

CHINA IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

WHAT INDIA NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT CHINA'S WORLDVIEW

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I consider it a privilege to have been invited to deliver the Second Annual K Subrahmanyam Memorial Lecture, which gives me an opportunity to pay homage to the memory of a distinguished public servant, a meticulous scholar and one of India's great strategic thinkers. I thank Global India Foundation and its President Shri OP Mishra for according me this privilege. My own engagement with Shri Subrahmanyam goes back to 1979 when I met him, on the eve of my travel to Geneva as a United Nations (UN) Disarmament Fellow, on the advice of another very distinguished diplomat, the late MA Vellodi. I recall Secretary Vellodi telling me that there was no better informed and knowledgeable person in India who could acquaint me with the intricacies of disarmament and international security and India's own positioning in this domain. This began a process of education at the feet of an extraordinary individual, off and on, over the next three decades. There are scores of people like me who have imbibed a sense of India's geopolitical role, its strategic compulsions and opportunities and above all the need to undertake dispassionate and rigorous analysis of issues, though I am not certain how many of us would measure up to his high standards. Nevertheless, I feel emboldened today to offer you some ideas on a subject that he was convinced would remain a major preoccupation for India in the decades to come—the challenge of an ascendant China.

Much of what I say is drawn from my own experience of China, an abiding fascination with its unique civilisation and a deep respect for its philosophical

and cultural heritage. My justification for indulging in this rather broad sweep analysis is that managing the China challenge requires a much deeper understanding of the nature of Chinese civilisation, its cultural particularities and the worldview of its people, formed layer upon layer, over five thousand years of unbroken though sometimes tumultuous history. China is undergoing a dramatic transformation and its traditional culture and ways of thinking can no longer be sourced only to persistent templates derived from the past. One has to only look at how modern digital culture has pervaded Chinese society, in particular its youth, to be cautious in making judgments about the country's view of itself. Nevertheless, certain deep-rooted elements that shape China's psyche and its worldview are worth careful reflection, including where India fits into that broad consciousness. At various points, I contrast Chinese and Indian cultural and philosophical traits, so that one is better prepared in adjusting one's own template in judging Chinese behaviour.

If there is one singular and unique feature of Chinese civilisation that distinguishes it from other major civilisations, it is the use of Chinese ideograms and characters that survive with few changes to this day since they first appeared on oracle bones some three thousand five hundred years or more ago during the ancient Shang dynasty. Chinese language has no alphabet. Each character is a word in itself and a decent vocabulary requires memorising at least three thousand characters. A scholar may aspire to a vocabulary of five thousand. In the words of Peter Hessler (*Oracle Bones: A Journey through Time in China* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), "Classical Chinese ... connected people over space and time. ... It provided a powerful element of unity to an empire that from another perspective was a mishmash of ethnic groups and languages". After I had learnt Mandarin in Hong Kong in the early 1970s, I often communicated with the local Cantonese using my newfound knowledge of Chinese characters, because my Mandarin was as unintelligible to them as their Cantonese dialect was to me. What is to be appreciated in this context is the importance of the written word in Chinese culture and the transformation of ideograms into an essential element in aesthetics. Calligraphy is a much-admired accomplishment and characters appear as an integral component in painting as well as pottery.

Contrast this with Indian culture where the spoken word is preeminent. The ancient *Vedas* were heard as *Srutis* and were then remembered as *Smritis*. The written word came much later. *Mantras* are energised only when they are recited in the correct rhythm and tone. Beauty is imparted and sought through

