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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Cioculescu, Ș. F., & Petre, S. (2013). China and India: learning from history, building the present and avoiding narratives on their "unescapable clash". *Studia Politica: Romanian Political Science Review*, 13(2), 287-311. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-447177>

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China and India

Learning from History, Building the Present and Avoiding Narratives on their "Unescapable Clash"

ȘERBAN FILIP CIOCULESCU, SILVIU PETRE

There is a body of common knowledge in international politics, which is hard to reject by anyone. One of them is about the so-called "inexorable" rise of the Asia-Pacific region playing the role of a geopolitical pivotal area. If one believe this "prophecy" – which is based on statistical evidence but also on a huge dose of wishful thinking –, then one must accept the scenario that the great powers during this century will compete for wealth, power and security in that region¹.

In this area, India and China are certainly the most populous countries and also in the world, both largely exceeding one billion inhabitants and also ranking among the territorially largest states in the world, after the Russian Federation. Thus, no wonder that journalists, strategic analysts and even ordinary people call them "giants", or use symbolic animal names (dragon, elephant, tiger etc.) and consider their bilateral relations and mutual perceptions/expectations to be among the decisive elements to shape the configuration of the world security architecture in this century. Not only are they populous, with a continental-like dimension, representing the inheritors of ancient and brilliant civilizations, but they are also direct neighbors, thus it is obvious that their leaders must conceive national and regional security policies taking into account also the perceived risks, threats and opportunities arising from the other one, beyond the borders. Nowadays, the two countries are among the biggest fast-rising economies in the world, belonging to the so-called BRICS group of countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), which are expected to be strong economic competitors for the West in the future and even overpass it. China is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council while India is a possible candidate to this position.

As one could expect, given the importance of these countries, there is a rich international relations and strategic studies literature dealing with the Sino-Indian relations. Not only Chinese and Indian experts are constantly contributing to the debate, but also American and European ones, almost all of them focusing either on the military side of security or on the economic competition. Generally, International Relations (IR) "realist" authors emphasize the perspective of an increasing and "unavoidable" conflict while liberals think the cooperation logic will prevail, ensuring peaceful relations between the two powerful actors. But what is striking is that a multitude of the analyses is focusing on the so-called "inevitability" of this long-term rivalry, suggesting that the power accumulated by the two actors will generate an unstable balance of power mechanism ending in a dangerous security dilemma and even a possible war. Not only American neorealist authors use this conflictual

¹ Jacek KUGLER, "The Asian Ascent: Opportunity for Peace or Precondition for War?", *International Studies Perspectives*, no. 7, 2006, pp. 36–42; Brad GLOSSERMAN, "Asia's Rise Far from Inevitable", *Asia Times online*, Jul. 22, 2009; Lord MALLOCH-BROWN, "Is Asia's Rise Inevitable?", *Asian Affairs*, vol. 41, issue 3, 2010, pp. 325-336. See also Brahma CHELLANEY, "The Resistible Rise of Asia?", *Project Syndicate*, <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/the-resistible-rise-of-asia->, May 1, 2012.

matrix, but also Indian and Chinese thinkers which probably know that being a modern Cassandra is more rewarding than playing the optimistic view¹. Journalists, of course, have an innate tendency towards this kind of rivalry-based discourse, as they anticipate the needs of the readers².

In this study, we want to show that the simple increase of power, be it material (economic, military, demographic) and non-material (innovation, culture, norms, legitimacy – what Joseph Nye called “soft power”) does not automatically lead to insecurity and conflict if it is not associated with some specific decision-making outcomes, which are based on cognitive perceptions, cultural practices and institutional characteristics. Using the work of constructivist author Alexander Wendt, we know that systemic “anarchy” in IR does not automatically mean conflict and war, because “anarchy is what states make of it”³.

Paying Attention to Complexity in the Notion of Complex Interdependence

There is an ongoing debate about the effects of trade for the production of peace and the taming of conflict. An ever growing literature generated has accompanied IR for more than eighty years. Both liberals and realists like to return and evoke as a ritualized moment Norman Angell’s book – *The Great Illusion* published just before the outbreak of WWI (1910)⁴. Angell’s intellectual effort tried to analyse the web of relations which bound in togetherness the international stage of both great and small nations. His conclusion advocated the irrationality of an all out conflict as trade was more profitable and less costly than the domino crisis begun in Sarajevo. While realists use Angell’s book as a catechism for naivete, liberals have tried to pay more attention to such early writings and improve their credo upon them⁵.

While Waltz disavowed the growth of interdependence in the later decades of the Cold War⁶, newer realists learned to take economic flows into account but are

¹ Barry BUZAN, “China in International Society: Is ‘Peaceful Rise’ Possible?”, *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, vol. 3, issue 1, 2010, pp. 5-36.

² Waheguru Pal SINGH SIDHU, Jing-dong YUAN, *China and India: Cooperation or Conflict?*, CO: Lynne Rienner, Boulder, 2003.

³ Alexander WENDT, “Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics”, *International Organization*, vol. 46, no. 2, Spring 1992, pp. 391-425.

⁴ Sir Norman ANGELL, *The Great Illusion*, Cosimo, Inc., New York, 2007.

⁵ For an assessment of Norman Angell place in the intellectual history of British liberalism see: Christopher J. FETTWEIS, “Revisiting Mackinder and Angell: The Obsolescence of Great Power Geopolitics”, *Comparative Strategy*, Issue 22, 2003, pp. 109-129; Torbjorn KNUTSEN, “Cowboy Philosophy? A Centenary Appreciation of Norman Angell’s ‘Great Illusion’”, Paper presented at the annual meeting of the ISA’s 50th Annual Convention “Exploring the Past, Anticipating the Future”, New York Marriott Marquis, New York City, NY, USA, Feb. 15, p. 200. See also Daniel W. DREZNER, “The Ten Worst Books in International Relations”, *Foreign Policy*, April 10, 2009, http://drezner.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/04/10/the_top_ten_worst_books_in_international_relations, accessed on May 4, 2013.

⁶ Kenneth N. WALTZ, “Globalization and Governance”, *Political Science and Politics*, vol. 32, no. 4, Dec. 1999, pp. 693-700; IDEM, “Structural Realism after the Cold War”, *International Security*, vol. 25, no. 1, Summer 2000, pp. 5-41.

nonetheless skeptical towards an improvement of security as result of trade. They argue that increasing interdependence goes hand in hand with increasing vulnerability. As a middle ground in this debate Dale Copeland writes that interdependence and commerce in themselves do not tame the dogs of war and a better explanation should add extra factors. According to Copeland the perceptions of ruling elites vis-a-vis the prospects of trade are even more salient than the level of economic interaction. If the prospects of trade are benefits-prone than the likelihood of warmongering declines. If however the ruling elites are pessimistic with regards to trade flows and believe military actions should have meager costs then they are likely to engage in a conflict. Copeland uses the example of Soviet-American relations during detente time from the 1970s to early 1980s¹.

Building upon Copeland we understand the dilemma of trade & war in the frame of political economy. While politics and economics are often separated for methodological purposes, in real life they mingle in intricate ways. States and markets seldom interact with consequences often ignored or non-evident for decision-makers. We assert that trade alone does not make up for interdependence. In order for two or several countries to be considered interdependent their mutual flows and settlement must have a certain degree. Only then one can witness a mutual spillover and predict from there the possibilities of war and peace. If rival countries are still benevolent to each other and pursue trade but at a modest or moderate level we will consider them engaged in *economic diplomacy*, meaning that it's only pseudo-interdependence provided by state factors as a gesture of good will.

Thus, our research questions will be: who exactly in China and in India has the authority to decide if the other state could be seen as a risk, a threat or a security partner? How dependent are these decision-makers on the society as a whole? How much influenced are they by the main historic events, national mythology, collective traumas and psychosis or cultural factors? How influent are the Chinese and Indian military elites when dealing with the politicians and the societies regarding the behaviour towards the other state?

This study is based on some specific hypothesis.

1. In order to understand Chinese and Indian foreign and security policies in their bilateral relations it is necessary but not enough to know the accurate level of power they both have and also their perceptions on power and security. Security patterns are dependent on political culture and strategic culture embodied and embedded in elite perception;

2. Political, military and intellectual elites generally shape the foreign and security policies narratives and run the state affairs more than the pure state bureaucracy;

3. Newly discovered economic interdependence turn the table around either a bellicose or a pacifist outcome depending on those elites view of their strategic neighborhoods.

We will investigate the relations between India and China using historic narratives, strategic studies tools and appropriate theories.

¹ Dale C. COPELAND, "Trade Expectations and the Outbreak of Peace Détente: 1970-1974, 1985-1991 and the End of Cold War", in Jean-Marc F. BLANCHARD, Edward D. MANSFIELD, Norrin M. RIPSAN (eds.), *Power and the Purse: Economic Statecraft, Interdependence and National Security*, Frank Cass & Colt Ltd., London, 2000, pp. 15-39/p. 16.

China is Rising But Unfortunately for It, It's Not the Only One!

To use a tabloidic phraseology, China is the world arena incontestable "diva", because of its huge economic growth, unmatched population and famous rivalry with the US for systemic hegemony¹. Chinese feel more and more comfortable with this image, they cultivate nationalist feelings and geopolitical ambitions embedded in traditional political views based on their Confucian-Daoist inheritance plus the marxist influence. Most of these traditional views cultivate moderation and non-provocative developments, the most famous being Deng Xiaoping's advice about "hidding the brightness and nourishing obscurity" (*tao guang yang hui*) and ensure a peaceful rise².

