TAKSHASHILA INSTITUTION

Contours of a New Modus Vivendi with China

Manoj Kewalramani

Takshashila Discussion Document 2024-18
Version 1.0, October 2024

This paper recommends a pathway for India to arrive at a new *modus vivendi* in its relationship with China. It further contends that Indian strategy should be focussed on expanding national power and dealing with China from a position of strength, while building new mechanisms of engagement and scrutiny.

Recommended Citation:
Manoj Kewalramani, "Contours of a New Modus Vivendi with China," Takshashila Discussion Document No. 2024-18, October 2024, The Takshashila Institution.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

This paper recommends a pathway for India to arrive at a new modus vivendi in its relationship with China. It argues that volatility is likely to be the norm in the India-China dyad owing to certain structural factors. However, it is in the interest of both sides to ensure a certain amount of stability and predictability in the relationship. In order to do so, this paper contends that Indian strategy should be focussed on expanding national power and dealing with China from a position of strength, while building new mechanisms of engagement and scrutiny.

This document has been formatted to be read conveniently on screens with landscape aspect ratios.

Please print only if absolutely necessary.

Author

Manoj Kewalramani is Fellow, China Studies, and Chairperson of the Indo-Pacific Studies Programme at the Takshashila Institution, Bengaluru.

I. The Current State of India-China Relations

Historically, the relationship between the modern Indian and Chinese states has been characterised by strands of cooperation, competition and even conflict. These continue to co-exist, although increasingly both countries seem to be viewing each other through the threat rather than opportunity prism. This has meant that competition and volatility have become the defining characteristics of the relationship. This situation is likely to persist for the foreseeable future, owing to three structural factors.

First, both countries are rising powers and major economies. Over the past three decades, India and China have witnessed simultaneous expansion in their respective interests and capabilities, which has led to greater friction. On legacy issues, such as the disputed land boundary between the two countries, the enhanced capabilities have resulted in greater friction and jockeying for advantage. For instance, on more than one occasion, Chinese officials have cited India's border infrastructure development as being among the reasons for the standoff in Eastern Ladakh. Likewise, assessments by Indian security officials and former diplomats have argued that infrastructure improvements are leading to more frequent engagements between

the two forces as well as enhanced mobilisation capacities. India and China's simultaneous rise has meant that both now have coinciding and expanding circles of interests, which are leading to new sources of friction. This has been evident in New Delhi's frustration with Beijing's deepening engagement in the Indian subcontinent and the Indian Ocean Region. The advancement of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, regardless of Indian protests that it violates India's sovereignty, along with Chinese investments and arms sales in the Indian subcontinent are examples of this phenomenon. Likewise, India's increasing public criticism of Chinese policies in the South China Sea, and its calls for transparency in development projects[1] and prevention of unsustainable debt, underscore a fundamental clash of interests.

Second, while both countries have experienced a simultaneous rise, the pace of this growth has been sharply uneven, favouring China. Consequently, structurally, there now exists a deep power asymmetry between the two countries. From a state of near parity in the early 1990s, the Chinese economy has grown to be more than five times the size of the Indian economy. In addition, over the years, China has been far more effective than India in channelising the gains from rapid GDP growth towards the development of human capital and hard power capabilities. For instance, as of March 2024, UNDP Human Development Index ranks China at 75, faring far better than India, ranked 134, on key social indicators regarding health and

education. Improvements along these parameters are significant factors in sustaining the gains made in alleviating poverty, which is again an area in which China's record has been far stronger than India's. In addition, rapid GDP growth has permitted China's defence spending to expand significantly in absolute terms, while officially hovering at around roughly 2% of GDP. China's official defence budget for 2024 was estimated at around $230 billion. That's more than any country in the world except the United States, and roughly three times India's defence allocation in the same period. Despite the recent slowdown in China's growth, this gap is unlikely to be bridged anytime soon. Consequently, India appears to have not only sought to invest in its expanding economic development and defence capabilities but has also pivoted towards greater external balancing, with partners like the US, France, Australia and Japan.

Third, the shifting balance of power between the United States and China, the changing nature of their bilateral engagement and the churn in the global order towards greater chaos and conflict are impinging on Sino-Indian ties.[2] The past decade has witnessed the gradual re-emergence of great power competition, with the United States and China being the chief protagonists. While there exist significant disparities, assessed on broad metrics of power, the two countries are today *the* dominant global actors. Competition across all domains — ideology, geopolitics, security, economics, and science and technology — is increasingly becoming the dominant prism in

both Beijing and Washington. That said, nearly three decades of economic globalisation has built deep linkages between Chinese and American economic and science and technology ecosystems. It has also resulted in the creation of an unprecedented web of interconnected supply chains, powering the global economy. The Chinese economy is central to these networks and the health of the world economy. Shattering these bonds, therefore, will be a lengthy process and will come at significant costs. Both China and the US also have their own grievances with the existing architecture and are engaging in a certain degree of revisionism. However, neither appears to be driven by a revolutionary zeal to upend the UN-centered system. More importantly, even if revolution were an ambition, both are evidently inhibited by the constraints of their resources, capacities, domestic politics and global appeal. Consequently, as part of this competition, both sides are seeking to tilt the balance of power in their favour. In this context, India is a key pivot state, with both Washington and Beijing adopting very different approaches to influence policy in New Delhi.

Beijing has repeatedly publicly stated that it wants both India and China to "view their bilateral relations in the context of the once-in-a-century changes in the world."[3] In this context, it has largely sought to use tools of coercion to shape and constrain India's options. In doing so, it has also demonstrated increased risk-tolerance and willingness to use force, likely emboldened by

perceptions of superiority in terms of the bilateral balance of power. Over the past decade, Chinese policies have shifted from being unaccommodating of India's interests and rise to being hostile and adversarial. This has been evident in several domains. For starters, there has been a steady escalation of tensions along the disputed land boundary. The ongoing standoff between Indian and Chinese forces in Eastern Ladakh is now in its fifth year, with both sides having 60,000 forward-deployed troops. Over the years, China has also repeatedly blocked the listing of Pakistan-based terrorists on the ISIL and Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee of the U.N. Security Council and steadfastly refused to acquiesce to India's membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group or its bid for a permanent UN Security Council seat. This has been the case despite repeated high-level diplomatic attempts at a thaw — capped off by the two informal summits in Wuhan in 2018 and Mamallapuram in 2019. Consequently, any future India-China engagement is likely to be encumbered by low levels of political trust, tensions along what is likely to remain a live border, and Beijing's anxieties regarding a rising India and its deepening ties with the US. Any cooperation, even at multilateral forums, is likely to be difficult and transactional.

The United States, on the other hand, has sought to build a deeper strategic partnership with India. This has been driven by a convergence of interests and shared values. Over the past two decades, the India-US relationship has grown by leaps and bounds.

The United States is among India's biggest trading partners. Security ties have also strengthened, particularly picking up pace after the signing of foundational defence agreements. For instance, the US designated India as a Major Defense Partner in 2016. As per the US Department of State, defence trade with India has expanded from near zero in 2008 to over $20 billion in 2020.[4] This is expected to further expand and deepen.[5] The two countries are also now cooperating more deeply in the exchange and development of critical and emerging technologies.[6] There has also been greater diplomatic and intelligence engagement between the two sides, across a range of issues. In particular, the US has played a key role in augmenting India's capabilities to counter threats, particularly through intelligence and defence cooperation. It is also noteworthy that the official US Indo-Pacific Strategy[7] expressly supports India's rise and regional leadership. Evidently, both sides today appear to view the relationship as strategically symbiotic, rather than a transactional arrangement.

That said, New Delhi is observing the shifting dynamic of cooperation and contention in Sino-US relations. Indian policymakers and analysts do not tend to view the US-China relationship as a zero sum game. Rather, they believe that it exhibits strands of cooperation—albeit deeply strained—and contention. India's engagement with both, therefore, is primarily rooted in pragmatism, prioritising strategic interests, while being mindful of

factors like geography, values and legacy. Issue-based tents rather than ideological camps is what India prefers. This has necessitated maintaining a certain degree of strategic autonomy.

