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India and China: Assessing the Need to Strengthen Bilateral Confidence Building Measures

Monika Chansoria
Visiting Research Scholar
Cooperative Monitoring Center

Prepared by
Sandia National Laboratories
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87185 and Livermore, California 94550

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Monika Chansoria
Visiting Research Scholar
Cooperative Monitoring Center
Sandia National Laboratories
P.O. Box 5800
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87185-MS1373

Abstract

India and China display a peculiar case of "constrained cooperation" 50 years after their border war, with convergence of economic interests tending to overlook strategic differences. While China acknowledges sharing an interest in a peaceful and stable South Asia, it perceives strengthened Indo-US ties as an attempt to enlist New Delhi as a counterweight to China or as part of a containment strategy against it.

The Chinese realists are subdivided into "offensive"/"defensive" and "hard"/"soft" camps; each believes that the state has to build its own strength. The hard-power realists argue for strengthening national power–particularly the military and economic dimensions, while soft-power realism emphasizes diplomacy and cultural power. The "offensive realists" argue that China should use its newly built military, economic, and diplomatic influence to coerce others toward the ends China desires. A range of CBMs between India and China that could reduce frictions and establish common ground are discussed.

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1. INTRODUCTION

India and China embody two great civilizations, depicting fascinating historical legacies, cultures and prospects. With their population jointly representing 36 per cent of that of the world (China at 1.33 billion and India at 1.15 billion), the two countries together have a significant impact on the world's economy. The India-China equation makes for a classic case of the realist vs. idealist debate, which acknowledges that while conceding India's rise as a regional power, China appears at unease while envisioning a multi-polar Asia. The challenges posed to the bilateral equation between India and China primarily stem out of an existential security dilemma at work, wherein each side appears to be suspicious of the motives of the other and this trust deficit often tends to threaten bilateral ties.

This paper analyses recent trends in the areas of India's convergence with China, as well as New Delhi's strategic divergences with Beijing, as both vie for a greater strategic space and influence in Asia, and subsequently underscores the need to strengthen and establish newer confidence-building measures (CBMs).[1] Entering the 50th year since the Indo-China border war in 1962, the present regional and bilateral conditions and equations are far off from being congenial. India and China display a peculiar case of "constrained cooperation" with economic convergence of interests tending to artificially overlook prevailing strategic differences. The fact of the matter remains that these very divergences, of which the territorial and boundary dispute is foremost, hold the potential of upstaging ties between the two countries at any given point. The Sino-Indian boundary dispute does not simply restrict to the definition of a boundary that could be marked on a map. It also takes on board vast tracts of disputed territorial frontiers, thereby adding to the operational challenges in attempting to revive a barren process that has been in flaccid motion for more than a quarter of a century now. Thus arises a burning need to put in place, certain specific bilateral CBMs between India and China with a faith that if sincere attempts are made to address divergences on key security issues, then there could be hope to reduce frictions and establish common ground.

1.1 China's posture towards India

China's posture towards India in the recent past has been to focus only on the economics of the relationship whilst choosing to ignore the contentious strategic aspects. These include the interminable territorial dispute and the strategic conflicts over China's growing role in South Asia. There appears to be a consensus among the more conservative and nationalist elements in China to toughen Beijing's policies and selectively make its presence felt.[2] Alastair Ian Johnston has argued that China has historically exhibited a relatively consistent hard *realpolitik* strategic culture across different time periods and that tends to persist in the current context. Chinese decision-makers seem to have internalized this strategic culture.[3] Notwithstanding that the India-China relationship had shed much of the baggage of the past few decades, arising out of bitterness of the interminable border dispute, efforts to promote political dialogue and economic cooperation seem to be becoming stagnant, with many other issues complicating the relationship. The political dialogue has failed to yield any forward movement on the border dispute and in addition, China's ongoing campaign for military modernisation and its consequent impact on regional players including India, both, at the diplomatic and military level, only tends to underscore an urgent need

to promote bilateral CBMs between the two countries in various fields, most importantly, in the military arena and the nuclear realm.

China acknowledges that it shares an interest in a peaceful and stable South Asia. Nevertheless, strengthened Indo-US ties are widely perceived in Beijing as an attempt by Washington to enlist New Delhi as a potential counterweight to China or as part of a containment strategy against it.[4] Beijing's concerns stem from steps undertaken by successive US administrations to "preserve a balance of power."[5] Moreover, according to Zhao Gancheng, Director of South Asia Studies at the Shanghai Institute for International Studies:

> A strategically more autonomous South Asia would ... lead to less reliance of South Asia on foreign forces ... From the angle of long-term interests ... China should adopt a dialectic approach and follow a long term South Asia policy ... As the construction of a new South Asian regional order progresses, it would be necessary for China to play a permanent role in establishing equilibrium and stability in South Asia.[6]

The form of such an increased Chinese role is still being debated in Beijing. The Chinese realists are subdivided into "offensive" and "defensive" as well as "hard" and "soft" camps, each strand believes that the state has to build its own strength. The hard-power realists argue for strengthening comprehensive national power (*zonghe guoli*) – particularly the military and economic dimensions, while soft-power realism emphasizes diplomacy and cultural power.[7] The "offensive realists" argue that China should use its newly built military, economic, and diplomatic influence to essentially coerce others toward the ends China desires.[8]