But at the same time Chinese feel that the main rival, the USA, is gradually building partnerships with neighbors of China to try to contain Chinese power and limit its security options³. India is such an incommode player, because it is almost as populous and huge as China, with economic rise and human capabilities, with a strong army and geopolitical goals in the neighboring areas. India is rising at the same time as China and it is thought to play an important role in the "movie" of China's strive to dominate its regional system and may be the world, in spite of the official claim of peaceful rise. India will surpass China in population and it is a true democracy, while China is led by an authoritarian-regime which is only gradually moving to social openness. They are both capitalist (free market) states but China started its reform years before India, after 1979, and still enjoys a significant edge over India. But Chinese leaders know that economic accidents could change the balance or even a regional war could occur, in which China could be involved, with disastrous consequences, and these could help India to become an element hindering Chinese domination of Asia.

American strategist Zbigniew Brzezinski depicted India as being "a complicated mixture of democratic self-governance, massive social injustice, economic dynamism and widespread political corruption"⁴.

Indian analyst Mohan Malik rightly described India-Chinese relations as follows: "the relationship is complicated by layers of rivalry, mistrust, and occasional cooperation, not to mention actual geographical disputes"⁵.

¹ Shaun BRESLIN, "China's Rise to Leadership in Asia – Strategies, Obstacles and Achievements", *Conference Paper*, GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Hamburg, December 11 and 12, 2006. See also Zhang XIAOMING, Barry BUZAN, "Correspondence, Debating China's Peaceful Rise", *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, vol. 3, 2010, pp. 447-460. See also Martin JACQUES, "Welcome to China's Millennium", *The Guardian*, 23 June 2009.

² Yang WENCHANG, "Diplomatic Words of Wisdom", 2011-10-29, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/indepth/2011-10/29/c_131218962.htm, accessed on 3 December 2012.

³ Martin JACQUES, *When China Rules The World: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global*, Penguin, 2nd edition, 2012. This well-known author thinks that the Chinese possible hegemony in the future will also take the form of cultural influence on the world system of states. This kind of power would be much more difficult to counter by USA.

⁴ Zbigniew BRZEZINSKI, *Strategic Vision*, Basic Books, New York, 2012, p. 19.

⁵ Mohan MALIK, "China and India Today: Diplomats Jostle, Militaries Prepare", July/August 2012, <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org>, accessed on 20 April 2013.

Lessons of the History: Trust Me At Your Own Risk!

In an interesting game of parallel history, China and India represent the successors of ancient civilizations and empires which dominated the world system and the vanished under the assault of invading forces: Mongols, Mughals, British, Russian, Japanese, British and American ones. Buddhism, one of world's five great religions was born in Nepal, proliferated, almost disappeared from there only to flourish again in Southeast Asia and beyond the slopes of Chomolungma¹.

India has been a British colony for centuries and its state, its borders had been traced by the colonial master which withdrew after WWII and left behind a bloody civil war (in fact more a religious sectarian one) which ended in the secession of Pakistan. China also began a gradual decline after the 15th century and in the 19th one lost huge territories to Russian empire (via the „Unequal treaties“), lost the opium war with Great Britain, lost the first war with Japan in 1894-1895 for the domination of Korea and Taiwan, then was crushed at the beginning of the 20th century by a military intervention of Western powers (the “Boxer rebellion”). China, after becoming a communist state, welcomed the good relations with India, a country which stood apart from both the communist and the capitalist blocks, while India immediately recognized PRC as a state and considered it a close neighbour. One should mention especially the “Panchsheel Agreement” of April 29, 1954 between the two states, as it mentioned the “five principles” of peaceful co-existence and mutual trust: India explicitly recognized the Chinese economic and political control on Tibet, giving up the privileges it has inherited from the British Crown, originating in the Anglo-Tibetan Treaty of 1904². Delhi agreed to this, in exchange for the confidence-building and security with its main neighbor, in the spirit of “friendship and brotherhood” claimed by Indian and Chinese leaders. More than that, India boycotted the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty on the grounds that the settlement did not return the island of Formosa (Taiwan) to China. Even in 1962, at the peak of territorial dispute, Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai reminded India's leader Nehru that:

“Our two peoples' common interests in their struggle against imperialism outweigh by far all the differences between our two countries. We have a major responsibility for Sino-Indian friendship, Asian-African solidarity and Asian peace”³.

But the growing nationalism and the opposing ideologies found a reason for conflict in a border dispute. It seems that China wanted to build a strategic railway from Xinjiang to Tibet passing through eastern Kashmir, a plan that was seen by

¹ Hermann KULKE, Dietmar ROTHERMUND, *O istorie a Indiei*, Romanian transl. by Loredana Tiron, Editura Artemis, București, 2003, pp. 60, 159-167; Shenali WADUGE, “Why Buddhism Prospered in Asia But Died in India”, *Asian Tribune*, June 10, 2012.

² David M. MALONE, *Does the Elephant Dance?*, *Contemporary Indian Foreign Policy*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2011, p. 131 and *passim*. Similar agreements between Beijing and Delhi were signed in 1993 and 1996 but without using the name “Panchsheel”, even if the “five principles” of peaceful co-existence were always mentioned. In Buddhist philosophy, *Panchsheel* (a Sanskrit word) was the name of the “five taboos/virtues” that a good Indian must respect during his life.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 132.

India as a catastrophe, because it would have linked China to Pakistan in a very direct way¹.

Thus in 1962, Chinese armed forces defeated the Indian ones and this explains why even today why the bilateral relations are not quite normal, not to say friendly. Retrospectively, one could say that the first prime minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru trusted too much the Chinese², believed in their rethorical pacifism and hesitated to increase the military power of the country. Nehru is well-known for being one of the most prominent leaders of the Thirld World (non-alignment) movement and thus willing to keep a separate way from USSR and USA.

However, Nehru's affair with Idealpolitik³ (versus classical practiced Realpolitik) must not be spelled as a by-word for naivete⁴. No doubt about it, he was idealistic at his country's own risks, but at the same time aknowledged the imperative of supporting words with swords. Unfortunately for Indian military security, his grasp of international relations during the first decades of Cold War a fact which explains why India entered the war in a state of visible material and psychological underpreparedness. Witnesses mentioned that during his prime minister mandate, Nehru personally controlled the foreign and security policy of India, a country which did not have its own foreign policy before the independence⁵ and consequently lacked the necessary expertise. As K.P.S. Menon, secretary of foreign affairs, explained, Nehru's

¹ Robert D. KAPLAN, *The Revenge of Geography*, Random House, New York, 2012, p. 156.

² If one bothers to index the word China in Nehru main book – *Glimpses of World History*, written in prison and published in 1935 it would find out 134 citation, notes Ramachandra Guha. Ramachandra GUHA, "Jawaharlal Nehru And China: A Study In Failure?", *Harvard-Yenching Institute Working Paper Series*, http://www.harvard-yenching.org/sites/harvard-yenching.org/files/featurefiles/Ramachandra%20Guha_Jawaharlal%20Nehru%20and%20China.pdf, accessed on 3 December 2011, p. 2.

³ Public memory cherishes him as a pacifist who despised war, alliances, security pacts and did not want a powerful army nor a binding strategic planning. He is said to have even wanted people in the MoD to work in civilian clothes! See Fareed ZAKARIA, *Lumea postamericană*, Romanian transl. by Crisia Miroiu, Polirom, Iași, 2009, pp. 138-139. It has become an already established cliché to see Nehru's halo as an extension of Mahatma's and therefore label their successive roles as a John the Baptist - Christ Savior frame. Some of this myth may hold big chunks of truth, but at the same time Nehru's friendship with Homi Bhaba, the father of Indian atomic program as well as his support of the Mahalanobis plan envisaging rapid industrialization, casts India's first prime minister more like a balanced modernist with secularist view. Shashi THAROOR, *Nehru. Inventarea Indiei*, Romanian transl. by Marina Elena Tătărâm and Alina Gabriela Vasile, Paideia, 2008. For English version see: Shashi THAROOR, *Nehru. The Invention of India*, Arcade Publishing, New York, 2003. For Homi Bhaba patronage of the seminal steps in India's nuclear development see: Leonard WEISS, "India and the NPT", *Strategic Analysis*, vol. 34, no. 2, March 2010, pp. 255-271/pp. 255-263; Hina PANDEY, "Atoms for Peace: Balancing the Promotion of Nuclear Energy and Non-proliferation", *Air Power and Space Studies Journal*, vol. 6, no. 2, Summer 2011, pp. 25-45/pp. 25-27, <http://www.aerospaceindia.org/Air%20Power%20Journals/Summer%202011/Chapter%202.pdf>, accessed on 10 May 2013.

⁴ An essay analysis of Nehru real-ideal-politik alternative stances read: Baldev Raj NAYAR, T.V. PAUL, *India in the World Order: Searching for Major-Power Status*, Contemporary South Asia, Cambridge University Press, 2002.