Consequently, in responding to the fluidity in Sino-US ties, New Delhi has worked to deepen its relationship with Washington while adjusting to a new, factious equation with Beijing. In addition, it has sought to diversify its outreach with a broader set of partners through new minilateral arrangements, or issue-based coalitions. India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar explained this dynamic, saying that "we are now entering a world of greater plurilateralism."[8] The key aspect of this, he added, would be the emergence of "greater localization and arrangements of pragmatism."

To conclude, it is important to underline that beyond history, geography, political mistrust and trade imbalances, there are structural dynamics that are driving Sino-Indian competition. At the heart of all of this is a deeper, strategic contestation for the future direction of order in Asia. New Delhi believes[9] that the Asian Century — implying a "greater weight for Asia in the overall global calculus" — necessitates "a modus vivendi among its key players," resulting in a new form of multi-polarity. In addition, it stands against what it says is a vision of "narrow Asian chauvinism." China, on the other hand, views the future of the Asian order from the perspective of its geopolitical rivalry with the United States.[10] In this

context, it has frequently argued for building an Asia for Asians. In practice, its approach, however, has essentially stripped other actors of their agency and engendered a desire for unipolarity.

II. The Indian Debate on China

At the highest levels of government, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, who assumed office in March 2019, has emerged as the face of India's China policy, despite the dominance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This is likely the outcome of a political assessment made after Modi invested significant personal political capital in the relationship with China, with little to show for it. For instance, soon after he was sworn in as prime minister, Modi hosted Xi Jinping in Ahmedabad in September 2014. While the Chinese side reciprocated this effort at hometown diplomacy, frictions between the two sides persisted. In fact, ties hit a low during the 72-day standoff in Doklam. Subsequently, informal summits of 2018 and 2019 were devised as an effort to break through the cycle of mistrust and bureaucratic inertia. However, the PLA's encroachment at several points across the Line of Actual Control in Eastern Ladakh in May 2020, and the subsequent killing of Indian soldiers in the Galwan Valley clash in June resulted in that effort being aborted. Since the informal summit of October 2019, there has been no formal

bilateral meeting between Modi and Xi. Given the weakening of the BJP's majority after the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the political risk of another diplomatic misadventure would likely weigh heavy on the Indian Prime Minister's mind.

Following the Galwan Valley clashes, the Indian government took a series of actions targeting Chinese interests across diplomatic, economic and technology domains, while seeking to partner more closely with the US and its allies. In large part, China policy has since been shaped through Jaishankar's formulation that peace and tranquillity on the borders and respect for LAC are essential for normalcy in bilateral relations. This has not, however, impacted India-China dialogue at multilateral platforms or hurt bilateral trade, which has continued to expand. The increased use of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India–China Border Affairs (WMCC) as part of the dialogue process with regard to the standoff is indicative of the MEA taking the lead in defining the terms of overall engagement with China.

Jaishankar's dictum that "the state of the border will determine the state of the relationship" generally seems to have found resonance within the foreign service community and armed forces. For instance, while advocating for a strategic dialogue between New Delhi and Beijing, Ashok Kantha, former Indian ambassador to China, has stressed that improvement in bilateral ties should be "predicated on

the restoration of peace, tranquillity and stability in the border areas without compromising India's traditional patrolling and grazing rights along the LAC."[11] Former Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale concurred that Chinese actions in 2020 had brought the boundary issue "to the front and centre" of the relationship, which cannot be kept aside while one deals with other issues.[12]

Likewise, the public statements of India's military leaders have highlighted the need for greater preparedness and focus on Chinese activities along the land boundary and in the Indian Ocean Region. For instance, former Army Chief General MM Naravane has argued that the PLA's aggression in Eastern Ladakh was "not a bad thing", as it forced India from "shying away from calling out China as the No. 1 threat."[13] His successor General Manoj Pande was emphatic while in office, stating that the northern borders were the "primary front" going forward.[14] Chief of Naval Staff Chief Admiral Hari Kumar, meanwhile, has highlighted the threat of "salami slicing", expressed concerns about tensions in the South China Sea and indicated that maritime dialogue with China was at a standstill since ties were not normal.[15] In addition, increasingly, across India's defence academies and think tanks, there have been greater deliberations on dealing with the challenges presented by China's rise.

At a policy level, placing stability at the border at the heart of the relationship has meant that friction has bled into all dimensions of the relationship. Trade and investment have increasingly come under scrutiny, as have Chinese companies operating in India. People to people relations, which had been impeded by the pandemic, have only deteriorated further, with flight connectivity and travel between the two countries becoming highly restricted. At the same time, India has sought to intensify efforts at internal and external balancing. The stated objective of this approach is to arrive at a new *modus vivendi* with China, premised on the three mutuals, i.e., *mutual respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interest*.[16]

It is, however, clear that there are differences of opinion between and within different departments and ministries, when it comes to China policy. For instance, there are deep concerns among the political and business communities about the imbalanced nature of bilateral trade and the impact of heavily subsidised and cheap Chinese goods on India's manufacturing sector and job growth.[17] This was a critical factor in the Indian government's decision to walk away from the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership agreement.[18] Nevertheless, the Commerce Ministry has, on occasion, highlighted the importance of intermediate and capital goods imports from China, which support Indian exports and enable it to rise up the technology value chain.[19] Recent reports inform that key business groups, particularly those with a stake in consumer electronics,

automobiles and railways, would like some sort of easing when it comes to trade and economic engagement with Chinese entities.[20] At the same time, the Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal has baulked at any suggestion that the government is rethinking its restrictive approach vis-a-vis Chinese investments.[21] This came after the government's 2024 Economic Survey called for openness to Chinese capital.[22] In her post-budget press briefing, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman did not distance herself from that suggestion.[23] In fact, the reported creation of a new inter-ministerial panel to deliberate on Chinese investments in India appears to indicate that a rethink is underway.[24]

This debate is far from settled, as evident from the writings of the country's strategic affairs analysts. Those viewing China from a primarily security and threat-prism contend that arguments for opening up to Chinese FDI is a product of "poor thought-craft."[25] Others have argued that a selective, sector-specific approach to accepting Chinese FDI, particularly keeping in mind the needs of the electronics and technology sectors, can be beneficial to boost Indian manufacturing and link to global value chains.[26] In other words, in its relationship with China, India appears to be grappling to balance the competing objectives of security and development.[27]

Given this, China policy is increasingly acquiring far greater salience in India's domestic political discourse. The Indian parliament has

unfortunately not had a substantive debate on ties with China, despite calls for such a discussion over the past few years. However, if one were to use questions raised in Parliament and the April 2022 debate on the Russia-Ukraine war as a proxy, then there is ample evidence that there is growing concern around the impact of Chinese economic and security policies on India. Parliamentarians from parties like the Indian National Congress (INC), the Biju Janata Dal (BJD), the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) expressed concerns about an adversarial China.[28] In fact, while antagonism towards China might not excite the voter-base, given that the relationship does not seem to have the visceral, emotional appeal that frictions with Pakistan command, it is clear today that there is little upside for Indian politicians to appear dovish on China. This, however, does not imply that China policy can be de-politicised as some have called for.[29]

In March 2023, the INC issued a lengthy International Affairs Resolution. Unsurprisingly, the document was very critical of the NDA government's handling of Indian foreign policy. The resolution contained a paragraph on China policy, which criticised the government's "unstructured" handling of the relationship, but it was thin on policy solutions. The resolution called to "urgently enhance capabilities to deter China from attempting any military coercion along the LAC", "aggressively step up" efforts to attract manufacturing and assembly into India, and also referenced the

importance of freedom of navigation in the South China Sea.[30] In its manifesto prior to the 2024 elections, the INC mentioned as a goal to "restore the status quo ante on our borders with China and to ensure that areas where both armies patrolled in the past are again accessible to our soldiers."[31]

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's comments on China over the years have demonstrated a recognition of the national security challenges that the country poses. In his *Vijay Dashmi* speech in October 2020, he lashed out at China's "expansionist nature", while calling on the Indian government to move ahead with "caution and strategic preparation." "We need to surpass China strategically, economically, and diplomatically. We must keep doing this, only then will we be able to stop China," he added.[32] At a public event discussing global affairs in December 2020, Bhagwat went further, claiming that expansionism was in China's "basic nature."[33] He contended that China's policy was aimed at expanding its influence. In subsequent engagements, making a pitch for self-reliance, the RSS chief has argued for addressing trade dependencies, particularly with China. "If dependence on China increases, we will have to bow down to it," he told a gathering marking India's 75th independence day.[34]