arrangements of sound; imagery is not of the same order. To an Indian, Chinese music sounds stilted and archaic, while Indian classical music is a breathtaking mastery of seven notes and several microtones in between, forever reinventing itself. It is for this reason that I consider Chinese culture to be predominantly visual, a legacy of the ancient ideogram, while India's is a predominantly aural culture, where the spoken word, the musical note, the sacred *mantra*, have become the defining characteristics of the culture. This difference in civilisational trajectory has its impact on how the two cultures perceive the world around them and interact with one another. The emphasis on the written word led to an immense treasury of historical documentation in China. The Chinese pilgrims, Fa Xian and Xuan Zhuang left elaborate records of their journeys to India and its great universities of Taxila, Nalanda and Vikramshila. In contrast, while it is estimated that at the beginning of the sixth century AD, the number of Indian Buddhist monks and teachers in China was upwards of three thousand, no accounts of how they perceived their adopted country have surfaced so far. Only some legends survive in temples associated with the more famous among them, such as the Shaolin Temple linked with the Zen master Bodhidhama and the Fei Lai Feng temple or the Peak that Flew Over located in Hangzhou, associated with the Buddhist monk known only by his Chinese name, Huili. Huili came from Rajgir and chose the location of his temple at the foot of a peak that resembled Gridhkuta in his native town. Hence the Peak that Flew Over. The great value attached to the written word bound as it has been with Chinese aesthetics and the thought process of a complex culture has combined with an enormous and detailed historical record to provide a contemporary reference point and multifaceted prism through which the world is perceived. Even to this day much of Chinese discourse is conducted through historical analogies some of which are explicit and well known. Some are artfully coded and the language lends itself to innuendo and ambiguity. The contrast with India where history is often a distraction is apparent.

In Chinese diplomatic behaviour, this cultural particularity poses unusual challenges to any interlocutor or negotiator. The Chinese insistently demand and sometimes obtain explicit formulations from friends and adversaries alike on issues of importance to their interests, but rarely concede clarity and finality in formulations reflecting the other side's interests. Thus, there is the recurring demand that India reaffirm, time and again, its recognition of Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. In 2003, during Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's visit, China

conceded Sikkim as a part of India but this was not explicitly recorded in a written formulation. In 2005, during Wen Jiabao's visit to India, China went a step further and handed over maps of China, showing Sikkim as part of India. Recently, some Chinese scholars have pointed out that the absence of an official statement recognising Indian sovereignty leaves the door open to subsequent shifts if necessary.

I recall seeing the record of conversation between RK Nehru and Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai in 1962, some months before the border war erupted in October that year. RK Nehru drew attention to reports that China was leaning towards the Pakistani position that Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) was disputed territory. He recalled to Zhou an earlier conversation, where when asked whether China accepted Indian sovereignty over J&K, he had said rhetorically—has China ever said that it does not accept Indian sovereignty over J&K? or words to that effect. At this latest encounter, Zhou turned the same formulation on its head to ask: has China ever said that India has sovereignty over J&K? Much of the misunderstanding and lack of communication that has characterised India–China relations may be sourced to the failure on India's part to be conversant with Chinese thought processes. It is easy to accuse the Chinese of betrayal as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru did after the 1962 War, but a clear awareness that deception is after all an integral element of Chinese strategic culture may have spared us much angst in the past. Such awareness should certainly be part of our confronting the China challenge in the future.

Deception is not unique to Chinese strategic thinking. The *Mahabharata* has examples of its efficacy and Chanakya was an ardent advocate of it, but in China it is accorded a value much more significant than in other cultures. Many in this well-informed audience will be familiar with the Chinese classic *The Romance of the three Kingdoms* and the oft-quoted “Ruse of the Empty City” depicted therein, which is a favourite part of Chinese lore. This was resorted to by the famous Shu Kingdom general Zhuge Liang. The general was in danger of being besieged and overrun at the fortress city of Xicheng by the Wei army, while his main forces were located a long distance away. Zhuge ordered all the city gates to be opened and asked his soldiers to don the clothes of ordinary householders, going about their normal activities, while he parked himself on top of one of the city gates calmly playing the Chinese string instrument, the Qin. Wei general Sima Yi confronted with this strange spectacle suspected that he would run into an ambush as soon as he entered the city gates and withdrew

and the day was saved for Shu. Zhuge is also credited with the observation that “to win a war it is necessary to steal into the mind of one’s enemy, observe his thought processes and then fashion an appropriate strategy”. There is no moral or ethical dimension attached to deception and the Chinese would find it odd being accused of “betrayal”, in particular if the strategy of deception had worked. What is required from Indian strategists and diplomats is to understand this important instrument in the Chinese strategic toolbox and learn to deal with it effectively. Perhaps we should take to heart Zhuge’s advice and enter the mind of our Chinese interlocutor to judge his mental and psychological construct.