⁵ Of course one can point the existence of a certain Empire of the Raj, as Robert Blyth put sit. It as actually a form of decentralized diplomacy which divided competence spheres between London, the metropolis and the viceroy of India. For more see Robert J. BLYTH, *The Empire of the Raj. India, Eastern Africa and the Middle East, 1858-1947*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2003.

own vision and prejudices led the foreign policy of India in such critical times. He did not listen to the advice of Lord Mounbatten, the last British vice-roy of India, who wanted a strong defense sector and a strongman as head of the General Staff¹. So, Delhi lost the border war in a disastrous way. This demonstrated to Indians that being highly moralistic while underplaying the hard power and the enemy intentions was not a good strategy for the survival of the nation. Indians acquired a deep mistrust concerning China and the famous expression *Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai* (Indians and Chinses are brothers)² remained a simple wording, even if Chinese army quickly withdrew from the occupied areas in Indian territory. Using the irony of the English word, one may notice that after the 1962 debacle Hindi Sini Bhai-Bhai became Hindi Sini Bye-Bye! From a military point of view, China certainly had an edge over India, as it has a well-trained Army, which fought three wars: against Japan, against the nationalists in the civil war and then against US in Korea.

Later, India seemed to have learned this lesson and became somewhat more ware-proned and won two wars against Pakistan, in 1965 and 1971, while China, in spite of the alliance with Pakistan stood aside. Beijing tolerated the secession of Bangladesh from Pakistan and adopted a neutral stance towards the Kashmir dispute, even if Pakistan gave China in the years '60s a small piece of land near Kashmir, which is often claimed by India.

India's quest for Independence, understood as self-reliance (*swaraj*) did not end in August 1947. In the perception of the Raisina Hill decolonisation could not really end until the subalterns (to use a catchword from the historian Gayatri C. Spivak) were at the same table with their former masters. It is to be said that Nehru himself considered the military potential of nuclear might. His speech near the passing of the Atomic Act (April 15, 1948) is revealing:

"We must develop this atomic energy quite apart from war – indeed I think we must develop it for the purpose of using it for peaceful purposes. ... Of course, if we are compelled as a nation to use it for other purposes, possibly no pious sentiments of any of us will stop the nation from using it that way"³.

India's entrance in the nuclear club received first inputs in 1953 when president Eisenhower started Atoms for Peace – an ambitious initiative aiming to transfer civil nuclear technology and expertise to developing countries. At that time Washington sympathised with South Asia's Ghandian legacy. During those years more than a

¹ Fareed ZAKARIA, *Lumea postamericană*, cit., p. 139.

² It has to be mentioned that the idea of a Sino-Indian brotherhood painted on the wider canvass of Asianism predated Nehru and the generation of Bandung. Sparkles of this spirit could be seen in the early decades of the XXth century. See for instance Sun Yat Sen's 1924 speech: Sun Yat Sen, *Panasianism* (1924), Society for Asian Integration, <http://www.asianintegration.com/Publications/Articles/Others/Pan-Asianism%20by%20Sun%20Yat-Sen.html>, accessed on April 20, 2013. Especially after World War I the promises of Versailles echoed into hopes that an alliance of Asian peoples would cast aside the yoke of European dominion. In India, for the sake of the conversation, people such as Taraknath Das fantasied about a German-Indian rapprochement forged against Britain. Sven SAALER, Christopher W.A. SZPILMAN (eds.), *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History, 1850–1920*, vol. I, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011, p. 244 and *passim*.

³ Raj CHENGAPPA, *Weapons of Peace*, Harper Collins Publishers, India, 2000, p. 79.

thousand Indian scientists came to America and returned to their country with knowledge. The affair turned sour in 1968 when India – albeit a supporter of de-nuclearisation- refused to sign the NPT, sign as an oligarchic pact between already possessing nuclear states. A descendant path soon followed- while Nixon worked to befriend the Chinese and mollify the Soviets, his administration record with Indira Gandhi went to the ground¹. After a second bitter conflict with Pakistan in 1971, New Delhi conducted a civil nuclear test in 1974. It was a three layer motivation: preemption against Pakistani inception of a nuclear program in the aftermath of the 1971 defeat; fear of China which exploded a bomb a decade later and la grandeur – ambition to be held as an international actor to be reckon with. This was to be echoed by a second nuclear set of tests in May 1998 at Pokhran.

This was seen as illegal by many countries, since India did not sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Even the fact that the Indian prime minister invoked the China threat to justify the possession of nuclear bombs was not seen as a valid argument by the international community. Beijing angrily reacted to the Indian allegations of a "China threat" denying them. Anyway, for strategic and geopolitical reasons, US president G.W. Bush Jr. negotiated and signed a nuclear treaty with Delhi, in 2005-2008, thus giving India some legitimacy for its nuclear program, the same privilege which is constantly denied to Iran. India still does not want to sign the NPT as it considers the nuclear a source of prestige and ultimate survival². The exemptions given by the Nuclear Suppliers Group are something exceptional. Of course, in China this surprising move has been seen as a first step towards a future India-US alliance for containment of Chinese power. But things are not so simple as in India only a part of the population and decision-makers would be ready to accept an alliance with USA³, thus there is no consensus on an anti-China policy, not to speak about a full-fledged alliance. Anyway, angry on this Indian avoidance of the NPT filters, China continued for a time to oppose India's aspirations to a permanent

¹ Jayakar PUPUL, *Indira Gandhi: A Biography*, Penguin Books India, New York, 1997, p. 225.

"Kissinger regrets India comments", BBC News, 1 July, 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4640773.stm, accessed on 4 May 2013. "This woman suckered us", said Nixon of Indira Gandhi, *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, March 2, 2010.

² Karsten FREY, *State Interests and Symbolism in India's Nuclear Build-Up*, South Asian Institute, Heidelberg Papers in South Asian Comparative Politics, October 2002; IDEM, *India's Nuclear Bomb and National Security*, Routledge, London/New York, 2006; IDEM, *Nuclear Weapons as Symbols. The Role of Norms in Nuclear Policy Making*, Institute Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (IBEI), Working Paper, Barcelona, October, 2006.

³ Dwelling upon this aspect alone one should take into account the effort garnered by the Congress party and especially by Manmohan Singh to pass an agreement which threaten his government stay in power. Another factor involved in passing the deal through Indian Parliament concerned bribe and traffic of influence, as some cables made public by Wikileaks revealed three years later. Jason BURKE, "Indian Government Tried to Buy Votes, Says WikiLeaks Cable", *The Guardian*, March 17 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/mar/17/india-usa>, accessed on 23 June 2012; "Legislators Bribed in Nuclear Energy Policy, Cash for Poor Votes", *Green World Investor*, March 17 2011, <http://www.greenworldinvestor.com/2011/03/17/wikileaks-exposes-more-muck-in-indian-politics-satish-sharmanahiketa-kapurkart-chidambaram-k-alagiri-legislators-bribed-in-nuclear-energy-policy-cash-for-poor-votes/>, accessed on 4 April 2013; Jim YARDLEY, Lydia POLGREEN, Hari KUMAR, "In India, Leaked Cable About Bribes Sets Off a Furor", *The New York Times*, March 17, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/18/world/asia/18india.html?_r=0, accessed on 20 December 2012.

seat with the US Security Council, even if its size and population enables it to have such desires.

Remembering the 1962 Border War: Sino-Indian Perceptions

This war is still remembered by strategists and common people in the two countries as being an amazing clash between non-western and non-colonial states, a war among two states which have been occupied, humiliated and even colonised (the case of India) by foreign powers. The Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh border disputes were salient at that time because the two young countries were dominated by strong ideologies and wanted to demonstrate the end of their subordinated role on the world stage.

Under the Communist leader Mao Zedong, China claimed the whole Tibet and got it without serious hindrances from outside but in its opinion the huge territory held by India and named Arunachal was also part of Tibet. Mao was committed to contest the Mc Mahon line, seen as an inheritance of the British colonial era, while India, led by prime minister Nehru, was committed to defend this line and had a spiritual commitment to the independence of Tibet.

In 1961, India adopted a more bolded stance, with a strategy of advance towards (the so-called "forward policy") the Chinese-held land and an aggressive border patrolling. Beijing at the beginning gave orders to its military commanders to withdraw and avoid clashes, and thus Indian troops were ordered to advance and occupy Chinese posts, abandoned by their sentinels. This seems strange, as Nehru was well-known for his pacifism and avoidance of military preparedness. Henry Kissinger mentions that Mao revolutionarily changed the classical Chinese paradigm on war. While Confucianism insisted on general harmony and avoidance of open conflicts, Mao wanted to enhance Chinese military power and engage in the defense of the disputed lands. The balance and the harmony were to give place to the clash of the wills.

Nehru had a special esteem for China and prized its fight for freedom against foreign oppressive powers. He even dreamt of a big federation with China, India, Ceylon, Afghanistan that would have translated the Bandung spirit into an institutional reality, even if only at regional level¹. He tried to resolve peacefully the border disputes with China, received the numerous Tibetans refugees, Dalai lama, and avoid enhancing the power of the armed forces, thus keeping India not well prepared for a possible clash with China. Indian soldiers were not well armed and equipped for a winter war in mountains, thus paying a heavy price to the geography and weather.

