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China and India: A 'New Great Game' founded on historic mistrust and current competition

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Abstract

This paper examines the ongoing strategic competition and rivalry between India and China, suggesting it can be seen as a 'New Great Game', with parallels to the original 'Great Game' played out between Britain and Russia for control of South and Central Asia in the 19th century. It argues that like the original, the current Sino-India competition includes territorial disputes, competition for access to resources, the development of strategic military alliances and the use of strategic relationships with other powers to contain the rise of the opposing nation.

The paper asserts that the two games are also similar in that both have mistrust of the other's strategic intentions and ambitions as the core aspect of their competition, based on a long history of intractable territorial disputes and diplomatic friction. The paper concludes that while the continuing socio-economic development of both countries is clearly dependent on a conducive security environment, the 'New Great Game' between India and China—unless it is checked—has the potential to lead to conflict, with likely profound consequences for regional and indeed global stability.

China and India: A 'New Great Game' founded on historic mistrust and current competition ¹

One thing appears certain: the future direction of Sino-Indian relations will be a key element of the incipient balance of power system in Asia.²

Introduction

The rise of China and its growing competition with the US tends to take up most of the strategic debate in the Indo-Pacific region. However, the simultaneous rise of China and India and their likely competition has the potential also to have a critical effect on the geopolitics of the region, and demands the attention of regional players.³

It is generally agreed that 'India and China—key actors in this region—are simultaneously moving upward on relative power trajectories'.⁴ With both nations having rapidly-expanding economies supporting rising defence budgets and capabilities including nuclear weapons, combined with the availability of massive manpower reserves, both are viewed as expecting 'legitimacy in the arena of great and emerging global powers'; as a result, they are competing for influence in South Asia, Central Asia, the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia.⁵

In part, China and India's expectations of becoming great powers are based on a sense that 'their civilisation greatness entitles them to great-power status', derived from their shared pre-colonial background as regional powers, at which time they displayed the will and capability to act as hegemons and dominate the economy and security of their respective regions.⁶

Some would argue that this notion is particularly evident in China's perceived intent for the international relations of the Indo-Pacific region to be reordered to reflect its historical position as the 'Middle Kingdom', fuelling concerns that competing Sino-Indian expectations of great-power status will be difficult to resolve.⁷ Regardless, it is clear that the Sino-Indian relationship is complex, as a result of the history and shared borders between the two countries but also because underlying tensions are being exacerbated by current-day expectations of greatness and a trend of mistrust of their respective geopolitical intent.⁸

Yet the Sino-Indian relationship started from a very positive basis. In the 1940s and 1950s, for example, India was the first Commonwealth nation to formally recognise the People's Republic of China. However, the relationship has since deteriorated over a range of issues, the most public—at least in the Western media—being China's renewed control over Tibet and the issue of Tibetan refugees, including recognition of the Dalai Lama. However, Mohan Malik reminds us that 'while the rest of the world started taking note of China's rise during the last decade of the twentieth century, India has been warily watching China's rise ever since a territorial dispute erupted in a brief but full-scale war in 1962'.⁹

David Scott similarly argues that the issue is one of strategic-level competition, noting that 'even if the territorial disputes were resolved, India and China would still retain a competitive relationship in the Asia-Pacific region, being as they are, two Asiatic giants aspiring to Great Power status'.¹⁰ He and a number of other commentators have referred to this competition for regional influence as a 'New Great Game', in reference to the 19th and 20th century competition for influence in Asia between Russia and Britain, known at the time—and publicised by Rudyard Kipling—as the 'Great Game'.¹¹

Like that competition, the Sino-India 'New Great Game' includes territorial disputes, competition for access to resources, the development of strategic military alliances and the use of strategic relationships with other powers to contain the rise of the opposing nation. Scott contends that China's 'Great Game' is the containment of India and that, while the initial focus of Sino-Indian competition was centred on South Asia, China is concerned that 'an emerging India ... [poses] a strong competitor for China from South, West, Southeast and Central Asia to the Indian and Pacific Oceans, where their interests and influences will clash'.¹²

This paper examines Sino-Indian strategic competition and rivalry in more detail. Part 1 discusses the concept of a 'New Great Game'. Part 2 establishes the history of conflict and friction between the two nations which has led to mistrust of their strategic intentions. Part 3 then analyses the strategic objectives which drive each nation's competitive approach before focusing on contemporary competition and tension. Part 4 focuses on the perceived Chinese strategic encirclement of India and considers the wider implications of India's response. The paper concludes that while the continuing socio-economic development of both countries is clearly dependent on a conducive security environment, the 'New Great Game' between India and China—unless it is checked—has the potential to lead to regional conflict.

Part 1: A 'New Great Game'?

The concept of the original 'Great Game' originated in the early 19th century and was used to describe the geopolitical rivalry between the imperial powers Russia and Britain in Central and South Asia.¹³ Its aim was imperial domination of the region, either through territorial control or influence over its rulers. At stake was the future of the British Empire's interests in India, against the interests of the Russian Empire in Central Asia, roughly divided by modern-day Afghanistan.

The two key elements of the currently-defined 'New Great Game' are the definition of geopolitics and how the concept differs from the original. For the purposes of this paper, 'geopolitics'—encompassing the linkages between geographical space, political power, economic growth and decision making—can be defined as:

A foreign policy approach and an international relations theory that stresses an awareness of relative position among countries and corresponding response of statesmen to advantages and vulnerabilities that territorial and maritime space may bring to foreign affairs and national security.¹⁴

Before proceeding to the second element of how the concept differs from the original, it is important to note that there is no general agreement that the concept of a 'New Great Game' is even valid. Matthew Edwards, for one, argues that it does not exist and that use of the term without further qualification is both inaccurate and misleading.¹⁵ In particular, he contends that the geopolitical objectives of the many players of the new game in Central Asia—Russia, US, China, India and Iran—are fundamentally different to those of the two original contestants, Britain and Russia, to the extent that the concept is no longer valid in the current geopolitical environment.

Therefore, it is important to define what is meant by the concept and to provide evidence that the game exists. For the purposes of this paper, the Sino-India 'New Great Game' refers to the geopolitical competition for 'influence, power, hegemony and profits' predominately between China and India in Central and South Asia, the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia.¹⁶ This rivalry includes economic competition and the concept of strategic encirclement and mistrust, which will be discussed later in the paper. However, it is not being played in isolation, as it involves other major powers, including the US and Russia, as well as regional powers such as Iran and Pakistan. It also impacts the Central Asian nations of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, and the South Asian nations of Afghanistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

Hence, it will be argued that while the definition focuses on China and India, the influence and interests of the 'New Great Game' extend into and across both Central Asia and South Asia because both countries share numerous land borders between themselves and other nations, into which they seek to extend their influence. Thus the broader region is a 'contested space', where both nations have overlapping interests and are acutely aware of the activities of each other.¹⁷ Scott, for example, notes that India is challenged by China's control of Tibet and its claims on the adjacent frontier, particularly in Arunachal Pradesh, highlighting that the Sino-Indian 'balance of power game' is 'entwined with the geopolitical locations in ... areas surrounding India'.¹⁸

Moreover, while acknowledging Edwards' concerns regarding the different actors and differing strategic objectives, it can be argued that there are a number of similarities between the 'New Great Game' and the original. In the original 'Great Game', Britain and Russia were contesting for influence and manoeuvring against each other for regional leadership in South Asia and Central Asia respectively, separated by the disputed territory of modern-day Afghanistan. In the 'New Great Game', India has replaced Britain, and China has replaced Russia. However, India has lost a sizeable proportion of South Asia with the post-

independence formation of Pakistan. And whereas Russia's interests in Central Asia were geographically focused on what were later the so-called 'Stan' republics of the Soviet Union, China's interests in Central Asia are primarily further eastward. They particularly include the areas abutting its south-western borders, stretching from modern-day Pakistan to Myanmar, although China obviously has interests in the now independent 'Stans' abutting its western border, as well as the sea lines of communication through the Indian Ocean.