Similar views on China have been echoed by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's (RSS) National Executive Member Ram Madhav, who also heads a prominent think tank called the India

Foundation. He has argued that Beijing is pursuing a policy of expanding its global reach, seeking to anoint itself at the top of the global hierarchy. Madhav has postulated that the world has entered a phase akin to the Cold War, wherein China is working to "displace the US as the hegemon."[35] In this context, it is seeking to export its model to other countries, thereby negatively impinging on the "democratic, free and liberal world order." In this context, he has supported the Indian government's assertions with regard to tensions in the South China Sea.[36] When it comes to China's growing influence in the Indian subcontinent, Madhav has argued that New Delhi must not view ties with neighbours simply from a China prism.[37]

Vijay Chauthaiwale, who heads the Foreign Affairs Department of the BJP, has generally been reticent about a detailed exchange on the India-China relationship. His views have largely supported the Narendra Modi-led government's policies, while targeting the opposition for its past engagements with the Communist Party of China. On occasion, he has expressed concerns on the proximity between China and Russia[38] and even indicated that "isolated skirmishes" between India and China on the boundary are likely to continue in the future.[39] Swaminathan Gurumurthy, another prominent thinker associated with the RSS, has argued that India and China are "spiritual cousins but political rivals."[40] He has contended that the "Chinese are empire builders" and "China is targeting India

because it knows that India is not its enemy but an impediment to its global ambition."[41] Gurumurthy has been particularly scathing in his criticism of US policy of engagement with China over the decades, arguing that it is American policies that have created a "Frankenstein's Monster."[42]

Historically, the Indian public has not had a very positive view of the Chinese Communist Party-led state in China. This is part of the legacy of the 1962 war. Both countries dealt with the memory of that conflict very differently. In China, until very recently, it barely figured in public or popular discourse.[43] In India, it left a deep scar on the nation's psyche. This was reflected in popular books, movies and songs. Indians felt deeply betrayed by a fellow Asian power, whose international socialisation Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had supported. The war, in many ways, also deeply challenged the sense of idealism and Asian romanticism that was once a feature of Indian foreign policy.

The normalisation of ties in the late 1970s started the process of repairing the relationship. By the first decade of the 2000s, one could argue that popular perception of China in India was truly shifting. This was partly due to the economic optimism around India and China being emerging economies and partly a product of the demonstration effect of China's phenomenal growth. For many Indians, China's remarkable growth story was a matter of inspiration.

This was evident in Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, referencing Shanghai's development as a model when talking about Mumbai's future, in 2004.[44] In the following years, trade, tourism, and educational and cultural exchanges grew.

However, escalating friction and political discord over the past decade, particularly since 2017, have dealt a severe blow to public perception. At its height, towards the end of the first decade of the 2000s, China's favorability rating among Indians was around 40%.[45] The most recent Pew survey found that Indians' perceptions of China had turned sharply negative since then. Negative opinions about China in India rose from 46% in 2019 to 67% in 2023.[46] Surveys conducted by Indian think tanks have also reflected the worsening of public and elite opinion in India.[47] Most of these have indicated weakened trust but a willingness to continue economic engagement.

Unsurprisingly, with heightened tensions along the boundary, particularly since May 2020, Indian media coverage of China has overwhelmingly been through the threat prism rather than an opportunity prism. Social media and television discourse in particular has been extremely shrill. This is reflected in the raucous civil society conversations around boycotting Chinese products or purported Chinese information and influence operations.[48] It is also evident in discussions around India's Tibet[49] and Taiwan[50] policies, calling for greater assertiveness by New Delhi. In a manner of speaking,

Beijing's actions have meant that it has lost the trust of at least a generation of Indians, particularly amid the rising tide of nationalism in India.

This is not to say that there isn't a strand of Asian Century optimism,[51] suspicion about America gaining from discord between India and China,[52] and civilisational romanticism[53] that persists. That said, the mainstream, dominant view appears to recognise the realities of geography, power, and the economic significance of China, resulting in a certain amount of pessimism about the relationship[54] along with pragmatism in policy discourse.[55]

III. The Duality in Chinese Discourse on India

There exist several versions of India in the Chinese imagination. Historically, Chinese writers, scholars and policymakers have viewed India through many different lenses. Ancient India was often considered a centre for spirituality and learning.[56] In fact, there was a time during the Han dynasty that India was described as *Tianzhu,* or Heavenly Jewel. But as the centuries wore on, this view faded into the background.

The writings of Kang Youwei, who visited India twice in the first decade of the 20th century, have perhaps had the most significant impact on modern Chinese thought on India. In his writings, Kang held up India's example as a warning for a China that was undergoing deep political churn. This approach of using India as an object to project Chinese political anxieties has been a motif in Chinese discourse about India. This process often entails the denigration of the other, while reinforcing one's own sense of superiority. In India, Kang saw the decline of a great, ancient civilization into colonial enslavement owing to deep disunity, a reluctance to change and fundamental social inequalities.[57] His warning was that China must be wary of such an outcome.

For many others at the time, encounters with Indian soldiers who were part of the British forces that launched campaigns in China through the mid-and late 1800s and the role of Indian trading communities in the opium trade shaped negative perceptions of the country as a "sub-imperial power."[58] In addition, leaders like Chiang Kai-shek saw the Indian freedom movement as lacking revolutionary zeal, determining this to be the product of an inherently weak and submissive Indian attitude.[59] This, of course, was distinguished from Chaing's aggressive and militaristic self-perception. Early leaders of the Communist Party of China imbibed some of these perspectives. In addition, they saw independent India as an inheritor of and collaborator with Western imperialism. From their viewpoint, the

modern Indian state was an expansionist entity that sought to hold on to vestiges of British imperial power. This was in sharp contrast to the People's Republic of China's policy of undoing the legacies of colonialism, particularly agreements that were termed unequal. India's adoption of the Westminster-style parliamentary system of democracy was also viewed as a "transfer of power" rather than a choice by a modern Republic of India.

In the first few years since India's independence and the formation of the People's Republic of China, such antagonistic strands of thought co-existed with significant friendly exchanges, both in the cultural or political domains.[60] India was among the first countries to recognize the PRC, with formal diplomatic relations being established in April 1950. In the subsequent years, there was steady engagement across domains, which was driven by the personal relationship between Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai. The early 1950s were an era characterised by intense top-level engagement between the leadership in both countries and efforts to build on shared interests, while adopting a cautious approach towards the more difficult issues like the boundary dispute. What drove this was the narrative around a shared historical experience of colonialism and pan-Asianism along with the imperatives of nation-building and the challenges posed by the emerging bipolar world order.

These ideas continue to resonate in modern-day Chinese discourse on India. Reportage of India in Chinese media tends to be limited but is frequently negative. Kang's depiction of India as a fragmented polity and backward society are reflected in Chinese media's coverage of the country, through constant stories of crime, corruption, and chaos. Dismissiveness, hostility and condescension are common in the tone of coverage with regard to India.[61] In fact, over the past decade, Chinese media outlets have adopted a far more acerbic, and sometimes even racist, tone with regard to India.[62] Indian democracy is often derided as an unsuitable system "grafted from the West"[63] and an impediment to the country's rise.[64] For instance, after the 2024 Lok Sabha elections resulted in the BJP needing coalition partners to form government, Lin Minwang, Deputy Director of the South Asia Studies Center at Fudan University, assessed that "continuous internal friction and strife" was a "typical characteristic of Indian politics."[65] This is, of course, inevitability juxtaposed with the apparent efficiency and representative nature of "whole-process democracy" under the Communist Party of China.[66] This contrast has become more prominent as the Communist Party has sought to intensify the projection of systemic influence globally.[67] While the underlying tone with regard to Indian democracy is derisive, it masks a certain sense of competition. It opens up the possibility that there is a deeper anxiety about what a politically plural, socially diverse and economically thriving democracy of a comparable size at the doorstep means for the legitimacy of the Communist Party's rule.[68] From a geopolitical perspective, the image of India as not simply

a regional irritant but rather an adversary is taking shape within China. This is evident in the public rise to prominence of PLA regiment commander Qi Fabao, who was involved in the Galwan Valley clash. It can also be seen in the unfavourable perceptions of India in public opinion surveys,[69] as it can be in the decision to include discussions about the 1962 war in new textbooks.[70]

Likewise, there is increasingly a competitive edge in official and analytical discourse around economic issues. Chinese scholars and analysts tend to discuss India's economic expansion and future potential with a unique blend of condescension and competition. The former is evident in comments highlighting how China's economic growth has outpaced India's over the past four decades. The latter is seen in writings that view India's economic policy and diplomacy primarily from the perspective of strategic competition with the United States and the worsening of bilateral ties with India.[71] Chinese analysts tend to assess Indian economic strategy as one premised on taking advantage of the West's anxieties with regard to China's dominance in key supply chains to present itself as an alternative. In their writings, they push back against any suggestion that India can be an attractive alternative investment destination for Western firms and a market that can rival the Chinese consumer market. In making this case, they tend to highlight challenges related to policy, regulatory and business environments in India; infrastructure limitations and inadequate supply chain development;

and issues related to labour rights and socio-political and cultural factors.