But British journalist Neville Maxwell, a well-known expert in Indian issues, has also a specific explanation for the escalation to war in 1962. He considers that India

¹ C.R. MOHAN, *Emerging Geopolitical Trends and Security in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the People's Republic of China, and India (ACI) Region*. ADBI Working Paper 412, Asian Development Bank Institute, Tokyo, 2013. Available: <http://www.adbi.org/workingpaper/2013/03/15/5543.geopolitical.trends.security.asean.prc.india/>, accessed on October 10, 2012. Not everyone had the same enthusiastic consideration towards Beijing and its red leaders. Vallabhai Patel, for some years Nehru's second in command tried to open the eyes to the former that Chinese communism can foster as much aggression as any former European power. See Shashi THAROOR, *Nehru...cit.*, p. 6.

mistakenly interpreted the Mc Mahon line, believing that an advanced border post, the Dhola Post, was inside the line, while in fact Dhola was North of Mc Mahon line and thus legitimately claimed by China. Seeing that Indians had occupied position in this disputed area, Chinese army eventually launched a pre-emptive strike to liberate this land¹. Mao Zedong, criticized by Soviet leader Nikita Krushkhev ("Why did you have to kill people on your border with India?"), answered that Indians crossed the Mc Mahon line and attacked first, and pretended that even Nehru did not know about Indian forces mistakenly crossing Mc Mahon line! Retrospectively, and keeping in mind Nehru's own explanations, the Indian strategy of claiming its colonial borders by using the so-called "forward policy" could not be seen as an accident but as a deliberate movement. This strategy was aimed at intimidating the Chinese patrols and cutting their lines of communications².

Neville Maxwell clearly explained India's use of the colonial border in its zero-sum game with China. According to his opinion,

"the boundaries of India ceased to be the pawns of the British in their Great Games with imperial rivals, and became cell walls of a national identity. No longer could boundaries be conceived or shifted by men whose concern was no longer territory, but strategic advantage; henceforth they enclosed the sacred soil of the motherland, and politicians could tamper with them only at their peril"³.

The French military analyst Thérèse Delpech asserted that the border war may be also explained by China's will "to punish India for having granted asylum to the Dalai Lama after the 1959 Tibetan uprising"⁴.

Der Primat der Innenpolitik has a saying here also: a third strand of explanations highlight Beijing's need to obtain some international success and cast China as besieged city in order to mollify the criticism against Mao's Great Leap Forward⁵.

To the above mentioned causes another one, singled out by David Malone was China's upset with India's harboring Chiang Kai-Shek's agents. Chinese officials urged their southern Himalayan counterparts to get rid of them but New Delhi's action was alleged halfhearted⁶. Ramachandra Guha speaks about Chinese followers of Dalai Lama or Indian anti-communists giving voice to anti-Mao slogans but nothing to the level of KMT members or agents of the Indian soil. In a climate of suspicion Beijing feared a Taiwanese invasion coupled perhaps with domestic riots. It is undoubtedly true that CIA trained anti-communist soldiers with the minimal hope of damaging the regime⁷. Further more, to add gas on the burning stove, on April 22, 1962, KMT

¹ Neville MAXWELL, *India's China War*, Random House, 2000.

² IDEM, "India's China War. How the Chinese Saw the Conflict", May 2011, <http://china.indiaborderdispute.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/neville-maxwell-chinas-india-war.pdf>, accessed on 7 February 2013.

³ IDEM, *India's China War*, cit., p. 75.

⁴ Thérèse DELPECH, "Nuclear Deterrence in the 21st Century", Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, Ca., 2012, www.rand.org, pp. 76-77.

⁵ Claude ARPI, "Why Mao attacked India in 1962", *Indian Defence Review*, vol. 26, issue 3, July-Sept 2011, <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/news/maos-return-to-power-passed-through-india/>, accessed on 2 May 2013.

⁶ David M. MALONE, *Does the Elephant Dance? ...cit.*, pp. 132-143.

⁷ Ramachandra GUHA, "Jawaharlal Nehru and China...cit.", pp. 20-24.

leader issued a communiqué where he threatened with mainland invasion. However this final hypothesis does not seem very robust as American ambassador to China, John Cabot assured his guest country that Washington did not support any move against Mao¹. So any interference coming from outside as explanatory factor should be laid to rest in the background, behind those bilateral issues concerning only the Sino-Indian security complex.

Because the Chinese attack took part at the same time with the Cuban missile crisis and as it risks increased too much China's power in Asia, both the USA and USSR reacted negatively. Washington considered this war a Chinese aggression, it condemned it with the UN, and in 1963, within the National Security Council, Robert McNamara stated that in case of a future attack by China against India, the USA should resort even to nuclear weapons. The idea that China could take huge territories from its big Asian neighbor by a quick war was unacceptable for the Americans, as it would have modified the regional balance of power in the benefit of the second biggest communist state in the world². The Soviets were also angry because they considered China's acts as dangerous, useless for the communist block, thus weakening the cohesion of the communist camp. From an ideological point of view, it is interesting that the USSR did not support up to the end the communist China (a brotherly country) against the "capitalist" (but non-aligned and reluctant to Western power) India³. Thus, one witnessed the total isolation of People's Republic of China at that time (Chinese troops quickly withdrew from much of Indian territory they had occupied), but also the painful failure of Nehru as chief foreign policy maker on the Indian side.

The Disputed Borders: Why did Negotiations Fail?

For historic and geopolitical reasons, the two states are not completely satisfied with their current borders, claiming parts of the other's territory. Beijing claims the Arunachal Pradesh state's territory as being Chinese and belonging to historical Tibet. But Delhi invoke the Mc Mahon line, inherited from the British colonial era. In 1914, the British empire agreed on a border demarcation with Tibet, settling the fate of this 890 km border. Sir Henry Mc Mahon, the then-secretary for foreign affairs of the UK, played a major role in this activity. As expected, today China rejects the papers signed by a then-autonomous Tibet leaders, claiming that Tibet is part of China and it should be China itself who establish its borders by directly negotiating with India. Interestingly, India is using a typical colonial border which is advantageous to

¹ Michael BRECHER, Jonathan WILKENFIELD, *A Study of Crisis*, University of Michigan Press, 1997, p. 386. For a study of Indo-US alliance in the wake of 1962 debacle see also Khalid JAVED, *The Sino-Indian War of 1962 and the United States: A study of Indo-US Collaboration against China*, US Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, 1962.

² Thomas C. SCHELLING, *Arms and Influence*, Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn., 1966, p. 51, quoted by Thérèse DELPECH, "Nuclear Deterrence...cit.", p. 76.

³ Air Marshal RS BEDI, "1962: Why the IAF Was Not Used", *Indian Defence Review*, vol. 26, issue 1, Jan.-Mar. 2011, <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/news/1962-why-the-iaf-was-not-used/>, accessed on 12 May 2013; Bharat VERMA, "1962: The Nehruvian Blunder", *Indian Defence Review*, vol. 27, issue 4, Oct.-Dec. 2012, <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/news/1962-the-nehruvian-blunder/>, accessed on 20 May 2013.

itself, against a country which has been historically traumatised by the intervention of foreign powers in its domestic affairs, in the 19-20th centuries, leading to the so-called "unequal treaties" and temporary lost of Manchuria and other areas. These treaties allowed imperial Russia, Japan but also Great Britain to take important peaces of land from Chinese homeland, as the Chinese empire was very week and unable to resist agressions commited by these powers individually – such as the opium wars with the British and the Japanese war of 1895 – or collectively such as in the case of the Boxers war at the beginning of the 20th century. Even today, Russia still enjoys vast amont of territory in Eastern Siberia which once belonged to the Celest Empire.

Chinese officials generally name this territory situated at the South of Tibet and hold by India "Southern Tibet" and sometimes consider Indians born in Arunachal as being Chinese citizens, thus claiming they don't need visas to travel in China! India refers to it as Arunachal Pradesh (Assam Himalaya), a state created to counter the Chinese pretentions to a "wider Tibet" and to have a military use in case of a new border war. China controls pices of land on the North-Western border of India, the Aksai Chin glacier and Shaksam valley (38.000 sq km), being an area of conflict, but also a piece of Kashmir, given by Pakistan to Beijing in 1963 (a surface of 5.200 sq km). India used to claim these territories and up to know did not give up its claims. Also India annexed the Sikkim in 1975, a fact which is still not officially recognized by China.

The first real attempts to normalize the situation were made in 1993 and 1996, when the two states agreed by signing The Treaty on maintenance of peace and tranquility along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and promised to enhance mutual trust, build confidence and prepare for a long term settlement of this issue. They established Confidence Building Measures on the border.

In order to avois escalating tensions, Delhi and Beijing signed in 2005 the *Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the India-China Boundary Question* which emphasized the clear and uncontested delimitation of borders using only peaceful ways. It is an open-ended process. Later, they have created the *Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on the border affairs* in January 2012, during the 15th bilateral border talks. But the initiative has ben discussed and agreed first in December 2010, when Chinese prime minister Wen Jiabao visited India¹.

The years 2012 was declared the "Year of India-China Friendship and Cooperation". In spite of these good-will gestures, China and India still have contested borders and periodically they resort to what the Delhi government called "cartographic aggressions": both states issue passports for the other states' citizens showing maps which reflect their will, not the current territorial line. The Indian media plays the game of nationalism, calling the Agni V long-range missile the "China killer", as it could easily hit Beijing and Shanghai! At the same time Agni VI received multiple warheads in order to hit simultaneoulsy many targets in China².