A number of analysts have noted that Beijing, both as a consequence of China's rapid rise but also because of its history, views itself as the natural leader in Asia, with a resultant propensity to contain the rise of rivals. Mick Ryan, for example, contends that 'China sees itself as the rightful pre-eminent power in Asia, and India as its major medium- to long-term competitor', leading Chinese strategists to perceive that 'India possesses an ambitious and belligerent and expansionist strategic culture'.¹⁹ Baladas Ghoshal makes a similar observation that China's ultimate objective would seem to be to 'curb the influence of India, the other rising Asian power and a perceived rival in South Asia, India's traditional backyard'.²⁰

In South Asia, this manoeuvring for influence and power can best be seen in the Sino-Pakistan alliance. This relationship was established in 1962 and has been an ongoing military and economic formal alliance between the two nations. Rajshree Jetly and Sangit Dwivedi assess that the relationship has provided China with geopolitical and geostrategic advantages over India in both South and Central Asia.²¹ These advantages include providing a counterbalance to Indian hegemony in South Asia and preventing India from only focusing on China.

In Central Asia, the 'New Great Game' can be seen in both the competition for resources and influence in the region. China has had a head start on India, having been involved in Central Asia since the 1990s when its state-owned China National Petroleum Corporation acquired the Uzen oilfield in Kazakhstan.²² Similarly, in 1996, China established a new Eurasian forum, known initially as the 'Shanghai Five', which involved China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan in social, economic and military-related discussions; it was enlarged in 2001 to include Uzbekistan, and renamed the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.²³ In July 2015, its members agreed to broaden the grouping to include India and Pakistan, a move no doubt intended by China and Russia to counter the influence of the US in Central Asia. Others, however, have asserted that Pakistan and India's well-established bilateral disputes will likely burden the forum, as well as further complicating China-India relations and their respective spheres of influence.²⁴

In recognition of the growing relevance and importance of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in regional affairs—and no doubt aimed at countering China's influence in Central Asia—India announced in June 2012 a new policy of 'Connect Central Asia', with India's Minister of State for External Affairs stressing that 'most [Shanghai Cooperation Organisation] member countries are our neighbours, or belong to our extended neighbourhood, with a strong historical and cultural legacy of centuries binding us together'.²⁵ An underlying element of the policy also relates to India's interest in accessing the energy resources of Central Asia, which is complicated by India's lack of a border with the Central Asian states, and Pakistan's lack of cooperation in facilitating the transit of hydrocarbons and the movement of trade goods to India. It is one of the reasons that New Delhi has developed relations with Tehran to use Iranian territory to transit energy from Central Asia via the Iranian port of Chabahar.²⁶

The final key facet of the 'Great Game' was the mistrust between Russia and Britain with respect to each nation's imperial intentions in Central Asia. The same circumstance exists in the current Sino-India 'New Great Game', which will be examined in the following sections, where it will be seen that the mistrust of the other's strategic intentions and ambitions is a cornerstone of their competition.

Part 2: A History of Mistrust

The Sino-Indian relationship has a history of being challenging and complex, underpinned by longstanding territorial disputes and diplomatic friction. The primary areas of territorial dispute are in the Himalayas on the shared Chinese-Indian border, in particular Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Aksai Chin. Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim are occupied by India but claimed by China, while Aksai Chin is occupied by China and claimed by India. The two historical areas of diplomatic friction are China's longstanding strategic alliance with Pakistan, and China's concerns regarding India's position on the status of Tibet and recognition of the Dalai Lama.

Malik suggests that despite a history of Sino-Indian joint declarations regarding Tibet and its borders, China still believes that India's intent is for Tibet to regain its independence, a perception exacerbated by India's long-term hosting of the Tibetan government-in-exile.²⁷ In highlighting this lack of trust, Paul Dibb notes that the two nations have longstanding regional disputes and that the Sino-India relationship 'lacks warmth and depth and ... [that] there are serious points of friction and underlying mistrust', leading to insecurities by both nations when interpreting the intent of the other.²⁸

A history of conflict and tension

Initially, in the late 1940s, in the immediate years following their formation as republics, the Sino-India relationship was friendly and had the potential to become cooperative and mutually beneficial; indeed, the founding Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, often described the potential for India and China, along with other South Asian nations, to form an 'Eastern Federation'.²⁹ However, after China took action in 1950 to renew its control of Tibet, India's strategic calculus changed. Thereafter, India became increasingly concerned at the risks from a resurgent China, and any chance of a grand partnership and mutual solidarity were quashed, with the relationship seemingly destined for conflict.

Prior to China's occupation of Tibet, China and India were distant neighbours buffered by Tibet and the Himalayas. However, after Tibet's occupation, the two countries—which then shared a 4000 kilometre border—became 'next door neighbours with contested frontiers and disputed histories', leading to a 'brief but full scale border war in 1962, followed by skirmishes in 1967 and 1987'.³⁰

Yet China's claim to Tibet actually has its roots in the 'Great Game'. In 1913, Britain organised a conference in Simla, India, to discuss the future status of Tibet, attended by representatives of the UK, the Republic of China, and Tibet. Taking the view that China exercised only weak suzerainty over Tibet, the British Foreign Secretary, Henry McMahon, proposed that Tibet be split into two (by what was to become known as the 'McMahon Line'), effectively establishing a buffer between China and India. China disagreed with the proposal and withdrew its representation, so the 'Simla Accord' was essentially only agreed by the UK. However, because of the internal weakness of the Chinese state, and various distractions including civil war and Japanese occupation, China made no real effort to oppose the Simla Accord, enabling Tibet to continue as a *de facto* independent state for several decades.³¹

In the aftermath of World War 2, and following the emergence of the Chinese Communist Party in 1949, China's new leader, Mao Zedong asserted that a strong China had to reclaim control of its traditional outlying territories, including Tibet, to right the unequal treaties imposed by the colonial powers.³² In 1950, China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) commenced its 'peaceful liberation of Tibet', which it completed by 1951.³³ China then consolidated its rule over Tibet with two key agreements. The first was in May 1951 when the leader of Tibet, the Dalai Lama, signed an agreement which promised Tibet autonomous self government within Chinese territory. Then in 1954, despite protests in the UN, India signed the Panchsheel Agreement with China, recognising Tibet as the 'Tibet Region of China', and making all previous agreements between Tibet and India invalid.