Some, like Hu Shisheng from the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, have explicitly argued for a restrictive policy when it comes to industrial chain transfers to India so as to avoid contributing to the country's development at the cost of China's development.[72] Others like Hu's colleague Wang Shida believe that India's development of manufacturing industries creates a significant demand for, and even dependence on, upstream and midstream sectors in China, which can help strengthen Sino-Indian economic and trade relations.[73] Such perspectives raise concerns about how open the Chinese government will likely be to facilitate manufacturing investments into India. That said, this is not simply an India-centric view among the analytical community in China. For instance, Peking University researcher Wei Xin has expressed concerns about China's transfer of low-end manufacturing capacities to other countries under the Belt and Road Initiative potentially leading to a hollowing out of the Chinese manufacturing base.[74] These arguments co-exist with persistent anger and frustration with regard to the treatment of Chinese enterprises in India and policies that are seen as denying Chinese capital access to the Indian market.

This duality is also present in Chinese discussions on Indian foreign policy. On one hand, Chinese scholars cast India's strategy of multi-

alignment as opportunistic hedging to seek advantageous positions. There is some grudging praise of this approach too. But in general, India is deemed to be an expansionist power — particularly with the rise of Hindu nationalism — that has hegemonic designs in the Indian Ocean Region.[75] It is also viewed as a status-seeking power that is trying to rid itself of the tag of a "poor and backward developing country" by aligning closely with the West and projecting itself as a "leading power."[76] The undercurrent in this line of thinking, of course, is that India is a power unequal to China. This is also underscored by the hierarchical diplomatic structuring of the world in Chinese official discourse. This classifies Russia, the US and Western European states or the EU as major powers, while India is viewed from the lens of peripheral diplomacy.

Contestation with India, therefore, is largely discussed from a regional lens or from the perspective of China's strategic competition with the US. Liu Zongyi, a researcher at the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, contends that India's strategic affairs elite "will never accept China becoming the dominant force in Asia."[77] Consequently, over the next decade, Indian policy will continue to be pro-US and confrontational with China. Liu even places the onus of the 2020 boundary clash on India's "highly speculative and risky" foreign policy.[78] Others like Fudan University's Zhang Jiadong have not gone as far to apportion blame. However, Zhang contends that Indian policy has shifted towards "a great power strategy," which entails diversified

major power relations or balancing among major powers and a more "assertive" foreign policy.[79] This viewpoint appreciates New Delhi's insistence on strategic autonomy, pointing out that India tends to act in its interests rather than simply following the US.

On the other hand, Chinese scholars also have a tendency to deny India agency, viewing the country as an instrument of American containment.[80] Discussions around India seeking to undermine the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation essentially at the behest of the US are a case in point.[81] Another example was the atrocious Global Times article attacking India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, accusing him of scuttling a thaw with China for the purpose of "pleasing the US."[82] This antipathy towards the minister has been fairly evident in Chinese discourse for some time,[83] although never expressed so directly, particularly in English language media.

Personalities aside, there is an undercurrent of acknowledgement among Chinese analysts that India and the US share a convergence of interests. In other words, the US is seeking to draw India into its orbit to contain China, and India is engaging with the US to further its own rise. Rong Ying, Vice President of the China Institute of International Studies, succinctly captures this viewpoint, stating that despite practical limitations, both India and the US "are getting what they need" from the relationship.[84] This line of thought tends to coexist with the argument that the India-US partnership faces significant challenges,

with New Delhi trying to maintain autonomy while Washington uses a vast array of tools, including interference in Indian domestic politics, to coerce it into obedience.[85]

Official statements from Chinese leaders and diplomats, however, have been far more circumspect. As mentioned earlier, there has been no formal meeting between Xi and Modi since the informal summit in Mamallapuram in October 2019. However, there has been relatively frequent engagement between the two foreign ministers, particularly at the sidelines of multilateral forums. At the official level, Chinese statements on the situation along the LAC in Eastern Ladakh have essentially called for India to accept the altered status quo. This has been expressed through terming the border as "generally stable"[86] and calls to place the border issue in an "appropriate position" in bilateral relations and not let it define overall ties.[87] On the surface, this language has eased in recent times.

For instance, Wang reportedly eschewed such framing in two meetings with Jaishankar in Astana and Vientiane earlier this year.[88] Instead, he said that China was willing to "explore the correct way for two big neighbouring countries to coexist," entailing "respecting each other, understanding each other, trusting each other, taking care of each other, and supporting each other's success."[89] This is essentially Beijing's counter-proposal to the Indian proposition of the three mutuals. Ambassador Xu Feihong summarised these as the five mutuals, i.e.,

mutual respect, mutual understanding, mutual trust, mutual accommodation and mutual accomplishment.

A close reading of these, however, does not indicate a shift in the established Chinese position. Expounding on these in the Indian media, Xu called for greater "dialogue and communication at all levels in various fields". He added that the two sides need to "view bilateral relations from a strategic perspective, form the right perception of each other, view each other's strategic intentions objectively, and stick to the right vision — that China and India are partners and development opportunities to each other instead of being rivals or threats."[90] On the boundary issue, he was rather clear that "the key is to form a correct perception of differences and handle them in a proper manner…our relationship is all-round and cannot be defined by certain differences, and our cooperation cannot be disrupted by a single incident."

That said, Chinese officials have been extremely cautious in not stressing discord with India in the past few months. In fact, there appears to have been a concerted effort at avoiding what had come to be termed as Wolf Warrior-style diplomacy, which had become commonplace in the aftermath of the Galwan clash. Beijing has been rather measured in response to recent statements from New Delhi with regard to the South China Sea or the visit of a US Congressional delegation to Dharamshala. Likewise, following the Quad leaders summit in Delaware in late September, the Chinese foreign ministry criticised the US but was

rather cautious in its remarks when it came to a specific question on India.[91] At the same time, since his appointment, Ambassador Xu has been engaged in quiet diplomacy, meeting with key stakeholders, and adopting softer public outreach through social media. While these are noteworthy developments, the above discussion underscores that it would be strategically imprudent for New Delhi to read too much into stylistic adjustments by Chinese officials. Instead, the focus should be on tangible changes in Chinese policy to accommodate India's interests and aspirations and engender stability and predictability in the relationship, which is critical for both countries' strategic ambitions. The following section proposes a pathway to this end.

IV. Towards a New Modus Vivendi

The past can often shine a light for future action. Despite the tense standoff in Sumdorong Chu in the Eastern Sector along the McMahon Line, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Beijing in 1988 provided the basis for the two countries to embark on a new path. The visit yielded a broad political understanding that the two sides would engage in more purposeful negotiations on the boundary issue while endeavouring to maintain peace and tranquillity in the interim. In addition, they would focus on developmental issues, seek

to better manage conflicts of interest where their peripheries overlapped and cooperate where broader interests coincided. In the years that followed, sustained engagement by both sides led to the inking of key agreements that helped keep the peace along the land boundary. It is worth bearing in mind that through much of the early phase of this process, soldiers from both sides continued to hold their positions in Sumdorong Chu. Disengagement from eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation only took place in 1995.