¹ Prashanth PARAMESWARAN, "Sino-Indian Border Negotiations: Problems and Prospects", *China Brief*, vol. 12, issue 6, March 15, 2012, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=39141, accessed on March 25, 2013.

² David KARL, "Sino-Indian Relations Full of Contradictions", March 13, 2013, www.foreignpolicyblogs.com, accessed on 20 April 2013.

The Tibet Issue

As we said previously, for China the Tibet province is not complete without the so-called "outer Tibet", an area of 96.000 sq km occupied by India. This area known as Northeast Frontier Agency became in 1987 the Indian state Arunachal Pradesh. China has also a special claim for a territory in Arunachal called Tawang, a land where the Buddhist population used to have close links with those of Tibet and where Beijing believes some rebellion plans aimed at territorial integrity of China were drafted. Tawang Monastery is a sacred place of the Tibetan Buddhism belonging to Indian territory in the area of contested border with China and analysts say that it is likely that this monastery will play a major role in the designation of the next Dalai Lama. Beijing could try to do something to alter the symbolic power of Tawang, short of conquering it directly and risk a general war with India. As the current Dalai Lama is 77 years old, there is a likelihood that China will find another candidate for being Lama and oppose it aggressively to the Indian candidate of Tawang¹, in a contest reminding us of the pope-antipope classical struggle during European Middle Age and Renaissance.

There are about 130.000 Tibetan refugees in India and also this country hosted the Dalai Lama, after he escaped Chinese invasion of 1950. India do not claim Tibet from China, but Chinese officials fear the support given by Delhi to Tibetan refugees, as long as there are separatist tendencies in Tibet. India does not trust Chinese intentions, as Beijing did not officially recognized Arunachal Pradesh belonging to India.

That is not all. The Eastern Indian area of Bengal is separated from the main body of the country by a slice corridor named Siliguri. This is a narrow stripe of land which separates China from Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. In case of a Chinese pre-emptive strike, coupled with a possible Bengalese support, India would have real problems in defending its eastern side. Strategic planning done by the Indian General Staff demonstrated that a massive Chinese attack could break the access through Siliguri, letting the Eastern Bengal and Arunachal Pradesh isolated and the Indian armed forces there encircled. Of course, India could in the end retaliate with nuclear ballistic missiles and threaten big cities in China but this is really dangerous and should be avoid. Based on this Siliguri scenario, rumors run that some hard-liners military people commissioned by the minister of Defense in Delhi drafted in 2006 a strategic plan to reciprocate to a Chinese attack on the corridor with an attempt to destabilize Tibet by provoking a revolt of the local population and thus forcing Chinese forces to turn back. But this scenario envisages a neutralization of Pakistan, by a surprise move from Iran and Afghanistan. Confronted with threats from the

¹ *Ibidem*. The author stated that China pretends that the future Dalai Lama could be born only on Chinese land and in 1995 Beijing even kidnapped a 6 years old boy from Tibet, who has been declared by Dalai Lama as the Panchen Lama, the second rank in the Buddhist hierarchy. It seems probable that the young Gendun Choekyi Nyima and his family members had been taken in Beijing under the custody of Chinese authorities. At the end of 1995 eventually the Chinese authorities succeeded in putting another child on the position of the Panchen Lama in Shigatse. Gendun is still missing and Indian authorities consider him as being held by Chinese. The most strange issue is that China is a laic state but its power quest make it interfere directly in the "business of monks" from Tibet! See "Panchen Lama Turns 20", <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Panchen-Lama-turns-20.-For-14-years,-he-has-been-a-hostage-of-the-Chinese-government-15085.html>, accessed on April 25, 2013.

West/North, Pakistan should not be able to support China by putting pressure on the border with India in the Kashmir area and even threatening Delhi with a nuclear strike. Otherwise, India could not count in anyway on a Pakistani neutrality, since China is the main protector of Pakistan against India.

But officially India has softer plans, even if different from a classical military defense vision. We know that in February 2012, the National Defense College and the Centre for Policy Research of India drafted a report called "Nonalignment 2.0"¹ which proposed a new strategy for border conflicts with China. Thus, in case of a Chinese aggression, India would not try to defend the attacked territory but it would try to grab also a piece of Chinese territory and then negotiate a mutual exchange and restoration of the territorial status quo². Of course, this scenario is based on the axiom that India is the satisfied power and China the revisionist one. But what is more important is that this scenario heavily borrowed from that which was drafted by the MoD in 2006: thus India could try to mount an insurgency in the Chinese-occupied areas in order to hurt the fighting potential of Chinese troops and break their supply lines. The 2006 MoD planning allowed even to instigate ethnic rebellions in Chinese provinces along the border, in case of Indian-Chinese war, but it seems that this possibility is kept for a last resort movement, as it has the potential for escalating for more brutal forms of confrontation. The 2012 report has involved not only private think-tanks but also the participation and support of the National Security Advisor S. Menon³, and this may be a signal given by Delhi to Beijing that it will be less and less tolerant with the numerous incursions that Chinese soldiers are doing in the disputed areas, according to Indian sources.

Currently, China enhanced the defense of Siliguri by deploying SU 30 air-fighters planes in Assam state. Anyway, Delhi is facing a strategic nightmare because a border war in the North would be in most of a cases a two-front war, excepting the situation in which Pakistan would launch an aggression in Kashmir and China would stay neutral.

Indian military analysts know that recently China invested a lot in developing the railway and roads networks in the Tibet Autonomous Region, near the Indian border, certainly with a military use⁴. There are five air bases, a number of helipads, but also a long rail network and more than thirty thousand kilometers of roads.

The thirty division deployed in that area – meaning about 160.000 troops – could be able to travel quickly in case of need, and also the geography is advantaging China in Tibet and in Himalayan mountains. Chinese could overpass Indians by 3 to 1 in infantry and benefit from better geographic positions to do the fight. Chinese troops must travel through a plain highland area, while Indian soldiers must climb the mountain in a frosty and difficult area. This is especially true for Aksai Chin but not only there. In reaction, Delhi decided to station the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile in Arunachal Pradesh, which was seen in China as the first deployment of an offensive tactical missile ready to hit Chinese targets.

¹ "Nonalignment 2.0: A Foreign and Strategic Policy for India in the 21st Century", Center for Policy Research, February 2012. http://www.cprindia.org/sites/default/files/NonAlignment%202.0_1.pdf, accessed on March 24, 2013.

² Prashanth PARAMESWARAN, "Sino-Indian Border Negotiations...cit."

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ Rajeswari Pillai RAJAGOPALAN, Kailash PRASAD, "Sino-Indian Border Infrastructure: Issues and Challenges", *ORF Issue Brief*, no. 23, August 2010.

The fact that India and China do increase their military power in the disputed areas, that they sometimes tend to allow their military to cross the border in a provocative way and that they invest in transport infrastructure suggest that the political leaders do not want to be seen domestically and internationally as pacifist and hesitant. Giving satisfaction to the nationalist supporters or simply relying on the military advisers who are against the compromise, they prefer to prolong a dangerous situation rather than to negotiate a peaceful and rational settlement like India giving up claims on Aksai Chin and China not claiming anymore Southern Tibet.

The Military Balance: Still Favorable to China?

Currently, China greatly overpass India in terms of GDP percentage allocated for defense and total sums: more than 100 billion dollars in 2012, compared with 30-32 billions dollars for India.

Since 2008, India keeps some medium to long range missile Agni III as a final deterrent near the border with China, which are clearly aiming at big chinese cities, situated at more than 2000 kilometers, and not at the Pakistanese cities and bases which are not so remote. Agni V is said to run 5000 km thus threatening even Eastern Chinese cities. In Hindu language, Agni mans "fire", thus this weapon has a symbolic appearance.

Anyway, India and China do not want do develop their military capabilities in a purely zero-sum game pattern, aiming at each other while not having any dialogue, in spite of the nationalist-ethos which staves behind large segments of their populations. This is the reason why they tried to develop a minimum defense cooperation and dialogue, in spite of the border disputes. In 2007 and 2008 some common military exercises were held, and since 2008 at least three rounds of the so-called India-China Annual Defense Dialogue. But in August 2010, this dialogue has been suspended, after China denied the visa request by chief of the Indian Northern Command to visit China in an official mission. China frequently irritates Indian authorities by denying visas to high military Indian officials, especially those born in Arunachal Pradesh, and by distorting maps of the common borders.

The year 2012 has been proclaimed the "Year of India-China Friendship and Cooperation", thus the projects for military cooperation were enhanced. Even the Indian opposition seems to accept this as something necessary. The leader of the main India's opposition party Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Sushma Swaraj stated that "if the armies of our two great countries forge an understanding, the future generations are assured of peace and stability. Much bad blood has flowed, its time to begin anew for the sake of future"¹. This is an interesting turn, since BJP traditionally put an emphasis on the "China threat" using the nationalist myths which are cherished by Hindu chauvinists. India and China decided to resume bilateral military exercises. Some authors, however, identified a structural handicap for the Indian establishment, namely the poor quality of the defense diplomacy. This is due to a lack of historic experience but also to the lack of coordination between the Ministry of Defense and

¹ Bhartendu Kumar SINGH, "Sino-Indian Defense Dialogue: A Panacea for the Sino-Indian Security Dilemma?", *China Brief*, vol. 13, issue 6, March 15, 2013, www.jamestown.org.