The Tibet crisis and border disputes

Although India had formally agreed that Tibet was part of China, the mid-1950s saw a slow decline in Sino-Indian relations, which led to a major shift in 1959.³⁴ This shift was shaped by border delineation disputes and the Tibetan uprising in 1959, and set the conditions for the Sino-India 1962 border war. As the decade progressed, Sino-Indian diplomatic tensions increased as questions began to appear regarding their shared frontier borders, including those between India and Tibet. Prime Minister Nehru asserted that the 1913-14 'McMahon Line' was the rightful line, whereas China disagreed and plotted the border further south. In the west, the two nations disputed control of the Aksai Chin plain, as China wanted it to connect Tibet and its western province of Xinjiang. These disputes led to significant internal political pressure on Nehru to harden his policies towards China, further increasing the mistrust between Beijing and New Delhi.

The Tibetan uprising of 1959, in response to harsh Chinese policies and widespread popular discontent, had been aggressively suppressed by the PLA and led to a mass exodus of Tibetans into neighbouring India, including some 80,000 refugees and the exiled Dalai Lama.³⁵ The uprising also saw a clash between the PLA and the Indian Army at Longju, in the China-India border zone, as a result of the PLA's pursuit of

Tibetan rebels. These events caused a number of large protests in Indian cities and additional pressure on Nehru to take a tougher approach to China. India's concerns regarding China's intent in Tibet were expressed at the time by P.C. Chakravarti, who asserted that 'any strong expansionist power, entrenched in Tibet, holds in its hands a loaded pistol pointed to the heart of India'.³⁶

Meanwhile in China, China's leadership was blaming India for stoking the insurrection in Tibet, and demanded the return of the Dalai Lama. Because of the known existence of Tibetan resistance fighters' bases along the India-Tibet border, as well as the discovery in 1958 of the presence of foreign intelligence services in the border zone, China took the view that India and the US were attempting to separate Tibet from China.³⁷ This situation caused apprehension and mistrust of India within the Chinese Government. India's then Defence Minister, Krishna Menon, remarked that 'we should have defined our relationship to China *vis-à-vis* Tibet.... [instead we] gave the Chinese the idea that we wanted Tibet, or that we wanted to use Tibet as a buffer state or something'.³⁸ As a result of the mistrust of India's intent, China claimed that it had 'taken up posts at key defensive points along the border to prevent imperialists and foreign reactionaries from dispatching spies and special agents into Tibet'.³⁹

As the tension increased, broader border disagreements were continuing and pressure mounted on Nehru to act. In 1958, Nehru publicly expressed his frustration with the 'regularity with which China has been distributing maps showing large stretches of Indian territory as parts of China'.⁴⁰ When Indian troops discovered a Chinese-built road in India's Aksai Chin plateau, the Indian parliament demanded action. As a result, in November 1961, the Indian Army launched its confrontational 'Forward Policy' in the disputed border zones and territories, which ordered Indian troops to patrol and position themselves as deeply as possible to cut off Chinese positions and force a withdrawal from the territory claimed by India.⁴¹

Thus the combination of embedded mistrust, miscalculation by India, and wrong assessments by the Chinese led to the brief but full-scale Sino-Indian border war of 1962.⁴² On 20 October 1962, to the surprise of Nehru and the Indian Army, China attacked the Indian border zone in Arunachal Pradesh and Aksai Chin plateau. The PLA captured most of both regions and badly shook the Indian government, which feared that 'they were going to overrun the plains'. The conflict ended, 31 days later, after Nehru sent an urgent request to the US and UK for military assistance, which was promptly responded to by both nations, with the US positioning an aircraft carrier group off the Bay of Bengal. China 'unilaterally declared a ceasefire and withdrew to the positions it had held prior to the beginning of the dispute'.⁴³

The shock of defeat caused major ramifications to India and shaped its future policies towards China. The mutual mistrust that developed during the war 'permeated the psyche of Indian policy makers as well as the public'.⁴⁴ The defeat also created considerable and enduring shame in the Indian military, and forced it to review its equipment, preparedness and intelligence—and was a key factor in India's later decision to acquire a nuclear capability.⁴⁵ It also provided a 'watershed' moment for Indian foreign policy, where it aimed at 'taking a more realistic approach to China ... premised on calculations of power'.⁴⁶ For its part, in the aftermath of the border war, China established its now longstanding alliance with Pakistan.

More broadly, the war instilled a 'permanent Sino-Indian rivalry [that] would last indefinitely'.⁴⁷ Ongoing tension on the long Sino-Indian border contributed to the sense of mutual mistrust. As noted by Malik, the ongoing uncertainty of the status of the Sino-Indian border in Arunachal Pradesh exacerbates India's lack of trust of China's intent, and provides China with 'strategic leverage.... [by] exposing India's vulnerabilities and weaknesses, and [thus] encouraging New Delhi's "good behaviour" on [Chinese] issues of vital concern'.⁴⁸ The longstanding effect on India's threat perception and deep distrust of China's intent is best summed up by India's Prime Minister Vajpayee's explanation to US President Clinton regarding the 1998 Indian nuclear tests, when he declared they were needed because of 'an overt nuclear state on our borders, a state that committed armed aggression against India in 1962 [and] with whom an atmosphere of distrust persists'.⁴⁹

The impact of the Sino-Pakistan alliance

A further source of friction in Sino-India relations is India's concerns of China's quasi alliance with its arch rival Pakistan.⁵⁰ China's long-held strategic alliance with Pakistan has been the cornerstone of its South Asia strategy and has been a linchpin in India's mistrust of China's intent. Beijing's view is that Pakistan provides it with geopolitical and geographic advantages in both South and Central Asia.⁵¹ Dwivedi and

Letly assess that the Sino-Pakistan alliance provides China with five critical benefits.⁵² First, it provides China with diplomatic support on the world stage regarding Tibet, Taiwan and Xinjiang. Second, it is a counterbalance to India's hegemony in South Asia and prevents India from focusing exclusively on China. Third, Pakistan provides China with opportunities to meet its growing energy requirements via a gateway to the Islamic world and access to the energy-rich nations of Central Asia. Fourth, it provides China with access to the Indian Ocean and a transport corridor into its restive western province of Xinjiang. Finally, the alliance assists China's 'long-term strategy of keeping US preponderance in the region at bay'.

A key to the Sino-Pakistan alliance lies in the history of post-partition India and the influence of the US. This relationship commenced when Pakistan and China formally established diplomatic ties in 1951.⁵³ By 1955, their bilateral relationship expanded when, at the first Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung, Indonesia, it was reported that China had reached a 'strategic understanding with Pakistan founded on their convergent interests *vis-à-vis* India'.⁵⁴ Since then, the Sino-Pakistan relationship has continued to develop along common geostrategic and geopolitical concerns, directed at Indian and US influence in South Asia.⁵⁵ The critical events which shaped the alliance include the Sino-Indian border war of 1962, the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War, the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War, the US nuclear-related sanctions of the 1970s, the Afghan-Soviet war and the actions of the US in South Asia post 9/11.⁵⁶

The US has been a critical element in the establishment of the Sino-Pakistan alliance. While the primary purpose of the Sino-Pakistan alliance was to contain the common enemy of India, it was also designed to counteract Beijing's concern and Pakistan's sense of betrayal of US diplomatic support and military aid to India during and after the border conflict of 1962.⁵⁷ The US played a further role in cementing the Sino-Pakistan alliance as a result of its diplomatic actions during the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War. Its decision to issue a statement of neutrality, followed by apportioning blame for the conflict on Pakistan, was seen by Islamabad as a further betrayal. As a result, Beijing filled the gap and provided Pakistan with the desired diplomatic support, threatening India with intervention. In the absence of US military aid, China stepped in and became Pakistan's premier conventional weapons supplier.