1.2 Institutional Framework of Bilateral Cooperation: An Economic Convergence of Interests.

The combined GDP of South Asia (with India as the most substantial contributor) and China touches (US) $4 trillion. With its annual trade volume with India reaching nearly $70 billion, China's short-term India policy seems to focus exclusively on the economic aspect. In improving economic cooperation with the countries of South Asia, Beijing has taken the following measures: increase Chinese FDI (foreign direct investment); transfer technology; remove non-tariff barriers; and technical assistance to increase trade bases of production in agricultural and manufacturing sectors. Asian economies, including that of China, have been buffeted by the global financial crunch. Aiming to reach an 8 per cent growth through stimulus packages and boosting domestic consumption, Beijing realises the crucial importance of South Asian countries in general, and that of New Delhi in particular, vis-à-vis its own economic growth.[9] During Premier Wen Jiabao's South Asia visit in December 2010, this understanding was reflected in Assistant Foreign Minister Hu Zhengyue's statement that China was interested in strengthening "high level contacts to enhance strategic mutual trust and expand bilateral trade". Proponents of the economic convergences between New Delhi and Beijing need to note that India (the world's second fastest-growing economy) is largely exporting primary commodities to China and importing finished products. For example, China is known to have mineral deposits two-and-a-half times that of India, however it continues to import iron ore from India. The dumping of Chinese goods is also adversely affecting India's local manufacturing industry. China maintains non-trade barriers and other mechanisms that keep out higher-value Indian exports, such as information technology and pharmaceutical products; it exports to India double what it imports in value; it continues to blithely undercut

Indian manufacturing despite a record number of anti-dumping cases against it by India in the World Trade Organization; and its FDI in India is minuscule ($52 million in the past decade).[10]

There are several institutional mechanisms for India's economic and commercial engagement with China. India-China Joint Economic Group on Economic Relations and Trade, Science and Technology (JEG) is a ministerial-level dialogue mechanism established in 1988 during the visit of former Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, to China. Besides, a Joint Study Group (JSG) was set up after former Indian Prime Minister AB Vajpayee's visit to China in June 2003 with an aim to examine the potential complementarities between the two countries in expanded trade and economic cooperation. As per its recommendation, a Joint Task Force (JTF) was set up to study the feasibility of an India-China Regional Trading Arrangement and the JTF Report was completed in October 2007. Moreover, there are Joint Working Groups on Trade, Agriculture and Energy. In December 2010, during Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao's visit to India, it was agreed upon to set up the India-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue (SED) with the first SED taking place in Beijing on September 26, 2011.

1.3 Building upon the Commonality of Countering Terror Networks in the Region

China and India have both been advocates of continued strengthening of multilateral counterterrorism cooperation within the UN framework. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between Beijing and New Delhi in May 2006 stipulated that they would hold joint military exercises and join forces in counterterrorism operations. Military ties between the Indian and Chinese armed forces have been building since December 2007, when the first joint counterterrorism exercise "Hand-in-Hand" was held at Kunming, China. One Company each from the Indian Army & the PLA participated in the exercise which was based on the theme of "Counter Terrorism". Lt Gen Susheel Gupta, Deputy Chief of India's Army Staff and Lt Gen Ma Xiaotian, Deputy CGS, Chinese People's Liberation Army's (PLA), were the observers from each respective side.

After the terror attack in Mumbai in November 2008, a joint military combat exercise was conducted from December 6-14, 2008, in Belgaum, Karnataka (in southern India), which featured joint tactical manoeuvres and drills, with a 137-strong Army contingent from the 1st Company of the Infantry Battalion of the PLA's Chengdu Military Area Command, and troops from the 8 Maratha Light Infantry Battalion of the Indian Army. The exercise focused on joint tactical manoeuvres and drills, interoperability training and joint command post procedures, and culminated in a simulated joint counterterrorism operational exercise. The larger aim of this initiative was to be able to evolve a collaborative security mechanism among Asian powers to tackle transnational terrorism.[11] Others, however, believe that counter-terrorism collaboration between the two nations' land forces are less than optimal. According to B. Raman:

> Operational cooperation in counter-terrorism and counter-piracy between the navies of the two countries is of far greater relevance as compared to cooperation between Indian and Chinese armies, since no India-based terrorist group is operating in Chinese territory and vice versa. On the contrary, Chinese territory and nationals have been subjected to attacks

not only by the Uighurs, but also by indigenous Pakistan-based Jihadi terrorist organisations.[12]

Given that India has experienced the scourge of terror groups in Kashmir and beyond, and China in Xinjiang province, the two could consider proposals including forging closer collaboration in intelligence sharing and counter-terror exercises. India has shared with China evidence about the involvement of Pakistan-based elements,[13] seeking its influence to persuade Islamabad to bring the perpetrators of the Mumbai terror attack to justice. India's present National Security Advisor and former Foreign Secretary, Shiv Shankar Menon had in fact, provided details of the attack to Chinese Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei, who was sent to India as a special envoy to defuse tensions between India and Pakistan. Initially, the Chinese state-controlled media had simply echoed Islamabad's position on the issue and subsequently the Chinese government chose to refuse in condemning its ally, Pakistan.[14]

During the course of the first counterterrorism dialogue since November 2008, held in Beijing in July 2011, China maintained its position of objecting in the UN to proscribing Maulana Masood Azhar of the terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed and two Lashkar-e-Taiba operatives, Azam Cheema and Abdul Rehman Makki, under the al-Qaeda and Taliban sanctions list. On the face of it, the dialogue was interpreted as a step in moving forward towards enhancing bilateral cooperation; however, there was no substantive development, with Chinese officials insisting that the information provided by the Indian delegation was "still insufficient"—which makes for a technical requirement under the relevant UN resolutions. Besides, details of Chinese arms worth $2 million from TCL, a subsidiary of the Chinese arms producer China Xinshidai, provided by Anthony Shimray of the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN {IM}), were also rejected by the Chinese delegation on the ground that they could not act upon a "confessional statement" – regardless of whether it had been admitted in a court of law.[15]

Significantly, in August 2011, hinting at a change of stance, China obliquely pointed at Pakistan for the deadly attacks in Xinjiang. According to a statement published in the *Global Times* by Pan Zhiping, Director, Institute of Central Asia at the Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences, "Located in the southern part of Xinjiang, Hotan is close to the border with Pakistan ... Due to their affinity in religion and language, some Uyghur residents there are at risk of being influenced by terrorist groups such as the East Turkistan Islamic Movement." This brings to focus China's prime concern vis-à-vis maintaining internal security and crackdown against separatism and extremism in its Muslim-majority and far-western Xinjiang province. The Taliban militancy, Islamic terrorist organisations and remnants of the Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, pose a serious challenge to Xinjiang's stability—often dubbed as China's "bridgehead" to the West. Xinjiang shares a 5,743 km boundary with eight countries: Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Mongolia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. China realises that the threat of militant and terrorist groups operating in the Central Asian Republics will impact upon the future stability in the restive Xinjiang province. In this reference, Beijing wants to make certain that no Islamic separatist group in Xinjiang (whose western tip touches the Afghan border) receives any benefit or support from radical/terror groups, post the US-led withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014.