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs¹. The civilian decision-makers do not allow enough freedom in action for the military, they are not able to establish creative full-fledged relations with military from other countries. Concerning the relations with China, Indian political elites seem more reactive than proactive, they tend to consider Chinese activities as aggressive and avoid enhancing military cooperation.

Is India the Trojan Horse of the USA? Not Really!

There are few doubts that both China and India put a bigger emphasis on their relation with the USA than on their bilateral relations. They know that they could influence Washington's foreign policy and security policy behavior and they tend to define their own role on the international arena through the lenses of their relations with the USA. For China, the things seem more obvious and less controversial: there is a majority of Chinese population and decision-makers who want their country to be on an equal foot with the systemic hegemon, dreaming at a multipolar world or at least at a bipolar one. Thus, Chinese-American relations are imagined to be mainly cooperative in the economic and trading fields and more competitive in the hard security area. Chinese decision-makers want a continuous economic cooperation which, they think, will in the end turn favorable to China and unfavorable to Washington, thus China could emerge as an equal power (in a multipolar system) or even as the number one, without having to properly fight a war. The famous thesis of the US hegemonic decline, launched decades ago by historian Paul Kennedy, and based on the overstretching effect is certainly much appreciated and trusted in many Chinese circles. Other Chinese, the more hawkish ones, even think at a clash for Taiwan in which China could deter US from intervening and thus greatly erode American image.

For India, the scenarios are not so clear-cut, the national role is not so exactly well-known and making a real consensus at the level of decision-makers and the population. Of course, there are adepts of a clear-cut alliance with USA and Japan against China and their arguments rests on Chinese aggressive geopolitical activity², like the "pearl string" strategy – the chain of Chinese military bases and facilities on islands surrounding the Indian continental mass. On the other side, the adepts of neutrality shake hands with those who are against US hegemony in the third world: leftists and other groups. Thus, taking a decision like that of an alliance with the US and Japan against China would be very difficult, given the lack of a domestic consensus and the risks of Chinese retaliation, even pre-emptive strike. Maybe some USA neoconservatives think that India would automatically prefer an alliance with Washington, as it will be afraid by Chinese expanding power but nothing is sure. Neocons and also some neorealists assert that China-India relations will be "marked by increase suspicion and rivalry"³ but they ignore the prudence of mainstream Indian decision-makers, they care to avoid provocative behavior and self-fulfilling prophecies. The fact that India grows in power does not mean that it will eventually

¹ C. Raja MOHAN, "From Isolation to Partnership: The Evolution of India's Military Diplomacy", *ISAS Working Paper*, no. 144, February 20, 2012.

² J. Mohan MALIK, "China-India Relations in the Post-Soviet Era: The Continuing Rivalry", *The China Quarterly*, vol. 142, June 1995, pp. 317-355/p. 326.

³ David KARL, "Sino-Indian Relations...cit."

begin to contain China and thus playing on the US grand strategy to limit Chinese power. More than that, the current Obama administration in US does not seem to encourage India to become an adversary of China.

Cooperation Could Work/Cracked Open Door Policy

China and India belongs to the so-called BRICS countries, they are among the most fast-growing economies in the world and in order to cooperate it seems at a first glance that they only need to behave in a rational manner, as their economic cooperation could in theory increase their level of wealth. But in fact their economies are not hundred percent complementary and in many instances there is a clear competition between the two states to have access to new markets and to available energy resources. Of course, there are areas of cooperation. In 2005, the two countries declared their willingness for a strategic partnership and more than that, the Indian environment minister, Jairam Ramesh used the word "Chindia" to describe the future interdependence and closeness between the two states and nations¹. In spite of rich narratives of brotherhood between the two nations, historical records and the issue of border disputes still hinder the normalizing of bilateral relations. Obviously, speaking about Chindia suggested a possible shared interests and strategy in global affairs², a sense of solidarity, but the evolution in the last decade suggest this would not be the case.

The trade between India and China is quite consistent, reaching more than 51 billion USD in 2008 and being more and more diverse. In 2011 it reached 73,4 billion dollars³. But India is buying much more than it is selling to China, thus having a trade deficit of more than 16 billion USD in 2007-2008⁴. There are some sensitivities which sometimes hindered the trade, as is the case of rare earths on which Beijing has a monopoly and electronic devices sold by India.

India has a trade balance deficit with China of 40 billion USD, meaning about 2% of the GDP. The Indian currency, the rupee, is considerably weaker than the Chinese renminbi.

¹ Bo MA, "Chindia – Cooperation or Competition under the Strategic Partnership", *Journal of East European and Asian Studies*, vol. 1, no. 4, November 2010, pp. 455-473/p. 456. For a more general information see Jairam RAMESH, *Making Sense of Chindia: Reflections on China and India*, India Research Press, New Delhi, 2005.

² Partha IYENGAR, Jamie POPKIN, "The Exponential Power of Chindia", 6 September 2007, <http://www.businessweek.com/stories/2007-09-06/the-exponential-power-of-chindia> businessweek-business-news-stock-market-and-financial-advice, accessed on April 2, 2013. According to the authors, "We are witnessing new joint ventures between Indian IT service firms and their Chinese counterparts, early illustrations of how a formidable Chindia economy could develop. Indian firms bring to the table world-class software expertise and leadership in global markets. Chinese partners have legions of capable, low-cost employees and greater know-how with clients in Japan, Korea, and other Asian countries where English is less prevalent".

³ "India-China Trade Hits All Time High of \$73.9 Billion in 2011", *NDTV Profit*, January 29, 2012, <http://profit.ndtv.com/news/corporates/article-india-china-trade-hits-all-time-high-of-73-9-billion-in-2011-296742>, accessed on 10 May 2013; "India-China Trade Hits All Time High of \$ 73.9 bn in 2011", *The Economic Times*, Jan. 30, 2012.

⁴ David SCOTT, "South Asia in China's Strategic Calculus", in Shaun BRESLIN (ed.) *Handbook of China's International Relations*, Routledge, London and New York, 2010, pp. 209-218/p. 214.

Communications do not work at an optimum level: there are no direct flights between Beijing, Shanghai and Mumbai, and India does not attract a significant share of Chinese foreign investments¹.

In 2008, China was already the second biggest trading country for India, after the USA and the bilateral trade was worth about 55 billions USD in 2010, a spectacular increase from the 18 billions USD in 2005². The India's target is to reach 100 billion by 2015, according to Asit Tripathy, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry³.

India seems less dependent on exports than China and effectively attracted less direct foreign investments, a fact which could be explained also by the fact that its economic liberalisation began only in 1991, more than a decade after China opened to the globalized economy. The two states must enhance their cross-investments, guarantee a free trade area or at least avoid protectionist measures such as the anti-dumping policy. Even if both prefer to trade with the USA and EU, they must ensure mutual benefits from economic cooperation at a higher level⁴. We should mention that since 2002 there are direct flights between India and China, but, in spite of this the exchange of visitors is not significant: in 2007 there were only 270.000 combined visitors, for a population of more than 2 billion⁵!

A good starting point is the evidence that the world economic crisis made the USA and European markets less opened to Asian products, more protectionists and mercantilists.

India exported to China especially iron ore, semi-finished iron and steel, minerals, plastic products, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, cotton, marine products etc.⁶. China sells to India various electronic items, electrical machinery and equipment, various organic chemicals, mineral fuels (coal), but also oil and other oil products (lubricants).

Numbers alone tell us only half of the story. If one compares Indo-Chinese trade figures with EU-India or EU-China than one has to compare 74 billion dollars against \$110 billion and, respectively, \$400 billion⁷. In conclusion none of them is dependent on each other to the extent both of them are to the EU.

¹ "Friend, Enemy, Rival, Investor. How Can India Make its Economic Relations with China Less Lopsided?", 30 June 2012, <http://www.economist.com/node/21557764>, accessed on 10 May 2013.

² Swapan BHATTACHARYA, Biswa BHATTACHARYAY, "Gains and Losses of India-China Trade Cooperation – A Gravity Model Impact Analysis", *CESIFO Working paper*, no. 1970, April 2007, www.ssrn.com, accessed on May 10, 2010.

³ http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-10-26/news/34750100_1_india-china-trade-china-international-auto-parts-bilateral-trade, 26 October 2012, accessed on 20 April 2013.

⁴ B.M JAIN, "India-China Relations: Issues And Emerging Trends", *The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 93, issue 374, 2004, pp. 253-256.

⁵ Suisheng ZHAO, "Chinese Nationalism and Its International Orientations", *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 115, no. 1, Spring 2000, pp. 2-3.

⁶ Ratna VADRA, "Trade Expansion of India and China", 2012 International Conference on Economics and Finance Research IPEDR, vol. 32 (2012), Singapore, <http://www.ipedr.com/vol32/013-ICEFR2012-Q10029.pdf>, accessed on 3 May 2013.

⁷ B. RAMNA, "India and China in Europe", *Sri Lanka Guardian*, 21 December 2010, <http://www.srilankaguardian.org/2010/10/india-china-in-europe.html>, accessed on 10 April 2012; "India-EU FTA to Create Jobs, Boost Trade: IEBF", *The Economic Times*, Jan. 4, 2013.