Since then, what it sees as continually inconsistent behaviour by the US has resulted in Pakistan perceiving the US as a 'fickle' partner.⁵⁸ As a result of this and earlier experiences, Islamabad made it a priority to further invest in its relationship with Beijing.⁵⁹ From Islamabad's perspective, Beijing is a reliable strategic partner that counterbalances India in its unequal relationship with Pakistan and is able to be consistently relied upon, unlike the US.⁶⁰ In 2005, the relationship was formalised with the signing of the Sino-Pakistan 'Treaty for Friendship, Cooperation and Good Neighbourly Relations'.⁶¹ In it, both nations pledged not 'join any alliance or bloc which infringes upon the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the other'.⁶² It was also agreed that each nation 'shall not allow its territory to be used by a third country to jeopardise the state sovereignty, security and territorial integrity on the other'.

The centrality of China in Pakistan's strategic calculus, at the expense of its relationship with India, has further soured the mistrust between India and Pakistan.⁶³ The Sino-Pakistan alliance has provided China with a key ally in its strategy to constrain India, which will be discussed later in the paper. The alliance has also provided critical strategic benefits to Pakistan, to the detriment of India's balance of power. These benefits include diplomatic support, military-to-military cooperation, and nuclear capability. Diplomatically, China has consistently defended Pakistan in international forums and provided Pakistan with moral support in times of need.⁶⁴

The Sino-Pakistan military-to-military cooperation has been the most enduring pillar of their alliance and is aimed at their shared anxiety of India. The alliance has emphasised the need to counterbalance the relative strength of India's military capability in comparison to Pakistan's. A key component is based on China's assessment that it must ensure that Pakistan has the appropriate military capabilities to defend its interests from the perceived threats of its rival India.⁶⁵ As a result, after the US failed to support Pakistan after the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war, China has continued to provide Pakistan with modern military equipment and arms.⁶⁶

Chinese assistance to counter India is not just confined to military equipment sales; it also involves the modernisation of Pakistan's military industrial complex. The modernisation is focused on Pakistan's naval capability and developing its military aircraft manufacturing capability.⁶⁷ Malik contends that this support is aimed at countering India's military strength in South Asia and meets 'Beijing's long-standing

policy to arm Islamabad with every weapon system that India has (and will have) in order to maintain a favourable balance of power in South Asia'.⁶⁸

The final component of Sino-Pakistan military cooperation, aimed at countering India, is the development of Pakistan's nuclear capability. This cooperation commenced in response to the Indian nuclear test in 1974.⁶⁹ It has included Chinese assistance in building Pakistan's three nuclear power plants/laboratories and nuclear weapons.⁷⁰ China has also supported Pakistan's development of its short- and medium-range ballistic missile capability and the transfer of technology.⁷¹ This nuclear cooperation is seen as a critical pillar of the alliance and is aimed at balancing India's conventional and nuclear capability, if not ensuring that 'Pakistan enjoys an edge over India in the nuclear sector'.⁷²

Beijing views the Sino-Pakistan alliance as a lasting partnership which has helped contain India despite the pressures of time and shifting geopolitical and geostrategic landscapes. The alliance meets China's strategic goals in South Asia as 'Beijing prefers a powerful and well armed Pakistani military that helps mount pressure by proxy on India'.⁷³ However, from India's perspective, Beijing's overt conventional and secretive nuclear support to Pakistan only adds further to India's mistrust of China's intent in South Asia.

In summary, it is evident that despite the current rhetoric of a cooperative Sino-Indian rise, there is a deep-seated lack of trust and longstanding competitive tendency between India and China. This lack of trust reflects the situation during the 'Great Game', which is being repeated in the 'New Great Game'. It is 'a critical impediment to the normalisation of China-India ties'.⁷⁴ As summarised by Malik:

[T]ensions between the two powers have come to influence their military and security decision making ... [as well as] their economic and diplomatic manoeuvring, with implications for wary neighbours and faraway allies alike. The relationship is complicated by layers of rivalry, mistrust, and occasional cooperation, not to mention actual geographical disputes.⁷⁵

Part 3: Competing Strategic Objectives

With a complex contemporary relationship, shaped by a history of tension and mistrust, there is unevenness in the perceptions that India and China hold of each other. This perception is marked by the China's official policy to 'deride, if not ignore' the rise of India and its 'regional ambitions and economical development, whereas China is central to India's strategic calculus'.⁷⁶ However, contrary to China's public perception, each nation has developed strategies to deal with the other and to ensure that they are positioned to compete with the other for influence and power in South and Central Asia.

China's strategic view

China's recent White Paper on Military Strategy identifies three new challenges emanating from 'hegemonism, power politics and neo-interventionism', and asserts that international competition is intensifying for 'the redistribution of power, rights and interests'.⁷⁷ In particular, the paper highlights the perceived threats emanating from the US 'rebalance' to the Asia Pacific, threats associated with Japan's overhaul of its military, the ongoing threats from 'Taiwan independence' forces, and threats from external nations meddling in China's affairs in the South China Sea.⁷⁸

The paper does not directly refer to India. In part, that it because China does not want to give India the satisfaction of being rated as a strategic threat. It is also because India does not 'provoke the high level of concern that the US or Japan does'.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, it is clear that India does rate in China's strategic calculus. Malik, for example, assesses that China sees India as an expanding threat to its core interests, identifying Chinese concerns that:

- 'India is a hegemonic and expansionist power that intends to ... re-establish India's dominance over the entire subcontinent;
- The Indian navy wants to dominate and control the Indian Ocean; and
- India aspires to become a great world power, in league with the US, Russia and China, armed with nuclear weapons and a UN Security Council veto.'⁸⁰

Baladas Ghoshal similarly contends that China's ultimate objective in Asia is to challenge the US as the dominant power and to curb the influence of India in South and Southeast Asia.⁸¹ In order to achieve this objective, China must position itself as the key player in South Asia by steadily extending its reach through its expanding economic and strategic influence over the region.