Taking the joint military exercises further, it was stated by Colonel Guo Hongtao, Staff Officer of the Asian Affairs Bureau, Foreign Affairs Office, Ministry of National Defence, when he told a visiting team of Indian journalists that "China is considering India's proposal for more joint

military exercises and it is at the stage of working level discussions." Guo said that the working level discussions will ultimately decide on when the exercise could be held while asserting that both countries should make "substantive effort to expand bilateral cooperation..." Gou also accepted that during the joint counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism war games held in Belgaum in 2008, officers of the PLA obtained new combat training experience of "cleaning up of the battlefield". The Indian journalists were visiting China on the invitation of the state-run All China Journalists' Association as part of the China-India Year of Friendship and Cooperation declared by the two countries.[16] Establishing a Joint Working Group on counter-terrorism could be a positive CBM that would prove to be a useful mechanism for exchange of information, intelligence sharing, anti-terrorism training programmes and for strengthening institutional links between crime prevention agencies in the two countries. Proposals for this could include the following:

- Exchange of information and assessments on the international and regional terrorist situation
- Strengthening of bilateral intelligence and investigative cooperation
- Enhance military-to-military cooperation on counterterrorism
- Working together on multilateral initiatives on terrorism, including on the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1373
- Initiation of dialogue and cooperation in homeland/internal security, terrorist financing, forensic science and transportation security
- Undertaking concrete steps to detect and counter the activities of individual terrorists and terrorist organisations of concern to the two countries

2. THE TRAJECTORY OF CBMS IN THE INDO-CHINESE CONTEXT

In the Sino-Indian context, Confidence Building Measures, including the Sino-Indian Panchsheel Agreement of 1954, had been part of India's nation-building process during the early years of their independence and were later consolidated under the Sino-Indian CBMs agreements of 1993 and 1996 (discussed in detail subsequently in the course of the paper).[17] The Sino-Indian interactions between 1988 and 1996 are considered very significant since they extended onto undertaking CBMs in the military field.[18] Today, both China and India get ready to face the formidable challenge of defining and demarcating their border—therefore making CBMs as the embodiment for future Sino-Indian rapprochement. The bilateral defence interaction has been on the anvil with peace and tranquility being maintained by and large, along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the border areas. A Chinese military delegation aimed at fostering CBMs between the defence forces of the two countries made a visit to India in December 1993 and the visit was reciprocated by Indian Army Chief General BC Joshi's visit to China in July 1994. More than a decade later, in May 2006 the first ever MoU on Defence Exchanges between the Armed Forces of India and China was signed. The formalisation of this MoU tends to deepen and institutionalize defence cooperation between India and China.

Nevertheless, considerable work remains. China continues to be in physical occupation of large areas of land India claims as its territory, starting with the Aksai Chin plateau in Ladakh, approximately 38,000 sq km, since the mid-1950s. In addition, India maintains that Pakistan has illegally ceded to China, in 1963, 5180 sq km of Indian Territory in the Shaksgam Valley of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK), north of the Siachen Glacier, under a bilateral boundary agreement. Additionally, China continues to stake its claim to about 96,000 sq km of Indian Territory in Arunachal Pradesh, which it calls 'Southern Tibet'. China's stated position is that reunification of Chinese territories is a sacred duty of the People's Liberation Army. China shares a 22,000 km land border with fourteen adjacent states. It has resolved territorial disputes with twelve of them, but still needs to resolve the territorial and boundary dispute with India. While recognizing the McMahon Line as its boundary with Myanmar, China refuses to do so with India and Bhutan.[19] Despite the Border Peace and Tranquillity Agreement signed by the two countries in 1993 and the agreement on confidence-building measures in the military field signed in 1996, border guards of the PLA have intruded repeatedly into Arunachal Pradesh and Ladakh and have even objected to Indian road construction efforts in these areas in the past few years. These periodic intrusions/transgressions have been widely reported and debated in the Indian press and have been discussed at length in the Indian Parliament as well.

2.1 Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas, September 7, 1993[20]

This agreement was hailed as the first major conventional CBM between Beijing and New Delhi. It reiterated the principles of "Panchsheel" and asserted that the Five Principles including mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence should be revived to form the basis of inter-state relations between India and China. The agreement averred that the India-China boundary question should be resolved through peaceful and friendly consultations.

Neither side shall use or threaten to use force against the other by any means. Pending an ultimate solution to the boundary question between the two countries, the two sides shall strictly respect and observe the line of actual control between the two sides. No activities of either side shall overstep the line of actual control. In case personnel of one side cross the line of actual control, upon being cautioned by the other side, they shall immediately pull back to their own side of the line of actual control. When necessary, the two sides shall jointly check and determine the segments of the line of actual control where "they have different views as to its alignment." *Article II* asserted that each side will keep its military forces in the areas along the line of actual control to a minimum level compatible with the friendly and good neighbourly relations between the two countries. The two sides agree to reduce their military forces along the line of actual control in conformity with the requirements of the principle of mutual and equal security to ceilings to be mutually agreed. The agreement underscored that both sides shall work out "through consultations effective confidence building measures in the areas along the line of actual control". Neither side will undertake specified levels of military exercises in mutually identified zones. Each side shall give the other prior notification of military exercises of specified levels near the line of actual control permitted under this agreement.