History seldom repeats itself; it does, however, tend to rhyme. The world today is far different from that of 1988 or even 1995. Decades of economic globalisation have created new dynamics of dependencies. Technological advancements have aided the transformation of business, politics and social interactions. And the international balance of power is undergoing a transition towards some form of uneven multipolarity. These shifts are leading states to redefine terms of engagement. Perceptions of risk and conceptualisation of security have expanded. A cascade of conflicts appears to be unfolding amid the major powers' inability to impose their will or act in concert. States are also increasingly looking inward, while seeking more fluid political alignments with international partners. In this background, great power competition between China and the US is shaping a new order and influencing the policy environment of countries like India. Amid this, neither extreme, i.e., a Cold War-style rivalry between China and the US or

a co-existence that results in American acceptance of Chinese primacy in Asia, serves Indian interests. A Cold War-like scenario narrows India's options and potentially places it on a volatile frontline. US accommodation of China fundamentally alters Asia's balance of power adversely for India.

Beijing appears to desire New Delhi's acquiescence of its primacy in Asia. This would entail India limiting the nature of its engagement with the US, maintaining economic openness to China and being accommodative of Chinese interests in the Indian subcontinent. In contrast, what New Delhi seems to want from Beijing is accommodation of its interests and aspirations as a rising power. This would require China to take into account Indian concerns across a wide range of domains, from the land boundary and trade to ties with India's neighbours and even at multilateral forums. In essence, it would entail China accepting multipolarity in Asia, despite the power differential with India. On the surface, these two propositions appear irreconcilable. Intense contestation, perhaps even confrontation or conflict, therefore, seems inevitable. Such an outcome is not necessarily in India's strategic interest, and calls for deeper thought on how a new normal can be arrived at in the relationship with China.

Good strategy is not about reconciling the irreconcilable. Instead, it entails maximising the resources at one's disposal to shape favourable

outcomes. In other words, rather than worry about the irreconcilable nature of the end states desired by each, the focus of Indian strategy and diplomacy should be on cultivating strength and creating new pathways that can enhance stability and predictability in ties.

To that end, this paper proposes the following:

First, Indian policymakers must grasp that bridging the power differential with China is key to negotiating a new modus vivendi. To achieve this, ensuring sustained economic growth and internal social stability are necessary conditions that allow India to invest in sources of strength that enhance its negotiating position. At a fundamental level this means avoiding unforced errors. Shifting the domestic political paradigm away from economic growth towards redistribution or enhanced state control over the economy will be deeply detrimental. Rather, policy must focus on better provision of better public goods, boosting economic freedom and being open to foreign capital, talent and technologies, development of infrastructure, military strength and science and technology capabilities along with improvements in education, employment and social security.

Second, on the specific issue of the standoff in Eastern Ladakh, disengagement should be the first step in a series that leads to normalisation. New Delhi must not accept the altered status quo as

the new normal. Restoration of lost patrolling rights should be central to any final resolution to the standoff. That said, considering the current circumstances, any meaningful movement to resolve the boundary issue is highly unlikely. There is little evidence that the Chinese leadership is interested in a resolution. In fact, given the nature of negotiations during the standoff in Eastern Ladakh, it is clear that Beijing is likely to continue to leverage the boundary dispute to pressurise New Delhi. In addition, China today boasts of the world's largest navy, which is rapidly developing blue water capabilities. Although basing will remain a long-term challenge for China, it is only a matter of time that a Chinese carrier group sails through the Indian Ocean. Indian policymakers and military leaders must, therefore, be prepared for a certain degree of volatility in the years ahead. Consequently, it is imperative to strengthen deterrence capabilities, and be prepared to escalate when faced with aggression in order to deter and/or achieve de-escalation. This calls for significant enhancements in India's defence budget, and better rationalisation of expenditures to facilitate greater firepower development. Simultaneously, efforts to enhance border infrastructure must continue, and support for border populations must be intensified. With regard to the specific boundary and confidence building agreements that India and China have inked over the years, there needs to be sustained diplomatic engagement to upgrade these to take into account changes in both sides' infrastructure build-up, deployment capacities, technological

capabilities, etc. For guarantees on paper to be adhered to, they need to be backed by force and modalities for dialogue between military commanders at different levels to prevent accidental escalation.

Third, both sides need to demonstrate greater imagination to restore a broader dialogue process. Such a process need not immediately be a high-profile leader-level affair. However, eventually, having periodic meetings between the Chinese President and the Indian Prime Minister are critical. Given the extreme concentration of power by Xi Jinping, head-of-state diplomacy, as the Chinese term it, will be essential as the fulcrum for a broader process. It is important to note that for all the sabre-rattling, keeping the peace with India is also in China's interest, given its increasingly adverse external environment and economic uncertainty at home. The objective of this engagement is to place the relationship within a broader strategic context, deepen understanding of each other's interests and policies, clarify red lines along with negotiating modalities of adherence to them by each side, be it along the disputed boundary or within each other's peripheries, and cooperating where interests coincide. This will take time and patience. Leaders can give directions but the interpretation and implementation has to happen at the levels of ministries and lower bureaucracies, with a particular focus on establishing mechanisms for exchanges on strategic and economic issues and on climate change adaptation and mitigation. In addition, India must seek an annual dialogue of the Special Representatives of

India and China on the Boundary Question. While a resolution of the boundary issue may be a long way away, New Delhi must insist on clarity with regard to Chinese territorial claims, including exchanges of maps.

Fourth, India needs to experiment with new approaches to address the development versus security dilemma in its relationship with China. China having greater stakes in the Indian economy is strategically beneficial. The key is to ensure that the stake does not translate to greater ability to coerce. The framework of policy, therefore, should be one of de-risking rather than decoupling. In terms of trade, this entails diversifying partnerships with other actors, being open to Chinese intermediate goods that support technological advancement and exports, and taking restrictive measures to blunt Chinese subsidies in sectors related to emerging technologies and those that are critical to national security. At the same time, India must remain open to Chinese capital and talent, particularly those that aid the development of India's manufacturing sector and deepen linkages with global value chains. This is not to argue that there isn't any need for scrutiny. In fact, a more robust scrutiny mechanism is needed rather than the current ad hoc process. This paper proposes the establishment of a new investment review mechanism with clear guidelines, conditions and timelines. This will engender greater predictability for industry, and ensure adequate democratic oversight. As part of this process, it is necessary to delineate a narrow

set of sub-sectors as critical from a national security perspective and therefore walled off from Chinese entities. Likewise, it is important to approve a set of sectors and sub-sectors where capital can flow through the automatic route.

Fifth, India must remain open to deepening engagement with the Chinese people. Deeper people-to-people exchanges are an asset for both sides. There is, in fact, an urgent need to cultivate a uniquely Indian perspective on Chinese polity, economy and society. This will not happen if channels of engagement, including digital access to open source information, are blocked. Furthermore, lack of engagement is likely to accentuate the threat of misperception and misinterpretation of interests and actions. Indian policy should support exchanges among students, scholars, universities, think tanks, tourists and the entertainment and media sectors. The answer to concerns around espionage and information and influence operations is not to wall off our societies.

Finally, India must continue to deepen its partnerships with the US and other international actors. In doing so, it must stress to Chinese interlocutors that ties with other actors are driven by Indian interests and not directed at any third party. It is highly unlikely that Beijing will accept any assurances from New Delhi in this regard. Assuaging Beijing's anxieties, however, should not be the goal of Indian policy. That would be tantamount to lending a veto to China on the nature

and extent of India's external partnerships. Instead, Indian policy should focus on leveraging external partnerships to build strength across domains. This can help shift the calculus of relative balance of power vis-a-vis China.

As the discussion above has shown, the PRC has historically viewed India as an inferior, regional actor. Hollow rhetoric that is not backed by capability will not remedy this. Only cultivating greater national power through internal and external balancing and dealing with Beijing from a position of strength on bilateral and international issues can remedy this perception. In other words, India does not merely need to enhance its comprehensive national power, it also needs to emerge as a major power in the Chinese mind. This approach could likely lead to some testy exchanges. But, on the whole, it is likely to be a far more effective method to facilitate more meaningful engagement between the two countries.