China's strategy in relation to India would seem to comprise six elements. First, China needs to generate a larger amount of resources than India for its political and military purposes via a continued high economic growth rate.⁸² Second, China needs to minimise a conventional arms race with India, while taking into account that India poses a significant nuclear threat.⁸³ Third, China needs to contain the rise of India by either denying it access to or marginalising its influence in regional and international organisations such as APEC and the Asian Development Bank.⁸⁴

Fourth, China needs to continue its support to Pakistan in order to ensure Pakistan's military strength remains an important factor in India's calculations, thus maintaining a two-front threat to India.⁸⁵ Fifth, Beijing needs to continue its policy of inaction to resolve Sino-Indian boundary disputes, so as to keep India under 'continuous pressure until the regional balance of power shifts in China's favour and disputes can be resolved to its own advantage'.⁸⁶ Finally, China needs to continue bolstering its military, economic, trade and development engagement with nations of South and Southeast Asia in order to extend its strategic influence and contain India's influence.⁸⁷

It is telling to note that, in contrast, China's strategic objective in its engagement with the states of Central Asia is neither expansionist nor militaristic; rather, it is focused on securing stable hydrocarbon resources, and the development of infrastructure and commercial interests.⁸⁸

India's strategic view

As India's economy accelerates, its foreign policy has moved from its Cold War focus on non-alliance and non-interference to one that attempts to address its place in Asia and more widely globally.⁸⁹ During the British colonial era, British India saw itself as the 'security manager' of South Asia and other parts of the Indian Ocean. India now has aspirations towards regional leadership and as a 'net security provider' to its region.⁹⁰ As part of this shift, C. Raja Mohan assesses that 'India's main objective is to emerge as an indispensable element in the Asian balance of power'.⁹¹

There are two theories as to how India is addressing its position in the region. The first assesses that it lacks 'a strategic vision of a future regional and world order to establish its rightful place in the world balance of power' and, instead, is awaiting other nations to accord it a role.⁹² Certainly, in the past, one of the criticisms has been that India lacked a clearly-stated policy approach to counter China's rise.

The second theory assesses that India does have a strategic vision and that it is engaging in its own diplomatic and military strategy to increase its influence in the Asian region.⁹³ This theory accords with the 'multi-dimensional foreign policy' espoused by India's Foreign Secretary, Nirupama Rao, in a speech in June 2011, which included the need for India to:

- Promote economic growth targets and ambitions;
- Achieve energy security to guarantee economic growth;
- Foster a peaceful regional periphery, including an emphasis on building networks of inter-connectivity, trade and investment;
- Address the challenge of a rising China;
- Gain the recognition and respect due a nuclear weapon state; and
- Confirm India's due place in the emerging international balance of power as one of three great powers.⁹⁴

The analysis of several Sino-India observers is that India does not see the rise of China as an immediate threat; rather, India sees China as a medium- to long-term threat within the context of an uncertain future.⁹⁵ There is also a perception that India's strategic culture is too fixated on its arch rival Pakistan, highlighted by the assertion of India's Defence Minister in 2009 that India needed to refocus its attention

on China as its main threat.⁹⁶ That view is supported by contemporary surveys of Indian popular opinion, including a 2010 Pew Research survey, which indicate that a majority of respondents see China as a future threat to India's security and have an unfavourable view of China's rise.⁹⁷

Mohan contends that India has more recently exhibited a preference for an inclusive approach in Asia, based on the principle of a 'multi-polar Asia', rather than one focused exclusively on China.⁹⁸ That would seem to align with the strategic objectives of the US and Japan, which want the balance of power to remain 'in favour of liberal democracies'.⁹⁹

India's current policy approach to respond to China is focused on being as subtle as possible, and assessed as being made up of four key components.¹⁰⁰ First 'is to avoid picking rhetorical, political or military fights' with China and instead focus on improving their bilateral relations as rapidly as possible through trade agreements and cooperation in fighting terrorism.¹⁰¹ These efforts are evidenced by Prime Minister Modi's visit to Beijing in May 2015, where he and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang signed a joint statement focused on economic and trade cooperation and guidelines on political talks.¹⁰²

Second is to revitalise its relationships with the nations of Southeast Asia, East Asia and Central Asia. This plan is a manifestation of India's shifting strategic view of the world and a better understanding of its place in the changing global economic environment.¹⁰³ Fundamental to this plan is India's 'Look East' policy and its 'Connect Central Asia' policy. The 'Look East' policy is aimed at reviving its relationships with nations in Southeast and East Asia, such as Singapore, Vietnam and Japan. The 'Connect Central Asia' policy is aimed at the renewal and upgrading of India's ties to the Central Asian states.¹⁰⁴ These policies will be discussed in more detail in later sections of this paper.

Third is to balance China's rise. India—along similar lines to strategies being pursued by countries as diverse as Australia, Japan, Vietnam, Taiwan, Mongolia and Indonesia—has pursued a 'balance of power' strategy, aimed at strengthening its ties with the US as well as a range of other regional states. However, India has refrained from developing formal strategic security alliances with other nations. Fourth is to ensure that it has sufficient national power to protect itself from China through the continued modernisation of its conventional military forces and the maintenance of its nuclear deterrent.

It is evident that both India and China desire a peaceful strategic environment for their respective economic development and do not wish for direct confrontation with the other. However, it is also evident that neither country is comfortable with the rise of the other, and that both are suspicious of the other's strategic intent and longer-term ambitions. As observed by Malik, 'both seek to expand their power and influence in and beyond their regions at each other's expense'—and it is this lack of trust that exists between China and India which shapes their strategic view of the other.¹⁰⁵

Part 4: Strategic Encirclement

The critical element of the Sino-India 'New Great Game' is the regional geopolitical power play between the two nations and a mutual suspicion that each is seeking to contain the other through strategic encirclement. In their view, this encirclement is being achieved through competition for regional influence and military manoeuvring in the other nation's traditional sphere of influence. This situation leads to a classic security dilemma; where a professed defensive manoeuvre by one nation is seen by another as an aggressive action. The result is that China and India are circling 'each other warily, very much aware that their feints and jabs could turn into a future slugging match'.¹⁰⁶

This section of the paper will examine the Sino-India competition for regional influence that contributes to the fear of encirclement and its implications on the South Asia region. First, it will examine China's purported encirclement of India through its strategic relations in South Asia and its increasing penetration on the Indian Ocean. The section will then discuss India's counter-actions through its 'Look East' policy, including its interest in the South China Sea, and its 'Connect Central Asia' policy. The section will conclude by proposing that the effects of these strategic moves are contributing to ongoing instability in the South Asia region.

China's perceived encirclement of India

China's strategic alliance with Pakistan and its developing relationships with India's other neighbours have heightened tensions between China and India, not least because China's actions are perceived by India as a deliberate strategy of encirclement.¹⁰⁷ Indian observers, in particular, perceive that China's penetration into South Asia is a calibrated plan to challenge India's dominance of its neighbourhood. In their view, China's plan is designed to keep India focused on the sub-continent in the expectation that it will constrain its influence from spreading wider into Central and South East Asia. Vikram Sood, a former head of India's foreign intelligence agency, states that the Chinese tactics to achieve this are simple—'keep borders with India tranquil but do not solve the disputes, trade with India but arm Pakistan, and wean away Nepal, Bangladesh, and Myanmar'.¹⁰⁸ These actions also are consistent with China's perceived intent to limit India's ambition to establish pre-eminence in South Asia, both on the land and on the sea.