Significantly, *Article V* stated that the two sides agreed to take adequate measures to ensure that air intrusions across the line of actual control do not take place and shall undertake mutual consultations should intrusions occur. Additionally, it was also agreed upon that both sides shall also consult on possible restrictions on air exercises in areas to be mutually agreed near the line of actual control. *Article VII* agreed upon holding consultations on the "form, method, scale and content of effective verification measures" and supervision required for the reduction of military forces along the line of actual control. Lastly, it was also decided under *Article VIII* that each side of the India-China Joint Working Group on the boundary question shall appoint diplomatic and military experts to formulate implementation measures. The experts shall advise the Joint Working Group on the resolution of differences between the two sides on the alignment of the line of actual control and address issues relating to redeployment with a view to reduction of military forces in the areas along the line of actual control.

2.2 Agreement on Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field along the Line of actual Control in the China-India Border Areas, November 29, 1996[21]

The second CBM in the Military Field along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas, signed in 1996 was primarily aimed at fulfilling the agenda of the first such CBM agreement of 1993. Moving more specifically into expanding these CBMs in the sensitive areas in the military field, it was specified that "Neither side shall use its military capability against the other side". The agreement crucially affirmed commitment of both sides to the line of actual control while fully recognising that both sides had "different perceptions" on certain segments for which the two agree "to speed up process of clarification" and start "to exchange maps indicating their respective perceptions...as soon as possible" (*Article X*). According to *Article III* of the 1996 agreement, all future ceilings are expected to be based on "parameters such as the nature of terrain, road communications and other infrastructure and time taken to induct/de-induct troops and armaments." While clearly categorizing the types of "offensive weapons", withdrawal of which will be given priority, *Article IV* pronounced the inclusion of combat tanks, infantry combat vehicles,

guns (including howitzers) with 75 mm or bigger calibre, mortars with 120 mm or bigger calibre, surface-to-surface missiles, surface-to-air missiles. Besides, the two sides also agreed upon exchanging data on the "military forces and armaments" that are to be reduced. The agreement urged both sides to "avoid holding large scale military exercises involving more than one division (15,000 troops) in close proximity to the LOAC" and to inform the other side on "type, level, planned duration and areas of exercise" in case it involves more than a brigade (5,000 troops), and about de-induction[22] "within five days of completion," and the other side shall be free to seek any number of clarifications as it deems necessary.[23] According to *Article V*, the two sides also agreed that no combat aircraft which include "fighter, bomber, reconnaissance, military trainer, armed helicopter and other armed aircraft" shall be allowed to fly "within ten kilometers" of the LOAC "except by prior permission" from the other side. Similarly, *Article VI* prohibits any use of "hazardous chemicals, conduct blast operations or hunt with guns or explosives within two kilometers" of the LOAC unless it is "part of developmental activities" in which case the other side shall be informed "through diplomatic channels or by convening a border personnel meeting, preferably five days in advance." With an objective to strengthen exchanges and cooperation between their "military personnel and establishments", *Article VII* provided that the two sides shall expand meetings between their border representatives at designated places and also enhances "telecommunication links" between these border points. And finally, as under *Article XI* the Sino-Indian Joint Working Group on Boundary Question starts "mutual consultations" for "detailed implementation measures", once again under Article IX each side shall have "the right to seek clarification" regarding the "manner in which the other side is observing the agreement" or on any "doubtful situation" in the border region.

2.3 Agreement on the Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the India-China Bound Question, April 11, 2005

By reaffirming the Declaration on Principles for Relations and Comprehensive Cooperation between India and China, signed on June 23, 2003, and recalling that the two sides had appointed Special Representatives to explore the framework of settlement of the India-China boundary question, both India and China noted that the two sides are seeking a political settlement of the boundary question in the context of their overall and long-term interests. An early settlement of the boundary question should be pursued as a strategic objective and that the political parameters and guiding principles for a boundary settlement should ensure that the differences on the boundary question should not be allowed to affect the overall development of bilateral relations (*Article I*). The two sides will take into account, inter alia, historical evidence, national sentiments, practical difficulties and reasonable concerns and sensitivities of both sides, and the actual state of border areas (*Article V*). Perhaps the most crucial clause in this agreement came in the form of *Article VII* which stipulated that in the process of reaching a boundary settlement, the two sides shall "safeguard due interests of their settled populations" in the border areas. However, Chinese Foreign Minister, Yang Jiechi stated in June 2007, "... the mere presence of populated areas in Arunachal Pradesh would not affect Chinese claims on the boundary." This statement was a blatant renouncement of the aforementioned *Article VII* of the "Agreement on Political Parameters and Guiding Principles" signed during Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's visit to India in April 2005, which categorically stated, "In reaching a border settlement, the two sides shall safeguard populations in border areas." Within the agreed framework of the final boundary

settlement, the delineation of the boundary will be carried out utilising means such as modern cartographic and surveying practices and joint surveys (*Article VIII*). However, pending an ultimate settlement of the boundary question, the two sides should strictly respect and observe the line of actual control and work together to maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas (*Article IX*).

The Joint Working Group (JWG) on the boundary issue has been the most noteworthy forum for implementing Sino-Indian CBMs by means of holding regular meetings of military commanders from both sides at Bumla and Dichu in the eastern sector, Lipulekh near Pithoragarh in the middle sector, and Spangur near Chushul in the western sector. These meetings are organised and conducted by the military area commanders from the two sides to establish facts on the ground. Besides, both commanders have access to each other through a "hotline" link to ensure consultations in case of any intrusion and/or emergency.

3. EVALUATIONG THE CHINESE APPROACH TO CBMS

Nations that relate to their neighbors in zero-sum terms will use CBMs sparingly, postponing resolution of contentious issues until power balances have altered in their favour. In contrast, nations that truly wish good-neighborly relations can use CBMs extensively to establish new patterns of cooperative security. In recent years, Beijing has publicly endorsed the practice of confidence-building measures, with the Chinese government gradually accepting CBMs as an important means of safeguarding China's security and regional peace. China's CBMs with India to improve lines of communication, reduce tensions, and disengage forces along disputed border areas are significant, but do not seem to presage final accords, at least in the near-term.