To add extra information a relatively good help is provided by the Index of Globalization. As shown bellow China's openness in economic and social terms fares significantly higher than India's.

Table 1
2012 KOF Index of Globalization¹

No.	country	Globalization Index	country	Economic Globalization	country	Social Globalization	country	Political Globalization
1	Belgium	92.76	Singapore	97.39	Cyprus	91.76	Italy	98.43
2	Ireland	91.95	Luxembourg	94.63	Ireland	91.43	France	98.21
3	Netherlands	90.94	Ireland	93.27	Singapore	91.04	Belgium	97.91
4	Austria	90.55	Malta	92.23	Austria	90.28	Austria	97.31
5	Singapore	89.18	Belgium	92.15	Belgium	89.75	Spain	96.68
6	Sweden	88.23	Netherlands	91.91	Switzerland	89.43	United Kingdom	96.43
7	Denmark	88.11	Hungary	90.50	Canada	88.72	Sweden	95.86
8	Hungary	87.38	Sweden	88.98	Netherlands	87.87	Poland	95.17
9	Portugal	86.73	Bahrain	88.96	Denmark	86.19	Portugal	94.36

Even after the post1991 liberalisation India remains more protectionist than its transHimalayan counterpart, especially if we focus on commodification and trade numbers:

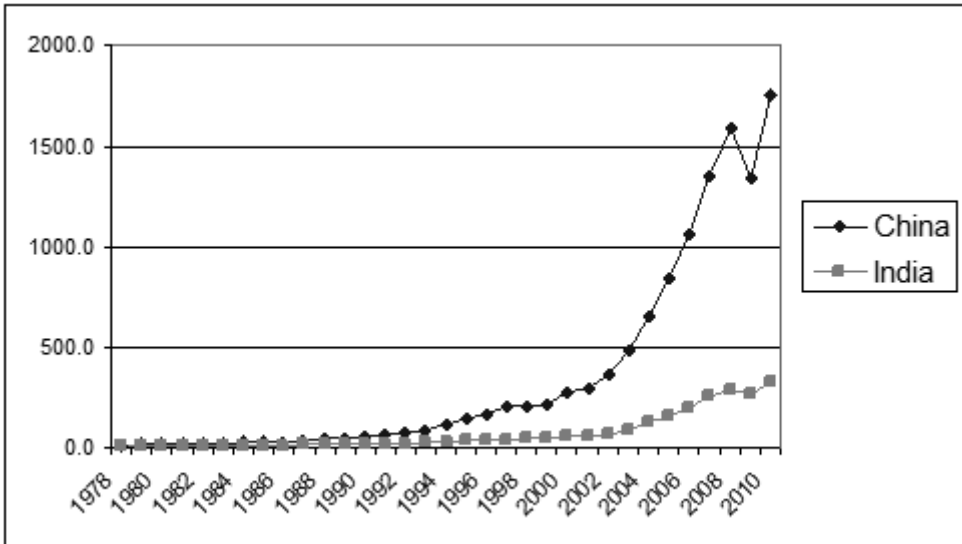
¹ The Index of Globalization is a recent measure divided in four segments: political globalization, economic globalization and social globalization.

For the political globalization are taken into account following variables: Absolute number of embassies in a country; Absolute number of international inter-governmental organizations, personnel contributions to U.N. Security Council Missions per capita; number of international treaties signed - any document signed between two or more states and ratified by the highest legislative body of each country since 1945. Not ratified treaties, or subsequent actions, and annexes are not included.

For the economic globalization variables are: data on actual flows trade (percent of GDP); Foreign Direct Investment, stocks (percent of GDP); Portfolio Investment (percent of GDP); Income Payments to Foreign Nationals (percent of GDP); hidden import barriers; mean tariff rate; taxes on international trade (percent of current revenue); capital account restrictions.

For the social globalization variables are: data on personal contact; telephone traffic; transfers of money (percent of GDP); international tourism- sum of arrivals and departures of international tourists as a share of population; International letters (per capita) as registred to Universal Postal Union, Postal Statistics database; Internet Users (per 1000 people); Television (per 1000 people); Trade in Newspapers (percent of GDP).

Figure 1
Exports of Goods and Services in China and India (Current US\$ Billion)



Ganeshan WIGNARAJA, "Will India Overtake China in the Next Decade?", *Vox*, 29 September 2011, <http://www.voxeu.org/article/will-india-overtake-china-next-decade>, accessed on May 5, 2013.

Because from a strategic point of view, decision-makers, especially those of India, perceive a security dilemma situation concerning Indo-Chinese relations, there is a reluctance to increase the size and structure of the trade, as this could benefit more China than India. Certainly, Indians envy Chinese prosperity and huge economic increase but some think that in the end, the democratic system and social openness, specific to India, will ensure a more balanced situation. Indians are hesitant to a spectacular increase of the trade with China, fearing a situation which would largely be in the advantage of Beijing. The classical issue in the IR theory, the problem of the relative vs. absolute gains in cooperative frameworks is to be applied to this example. The two countries do not have a free-trade agreement and India sometimes imposed anti-dumping taxes on some Chinese goods. Chinese economy grew in 2011-2012 with about 9,5% by year and India with 7,5%. This is a spectacular rate of growth, comparing with what Japan and South Korea managed to do in the same period.

China and India certainly rivalise regarding exports of garments, textiles, electronics and light machinery, they are also competing for attracting foreign capitals¹. But if they were able to create a free-trade area, this could seriously increase their common power on the international markets.

¹ *Ibidem*.

How to Counter the "Realist"-minded Western Narratives on the Fatal Clash between the Dragon and the Elephant?

Currently, both the Chinese and Indian strategists and the decision-makers perfectly know that their countries will act not only in accordance with the traditional behavior guided by the dominant philosophy, not only influenced by a healthy pragmatism but also to confirm or to deny the western scenarios. A lot of famous IR experts and strategic studies pundits such as Zbigniew Brzezinski, and Fareed Zakaria write in their articles and books on the spectacular rise of India¹, nearly matching China's well-known rise and Japan's development in the years 70-80s. Thus, the national role conception of Chinese and Indian decision-makers will be influenced also by the western ideas on them. But being well aware of these foreign expectations and not taking them as "scientific" predictions could also induce them to behave differently, thus avoiding self-fulfilling prophecy mechanisms.

A military conflict between China and India would certainly be a terrible, bloody and devastating one, because they are the most populous countries in the world, with nuclear weapons and huge land armies. It could attract other Asian powers in a huge regional war and provoke the ruin of Asia, stopping its economic and demographic rising, and also its emergence as number one region in international affairs

India and China both passed through tough moments in their history: for China, the 19th century has been the "century of humiliation", while India had been a colony between the 19th and the 20th century, a full century of humiliation and submission, of course more if we consider also the Mughal centuries of domination. This is a shared inheritance of the former Western hegemony in world affairs, excepting the Muslim period in India. But despite this link, one can say that nationalism and the military build up may end in a classical security dilemma mechanism, even increased by the configuration of Asian alliances.

On the other hand, China and India, seen as probable rivals by the realist-minded western analysts, were described as "natural" strategic allies by some Russian experts and politicians. One of the most spectacular proposals involving India and China in a single project was Russia's former minister of foreign affairs Evgheni Primakov proposal or 1996 to create a strategic triangle with Delhi, Beijing and Moscow, in order to balance against US systemic hegemony and deny unipolarity's long term existence². Primakov has been a famous adept of the Eurasian doctrine of Russian foreign policy. Today, Russia is focusing mainly on the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), while its partnership with China is based on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Interestingly, India is an observer state with the SCO. Even if these two security and defense groups could be reunited under a single roof – which is greatly problematic because of China and Russia sensitivities – we would be still far from a real strategic triangle. India is not ready for such a triple alliance, fearing

¹ Zbigniew BRZEZINSKI, *Strategic Vision*, cit., and Fareed ZAKARIA, *Lumea postamericană*, cit.

² Stephen BLANK, "Primakov's Russia/India/China Triangle Nears Realization", *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, vol. 2, issue 79, April 22, 2005, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=30293, accessed on May 10, 2013.

China's increasing power and the risks of an open conflict with USA¹. Thus, China and Russia are strategic partners, Russia and India are also strategic partners, but not India and China, thus breaking the "triangle". During the late Cold War era, as one expert put "In South Asia, Soviet-Indian relations functioned as a balance against the China-Pakistan axis backed by the US"². So, even after the bipolar competition, there is a lack of trust in strategic issues between China and India, while Pakistan is traditionally one of the strongest sources of divide for them. As a concrete example, Delhi cannot forget that decades ago, Pakistani government gave China a piece of Kashmir, claimed by India.

Conclusions. The Dragon Is Not Bound to Eat the Elephant, Nor to Be Crushed by It, or It is Anything Unescapable in World Politics?

Taking into account its economic and strategic activities during the last decade, China seems preoccupied with a strategy of developing commercial and naval bases in the Indian Ocean, the so-called "string of pearls"³. The main bases used by Chinese are in Gwadar (Pakistani coast), Hambantotta (Sri Lanka), Chittagong (Bangladesh, the Bay of Bengal) and on several points on the coast of Burma. Other states that Beijing aims at integrating in its strategy are Mauritius, Seychelles and Maldives. India replicated by enhancing its military capabilities in the Andaman Islands and Nicobar archipelago, by creating a regional ad-hoc command. Thus, one could see encirclement/counter-encirclement strategies⁴.