On the land

The key region for China's contended strategic encirclement of India is along India's northern and western borders. Earlier, this paper summarised the Sino-Pakistan strategic alliance and its strategic significance to China. For Beijing, Pakistan and its proxies are able to keep the one million-strong Indian Army focused and preoccupied to its west and in Kashmir. In Kashmir alone, Pakistan has tied down some 500,000 to 700,000 Indian troops for the past 20 years. This action has ensured that the Indian Army has not had the capacity to interfere in Tibet or in the wider Southeast or East Asia regions.¹⁰⁹

Sino-Pakistan observers assess that Pakistan's stance against India also meets China's strategic objective of supporting other South Asian nations as a counterweight to India.¹¹⁰ Pakistan provides an example to the smaller South Asian nations, with Malik assessing that:

[These nations can] benefit from Chinese economic and military largesse, enjoy China's diplomatic protective umbrella, safeguard their sovereignty from [the] interventionist policies of major powers (read, the United States), and counter Indian attempts to dominate or influence their decision-making.¹¹¹

To India's north, China has been increasingly developing its military capability in Tibet, adjacent to Arunachal Pradesh. This build-up is aimed at ensuring that the Indian Army is challenged with two fronts on its immediate borders. Gurmeet Kanwal has highlighted that China has developed sophisticated military infrastructure in the area, including the 'construction of new railways, 58,000km of all-weather roads, five air bases, supply hubs and communication posts', which would assist China to strike with power and speed if it decided to seize the Indian-controlled territory which it claims as its own'.¹¹²

To further pressure India and keep its focus to its north, China also implemented an aggressive patrolling and incursion strategy in the border areas from 2003 to 2010; this Chinese strategy caused policy inertia from within the Indian foreign policy establishment and criticism from the Indian media and military officials for the lack of an official Indian response.¹¹³ China is also developing its relationship with Nepal with the objective of decreasing the influence of India.¹¹⁴ This has included the use of 'no strings attached' concessional loans and economic aid. It has also offered military logistics and training assistance to the Nepalese Army. However, of most concern to India are China's plans to develop railway lines through Nepal, connecting to Tibet, which would make India's northern flank more vulnerable to China.

In 2008-09, as a result of aggressive Chinese activities in the vicinity of Arunachal Pradesh, and concerns regarding Chinese military infrastructure, India turned its attention to this border zone and commenced a modernisation of its forces in the area. India's response has been an expansion of its security forces and their capabilities to defend the zone. It has included a five-year plan to raise a new mountain corps and increase the force level to 120,000 troops in the northeast of India.¹¹⁵ In addition, India has also deployed Sukhoi SU-30MK1 aircraft, helicopters and cruise and ballistic missiles to help defend Arunachal Pradesh.¹¹⁶

Although India would argue that these measures are defensive in nature, and in response to the PLA's force build-up, China sees India's response as highly provocative.¹¹⁷ The military build-up on both sides has added to their shared security dilemma and—particularly given the sensitive nature of Tibet and Arunachal Pradesh—has increased the possibility of conflict over the area.¹¹⁸

On the sea

The final component of China's perceived encirclement strategy is its penetration into the Indian Ocean. As China and India's economies grow, and their energy needs increase, their respective areas of interest have expanded to include the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) in the Indian Ocean and South China Sea.¹¹⁹ China's increased presence and influence in the Indian Ocean region has included its cultivation of partnerships with a number of India's neighbours, the development of Pakistan's Gwadar deep-sea port and the expansion of naval activities in the Indian Ocean, all of which have caused Indian policy makers to become increasingly concerned that China is implementing a strategy of maritime encirclement.¹²⁰

In recent years, China has developed multi-dimensional relationships with Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, which have included major trading partnerships, investment in infrastructure development, funding of socio-economic needs, and assistance in developing the energy production of these partners.¹²¹ However, a critical element has been its investment in the port facilities of these nations.¹²² These have included Hambantota in Sri Lanka, Chittagong in Bangladesh and the Kyaukpyu deep-water port in Myanmar, as well as naval facilities on Myanmar's Great Coco Island.¹²³ These so-called 'String of Pearls' provide China with increased access and influence in the Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea—and are seen by New Delhi as a direct threat to India's interests and influence in the Indian Ocean region.¹²⁴

Pakistan has also provided a critical strategic node for China's access to the Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf, particularly via the Chinese-funded deep-water port at Gwadar in western Pakistan, which opened in 2007.¹²⁵ In April 2015, Pakistan granted China approval to operate this port for the next 40 years as part of the development of the so-called China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Contrary to Chinese claims that Gwadar has been developed only as a trading point, analysts have concluded that the facilities could provide the Chinese Navy with strategic naval support infrastructure in the Indian Ocean.¹²⁶ Such enhanced access to the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf would effectively enable China to become a two-ocean maritime power.¹²⁷ That, in turn, would potentially impact on the freedom of navigation of US maritime forces; it would also be seen by India as further evidence of China's ambitions to contain India and challenge India's influence in the Indian Ocean.

Indian concerns are reinforced by China's naval expansion. The Chinese Navy is currently growing at a faster rate than India.¹²⁸ By 2020, it is expected that China will have 73 major combat ships and 78 submarines, of which 12 will be nuclear, although it will still lack an operational aircraft carrier group capability. Some Indian analysts believe that as China extends its reach into the Indian Ocean to safeguard its access to natural resources, the countries' navies are as likely to clash as their armies'.¹²⁹

In summary, China's relationship with Pakistan and its increased reach into the Indian Ocean look likely to test Sino-Indian relations and further impact the equilibrium in South Asia.¹³⁰ Rajiv Sikri assesses that 'if India remains under pressure and unsure about China's intentions, it will be difficult for India to free up resources from defence to [other] development priorities'.¹³¹ As a result, India is developing ways and means to counter what it perceives as China's encirclement strategy, in order to balance China's actions in the South Asia region and the Indian Ocean.

India's perceived counter-encirclement of China

India is clearly concerned that the 'peaceful rise' of China masks a covert policy of the containment of India, resulting in the assessment by India that 'China presents the biggest geopolitical test'.¹³² India's assessment is viewed through the prism of China's long-term strategic alliance with Pakistan and the economic assistance and infrastructure development support it is providing to India's neighbours.¹³³ As a result, India is responding with counter-encirclement measures through a range of strategic initiatives with other powers, including the US, Japan and Australia, and with a number of other nations in Southeast and East Asia.¹³⁴

'Looking East'

India's efforts to counter China's strategic encirclement have included extending its strategic ties with nations towards its east, outside of the immediate South Asia region. This move is part of India's 'Look East' policy and has included engaging and developing strategic dialogue and agreements with nations in

the Asia-Pacific, such as Vietnam, Japan, Singapore and Australia.¹³⁵ The development of these relationships, particularly in the defence and security areas, has largely focused on the maritime field. However, such moves are not going unnoticed by China, especially in the South China Sea, and are causing concern for Beijing, with Chinese officials reportedly noting that 'India ha[s] increased [its] military infiltration in the South China Sea regions... [which] allows no room for optimism (over China's undisturbed hegemony in these waters)'.¹³⁶

India's strategic push eastwards includes the development of its bilateral relationship with Vietnam.¹³⁷ India and Vietnam share a common history with both nations having lost limited wars with China in 1962 and 1979 respectively. As a result, both nations share a common concern regarding the 'rise of China', particularly since both have unresolved border disputes with China. In 1994, India and Vietnam signed a defence agreement, which could be seen as a reciprocal 'geographical pressure point' on China in the same way that China's long-term alliance with Pakistan has on India.¹³⁸

More recently, India-Vietnam strategic ties were revitalised with a new agreement signed between Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung and India's Prime Minister Modi on the former's visit to India in 2014.¹³⁹ The agreement included defence and security cooperation, and came at a time of increased tensions in the South China Sea between China and its neighbours. This cooperation has seen India commit to provide Vietnam with four maritime patrol vessels in order to bolster its maritime security capabilities. The agreement was further enhanced with the signing of a 'Joint Vision Statement' in May 2015 between Vietnam's Defence Minister and his Indian counterpart, which outlined a trajectory for their bilateral relationship out to 2020 and for further defence cooperation, including coast guard cooperation.