Tracing the evolution of the Chinese approach to CBMs, Xia Liping notes that China's negative attitude toward CBMs changed significantly in the mid-1980s with Beijing's need to focus on economic development. Xia asserts, there is little debate among Chinese scholars on the current significance of CBMs. As for CBMs to prevent maritime and resource conflicts, Xia calls for incidents at sea-type accords and the installation of hotlines.[24] China has experienced a process of gradually deepening its understanding of the concept of CBMs beginning with the early 1950s to the early 1970s, when China did not embrace the concept of CBMs because during this period the concept of CBMs had not fully developed. The process of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which led to the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, presents the most fully developed model for CBMs. At first, China had a negative attitude towards the process, thinking it was the manifestation of a policy of appeasement taken by Western countries towards the hegemony of the Soviet Union.[25] Since the mid-1980s, there has been a significant change in Chinese thinking and approach toward the idea of CBMs. The main reasons for this change are the following:

- With the end of the Cold War, CBMs are emerging as an essential means of preventing accidental wars and unintended escalation in strife-ridden regions;
- The importance of economic factors in international relations and economic interdependence is increasing among Asian-Pacific countries. This has made states in the region more willing to resolve territorial disputes and political problems through peaceful means, including CBMs;
- China has been focusing its efforts on internal economic development, so it is trying its best to seek a peaceful international security environment; and
- China's policy of reform and openness has made much progress, rendering Chinese scholars and officials much more open to accepting new concepts from abroad in the field of arms control. CBMs have been introduced in China with the idea that CBMs are one of the important means of maintaining peace and stability.[26]

More significantly, during the Second Ministerial Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), held on August 1, 1995, Chinese Foreign Minister, Qian Qichen, outlined some principles of the Chinese government policy specifically in reference to CBMs:[27]

- To establish CBMs so as to improve the Asia-Pacific security environment and to bring stability and prosperity in the region to the twenty-first century;

- To put good political desire as the first precondition of the establishment of CBMs between countries; "without good and common political desire, it is impossible for them to cooperate voluntarily";
- To attach importance on pushing CBMs in its broad sense so as to improve the regional security environment as a whole; "it is not enough to establish CBMs only in [the] military field, and the establishment of CBMs should include political, economic and social contents"
- To establish CBMs according to both the reality of diversification in the Asia-Pacific region and the new features of the international situation, and not to blindly imitate the models of other regions and those of the past; and
- To establish some pragmatic and feasible CBMs step by step. Regional security cooperation should be developed according to the spirit of doing easier things first, then taking on more difficult issues, while seeking common ground and setting differences aside for the time-being.[28]

Most of these CBMs have been related to border-disputes and some scholars have questioned the necessity or even the usefulness of nuclear related CMS. They argue that the areas of dispute are too complex already and urge that the nuclear issue should not be thrown into the mix; especially since the likelihood of a nuclear exchange is so low. In the event, where there is low/no probability of a nuclear exchange, pursuing nuclear CBMs are unlikely to damage confidence-building processes between two strategic actors and the case of India and China should fall best under this category. Furthermore, periods of low tensions are probably the best times to start new confidence building measures.

3.1 Indo-China Bilateral CBMs: The Way Forward

In a significant movement forward, India has proposed to set up a new Border Personnel Meeting (BPM) venue along the Uttarakhand-Himachal Pradesh stretch of the Sino-Indian border as a CBM between the two countries. The proposal was put forth by India during the 4th round of the Annual Defence Dialogue between Beijing and New Delhi in December 2011, in which both sides agreed to increase the defense exchanges between the two countries and enrich the content of the exchanges. Thus far, meetings at regular intervals are held at three facilities in Kibithu in Arunachal Pradesh, Nathu La in Sikkim and Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir. The need for such a facility was felt by the Indian side as there was no such venue in the central sector of the 3,488 km long Indo-China International Land Border. However, the proposal is under consideration by the Chinese side.[29]

In addition, India and China also etched out a Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs on January 17, 2012. According to Dai Bingguo, State Councillor of the People's Republic of China, both India and China should put aside their differences and seize "a golden period to grow..." While on the face of it, the optimism helped in setting a positive tone to the talks, it did not really translate into any substantial shift in the Chinese policy on the issue. The latest mechanism tends to reiterate mere symbolism, submitting no tangible progress on ground. It offers a "desire to materialise the spirit" of similar endeavours inked previously, including the Border Peace and Tranquillity Agreement of 1993, CBMs in the Military Field of 1996, and the Protocol on Modalities for the Implementation of these CBMs of 2005, coupled with numerous meetings of the Joint Working Group. Since it only seeks to "consult" and "coordinate" border affairs, the efficacy of the latest Working Mechanism as a

plausible means of achieving any sort of breakthrough to the interminable territorial and boundary dispute will likely be placed under a critical scanner. Interestingly, Article V of the Working Mechanism states that it "will not discuss resolution of the Boundary Question or affect the Special Representatives Mechanism". In the scenario of India intending to negotiate with China on arriving at a boundary resolution from a position of equality in the long term, it ought to step up efforts in the said direction, particularly seeking delineation of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) physically on ground and map—which could be the biggest and most tangible CBM between Beijing and New Delhi. It needs to be underlined here that since the Indo-China War of 1962, the LAC between India and China has not yet been physically demarcated/delineated on ground as well as in the military maps. This, in effect, has resulted with both sides drawing their respective perceptions of the LAC. The resultant and often reported incidents of border transgressions by the Chinese troops are being addressed through established mechanisms including hot lines, flag meetings, border personnel meetings and normal diplomatic channels. The latest Working Mechanism aims to only facilitate timely communication of information on the border situation, for appropriately handling border incidents, thus putting a worrying question mark over the eventual future of India's boundary settlement with the People's Republic of China. While the classic realist perspective on clashing interests and power in an anarchic international system has not entirely become redundant, the growing coincidence of interests between the two "emerging powers" in an increasingly integrated system has not yet been fully recognised by either side.