V. References

1. "Official Spokesperson's response to a query on participation of India in OBOR/BRI Forum," Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 13 May 2017, https://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/28463/official+spokespersons+response+to+a+query+on+participation+of+india+in+oborbri+forum.
2. Nitin Pai and Lt. Gen. Prakash Menon, "India's Path to Power: Strategy in a World Adrift," The Takshashila Institution, October 2, 2021. https://takshashila.org.in/research/indias-path-to-power-strategy-in-a-world-adrift.
3. "China, India promise to improve bilateral relations," *Xinhua*, 3 March 2023, https://english.news.cn/20230303/9ae6ffaf42e246bcb572afdd5909fa14/c.html.
4. "U.S. Security Cooperation With India," US Department of State, 20 January 2021, https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-india/.
5. "FACT SHEET: United States and India Elevate Strategic Partnership with the initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET)," The White House Briefing Room, 31 January 2023, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/01/31/fact-sheet-united-states-and-india-elevate-strategic-partnership-with-the-initiative-on-critical-and-emerging-technology-icet/.
6. The White House. "FACT SHEET: United States and India Elevate Strategic Partnership with the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET)." The White House, January 31, 2023. https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/01/31/fact-sheet-united-states-and-india-elevate-strategic-partnership-with-the-initiative-on-critical-and-emerging-technology-icet/.
7. "Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States," The White House, February 2022, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf.

8. "Keynote address by the External Affairs Minister at the 5th Indian Ocean Conference 2021," Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 4 December 2021, https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/34599/Keynote+address+by+the+External+Affairs+Minister+at+the+5th+Indian+Ocean+Conference+2021.
9. "Remarks by External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar at the launch of Asia Society Policy Institute," Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 29 August 2022, https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/35662/Remarks_by_External_Affairs_Minister_Dr_S_Jaishankar_at_the_launch_of_Asia_Society_Policy_Institute.
10. "Foreign Minister Qin Gang Meets the Press," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 7 March 2023, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/wjbz_663308/2461_663310/202303/t20230307_11037190.html.
11. Ashok Kantha, "Resetting India-China ties in an era of tensions: Beyond the 'New Normal' at the Border." Hindustan Times, May 4, 2024. https://www.hindustantimes.com/opinion/resetting-india-china-ties-in-an-era-of-tensions-101714831623599.html.
12. StratNewsGlobal. "Need Fresh Start With China: Former Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale" Youtube video. August 18, 2024. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIPO3RjhoOg
13. ThePrint. "Chinese Aggression at LAC in 2020 Was 'Not a Bad Thing', Says Former Army Chief Gen Naravane." February 11, 2024. https://theprint.in/defence/chinese-aggression-at-lac-in-2020-was-not-a-bad-thing-says-former-army-chief-gen-naravane/1962528/.
14. Baruah, Sanjib Kr. "Exclusive: 'China Our Primary Front Now', Says Army Chief Gen Manoj Pande." *The Week*, August 27, 2023. https://www.theweek.in/theweek/cover/2023/08/19/chief-of-army-staff-general-manoj-pande-exclusive-interview.html.
15. Singh, Dalip. "India Is Not in Dialogue With China on Maritime Challenges, Says Indian Navy Chief." BusinessLine. December 1, 2023.

https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/india-is-not-in-dialogue-with-china-on-maritime-challenges-says-indian-navy-chief/article67595079.ece.

16. "Remarks by External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar at the Launch of Asia Society Policy Institute." n.d. Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/35662/.
17. Patnaik, Ila, and Ajay Shah. "The Case for Trade Barriers against Chinese Imports." *Business Standard*, June 24, 2024. https://www.mayin.org/ajayshah/MEDIA/2024/china_barriers.html.
18. "'My Conscience Won't Permit': Why PM Modi Decided to Keep India Away From the RCEP Trade Deal." News18. November 4, 2019. https://www.news18.com/news/india/my-conscience-wont-permit-why-pm-modi-decided-to-keep-india-away-from-the-rcep-trade-deal-2373631.html.
19. "India Has Highest Trade Deficit With China but Gap Narrowing: Goyal." *The Economic Times*, July 26, 2024. https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-has-highest-trade-deficit-with-china-but-gap-narrowing-goyal/articleshow/112041552.cms?from=mdr.
20. Chris Kay and John Reed. "Can India's economy thrive without China's help?". Financial Times. August 7, 2024. https://www.ft.com/content/5a2b4491-5687-4b11-872d-a4f51121bbb2
21. "No Rethinking on Supporting Chinese Investments in India: Goyal." *The Hindu*, July 30, 2024. https://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/no-rethinking-on-supporting-chinese-investments-in-india-goyal/article68463351.ece.
22. Business Today Desk. 2024. "Hindi-Chini, Buy-buy? Economic Survey Makes a Case for FDI From China Despite Ban." *Business Today*, July 22, 2024. https://www.businesstoday.in/union-budget/story/hindi-chini-buy-buy-economic-survey-makes-a-case-for-fdi-from-china-despite-ban-438220-2024-07-22.
23. Sarita Singh and Nikunj Ohri. "India's Finance Minister backs increasing Chinese direct investment", Reuters, July 23, 2024.

https://www.reuters.com/markets/asia/indias-finance-minister-backs-increasing-chinese-direct-investment-2024-07-23/

24. Rathee, Kiran. "Forbidden No More: India Begins OKing Chinese Proposals." *The Economic Times*, August 22, 2024. https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/forbidden-no-more-india-begins-oking-chinese-proposals/articleshow/112691334.cms.
25. Chikermane, Gautam, and Kalpit A. Mankikar. "India's Thought-Craft Needs to Be in Tune with Its Statecraft." *Observer Research Foundation*, August 1, 2024. https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/india-s-thought-craft-needs-to-be-in-tune-with-its-statecraft; Srinath Sridharan "Chinese FDI: A Strategic Gamble for India's Economic Future." *Businessworld*. Accessed July 27, 2024. https://businessworld.in/article/chinese-fdi-a-strategic-gamble-for-indias-economic-future-527425.
26. Shouvik Das. "FDI from China can help India increase value addition, exports." *Mint*. July 22, 2024. https://www.livemint.com/economy/economic-survey-china-fdi-electronics-export-china-plus-one-chinese-companies-electronics-semiconductor-11721645156051.html; Dhar, Biswajit. "Is India Ready to Welcome Chinese Capital Again?" *The New Indian Express*, August 9, 2024. https://www.newindianexpress.com/opinions/2024/Aug/08/is-india-ready-to-welcome-chinese-capital-again.; Krishnan, Anand P. "With or Without Chinese Companies Is the Question." *The Hindu*. September 9, 2024. https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/with-or-without-chinese-companies-is-the-question/article68619220.ece; Pranay Kotasthane, "Confronting Trade-offs for India's Electronics Manufacturing Success". Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. July 27, 2023. https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/cag/publications/center-publications/publication-article/detail/cib228-1
27. Note comments by Sanjeev Sanyal, member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, in October, calling for India to be open to Chinese capital and talents while defining a "sensible balance" when it comes to security concerns. https://www.msn.com/en-in/news/India/you-can-t-wish-away-

china-india-must-balance-economic-security-considerations-says-sanjeev-sanyal/ar-AA1rxez8?ocid=sapphireappshare. Also see, Seshadri, V. S. *The China Factor in India's Economic Security*. Policy Brief Vol. IX, Issue 24. New Delhi: Delhi Policy Group, September 26, 2024. https://www.delhipolicygroup.org/uploads_dpg/publication_file/the-china-factor-in-indias-economic-security-5195.pdf.

