

Chapter 2

India's Policy Towards China Under the Mindset of "Assertive Government"

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It is generally believed the Modi-led Indian government has entered an era featuring an "assertive government", with its foreign policies under influence of such assertiveness. The thesis discusses the factors which contribute to the mindset and what fluctuation it may cause to the Sino-Indian ties. Stress is laid on what influences the assertiveness may bring about to Sino-Indian border issues and the "Belt and Road".

Bharatiya Janata Party led by Narendra Modi won an overwhelming victory against the National Congress in the general election held in May 2014. Since Modi took office one year ago, the Indian government has been more assertive and proactive in foreign policies, apparently with a stronger desire to compete with China and to seek a world great power status. Hence, its foreign policies tend to be increasingly assertive.

How did the "assertive government" mindset come into being? What influence did it have on its foreign policy formulation and implementation? What changes will happen to India's China policy and China-India ties in the future? How should China deal with an assertive India? These are the questions that the article intends to reply to.

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2.1 Basis for the Mindset of “Assertive Government” During Modi’s Ruling Period

Regarding India’s foreign policies, many Indian scholars tend to view Modi’s political status and administration style as part of the country’s diplomatic strength and believed that an “assertive government” helped India to realize its dream of being a world great power. What is strange is that the appearance of assertive Modi administration that inspires various circles of India is not due to significant improvement in its internal and external environments. The past year did not see noticeable improvement in its measurable strength. Despite that, India achieved considerable economic growth rate in 2014, which was even higher than that of China. It was something India had been aspiring so much but failed to accomplish for many years. Nevertheless, the economic aggregate of India is still only one fifth of China’s. Nor can we see any significant growth in the country’s military technology and international campaigns. To a large extent, Modi’s assertiveness did not arise from the change in India’s power or relative power but from the change in the mentality in carrying out its foreign policies.

This is especially apparent in the diplomatic ties of that India has with China. Over the past year, there have been considerable changes in the national diplomatic rhetoric’s and foreign policy implementation over India-China ties by switching from the present position of his predecessor. In terms of domestic economic issues, Modi views China as a competitor or a target India is trying to catch up with. He even visited some areas in disputed Arunachal Pradesh, which was obviously a provocation.

What gave rise to Modi administration’s assertive diplomacy? Is the international environment in India’s favor? Or are there apparent changes in the strength of India’s main competitors? Or does it have something to do with Modi’s personal style? Many reasons are behind that.

First of all, assertive diplomacy has been a tradition of India. Even in the era dominated by the prudent Manmohan Singh-led Congress Party, India’s aspiration for a great power status is known to all. Since 1990s, one of the core goals of India’s diplomacy is to seek acknowledgement of its world great power status. In a favorable diplomatic environment, India does not need to consider what counter effect it may encounter from the leading power and its affiliates in the effort to pursue a world great power status as China does. Nor will its assertive diplomacy meet with strong opposition from China that is pursuing a low-profile diplomacy. The maximum benefits India is able to gain from its diplomatic policies depend on how well it can apply its existing strength. For India, deliberate preservation of strength and avoiding international conflicts is unnecessary. Assertive diplomacy embodies India’s intent on seeking a world power status, which is also allowed in a favorable international environment.

Despite that assertive diplomacy has been a tradition of India, Modi’s assertiveness is something rare among the previous prime ministers for decades. For one thing, the ruling status of Modi administration is stable, with the government

dominated by a majority party, something rarely seen for years. The National League for Diplomacy led by the Bharatiya Janata Party won 334 seats out of 543, with only 63 seats for the United Progressive Alliance led by the ex-ruling Congress Party and 146 for other parties. The Bharatiya Janata Party-led government is the most stable one in decades, which enables Modi to be an Indian prime minister with a stable status following Rajiv Gandhi.

Secondly, the Modi-led government has the highest popularity among the masses since the 1990s. In addition, the Indian community generally feels optimistic about the fact that Modi came to power. Although admittedly this optimism is based on the disappointment of the previous downturn of the Congress Party to a considerable extent, the high popularity still offers Modi more abundant political resources, thus making his government implement more proactive policies according to their own ideas. Of course, this also brings Modi considerable political pressure, compelling him to achieve political achievements in line with such high popularity in the near term, even if it's only a gesture to do so.