3.2 Need for Nuclear Dialogue and CBMs

The vulnerability of modern states to armed conflict with conventional weapons, coupled with the possibility of it extending into the nuclear realm, tends to accentuate the contextual and operational significance of deterrence. The theory of nuclear deterrence attempts to relate the threatened use of force to states' efforts to secure their interests through the strategy that leaves something to chance or the strategy of retaliation. CBMs help to untangle the qualms and complexities, serve to reduce tensions and promote regional security by means such as giving prior notification of military exercises, establishing "hotlines", relocating short-range missiles away from the border, engaging in bilateral consultations on security concepts and nuclear doctrines to develop confidence building measures both in the conventional and nuclear fields. In addition to the conventional CBMs, nuclear CBMs can be described as a tool to achieve greater bilateral stability at the strategic level between two nuclear powers. A conceptual requirement of nuclear CBMs should be that inadvertent nuclear war can be prevented by improving levels of communication, increasing nuclear information exchange, and restricting military operations near international borders.[30]

The present scenario of "non-negotiation of nuclear CBMs between India and China" only tends to add to the security dilemma between Beijing and New Delhi. India and China can try and devise mechanisms so as to gauge the extent to which the existential critical differences can be abridged and thereafter recognize expansion of common ground. The precarious nuclear balance between India and China warrants that nuclear CBMs be established between the two countries, given that the presence of nuclear weapons further complicates the debates over a conventional conflict, especially owing to the presence of a perplexing nuclear escalation ladder. However, at the same time, it also needs to be borne in mind that both India and China would certainly not want to limit themselves with any CBM, which would affect the pace of their respective armament/military modernisation programmes, in order to assure security. Even though, differentiating conventionally armed missiles from that of being nuclear-armed can be hard to achieve, however,

the issue of their respective deployments could be mutually taken up for discussion. Herein, it needs to be debated whether nuclear CBMs between India and China can be pursued independently of conventional CBMs.

It appears that China is opposed to India's joining the nuclear non-proliferation regime. For instance, Beijing was reluctant to allow the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) to open up trade in nuclear materials and technology with India in 2008. In so far as the Chinese approach is concerned, there is an absence of a realistic approach towards India's emergence as a nuclear weapons power. From an Indian standpoint, there is a complete need for establishing a closer dialogue between Beijing and New Delhi on matters nuclear. Beijing and New Delhi have never undertaken a dialogue on nuclear issues ever since India tested nuclear weapons in 1998. China refuses all such discussions claiming they would undermine the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The blurred security environment is also witness to the fact that China refuses to discuss any nuclear CBMs or, nuclear risk-reduction measures (NRRMs) with India. In that sense, it is very contentious to proceed forward with a discussion on their respective nuclear weapons programme, perhaps a dialogue on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) and global nuclear disarmament might just prove more fecund. Nevertheless it continues to remain ambiguous whether Beijing would be willing to reconsider its position of accepting India as a nuclear-armed power. By virtue of explicitly accepting the changes in the policies of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), Beijing has tacitly recognised India's position as a country with nuclear weapons. There needs to be an exhaustive and in-depth discussion at the Track II level between specialists from the two countries and thereafter be raised at the official policymaking levels in each country.

Given that both India and China share similar perspectives on nuclear weapons and both accord a fairly limited role in national security strategy to nuclear weapons, with their role restricted to retaliation, China and India's similar approach towards disarmament should be viewed as a positive step towards the objective to establishing nuclear CBMs. China has advocated for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. It has been argued by Beijing that in order to attain the ultimate goal of complete and thorough nuclear disarmament, the international community should develop, at an appropriate time, a viable, long-term plan with different phases, including the conclusion of a convention on the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons. China holds that, before the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, all nuclear-armed states should abandon any nuclear deterrence policy based on the first-use of nuclear weapons, make an unequivocal commitment that under no circumstances will they use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or nuclear-weapon-free zones, and negotiate an international legal instrument in this regard. In the meantime, nuclear-armed states should negotiate and conclude a treaty on no-first-use of nuclear weapons against each other.[31]

4. INDIA'S NUCLEAR POLICY

Ever since testing nuclear weapons in 1998, India has made ardent efforts to maintain and stabilise its nuclear deterrent and minimise existential nuclear dangers. In the Indian case, the logic and role of nuclear weapons as a political instrument confers on them a utility more in terms of political deterrence rather than limiting it to military deterrence. In this reference, New Delhi's nuclear weapons are entirely a political instrument in nature, based on the political necessity of exercising the option and the nature of the environment in which it has to pursue national interests. India's nuclear doctrine outlines the strategy of "credible minimum deterrence" and also establishes that India will not be the first to initiate a nuclear strike. This declared "no-first-use" doctrine thus rules out the first-strike option and seeks to ensure the survivability of the nuclear arsenal for a credible second-strike capability. The fact that India's deterrence debate revolves around a defensive doctrine, amply visible by a repeated affirmation of the "No-First-Use" principle shall only assist in enhancing regional strategic stability, desirable both for the purposes of deterrence stability and that of crisis stability.

The long-term effectiveness of a nation's nuclear deterrent is determined not by a quantitative comparison or war-fighting capability of the weapons, but by their inherent capacity to retaliate. Conventional weapons alone cannot deter a nuclear adversary. A no-first-strike policy must be backed by an assured, effective and rapid second-strike capability for ensuring robust deterrence. Against this backdrop, a retaliatory second-strike capability that is credible and invulnerable becomes imperative for India so as to be able to deter the adversary by surviving the first strike and inflicting substantial retaliation thereafter. It would only be apposite to state here that the means of delivery assume critical importance since its survivability and effectiveness in reaching the likely decision points required in the deterrence paradigm finally defines credibility of a nation's deterrence posture. Notwithstanding the delay in India's achieving the desired objective of a fully-operational nuclear triad, the journey of achieving such a triad can be described as a work in progress, which will provide New Delhi with an option of upgrading its present strategic posture of "dissuasion" to one of "credible deterrence".