Another important feature of Chinese thinking is what I call “contextualising”. Significant decisions and actions must always be located within a broad assessment of economic, political, social and even psychological factors that constitute the stage setting for the proposed activity. This lends an inherent prudence to Chinese strategic thinking, but once events have brewed to the right mix and the timing is right, action is swift and decisive. The Chinese strategist may wish to avoid war, if it carries inordinate risks. However, the use of force is an essential and accepted part of pursuing national interests and war is not necessarily an unmitigated evil. The Indian attitude towards the use of force and the dangers of war is more ambiguous. The use of force is often seen as a failure of diplomacy and not an extension of it. This is an important difference between the two countries. The conversations between Nehru and Mao Zedong in 1956 on the nature of war reflect this clearly.

I illustrate this by examining some of the events leading to the 1962 border war. In January 2005, Chinese TV broadcast a documentary entitled *The Secret History of the China–India War*. This documentary is important for two reasons. It painstakingly spells out the domestic, regional and international context within which the decision to launch the attack against Indian border forces was taken. It refers to the hesitation within certain sections of the party leadership to “make an enemy out of India” at a time when China was still recovering from the ravages of famine and the disastrous consequences of the 1958–61 Great Leap Forward. The international situation was also judged to be unfavourable. The ideological conflict with the Soviet Union had become a state-to-state conflict. The United States (US) continued its hostile policies towards China and the Chiang Kai Shek regime in Taiwan had become more aggressive. This is an example of the “contextualising” approach. This probably corresponded to the assessment of the Chinese posture on the Indian side, that is, while border skirmishes would

continue China was unlikely to engage in a full-scale war.

However, from the summer of 1962 the “context” had begun to change and the clues to this change were missed by the Indian side. After having retreated to the “second line of leadership” in the wake of the failure of the Great Leap Forward, Mao plotted his return to absolute leadership, using the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) with the new Defence Minister Lin Piao, who replaced Marshal Peng Tehuai, as an ally. The TV documentary points to differences of opinion within the party leadership on the border issue, which it said was settled by the denunciation of those who counselled restraint as “Right opportunists”. While having temporarily ceded the administration of the party and the government to other veteran leaders like Liu Shaoqi and Peng Zhen, Mao appears to have taken charge of issuing directives to the PLA personally on handling border tensions with India. It was he who decided in August 1962 to engage in a full-scale military assault on Indian forces and to “liquidate the invading Indian army”, but only after his commanders had reported that the Indian side had neither the numbers nor the equipment to withstand a Chinese attack, particularly if the attack was of an unexpected scale. On the international front too there was a window of opportunity mitigating some of the constraints cited earlier. In June 1962, the Chinese ambassador Wang Bingnan had enquired from his US counterpart in Warsaw whether the US would take advantage of India–China border tensions to encourage a Taiwanese attack on the mainland. He obtained a categorical assurance which he claims in his memoirs played a big role in the decision to go to war with India. Thanks to the impending Cuban missile crisis, the Soviet Union sought Chinese support by conveying its intention to side with China in the border conflict with India. China may not have known about the looming US–Soviet crisis, but it certainly profited from the Soviet change of heart, temporary though this proved to be. Perhaps it is too much to have expected Indian decision makers to connect these dots together, but that is precisely what is necessary in dealing with China. The other example of the importance of contextualising may be seen through a contrary example. In 1971, during the Bangladesh War of Independence, the US and China were allies supporting Pakistan. Henry Kissinger tried to persuade the Chinese to attack India along the Sino–Indian border as a means of relieving pressure on their common ally Pakistan. In the papers of the White House Chief of Staff Alexander Haig, it is reported that he received a formal reply from the Chinese side conveying that China had decided not to move troops to the Sino–

Indian border. One may confidently surmise that the constraining “context” in this regard was the *Indo–Soviet Treaty, 1971*.