Thirdly, the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) is such a political party having the strong religious sec tradition and the Hindu nationalism has always been the core political philosophy and ideology of the BJP. Under the guidance of the Hindu nationalism, the BJP lays greater emphasis than the Congress Party on India's national dignity and national pride, and is often more inclined to taking a strong position in foreign affairs. This is understandable, because compared to the elite parties, the grass-roots political party can only stress more nationalist appeals to win public support in India, which is not unique to India.¹ In the 20th century India challenged the international nuclear non-proliferation system by conducting nuclear tests, which happened in the ruling period of the BJP. In fact, during the reign of the previous Congress Party-led government, India already had basic capability to conduct nuclear tests. Prime Minister Vajpayee's decision to conduct nuclear tests is often used as one of the evidences that the BJP has a stronger desire, more willingness and more courage to achieve India's power status.

Finally, Modi's own class origin and family background also has played a catalytic role in the BJP-led government's assertive diplomacy to some extent. India does not lack the presidents coming from the bottom of the society, but as an actual executer of the administrative power in India, the position of Prime Minister has never been taken by a grassroots person or even a person of "Dalit" caste² before

¹Of course, it can be argued that it's inaccurate to distinguish the BJP from the Congress Party by using the grass-roots political party and the elite one. The leadership of the BJP is also marked with the strong elitism. But in any case, it's still true that the BJP's claims are much closer than those of such veteran elite party as the Congress Party to the concept and needs of the middle and lower society in India.

²Moody's so-called family origin of "untouchables" is questionable. During the general election the Indian National Congress Party had repeatedly criticized the origin problem of Modi, not because Modi lied about its high-caste origin, but because Modi allegedly forged his childhood tragic experience and caste factors leading to this kind of experience. Modi may not come from the Dalit caste in the oil extraction industry as asserted by him in public. No matter whether the rumor is true

Modi turned Prime Minister. After coming to power, Modi of humble family origin feels an urgent need for a more assertive posture to confirm his difference from the elite leaders of the old Brahman Congress Party, and also has a strong need to make up for his insufficient legitimacy in the Indian caste system using assertive policies. Modi's strong style developed in the decade-long Gujarat ruling period, is also related to his class origin to a larger extent. This style will naturally continue after he serves as Prime Minister.

2.2 Modi's Perception and Judgment of the China-India Relations

For the above reasons, the new Indian government's domestic and diplomatic policy has been adjusted more proactively over the past year. While Modi-led government's active policy is not likely to generate a significant rise in the overall strength and international competitiveness of India in a short term, but such strong stance has remarkably improved India's own self-confidence of the development prospect, and the increasing self-confidence to a certain extent stimulates India's economic performance and more or less enhances India's international status at least in a short term. Since Modi took office, India as the largest economy in South Asia that used to be slow in many ways, has almost become vibrant overnight. In the Q2 and Q3 of 2014–2015 fiscal year, India's economic growth reached 5.7 and 5.3 % respectively, exceeding its intended targets.

By comparison, China is under economic adjustment. In 2014, China's annual growth rate declined, even not reaching the projected target of 7.5 %. Due to this, there immediately emerge some Western financial discourses which have excited so many Indians: under the leadership of Modi, India's economic growth rate will surpass China in 2015 or in 2017 at the latest, and will completely overtake China in terms of economic size in 2030.

In terms of data, Modi does create a miracle or at least maintains the myth. However, the high growth in the two quarters—the high growth under the Indian standard—is ultimately because of confidence effect generated from Indian consumers' and producers' expectation of Modi Miracle, or is the Indian economy actually embarking on a long-term high growth road? After all, there is an essential difference between the two. But in any case, there is no doubt that both the Indian government and the masses have significantly enhanced their self-confidence towards China, so there is no surprise that Indian's assertive foreign policy towards China emerges in such a case.

(Footnote 2 continued)

or false, in fact, even if Moody takes the initiative to “lower” his own caste, there is still no surprise about such a move in India's election culture.

1. India believes the existing international and regional situation is favorable to India, which can help India handle the India-China ties in accordance with its own ideas. Although there is a huge gap in strength between China and India, India often shows a more assertive attitude in the Sino-Indian relations, for which the reason is that India is of the opinion that China is at a disadvantage in the current international environment, compared to India; China is squeezed by the Western countries, particularly the United States, and relation between China and Japan has a tension in the eastern seaward region and the relation between China and some Southeast Asian countries are strained; so China has neither the intention nor the possibility to hassle with India, but instead China may even need some support from India; thus India just can reap benefits by paying less costs and getting more returns from China. In addition, India even believes certain pressure on China will further push China to attach importance to the Sino-Indian relations originally falling out of the China's core international strategies, and compel China to accept India's propositions by taking advantage of China's mindset of "Seeking Stability" in the Sino-Indian relations.
2. India believes that there is an "assertive government" in both China and India, and it is possible to make a historic strategic decision. Modi is extremely popular in India, but the changes having occurred in China after the 18th CPC National Congress also have left a deep impression on India. Therefore, India believes that President Xi Jinping and the Prime Minister Modi are both a rare strong leader in these two countries for more than 20 years, and they are strong enough to overcome the domestic political and public challenges to make major decisions. However, it should be noted that the major strategic decision expressed by India is conditional, in the hope that both sides can start negotiations aimed at resolving the problems by following India's propositions, but is not in the hope that both sides shall seek to solve the problems on the basis of equal consultation.