More broadly, India's growing strategic ties with Vietnam, Singapore, Cambodia and Australia are clearly part of its strategy to counter China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific region. In May 2015, for example, the Indian Navy deployed four warships to the Asia-Pacific, which included participating in a maritime exercise with the Singapore Navy in the South China Sea and making port calls in Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia and Australia.¹⁴⁰

While building relationships with nations in the region is an important part of India's counter-action, it is the India-US partnership that is viewed as the cornerstone to India's strategy to counter China's assertive geopolitical moves in the 'New Great Game'. Since 2001, India has increased its political engagement and cooperation with the US, which led to the signing of an expansive 10 year military cooperation framework between the two nations in 2005.¹⁴¹ It was further enhanced after the 'game-changing deal on nuclear cooperation [which] was consummated in 2008'.¹⁴²

These initial framework agreements have laid the foundations for India's contribution to the US rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region. This was confirmed by the former US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta in a speech in June 2012 when he contended that 'defense cooperation with India is a linchpin in [the US rebalancing] strategy.... India also shares with the United States a strong commitment to a set of principles that help maintain international security and prosperity'.¹⁴³

This partnership is most likely to have the greatest effect on the balance of power in the South Asia region. India has particularly benefited from its cooperation with the US, especially in dealing with potential threats originating from China, and with gaining inclusion into various exclusive global decision-making institutions.¹⁴⁴ For its part, the US has used India, as a well-established democracy, as a 'regional bulwark' in the Indian Ocean to balance against what it sees as the increasingly assertive actions by China.¹⁴⁵ Further, it has been noted by David Brewster that although the US is the predominant military power in the Indian Ocean, it is encouraging India to act as a net security provider in the region.¹⁴⁶

However, the US-India partnership does cause a dilemma for New Delhi. Neither India nor the US wants the Indian Ocean to become dominated by China. But India is also very wary of not provoking China into believing that it is part of a US plan to contain China. China is reportedly watching the partnership very closely, fearful that 'Indian-American cooperation ... [has the potential to] prolong US hegemony and prevent the establishment of a post-American, Sino-centric hierarchical regional order in Asia'.¹⁴⁷

To counter this perception, India has attempted to assure Beijing that the relationship is not an alliance and that it is not aimed at containing China.¹⁴⁸ However, there is some evidence to suggest that as a

consequence of the US-India partnership, China's stance against India has become more assertive, with Nitya Singh contending that as a result of 'improved [Indian] relations with the US, China has increasingly adopted an aggressive posture on the border'.¹⁴⁹ Further, Malik assesses that as India and the US grow closer, China will tilt closer to Pakistan, and therefore Pakistan will become more geopolitically important to China. As a result, it can be argued that the US-India partnership is a significant contributor to tensions in the Sino-India 'New Great Game'.

'Connecting North'

The final leg of India's counter-encirclement strategy is its 'Connect Central Asia' policy. India's interests in Central Asia relate to its concerns regarding Sino-Pakistan encirclement, access to energy resources and the possible threats from Islamic extremist groups on Kashmir.¹⁵⁰ India is a latecomer to Central Asia and its presence is considered by most commentators as being a negligible when compared to China's.¹⁵¹

Nevertheless, India is increasingly attempting to engage with Central Asia. It has focused particularly on improved relations with Tajikistan, with which it developed military ties in 2003, resulting in an undeclared Indian military presence at an airbase at Farkhor.¹⁵² This was followed in 2007 by an overt military presence established at the Ainy airbase.¹⁵³ This deployment is reportedly to provide a reaction force to support Indian interests in Tajikistan and Afghanistan.¹⁵⁴ Some commentators have speculated that the deployment is a reflection of India's desire to establish a larger capability in Central Asia for geopolitical purposes aimed at Pakistan and Kashmir.¹⁵⁵ It seems likely, however, that 'India's military presence in Central Asia will further intensify the militarisation of that region ... [with the potential also to] provoke the great powers into military competition'.¹⁵⁶

Conclusion

This paper has examined the Sino-India 'New Great Game' in South and Central Asia in order to establish if this geopolitical rivalry could lead to regional conflict in the South Asia region in the next decade. It has argued that the circumstances of this 'New Great Game' have some similarities to the original imperial 'Great Game' between Russia and Britain. Most notable is the contest for influence and the diplomatic manoeuvring between India and China for leadership in the region.

The paper has identified that while the original 'Great Game' focused mainly on disputed territory between Central Asia and South Asia, the Sino-India 'New Great Game' differs in that it covers Central Asia, South Asia and the Indian Ocean. The 'New Great Game' also differs in that it is not played in isolation between two great imperial powers but is being influenced by the US and other regional powers in both South Asia and Central Asia. However, an important conclusion is that the two games are similar in that both have mistrust of the other's strategic intentions and ambitions as the core aspect of their competition, and it is this mistrust and the reaction of the players which has the potential to lead to regional conflict.

While neither party would want the 'New Great Game' to result in conflict, a key issue is the perceptions of both parties regarding China's strategic encirclement of India, India's response and its effect on regional stability. India's reaction to what it perceives as China's strategy has been to counter its encirclement by encroaching into China's immediate area of interest both in Southeast Asia and Central Asia. Most importantly, however, has been India's improved relationship with the US, which is a major cause of concern to Chinese strategists, as the continuing US presence and influence is considered the greatest threat to China's own aspirations in the Indo-Pacific region.

Based on historic mistrust and current competition, this paper has argued that the rise of China and India will be dominated by tension and suspicion in the coming decade. It has argued that the Sino-India 'New Great Game' exists and could be the catalyst for conflict between these two major powers. While neither India nor China—nor indeed any of the affected parties—would want the 'New Great Game' to lead to war, there is a real risk that left unchecked, miscalculations or misunderstandings could see the 'Game' spiral out of control with likely profound consequences for regional and indeed global stability.