28. Manoj Kewalramani. "Special Post: Indian Parliament's Discussion on China". Tracking People's Daily. April 6, 2022. https://trackingpeoplesdaily.substack.com/p/special-post-indian-parliaments-discussion
29. Baru, Sanjaya. "Time to Restore Balance in India-China Relations." Deccan Chronicle. Accessed Sept, 2024. https://www.deccanchronicle.com/opinion/columnists/sanjaya-baru-time-to-restore-balance-in-india-china-relations-1820744
30. Indian National Congress. "International Affairs Resolution." Congress Sandesh. Accessed October 14, 2024. https://inc.in/congress-sandesh/national/international-affairs-resolution.[1]
31. Indian National Congress. "Introduction." Manifesto 2024. Accessed October 14, 2024. https://manifesto.inc.in/en/introduction/.
32. "RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat on China: Dussehra Speech in Nagpur RSS Headquarter." Navbharat Times, October 25, 2020. https://navbharattimes.indiatimes.com/india/rss-chief-mohan-bhagwat-on-china-dussehra-speech-in-nagpur-rss-headquarter/articleshow/78853847.cms.
33. Deeptiman Tiwari. "China Has Now Risen, Doesn't Care What World Thinks of It: RSS Chief." December 3, 2020. https://indianexpress.com/article/india/chihttps://indianexpress.com/article/india/china-has-now-risen-doesnt-care-what-world-thinks-of-it-rss-chief-7078718/
34. "Will Have to Bow before China If Dependence on It Increases, Says RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat." The Hindu. August 15, 2021. https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/decentralised-production-will-help-indian-economy-rss-chief-mohan-bhagwat/article35921971.ece.

35. Ram Madhav. "China as Broker of Peace: How Cold War 2.0 Is Heating Up." The Indian Express, August 23, 2024. https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/china-as-broker-of-peace-how-cold-war-2-0-is-heating-up-9478017/.https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/china-as-broker-of-peace-how-cold-war-2-0-is-heating-up-9478017/
36. Ram Madhav. "India's message to China: Respect the rules you expect everyone else to follow". The Indian Express. April 6, 2024. https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/india-china-mea-response-influence-beijing-9253623/
37. YouTube. "Ram Madhav on India's China Challenge." Posted by "India Today Global," June 11, 2024. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFoLOvybvjE[1].
38. YouTube. "Shaping a Global Order in Flux with Dr Vijay Chauthaiwale, In Charge, Foreign Affairs Department BJP." YouTube video. Posted by "India Global Forum," March 30, 2023. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqwrMaMXsZc.
39. "BJP's foreign affairs in charge Dr Vijay Chauthaiwale (@vijai63) says 'Pakistan use anti-India tactics for their survival' on Bilawal Bhutto's derogatory remark against PM Modi." Facebook video, 2:01. Posted December 16, 2022. https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=667483858442075.
40. Gurumurthy, S. (@sgurumurthy). "The US is trying to make Russia a pariah state. But Russia is not Iran or North Korea. It is too big, too powerful, too resourceful to be isolated. The US sanctions will hurt Russia. But they will hurt Europe more. And create a new financial order sans dollar." Twitter, February 28, 2022, 8:37 a.m. https://twitter.com/sgurumurthy/status/1498462985391841280.
41. Vivekananda International Foundation. "India and the Changing World Order." Podcast. October 21, 2022. https://www.vifindia.org/podcast/2022/october/21/India-and-the-Changing-World-Order.

42. Podcast – Vivekananda International Foundation. October 2021. https://www.vifindia.org/podcast/2022/october/21/India-and-the-Changing-World-Order
43. Yuanyue Dang. "Textbooks Teach Young Chinese More about National Security, Xi Jinping Thought." South China Morning Post. August 28, 2024. https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3276139/textbooks-teach-young-chinese-more-about-national-security-xi-jinping-thought.
44. Archive PMO. "PM's Speech at the Inauguration of the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations of the Utkal University." October 16, 2004. https://archivepmo.nic.in/drmanmohansingh/press-details.php?nodeid=136[1].
45. Pew Research Center. "China's Economic Growth Mostly Welcomed in Emerging Markets, but Neighbors Wary of Its Influence." December 5, 2019. https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/12/05/chinas-economic-growth-mostly-welcomed-in-emerging-markets-but-neighbors-wary-of-its-influence/.
46. Pew Research Center. "Indians' Views of Other Countries." August 29, 2023. https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2023/08/29/indians-views-of-other-countries/
47. Harsh Pant, Aditya Gowdara Shivamurthy, Shivam Shekhawat, and Sahil Deo. "The ORF Foreign Policy Survey 2023: Young India and the Multilateral World Order." Observer Research Foundation, February 2024. https://www.orfonline.org/research/the-orf-foreign-policy-survey-2023-young-india-and-the-multilateral-world-order; Manoj Kewalramani, Shrey Khanna, Ruturaj Gowaikar and Aneesh Jaganath. "How Indians View the World: Findings of India's Global Outlook Survey". February 22, 2022. https://takshashila.org.in/research/global-outlook-survey-2022
48. Law and Society Alliance. "Mapping Chinese Footprints and Influence Operations in India". August 2021. https://tibet.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/MAPPING-CHINESE-FOOTPRINTS-AND-INFLUENCE-OPERATIONS-IN-INDIA2.pdf
49. Vijay Kranti, "Xi's China Deserves a Diplomatic Surgical Strike by India on Tibet." Organiser, March 24, 2024. https://organiser.org/2024/03/24/228346/bharat/xis-china-deserves-a-

diplomatic-surgical-strike-by-india-on-tibet/; Jacob, Jabin T. "There's More to the Tibet Border Speech than Geopolitics." Deccan Herald, October 14, 2023. https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion

50. Dogra, A. "Should India Review Its One China Policy?" United Service Institution of India, February 10, 2023. https://www.usiofindia.org/strategic-perspective/Should_India_Review_Its_One_China_Policy.html; Pant, Harsh V., and Shashank Mattoo. "India's Taiwan Moment." Foreign Policy, August 19, 2022. https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/08/19/india-taiwan-diplomacy-politics-economics-shipping-semiconductor/.
51. The Telegraph. "Broad Vision: Editorial on India and China Working Together to Realise the Asian Century." October 11, 2022. https://www.telegraphindia.com/opinion/broad-vision-editorial-on-india-and-china-working-together-to-realise-the-asian-century/cid/1882281; The Economic Times. "India, China Should Cooperate Closely for Realisation of Asian Century: Think-Tanks Forum." November 30, 2019. https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/india-china-should-cooperate-closely-for-realisation-of-asian-century-think-tanks-forum/articleshow/72306515.cms?from=mdr.
52. Bhadrakumar, M. K. "Opinion: Why US Wants India-China Conflict to Simmer." Rediff.com, July 8, 2020. https://www.rediff.com/news/column/opinion-why-us-wants-india-china-conflict-to-simmer/20200708.htm.
53. B.R. Deepak. "India-China: Clash or dialogue between civilisations?". June 1, 2019. https://sundayguardianlive.com/opinion/india-china-clash-dialogue-civilisations-2; Sudheendra Kulkarni. "On China, BJP and Congress Must End Blame Game". November 23, 2023. https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/1962-a-knotty-legacy-9038439/
54. Datta-Ray, Deep K. "Tread Carefully." Open, October 14, 2022. https://openthemagazine.com/essays/tread-carefully; "Next 15 Years Will Be a Tough Period in India-China Ties, Says Ex-Foreign Secretary." The Hindu, September 11, 2024. https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/next-15-

years-will-be-a-tough-period-in-india-china-ties-says-ex-foreign-secretary/article68627267.ece.

