and ASEAN naval cooperation could impinge upon China's maritime interests'. Cited in Yuan, 'India's Rise after Pokhran II', p. 987.
71. S.V. Lawrence, 'Non-Proliferation: China's Perspective', *FEER*, 20 July 2000, p. 18; Also see J. Mohan Malik, 'China Plays "the proliferation card"', *JIR*, Vol. 12, No. 7, July 2000, pp. 34-37; and A. Koch, 'China gives missile aid to Pakistan', *JIR*, Vol. 12, No. 8, August 2000, p. 5.
72. See Chen Tieyuan, 'People are Concerned over India's "Dream of Becoming a Great Power"', *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao (China Youth Daily)*, 8 May 2001, trans. in *FBIS-CHI*; Shao Zhiyong, 'India's Big Power Dream', *Beijing Review*, 12 April 2001, 10; and J. Mohan Malik, 'South Asia in China's Foreign Relations'. Many Chinese strategists believe that 'India possesses an ambitious, belligerent, and expansionist strategic culture'. writes Andrew Scobell, "'Cult of Defense" and "Great Power Dreams"', p. 342. Information here is also based on author's discussions with China's South Asia specialists during 2001-2002.
73. N. Kumar, 'India, China Competitors: Defines PM', *The Indian Express*, 9 November 2002, p. 1.
74. B. Verma, 'To become an alternate power hub ... India must adopt a two-pronged strategy vis-à-vis China', *The Pioneer*, 3 February 2003, p. 7. The Indian Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha argued recently 'India and China are too large and too strong to be contained or cowed down by any country, including each other'. See A. Baruah, 'China-Pak Nuclear Links Cause Concern: Sinha', *The Hindu*, 28 January 2003, p. 1.
75. The arguments here are made in and cited from 'India cannot trust China: Former Army Chief', *The Indian Express*, 1 January 2003, p. 1; R. Srinivasan, 'A Millennia-old tussle', Rediff.com, 22 November 2002; Jane's Information Group, 'Asia's new power balance', *Foreign Report*, 31 May 2001; B. Chellaney, 'No Syrupy Sentiment, Please', *The Hindustan Times*, 17 May 2000 and 'Twin Timing China', *The Hindustan Times*, 14 June 2000; V.K. Grover, 'Enter the Dragon', *The Hindustan Times*, 26 May 2000; B. Karnad (ed.), *Future Imperilled: India's Security in the 1990s and Beyond* (New Delhi: Penguin-Viking India, 1994), pp. 46-47; R. Thakur, 'India was Wrong to Test, but What can the World do?', *The International Herald Tribune*, 19 May 1998; and B. Verma, 'To become an Alternate Power Hub'. Most analysts argue that the nuclear missile collusion between Beijing and Islamabad must not go unanswered and unpunished.
76. Beijing is aware of the growing disenchantment in Washington's policy circles with Islamabad's half-hearted measures against the al-Qaida and the perception that Pakistan is 'double-dealing' with the US. J. Hoagland, 'Nuclear Enabler: Pakistan Today is the Most Dangerous Place on Earth', *Washington Post*,

- 24 October 2002; and T. Anthony, 'Alliance with Islamabad Shaky from Start', *Washington Times*, 11 January 2003, p. 8.
77. Agencies, 'Is China Dithering on the Border Question?' *The Pioneer*, 1 June 2000.
78. For example, reports about India's nuclear energy cooperation with Vietnam and missile collaboration with Taiwan indicate New Delhi may have decided to have its own 'Israel' to counter Beijing's 'Israel' (Pakistan). See R. Puri, 'Partnership with Vietnam', *The Hindustan Times*, 8 December 1999; AFP, 'Taiwan, India in Secret Military Cooperation: Report', 2 January 2002. Full report in 'Wo he Indu mimi zhan kai junshi hezuo', *Lianhe xinwen* (Taipei), <<http://udnnews.com/CB/NEWS/FOCUSNEWS/POLITICS/647735.shtml>>
79. G. Klintworth, 'Chinese Perspectives on India as a Great Power', in R. Babbage and S. Gordon (eds), *India's Strategic Future: Regional State or Global Power?* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), p. 96.
80. A.J. Nathan and R.S. Ross, *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress: China's Search for Security* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), p. 231.