4.1 India's Search for an Operational Nuclear Triad

Presently, India awaits the third and perhaps, most elusive, underwater leg of its nuclear triad, namely, the INS Arihant—an indigenous nuclear-powered submarine armed with nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles (SSBN). Likely to be fully operational and out at sea by early 2013, the "harbour-acceptance trials" and the "sea-acceptance trials" of INS Arihant have been slated for this year and upon their completion, the SSBN shall be commissioned into the Indian Navy. As the Indian Navy stands poised to complete the nation's nuclear triad, it is expected that the final nuclear insurance will come from the seas once the INS Arihant begins undertaking deterrent patrols. India's nuclear doctrine calls for sufficient, survivable and operationally prepared nuclear forces; a robust command and control system; effective intelligence and early warning capabilities; comprehensive planning and training for operations in line with strategy; and the requisite primary and alternate chain of command to employ nuclear forces and weapons. The possession of a nuclear triad primarily includes development of three major delivery components, namely strategic bombers (carrier-based or land-based, armed with bombs or missiles), land-based missiles and SSBNs. India's force structure is largely based upon its existing military assets including the

Sukhoi-30 MKIs and Mirage-2000s ensuring that India's limited arsenal can execute a successful second strike to cause damage that would be unacceptable to the adversary and therefore influence its cost-benefit analysis of undertaking a first strike to begin with. Besides, more recently in April 2012, the Indian Navy formally inducted the INS Chakra, an 8,140 tonne nuclear-powered Akula-II class attack submarine, armed with the 300 km range 'Klub-S' land-attack cruise missiles and advanced torpedoes, leased from Russia for a period of 10 years. However, the INS Chakra falls short of providing India with its long-awaited third leg of the nuclear weapons triad, since it will not be armed with long-range strategic missiles. Nevertheless, the INS Chakra has surely strengthened India's underwater combat arm by offering operational flexibility in blue-water operations, and additionally presenting the capability to deploy a potent weapons delivery platform at a place of its choosing at long distances in stealth. In the meanwhile, India looks towards its second SSBN, named the INS Aridhaman, following the induction of the INS Arihant.

Additionally, the successful test-launch of the long-range Agni V missile by India in April 2012 has undoubtedly bolstered India's deterrent, and the Agni V is being considered as the mainstay of India's nuclear delivery vectors. The accuracy of the Agni V missile can only be ascertained with frequent validation tests, before it gets fully inducted into the Indian armed forces by 2014-15. In that sense, it will be another two years before New Delhi sees the fully integrated and operational version of the Agni V missile. A fully functional and cohesive nuclear triad force structure composition that includes nuclear-capable long-range aircraft, inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) and SSBNs, with actual weaponisation being held back, (i.e., nuclear weapons in a mated format) will be the ultimate platform for India's nuclear triad. That the mere possession of nuclear weapons paves the way for an implicit threat of use or actual use, a well propounded "no-first-use" of nuclear weapons is India's elementary commitment and in furtherance to this reference, every possible effort should be made to persuade as many nations who are in possession of nuclear weapons, to join an international treaty which seeks to ban their first use. Till the time nuclear weapons will be eliminated from the world, the related threats shall also remain. The sole permanent solution to this quandary remains a global commitment towards achieving universal, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament which will enhance and grant a sense of permanence to the conceptual as well as operational levels of collective security. This is a cause, long espoused by India, and being a national security objective, New Delhi should continue its efforts towards seeking to achieve the goal of a nuclear weapon-free world.

5. CHINA'S NUCLEAR DOCTRINE AND POSTURE

Chinese leadership has today achieved broad consensus that the nation's interests are best served by a stable and peaceful international environment.[32] China's commitment to a peaceful rise has prompted China to limit its nuclear weapons as much as possible. Running contrary to China's intention to reduce reliance on nuclear weapons, however, is China's national defense imperatives that demand that China must develop its nuclear weapons to a certain extent. Chinese decision-makers are faced with the task of finding the appropriate trade-off between the two competing goals. Their response is nuclear modernization. The task facing China's leadership in terms of nuclear policy seems to be rather clear: Maintain the credibility of China's nuclear deterrence capability. The PLA's Second Artillery Force (PLASAF), responsible for China's strategic missile forces, nuclear and conventional, has gained higher prominence in Chinese defense planning and decision-making over the last decade.

Following the principle of building a lean and effective force, the PLA Second Artillery Force strives to push forward its modernisation and improves its capabilities in rapid reaction, penetration, precision strike, damage infliction, protection, and survivability, while steadily enhancing its capabilities in strategic deterrence and defensive operations. It continues to develop a military training system unique with the strategic missile force, improve the conditions of on-base, simulated and networked training, conduct trans-regional maneuvers and training with opposing forces in complex electromagnetic environments.[33] It has set up laboratories for key disciplines, specialties and basic education, and successfully developed systems for automatic missile testing, operational and tactical command and control, strategic missile simulation training, and the support system for the survival of combatants in operational positions. It has worked to strengthen its safety systems, strictly implement safety regulations, and ensure the safety of missile weaponry and equipment, operational positions and other key elements. It has continued to maintain good safety records in nuclear weapon management. Through the years, the PLASAF has grown into a strategic force equipped with both nuclear and conventional missiles.[34]

5.1 Insights into how Chinese Military Strategists and Security Analysis Perceive the Role of Nuclear Weapons in the Country's Defense Posture and the Continued Relevance of its No-First-Use Policy

In 1964, Beijing announced that it would adhere to a policy of no-first-use (NFU) of nuclear weapons (*bu shouxian shiyong*) and called for worldwide nuclear disarmament. It has adhered to its announced policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons at any time and in all circumstances, and made the unequivocal commitment that under no circumstances will it use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or nuclear-weapon-free zones. It needs to be mentioned that although official Chinese statements continue to ascribe to a no-first-use policy, there remains some confusion about the scope of the policy and the conditions surrounding it.