Lest anyone believe that Chinese strategists always get things right, I recall what happened in 1986 during the Wangdung Incident in the Eastern sector. In 1985, China began to signal that the so-called “package proposal” for resolving the border issue, essentially legitimising the post-1962 status quo was no longer on offer. In official talks, Chinese officials stated explicitly for the first time that since the disputed area in the eastern sector was much larger than in the western sector, India would have to make significant concessions in that sector and China would reciprocate with appropriate concessions (unspecified) in the west. It was also conveyed that at a minimum Tawang would have to be transferred to the Chinese side. When India pointed out that just three years ago in 1982 Deng Xiaoping had himself spelt out the package proposal as had been hitherto understood; the response was that India may have read too much into his words. The shift could have been related to a greater level of confidence following China’s rapid growth and the fact that a young and as yet untested prime minister had taken office in New Delhi. This was followed by the discovery in the summer of 1986 that the Chinese had crossed the Thagla Ridge and occupied a feature called Le, building permanent barracks as well as a helipad. In my view this was in some way linked to the hardening of the Chinese position on the border and the new insistence on India making concessions in the eastern sector. I accompanied Ambassador KPS Menon to lodge a protest with the then Chinese assistant foreign minister and was a witness to a most undiplomatic, offensive and vituperative harangue by the latter. He claimed that China was of course on its own territory, that it was only “strengthening border management” after the neglect of recent years and that India would be prudent not to overreact. Soon thereafter I was transferred from Beijing to Tokyo, but en route in Delhi I attended a strategy session called to discuss our countermoves. There was a reluctance to take any military countermeasures. However, a couple of weeks later I learnt that Army Chief General Sundarji had airlifted troops and occupied the parallel ridge, known by the peaks Lurongla, Hathungla and Sulunga overlooking the Sumdorong River. Two forward posts Jaya and Negi were set up across the river just below the ridge and only ten metres from a Chinese forward post. The Chinese were taken completely by surprise as perhaps were our own political leaders. External Affairs Minister ND Tiwari halted in Beijing, on his way back from Pyongyang after attending the Nonaligned Coordination Bureau meeting

that September, to try to assuage Chinese anger. I accompanied him en route to Tokyo, having been deputed to Pyongyang to assist our delegation. Senior Chinese Foreign Ministry officials were at hand at the airport to receive us. In the brief exchange that took place at the airport, the minister's protestations of peace and goodwill were met with the not unreasonable comment that while Indian leaders were talking peace they were making aggressive military moves on the ground at the same time. China would only be satisfied if Indian troops vacated the ridge they had occupied. China would not be fooled, it would "listen to what is said, but see what action is taken". In later talks we agreed to vacate the heights on our side if the Chinese retreated behind the Thagla Ridge, but since they were not ready to do so, we stayed put as well. While we may not have planned it this way, the Chinese judged our actions through their own prism—that we had countered their unexpected move by a well-orchestrated countermove of our own. Subsequently, the offensive and overbearing tone adopted by Chinese Foreign Ministry officials also changed to become more polite and civilised. The next several years were spent in the two sides discussing disengagement in this sector and finally in 1992, the eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation ended and a number of confidence building measures were adopted. The lesson to be drawn is not that India should be militarily provocative but that it should have enough capabilities deployed to convince the other side that aggressive moves would invite countermoves. This is the reason why it is so important to speed up the upgradation of border infrastructure and communication links along all borders, not just with China.

In dealing with China therefore, one must constantly analyse the domestic and geopolitical environment as perceived by it, which is the prism through which its strategic calculus is shaped and implemented. In 2005, India was being courted as an emerging power by both Europe and the US, thereby expanding its own room for manoeuvre. The Chinese response to this was to project a more positive and amenable posture towards India. This took the shape of concluding the significant *Agreement on the Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for Seeking a Settlement of the Border Issue*, the depiction of Sikkim as part of India territory in Chinese maps and the declaration of a bilateral Strategic and Cooperative Partnership with India. In private parleys with Indian leaders, their Chinese counterparts conveyed a readiness to accept India's permanent membership of the Security Council, though they were not willing to state this in black and white in a joint statement. Since then however, as Indian prospects

appeared to have diminished and the perceived power gap with China widened, Chinese sensitivity to Indian interests has also eroded. It is only recently that the tide has turned somewhat, when China has been facing a countervailing backlash to its assertive posture in the South China Sea and the US has declared its intention to “rebalance” its security assets in the Asia–Pacific region. There has been a setback to the hitherto Chinese dominating presence in Myanmar and a steady devaluation of Pakistan’s value to China as a proxy power to contain India. At home, there are prospects of slower growth and persistent ethnic unrest in Xinjiang and Tibet. We are therefore, once again witnessing another renewed though probably temporary phase of greater friendliness towards India, but it is a pity that we have been so far unable to engage in active and imaginative diplomacy to leverage this opportunity to India’s enduring advantage.

I now speak briefly on Chinese attitudes specific to India and how China sees itself in relation to India. While going through a recent publication on *China in 2020*, I came across an observation I consider apt for this exercise. The historian Jacques Barzun is quoted as saying:

“To see ourselves as others see us is a valuable gift, without doubt.

But in international relations what is still rarer and far more useful is to see others as they see themselves”.