But this is not very clear if these strategic points have, from Beijing's perspective, mainly a military goal, such as limiting the Indian navy ability to project its power, or if it's mainly a way to "help economically liberate landlocked inner China", as Robert Kaplan mentioned⁵. Certainly, one important goal, may be the most important now, is the access to oil and gas from the Middle East by controlling the straits and other vital points on the South-Asian coast and also the development of Beijing's naval diplomacy⁶. Waterways seem cheaper than land railway and highway network from China to Afghanistan, Pakistan, Burma and other areas. But it's probable that China will try to build also this land infrastructure of transportation, having both an economic and a military use. Kaplan calls these "dual-use civilian-military facilities where basing arrangements will be implicit rather than explicit, and completely dependent on the

¹ Akihiro IWASHITA, "Primakov Redux? Russia and the 'Strategic Triangles' in Asia", http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/coe21/publish/no16_1_ses/09_iwashita.pdf, pp. 165-194, accessed on March 20, 2013.

² *Ibidem*, p. 179.

³ Ioana Bianca BERNA, "China în noua arhitectură de securitate a Oceanului Indian", *Monitor Strategic*, no. 3-4, 2010, pp. 45-57/pp. 49-50. The author thinks that China is using the three fleets – Beihai, Donhai, Nanghai – to create "a geopolitical network of strategic knots that China uses trying to put an end the regional activities of USA, to annihilate the Indian rival and to become the pivotal dominant state with the Indian Ocean" (p. 49).

⁴ Robert KAPLAN, "Center Stage for the 21st Century: Power Plays in the Indian Ocean", *Foreign Affairs*, March-April, 2009, http://www.reallearnpolitics.com/articles/2009/03/rivalry_in_the_indian_ocean.html, accessed on June 10, 2010.

⁵ IDEM, *Monsoon*, Random House, New York, 2010, pp. 10-11.

⁶ Ioana Bianca BERNA, "China în noua arhitectură de securitate...cit.", p. 49.

health of the bilateral relationship in question"¹. Kaplan famously stated that "China expands vertically India horizontally", anticipating that the competition between them will be "less on land than in a naval realm"². It is not very important if China really wants to use these bases against India, but the fact that Indian officials probably think so. Feeling encircled, India will be less tolerant with Chinese activities near the common border. The main fields of interests for China – transport corridors, gas pipelines and deep water ports – are considered by India as being negative factors for its future development, and possible threats. Recently, a new government in Maldives, resulted from a coup, replaced the former pro-Indian leadership with a pro-Chinese one, thus giving a Chinese company a lucrative contract for modernising the Male airport, in spite of the fact that an Indian company had a contract of 500 million USD with the Maldivian government.

Although this strategy of the "string of pearls" is not a self-fulfilling prophecy, but could be merely a long-term disturbance prompting more negotiations and political dialogue³. Brzezinski commented that China's rise would probably meet more resistance than USA faced during its rise as hegemon, because China does not have a "favorable geographical location" or historic circumstances. China depends on the economic adaptability of Asia and on the acceptance of its rise by direct neighbors⁴.

If one believes the official position, the 18th Report of the Communist Party Congress in China in November 2012, outlined the peaceful nature of China's foreign policy:

"China is following unabatedly the way of peaceful development and firmly promotes an independent foreign policy, based on peace".

Hu Jintao, still the president of People's Republic at that time, assumed the document which insisted on the "red lines" for his country:

"We are firm in protecting the sovereignty, security and development interests of China and we will never give up to the foreign pressures"⁵.

"China promotes the peace agreements with the international disputes and is strongly opposed to the use of violence or to any other foreign-led attempt to undermine the legitimate governments of these countries, including the terrorism, in any form."⁶

Thus, the Chinese line is based on anti-hegemonic practices, justice, fairness and peace. "China will never try to fulfill hegemony and will abstain from expansionist practices."⁷

¹ Robert KAPLAN, *Monsoon*, cit., p. 11.

² *Ibidem*, p. 13.

³ For an US (American) point of view on the China's string of pearls see Cristopher PHERSON, "String of Pearls: Meeting the Challenges of China's Rising Power Across the Asian Littoral", Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle, July 2006, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub721.pdf>, accessed on April 20, 2012.

⁴ Zbigniew BRZEZINSKI, *Strategic Vision*, cit., p. 89.

⁵ Hu JINTAO, "Raport la cel de-al XVIII-lea Congres al PCC Chinez", 2012, Romanian edition, 2012, p. 71.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

Concerning the neighbors, the document depicts them as friends and partners, relations of friendship and cooperation and "we must ensure that China's development will bring bigger benefits to our neighbors"¹. Among the neighbors, the so-called "developing countries" are the privileged partners for China. For them, China will be "a loyal friend" and a "sincere partner". But Indian officials do not really seem ready to believe that rhetoric, especially since the Chinese patrols again entered the disputed territory of Eastern Ladakh in April 2013, more than 15 kilometers, claiming it was Chinese territory and pitching tents. Some Indians fear that China may be even eyeing the waters of the Shyok and Chang Chenmo rivers, to be used for domestic consumption and agriculture in the arid Aksai Chin area. China is already building a dam on the Brahmaputra River, thus potentially depriving India of some needed water. Delhi would like to establish a Brahmaputra River Valley Authority to share the waters and prevent China to endanger the environment in this ecosystem².

One of the main problems of the current Chinese foreign policy is the emergence of ultra-nationalism among young people. The Communist Party leaders seem to encourage the nationalist propaganda in order to legitimize their power and compensate the huge inequality that globalization and capitalism produced in the domestic society. They do not dare to hinder huge nationalistic street demonstration against Japan for the possession of some disputed islands, fearing that these masses would in the end turn against the communist monopolistic power. As one analyst put it

"the new Chinese leadership will be tempted to please its domestic base by adopting more nationalistic foreign policies..... A more nationalistic, hard-line route would inevitably cause more conflict and direct confrontation with China's neighbors, even to the point of war"³.

The new foreign affairs minister Wang Yi, his successor and supervisor, Yang Jiechi, the prime minister Li Keqiang and the president Xi Jinping, all of them must take care to define a non-provocative line of conduct towards the neighboring states, avoiding the nationalistic tendencies to "colour" these relations. The seven members of the "aristocratic" Politburo Standing Committee also have a great responsibility in this area. India also has a growing nationalism, one based on the Hindu ethnic group. Chinese tend to be at odds with almost all the neighbors: Japan, Vietnam, Philippines and India. They claim islands and maritime borders which are difficult to agree by the neighboring states. China's assertiveness regarding borders and neighbors could be explained not only by rational calculation of power in an anarchic environment but also by the quickly emerging narratives which are spread in the political circles and determine the politicians to act in a resolute way to prevent opponents from winning the hearts and minds on a nationalistic public opinion⁴. The famous American Sinologue Alastair Iain Johnston recently spoke about the "media

¹ *Ibidem*, p. 72.

² Roomana HUKIL, "India, China & the Brahmaputra: Riparian Rivalry", 31 March 2013, <http://www.ipcs.org/article/peace-and-conflict-database/india-china-the-brahmaputra-riparian-rivalry-3864.html>, accessed on 2 April 2013.

³ Zheng WANG, "Does China Have a Foreign Policy?", 20 March 2013. <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/does-china-have-foreign-policy>, accessed on 23 April 2013.

⁴ Alastair Iain JOHNSTON, "How New and Assertive is China's New Assertiveness?", *International Security*, vol. 37, no. 4, Spring 2013, pp. 7-48. For a general perspective on China's

blogosphere interaction" as a determinant factor explaining the nature and speed of future security dilemmas involving China and other competitors¹. Some Indian strategists mention that Delhi "rejects the balance of power approach to security and looks at the world through the conceptual lenses of a co-operative society"². India is presented as wanting peaceful change, not the preservation of status quo: a new economic order, multipolarity with the states system, traditional support for national liberation struggle and ideals of social justice³. This may be true, but when confronted with the danger of a devastating war, Indian decision-makers could choose in the end the classical deterrence means, mainly the balancing strategy.

Thus, it could be difficult for China and India to engage in new and positive relations in spite of the past experiences regarding land and borders. The leaders are frequently influenced by the narratives of the so-called "inescapable clash" between the two states, based on the traditional vision.

Certainly there are similarities between India and China like the demographic size, the geographic location, the experience of past historic humiliations, the huge domestic difficulties and mass poverty, not to speak about the reluctance to accept western domination of the world system. They are nuclear powers and have huge land armies. Both belong to the BRICS group of states with emergent economies.

On the other side, the differences between them are also important: India is a federal democracy, while China is a market-oriented authoritarian/totalitarian regime and is certainly a much more economically developed state. Their clashing nationalisms and competing elites may prove formidable obstacles on the way of normalising the bilateral relations.

strategic culture in history see especially IDEM, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*, Princeton University Press, 1995.

¹ *Ibidem*, p. 48.

² Shrikant PARANJPE, "Foundations and Development of Indian Strategic Perspectives", in Francois VREY, Thomas MANDRUP, Abel ESTERHUYSE (eds.), *On Strategy. Strategic Theory and Contemporary African Armed Conflicts*, Sun Media, Stellenbosch, 2010, p. 108.

³ *Ibidem*.