Stating that it will limit its nuclear capabilities to the minimum level required for national security, China adopted a minimal deterrent strategy relying on a small number of nuclear weapons to

deliver punitive, counter-value responses to an adversary's first strike. A majority of Chinese analysts profess the no-first-use issue arguing that this position has served Chinese strategic interests well since the 1960s giving Beijing the moral high ground and lending credence to its commitment to the total elimination of nuclear weapons worldwide. Following the end of the Cold War, China holds that if all declared nuclear-weapons states should make a pledge of NFU of nuclear weapons, this would be one of the most effective measures to prevent nuclear war and nuclear proliferation and would also give impetus to the process of nuclear disarmament. Major General Peng Guangqian argued that the first use of nuclear weapons by any country would be unthinkable today and advocates that China should not change its existing policy, which emphasizes: the defensive nature of China's nuclear arsenal; China's doctrine of no-first-use; the limited size of Chinese nuclear forces; China's efforts to promote nuclear disarmament and international nuclear arms control; and China's commitment to the ultimate goals of "total elimination and thorough destruction" of nuclear weapons.[35]

There is another school of thought in China, which views nuclear weapons as essentially a symbolic tool whose sole purpose is to advance political and strategic goals, rather than military weapons. Discarding a no-first-use would not enhance China's security, which depends on the credibility of its resolve to use maximum conventional force to meet any conventional attack. For instance, Sun Xiangli argues that for China, nuclear weapons are political and strategic deterrent weapons. This is the fundamental underpinning of Chinese policy that has remained a constant since 1964.[36] Li Bin at the Tsinghua University, argues that China has adopted a no-first-use policy because its nuclear strategy is first and foremost to counter nuclear coercion. Further, any suggestion of first use during a conventional conflict is neither morally acceptable nor credible. China's no-first-use policy, can be explained in the backdrop that it would never be credible for China to declare it will use nuclear weapons first.[37]

However, on the flipside, scholars such as Shen Dingli at the Fudan University argue that China's no-first-use policy, is morally appealing and politically useful, but should not be allowed to impose undue and precarious constraints on China's strategic nuclear options, especially at a time when China's nuclear and conventional forces are limited and comparatively unsophisticated compared to those of its potential adversary. Shen argues, "If China's conventional forces are devastated, and if Taiwan takes the opportunity to declare de jure independence, it is inconceivable that China would allow its nuclear weapons to be destroyed by a precision attack with conventional munitions, rather than use them as a true means of deterrence."[38] What Shen is arguing here is not that the no-first-use doctrine should necessarily be abandoned, but rather that a more serious discussion is needed regarding how China can most effectively protect its core national security interests. If no-first-use continues to serve China's needs, it should be maintained and upheld; however, if this doctrine becomes a moral and philosophical straightjacket that undermines China's national security, then, Shen argues, it should be modified.[39]

As of now, no-first-use remains in place as official Chinese policy. A serious debate on the future of this posture is likely to continue and even intensify in the months and years ahead. For instance, PLA officer, Major General Wu Jianguo, has explicitly stated that his country may find nuclear weapons useful in local wars.[40] In a reference to the West and the Soviet Union, Wu stated:

> ...Threatened to use nuclear weapons in conventional wars because they believed that with nuclear weapons in hand, psychologically they would be able to hold a dominant position which would enhance troop morale and frighten the enemy on the one hand, and restrict

> the enemy's use of some conventional means on the other, thus changing the direction of the war.[41]

Wu goes on to argue that if the PRC cannot achieve its objectives through purely psychological means, it must "strive to win a victory through actual combat, so as to remove obstacles to its political, economic, and diplomatic activities. Militarily, the immense effect of nuclear weaponry is that it can serve as a deterrent force and, at the same time, as a means of actual combat."[42] Wu rejects the idea that any form of combat, including nuclear warfare, is inherently taboo.

However, final decision-making and implementation of official policy in the nuclear realm continue to be the exclusive prerogative of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and military leadership at the highest levels. However, the fact that China's nuclear use policy is being debated publicly implies that it has also been the subject of internal discussions and that, while it remains unchanged for the moment, the door has been left open to further official examination of the policy.

6. PROPOSAL FOR ESTABLISHING A NUCLEAR CBM DIALOGUE BETWEEN INDIA AND CHINA

Thus far, the existing CBMs have not been able to eliminate the tenacious security dilemma present in the India- China context. It becomes even more important to assess and discuss the possibility of introducing nuclear CBMs in the India-China context which could potentially include the following:

- Jointly advocate the cause of universal nuclear disarmament
- Channelize efforts for an international convention on unconditional no-first-use of nuclear weapons and on the non-use and non-threat-of-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states and in nuclear-free zones
- Declaration of not using WMD against each other
- Support efforts to establish nuclear-free zones
- Pledge not to use nuclear weapons against one another and more importantly, a de-targeting agreement with each other
- Discuss the possibility of land-based nuclear arsenals remaining "de-mated" and "de-alerted" in peacetime
- Agreement on technical parameters, pre-notification of flight testing of ballistic missiles
- Make existing hotlines and communication channels available 24x7
- Mutual agreement on reducing the risks of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons, and notifying each other of any such incident/accident

The realist mode negates the understanding that the economic facet of Sino-Indian ties would constitute the key to the success of the future relationship: economic stakes and convergences cannot discount the existential strategic divergences, which could become a spoiler in the future relationship, as both contend for a larger share of the global economic and strategic pie. Although China and India have been converging on the economic front (heavily fashioned to favour China), the never-ending border dispute is just one of the many areas of discord between the two. Bilateral CBMs play a very critical role in India-China relations, more so, owing to respective perceptions vis-à-vis a "security dilemma" that exists between the two countries. For the time being, economic convergence of interests between China and India has tended to override the prevailing strategic differences and provides a novel connotation to the relations between the two nations. However, their bilateral territorial and boundary dispute has the potential to flare into a border conflict, leading to alteration of the strategic balance in the region. The recurrent and tiring rounds of talks, agreements and discussions without a significant breakthrough or even a possibility of it, seem to indicate that the border dispute will eventually become a key impediment in the future course of China's relations with India. On the eve of Premier Wen Jiabao's visit to India in 2010, the Chinese Ambassador to India, Zhang Yan stated, "China-India relations are very fragile and very easy to be damaged and very difficult to repair." This consequently highlights the urgent need to further build upon the CBMs between the two countries especially since peaking tensions can many a times become a fertile ground for confidence building measures to be adopted mutually.

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