It is true that through their long history, India and China have mostly enjoyed a benign relationship. This was mainly due to the forbidding geographical buffers between the two sides, the Taklamalan Desert on the Western edges of the Chinese Empire, the vast icy plateau of Tibet to the South and the ocean expanse to its East. Such interactions as did take place were through caravan routes across what is now Xinjiang as well as the seaborne trade routes across the Indian Ocean and South China Sea, linking Indian ports on both the eastern and western seaboards to the coast of China. India was not located in the traditional Chinese political order consisting of subordinate states, whether such subordination was real or imagined. In civilisational terms too India as a source of Buddhist religion and philosophy and at some points in history the knowledge capital of the region may have been considered a special case, a parallel centre of power and culture but comfortably far away. During the age of imperialism and colonialism, India came into Chinese consciousness as a source of the opium that the British insisted on dumping into China. The use of Indian soldiers in various military assaults on China by the British and the deployment of Indian police forces in British Concessions may have also left a negative residue about India and Indians

in the Chinese mind. This was balanced by several strong positives however, in particular the mutual sympathy between the two peoples struggling for political liberation and emancipation throughout the first half of the twentieth century. To some extent, these positives continued after Indian independence in 1947 and China's liberation in 1949 and were even reinforced thanks to Nehru's passionate belief in an Asian resurgence and the seminal role that India and China could play in that process. However, such sentiments were soon overlaid by the challenges of national consolidation in both countries and the pressures of heightened Cold War tensions. With the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1950, India and China became contiguous neighbours for the first time in history. When the 1959 revolt in Tibet erupted and the Dalai Lama and 60,000 Tibetans sought and received shelter in India, the differences between the two sides on the boundary issue took on a strategic dimension, as has been pointed out most recently by Kissinger in his book *On China* (New York: Penguin, 2011).

The 1962 War was not so much about the boundary as it was a Chinese response to a perceived threat to China's control over Tibet, however misplaced such a perception may have been. The comprehensive defeat of Indian forces in the short war and the regional and international humiliation of India that followed, allowed China to conveniently locate India in its traditional interstate pattern, as a subordinate state not capable of matching the pre-eminence of Chinese power and influence. Since 1962, most Chinese portrayals of India and Indian leaders in conversations with other world leaders or more lately in articles by some scholars and commentators have been starkly negative. An Indian would find it quite infuriating to read some of the exchanges on India and Indian leaders in the "Kissinger Transcripts". In recent times, Chinese commentaries take China's elevated place in Asia and the world as a given but Indian aspirations are dismissed as a "dream". There are repeated references to the big gap between the "comprehensive national power" of the two countries. India's indigenous capabilities are usually dismissed as having been borrowed from abroad. In an interesting research paper entitled "Between 'China Threat Theory' and Chindia: Chinese Responses to India's Military Modernisation" (*Chinese Journal of International Politics*, vol4, no1, 2011, pp87–114) Lora Saalman refers to the "overconfidence" phenomenon that characterises Chinese comparisons of their own capabilities vis-à-vis India. She points out that Indian claims of domestic production and innovation are frequently dismissed by Chinese analysts by adding the phrase "so-called" or putting "indigenous" or

“domestic” in quotes. She concludes:

“These rhetorical flourishes suggest elements of derision and dismissiveness in Chinese attitudes towards India’s domestic programmes and abilities”.

This dismissiveness also colours Chinese analysis of Indian politics and society. The usual Chinese refrain is that India is chaotic and undisciplined and does not have what it takes to be a great power like China. In an article entitled “Why is China Wary of India” (*The Weekly Voice*, online at <http://www.weeklyvoice.com>) the commentator John Lee relates an interesting story of what transpired at a Washington Security Conference:

“A Chinese delegate caused an awkward silence among the congenial group at a post-event drinks session when he stated that India was ‘an undisciplined country where the plague and leprosy still exist. How a big dirty country like that can rise so quickly amazed us”.