55. Business Standard. "BS Manthan: India Should Chart Own Path to Shed West's 'China' Tag." March 28, 2024. https://www.business-standard.com/specials/bs-events/bs-manthan-india-should-chart-own-path-to-shed-west-s-china-tag-124032800750_1.html; Manoj Joshi, "India needs a two-track policy to handle China". Septemeber 10, 2024. https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/india-needs-a-two-track-policy-to-handle-china/; Kantha, Ashok K. "Weighing in on 'Business as Usual' with China." The Hindu, September 24, 2024. https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/weighing-in-on-business-as-usual-with-china/article68674839.ece.
56. Saran, Shyam. "How China Sees India and the World." Juggernaut, 2022. https://www.juggernaut.in/books/how-china-sees-india-and-the-world
57. Scobell, Andrew. "China's Real Strategic Culture: A Great Wall of the Imagination." Contemporary Security Policy 35, no. 2 (2014): 211-226. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0009445511048002091]; Idier, Nicolas. "Kang Youwei 康有爲 (1858-1927) and India: The Indian Travels of a Cosmopolitan Utopian." In India-China: Intersecting Universalities, edited by Anne Cheng. Paris: Collège de France, 2020. https://books.openedition.org/cdf/7566?lang=en.
58. Menon, Shivshankar. "India and Asian Geopolitics: The Past, Present." Brookings Institution. April 20, 2021. https://www.brookings.edu/books/india-and-asian-geopolitics/
59. Saran, Shyam. "How China Sees India and the World." Juggernaut, 2022. https://www.juggernaut.in/books/how-china-sees-india-and-the-world
60. Shang Quanyu, Sino-Indian Friendship in the Nehru Era: A Chinese Perspective. August, 2005. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/000944550504100302

61. For a detailed assessment, see The Alien Next Door: Media Images in China and India, Simon Shen and Debasish Roy Chowdhury in Routledge Handbook of China–India Relations by Kanti Bajpai, Selina Ho, Manjari Chatterjee Miller
62. South China Morning Post. "Chinese State News Agency Slammed over 'Racist' India Border Row Video." August 17, 2017. https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2107202/chinese-state-news-agency-slammed-over-racist-india.
63. Global Times. "China's 'dual carbon' goals not to affect economic growth: experts." August 30, 2021. https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202108/1232852.shtml.
64. Zhang, Jiadong. "India Loses Its Way with Major-Power Ambitions." Global Times, September 1, 2020. https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1199518.shtml.
65. Fudan University Institute of International Studies. "【环球时报-环球网报道记者 赵觉珵 白云怡 张玉滢】自4月19日开启投票的印度大选结果终于在当地时间6月5日凌晨揭晓." June 5, 2024. https://iis.fudan.edu.cn/61/d6/c6893a680406/page.htm.
66. Xinhua. "China: Democracy That Works." Xinhua, December 4, 2021. http://www.news.cn/english/2021-12/04/c_1310351231.htm.
67. South China Morning Post. "China and India Should Be Global South Anchors, Not Power Competitors." February 02, 2024. https://www.scmp.com/comment/opinion/article/3250458/china-and-india-should-be-global-south-anchors-not-power-competitors.
68. Zeng, Jinghan. "Constructing a 'New Type of Great Power Relations': The State of Debate in China (1998–2014)." The China Quarterly 228 (2016): 909-929. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10670564.2016.1245897.
69. Center for International Security and Strategy, Tsinghua University. "Chinese Outlook on International Security 2024." Tsinghua University, 2024. https://ciss.tsinghua.edu.cn/upload_files/atta/1727662169826_AD.pdf.
70. South China Morning Post. "Textbooks Teach Young Chinese More about National Security, Xi Jinping Thought." Accessed August 28, 2024.

https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3276139/textbooks-teach-young-chinese-more-about-national-security-xi-jinping-thought.

71. For a detailed discussion on this, see Manoj Kewalramani, Supply Chain and Market Scale: India as the Next China? Institut Montaigne. "China Trends #19: Hot Peace Between China and India." Accessed April 10, 2024. https://www.institutmontaigne.org/en/expressions/china-trends-19-hot-peace-between-china-and-india
72. "莫迪政府'对华产业替代'策略及其影响." China-US Focus. January 8, 2024. https://cn.chinausfocus.com/finance-economy/20240108/43096.html; The Indian Express. "Expert Explains: Why Anti-India Business Sentiment Is Growing in China." October 14, 2024. https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-global/why-anti-india-business-sentiment-is-growing-in-china-9596148/.
73. CFISnet. "王世达：印度大选后对华关系向何处去". June 05, 2024 http://comment.cfisnet.com/2024/0605/1330224.html
74. Center for Strategic and International Studies. "Economic Security Risks in Belt and Road Implementation and Their Control Methods." September 20, 2022. https://interpret.csis.org/translations/economic-security-risks-in-belt-and-road-implementation-and-their-control-methods/.
75. "中国财经信息网." Accessed June 26, 2024. https://web.archive.org/web/20240626100242/http://comment.cfisnet.com/2024/0618/1330302.html[1]
76. FX361. "中国新能源汽车产业发展现状及未来趋势分析." 06 April, 2023. https://m.fx361.com/news/2023/0406/21817303.html.
77. Renmin University of China. "李政远个人资料." Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies. Accessed October 14, 2024. http://rdcy.ruc.edu.cn/zw/jszy/lzy/lzygrzl/6d6959a338224dedafbbb971e3d51c40.htm[1].
78. "美国印太战略的形成，不仅有美国利用印度来遏制中国的一面，同时也是印度主动塑造对其有利战略格局的结果." 中国财经时报网, February 29, 2024. http://comment.cfisnet.com/2024/0229/1329580.html.

79. Zhang Jiadong, "What I feel about the 'Bharat narrative' in India". Institute of International Studies Fudan University. January 2, 2024. https://iis.fudan.edu.cn/en/d4/85/c38332a644229/page.htm
80. See, Li L, Tianjiao J (2023) From conceptual idea to strategic reality: 'Indo-Pacific Strategy' from the perspective of Chinese Scholars. Asian Perspectives 47(1): 101–119; Shanghai Institutes for International Studies. "上海国际问题研究院." 03 March, 2023. https://www.siis.org.cn/sp/14659.jhtml; Rajagopalan, Rajeswari Pillai. "Quad through Chinese Lens." Moneycontrol, October 14, 2024. https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/opinion/quad-through-chinese-lens-12829821.html.
81. "India deliberately "snubbing" China and turning to attend the G7 summit and visit Russia and China?" Baidu Baijiahao. July 12, 2024. https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1804368479871282740&wfr=spider&for=pc
82. Global Times. "India's diplomacy has a 'S. Jaishankar problem'. September 09, 2024. https://archive.is/2024.09.08-234416/https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202409/1319479.shtml#selection-1159.260-1159.294
83. Global Times. "With Jaishankar's reappointment, 'no major change in India's China policy anticipated'". June 12, 2024.https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202406/1314021.shtml
84. China Radio International. "近日，美国总统拜登在白宫会见了到访的印度总理莫迪，两国宣布签署一系列国防和商业协议，以推进军事和经济关系。" June 24, 2023. https://news.cri.cn/20230624/c875d91c-ec0d-c894-570f-7380ae4eb25f.html.
85. Guancha.cn. "刘宗义：中国经济增长的动力在哪里?." June 25, 2023.. https://www.guancha.cn/liuzongyi/2023_06_25_698065_1.shtml.; "观察者网用户." 观察者网. Accessed June 23, 2023. https://user.guancha.cn/main/content?id=1023728.; China Institute of International Studies. "China's Position on the Ukraine Issue." CIIS, March 17, 2022.

https://www.ciis.org.cn/english/COMMENTARIES/202203/t20220317_8456.html.

86. Institut Montaigne. "China Trends #19 - The Hot Peace Between China and India." April 2024. https://www.institutmontaigne.org/ressources/documents/china-trends-19-hot-peace-between-china-and-india.pdf.
87. Reuters. "India Could Ease China Investment Curbs if Border Stays Calm." January 18, 2024. https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/india-could-ease-china-investment-curbs-if-border-stays-calm-2024-01-18/.
88. Embassy of the People's Republic of China in India. "Wang Yi Meets with Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar." July 26, 2024. http://in.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/gdxw/202407/t20240726_11460593.htm.
89. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. "王毅会见印度外长苏杰生" [Wang Yi Meets with Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar]. July 4, 2024. https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/wjbzhd/202407/t20240704_11448249.shtml.
90. Embassy of the People's Republic of China in India. "The Five Guidelines to A Dragon-Elephant Tango." August 2, 2024. http://in.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/dsxxs/dshdjjh/202408/t20240802_11465769.htm.
91. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lin Jian's Regular Press Conference on September 23, 2024." September 23, 2024. https://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/xw/fyrbt/lxjzh/202409/t20240923_11495195.html.

1.

TAKSHASHILA INSTITUTION

The Takshashila Institution is an independent centre for research and education in public policy. It is a non-partisan, non-profit organisation that advocates the values of freedom, openness, tolerance, pluralism, and responsible citizenship. It seeks to transform India through better public policies, bridging the governance gap by developing better public servants, civil society leaders, professionals, and informed citizens.

Takshashila creates change by connecting good people, to good ideas and good networks. It produces independent policy research in a number of areas of governance, it grooms civic leaders through its online education programmes and engages in public discourse through its publications and digital media.