Notes

- 1 This is an edited version of a paper, with the same title, submitted by the author while attending the Defence and Strategic Studies Course at the Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies at the Australian Defence College in 2015.
- 2 C. Raja Mohan, 'India in East Asia', Australia-India Strategic Lecture, Melbourne, 21 February 2007, p. 8, available at <www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/india-east-asia> accessed 21 April 2015.
- 3 This concept is supported by Mohan, 'India in East Asia'; also Mohan Malik, *China and India: great power rivals*, First Forum Press: London and Boulder, 2011; Mick Ryan, 'India-China Strategic Competition', *Australian Defence Force Journal*, Issue No. 188, 2012; and David M. Malone and Rohan Mukherjee, 'India and China: conflict and cooperation', *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, Vol. 52, No. 1, 2010.
- 4 Ryan, 'India-China Strategic Competition', p. 44
- 5 Malone and Mukherjee, 'India and China', pp. 137-8.
- 6 Malone and Mukherjee, 'India and China', p. 149.
- 7 Malone and Mukherjee, 'India and China', p. 149.
- 8 This paragraph based on Paul J. Smith, 'The Tilting Triangle: geopolitics of the China-India-Pakistan relationship', *Comparative Strategy*, Vol. 32, 2013, pp. 315-6.
- 9 Mohan Malik, 'China and India Today: diplomats jostle, militaries prepare', *World Affairs Journal*, July/August 2012, available at <<http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/china-and-india-today-diplomats-jostle-militaries-prepare>> accessed 4 June 2015.
- 10 David Scott, 'The Great Power "Great Game" between India and China: 'the logic of geography'', *Geopolitics*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2008, p. 4.
- 11 These commentators include Scott, 'The Great Power "Great Game" between India and China'; Nishtha Kaushiki, 'The New Great Game and India's Connect Central Asia Policy: strategic perspectives and challenges', *Journal of International and Area Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 2, 2013; Zehra Akbar, 'Central Asia: the new great game', *The Washington Review of Turkish & Eurasian Affairs* [website], available at <<http://www.thewashingtonreview.org/articles/central-asia-the-new-great-game.html>> accessed 29 April 2015; and Jen-kun Fu, 'Reassessing a "New Great Game" between India and China in Central Asia', *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2010, pp. 17-22.
- 12 Scott, 'The Great Power "Great Game" between India and China', p. 4.
- 13 This paragraph is based on Matthew Edwards, 'The New Great Game and the new great gamers: disciples of Kipling and Mackinder', *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 22, No. 1, March 2003, pp. 84-90; Scott, 'The Great Power "Great Game" between India and China', pp. 1-5; and Akbar, 'Central Asia'.
- 14 Scott, 'The Great Power "Great Game" between India and China', p. 3.
- 15 This paragraph is based on Edwards, 'The New Great Game and the new great gamers', pp. 88-97.
- 16 Scott, 'The Great Power "Great Game" between India and China', p. 2.
- 17 This paragraph is based on Scott, 'The Great Power "Great Game" between India and China', pp. 1-2.
- 18 Scott, 'The Great Power "Great Game" between India and China', p. 3.
- 19 Ryan, 'India-China Strategic Competition', p. 45.
- 20 Baladas Ghoshal, 'India and China: towards a competitive-cooperative relationship?', *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies* [website], Issue Brief No. 153, August 2010, p. 1, available at <http://www.ipcs.org/pdf_file/issue/IB153-Ghoshal-IndiaChina.pdf> accessed 9 September 2015.
- 21 Rajshree Jetly, 'The Sino-Pakistan Strategic Entente: implications for regional security', Institute of South Asian Studies Working Paper No. 143, National University of Singapore: Singapore, 14 February 2012; and Sangit Dwivedi, 'Exploring Strategies and Implications of an Opportunistic Alliance: a case study of Pakistan and China', *Asian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 2013, pp. 324-5.
- 22 Kaushiki, 'The New Great Game and India's Connect Central Asia Policy', p. 87.
- 23 See The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's website at <<http://www.sectsco.org/EN123/>> accessed 9 September 2015.

- 24 Umair Jamal, 'Coalition of the Unwilling: Pakistan and India bring confrontation to the SCO', *The Diplomat* [website], 30 July 2015, available at <<http://thediplomat.com/2015/07/coalition-of-the-unwilling-pakistan-and-india-bring-confrontation-to-the-sco/>> accessed 7 September 2015.
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- 26 Kaushiki, 'The New Great Game and India's Connect Central Asia Policy', p. 90.
- 27 Malik, *China and India*, p. 157.
- 28 Paul Dibb and John Lee, 'Why China will not Become the Dominant Power in Asia', *Security Challenges*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 2014, pp. 14-5.
- 29 This paragraph is based on Mohan, 'India in East Asia', pp. 4-9.
- 30 Malik, *China and India*, p. 145; also Malik, 'China and India Today'.
- 31 Malik, *China and India*, pp. 128-9.
- 32 Jonathan Holslag, *China and India: prospects for peace*, Columbia University Press: New York, 2010, pp. 35-9.
- 33 This paragraph based on Malik, *China and India*, pp. 127-58.
- 34 This paragraph based on Nitya Singh, 'How to Tame Your Dragon: an evaluation of India's foreign policy towards China', *India Review*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 2012, p. 142; and Holslag, *China and India*, pp. 38-9.
- 35 This paragraph based on Singh, 'How to Tame Your Dragon', pp. 142-3; Holslag, *China and India*, pp. 38-9; and Malik, *China and India*, pp. 128-9.
- 36 Malone and Mukherjee, 'India and China', p. 140.
- 37 Malik, *China and India*, pp. 130-1.
- 38 Singh, 'How to Tame Your Dragon', pp. 142-3.
- 39 Paul J. Smith, 'The Tilting Triangle: geopolitics of the China-India-Pakistan relationship', *Comparative Strategy*, Vol. 32, No.4, 2013, p. 316.
- 40 Smith, 'The Tilting Triangle', p. 316.
- 41 Holslag, *China and India*, p. 39; and Malone and Mukherjee, 'India and China', p. 140.
- 42 This paragraph based on Holslag, *China and India*, p. 39; Singh, 'How to Tame Your Dragon', p. 143; and Smith, 'The Tilting Triangle', pp. 316-7.
- 43 Malone and Mukherjee, 'India and China', p. 141.
- 44 Singh, 'How to Tame Your Dragon', p. 143.
- 45 Smith, 'The Tilting Triangle', pp. 317 and 324.
- 46 Singh, 'How to Tame Your Dragon', p. 143.
- 47 Smith, 'The Tilting Triangle', p. 317.
- 48 Malik, 'China and India Today'.
- 49 Scott, 'The Great Power "Great Game" between India and China', p. 4.
- 50 The Sino-Pakistan alliance was a 'quasi' alliance as there had never been a formal agreement signed between two nations. However, it is the most enduring relationship that either country has held: see Dwivedi, 'Exploring Strategies and Implications of an Opportunistic Alliance', p. 307.
- 51 Jetly, 'The Sino-Pakistan Strategic Entente', p. 1.
- 52 Dwivedi, 'Exploring Strategies and Implications of an Opportunistic Alliance', pp. 324-5; and Jetly, 'The Sino-Pakistan Strategic Entente', p. 2.
- 53 Rizwan Zeb, 'Pakistan-China Relations: where they go from here?' UNISCI (Research Unit on International Security and Cooperation) Discussion Papers, No. 29, May 2012, p. 47, available at <<http://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/UNIS/article/viewFile/40659/38981>> accessed 9 September 2015.
- 54 Malone and Mukherjee, 'India and China', p. 139.
- 55 Qandeel Siddique, 'Deeper than the Indian Ocean? An Analysis of Pakistan-China Relations', Centre for International and Strategic Analysis, Report No. 16, 2014, pp. 43-4, available at

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