Currently, there are two strands in Chinese perceptions about India. There are strong, lingering attitudes that dismiss India’s claim to be a major global player and regard its great power aspirations as “arrogant” and unrealistic pretensions. The other strand, also visible in scholarly writings and in a series of leadership summits that have taken place at regular intervals, recognises India’s economic, military, scientific and technological capabilities as being on the rise, even if they do not match China’s. India is valued as an attractive market for Chinese products at a time when traditional markets in the West have gone flat. China is also respectful of India’s role in multilateral fora, where on several global issues Indian interests converge with China. I have personal experience of working closely and most productively with Chinese colleagues in United Nations climate change discussions and our trade negotiators have found the Chinese to be valuable allies in World Trade Organisation negotiations. In such settings the Chinese comfortably defer to Indian leadership. I have also found that on issues of contention, there is reluctance to confront India directly, the effort usually being to encourage other countries to play a proxy role in frustrating Indian diplomacy. This was clearly visible during the Nuclear Suppliers Group meeting in Vienna in 2008, when China did not wish to be the only country to oppose the waiver for India in nuclear trade, as it could have since the group functions by consensus. China may have refused to engage India in a dialogue on nuclear or missile issues, but that does not mean that Indian capabilities in this regard go unnoticed or their implications for Chinese security are ignored. It is in the maritime sphere that China considers Indian capabilities to possess the most credibility and as affecting Chinese security interests. These two strands reflect

ambivalence about India's emergence—dismissive on the one hand and a wary, watchful and occasionally respectful posture on the other. Needless to say, it is the trajectory that India itself follows in its economic and social development that will mostly influence China's perception about it.


Additionally, how India manages its relations with other major powers, in particular the US would also be a factor. My own experience has been that the closer India–US relations are seen to be the more amenable China has proved to be. I do not accept the argument that a closer India–US relationship leads China to adopt a more negative and aggressive posture towards India. The same is true of India's relations with countries like Australia, Indonesia and Japan that have convergent concerns about Chinese dominance in the East Asian theatre. I also believe that it is only a question of time before similar concerns surface in Russia as well. India should be mindful of this in maintaining and consolidating its already friendly but sometimes sketchy relations with Russia. The stronger India's links are with these major powers, the more room India would have in its relations with China.

It may be apparent from my presentation that India and China harbour essentially adversarial perceptions of one another, determined by geography and the growth trajectories of the two countries. China is the one power which impinges most directly on India's geopolitical space. As the two countries expand their respective economic and military capabilities and their power radiates outwards from their frontiers, they will inevitably intrude into each other's zones of interest or "overlapping peripheries". The adversarial relationship may not inevitably generate tensions or worse another military conflict, but to avoid that India needs to fashion a strategy based on a constant familiarity with Chinese strategic calculus and changes in this calculus as the regional and global landscape evolves. This must above all be informed by a deep understanding of Chinese culture, the psyche of its people and how these too are undergoing change in the process of modernisation. Equally India should endeavour to shape Chinese perceptions by building on the positives and strengthening collaboration on convergent interests, which are not insignificant. One must always be mindful of the prism through which China interprets the world around it and India's place in that world. It is only through such a complex and continuing exercise that China's India challenge may be dealt with.

Sometimes a strong sense of history, portions of which may be imagined rather than real, may lead the Chinese to ignore the fact that the contemporary

geopolitical landscape is very different from that which prevailed during Chinese ascendancy in the past. Merely achieving a higher proportion of the global gross domestic product does not guarantee a restoration of pre-eminence. Ancient China was not a globalised economy. It was a world in itself, mostly self sufficient and shunning the less civilised periphery around it. Today, China's emergence is integrally linked to the global economy. It is a creature of interdependence. Similarly, the geopolitical terrain today is populated by a number of major powers, including in the Asian theatre. A reassertion of Chinese dominance or an assumption that being at the top of the pile in Asia is part of some natural order is likely to bump against painful ground reality, as it has since 2009, opening the door to US rebalancing. Recent reports of a slowing down of Chinese growth should also be sobering.

On the Indian side, the failure to look at the larger picture often results, by default in looking at India–China relations inordinately through the military prism. This also inhibits India from locating opportunities in an expanding Chinese market and in promoting a focus on the rich history of cultural interchange and the more contemporary pathways the two cultures have taken in fascinating ways. This covers cinema, dance, literature, music and painting. Chinese successes in development and its focus on infrastructure do hold lessons for India which should be embraced. If China for its own reasons is willing to invest in India's own massive infrastructure development plans, why not examine how this could be leveraged while keeping our security concerns at the forefront? There are many areas of grey and it is for dispassionate strategists on both sides to explore and help shape a future for the China–India relationship that aspires to be as benign as it has been for most of the past.

I thank you for your attention. 

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