Out of the above mindsets, the Modi-led Indian government holds a more active and assertive position than that of the Congress Party-led government towards China on such major issues concerning territorial disputes, "Belt and Road" and other issues in the Sino-Indian ties.

2.3 India's Position and Purpose on Major Issues on Sino-Indian Relations

1. On territorial issues, India is eager to make a "package solution" but never makes any substantial concession.

On the territorial issues, on every occasion of the forthcoming high-level contacts between China and India for a long time, some Indian media would always

“disclose” that there are the so-called confrontations or even conflicts happening between Chinese and Indian forces in the border areas, and would even try to hijack the visit topics. This trick has almost become a “routine” of India. On the eve of Premier Li Keqiang’s visit to India in May 2013, Indian media also widely reported the so-called “tent standoff” incident so that both the Chinese and Indian governments had to take a lot of time to clarify some rumors from the Indian media during the visit. When President Xi Jinping paid a visit to India in September 2014, the Indian media played such an old trick once again by hyping that “Chinese army invaded Ladakh”, which constituted a certain obstacle to the Chinese president’s first visit to India in the eight years.

If the above tricks can only show the Indian media’s inherent bias to the Sino-Indian relations and may try to attract the public attention using sensational coverage during the China-India high-level interactions, then after the current Indian Prime Minister Modi confirmed that he will visit China in the first half of 2015, Modi’s insisting on “inspecting” the so-called “Arunachal Pradesh”—this is the first visit of all Indian prime ministers to the so-called “Arunachal Pradesh”—apparently is marked with a stronger political motivation. Because currently Modi has a very high popularity among the masses in India, and needn’t rely on news gimmicks to enhance his support rate, the “inspection” behavior can not be explained by simply the need of the domestic situation in India. In fact, the Indian media’s previous hype of Modi’s “inspection” of “Arunachal Pradesh” reflects the true attitude of India on the current China-India relations and the border issues. It hopes to resolve the border issue as soon as possible, and its action has a strong motive of putting pressure on China.

For some time, through various channels the Indian side endeavors to sound out China’s attitude towards the two border dispute issues. First, India repeatedly asks China to confirm its stance that the so-called “China-India border issue should be resolved as soon as possible”; secondly, India repeatedly stresses that the Chinese side used to put forward the “East-Exchange for-West”-based “package solution”, and requests that China verifies that it’s still a valid proposal put forward by China, to which China has taken no retreat in its stance.

The two ideas are India’s stance on the border issues, of which the first is to solve the issues as soon as possible; the second is to verify that China offers to put forward the “East-Exchange for-West” program, which will be used as a precondition of negotiations. In essence, India requests China to give up the territorial sovereignty of the southern Tibet in the control of India, which is most of “Arunachal Pradesh”. Then both China and India can make negotiation on the disputed western territory, Tawang and other disputed small areas.

India’s reason for the above so-called nice plan is because the Indian side is very clear that no matter how self-expressive it is on the part of India, there is a huge gap in strength between China and India and the gap will grow, which is an indisputable fact. The longer the Solution of territorial issues are delayed, the more unfavorable it’s for India to “re-conquer” even the Aksai Chin region under Chinese control. Moreover, with the improvement of China’s Tibetan infrastructure network, some instability factors may also emerge in the “Arunachal Pradesh” in the so-called

actual control of India. Therefore, India is very eager to make progress in the border issues.

Although India is more eager to make a breakthrough, India will not take the initiative to propose any solution. India hopes that China can take the initiative to put forward the “East-Exchange for-West” proposal. If so, China will be bound to recognize that the so-called “Arunachal Pradesh” belongs to India. As for the disputed areas in the western part of the borders, India will then negotiate with China on a case-by-case basis. Thus, on the one hand, India will gain the legitimate rights to the “Arunachal Pradesh” territory; on the other hand, India will also compel the Chinese side to first make a compromise on the territorial issues, so as to relieve its domestic pressure. Modi's inspection tour in “Arunachal Pradesh” in the early 2015 shows that the real motivation lies in the expression of India's “tough stance” in the issues concerning the eastern part of the disputed territory between the two countries, thus providing a good predetermined position of India for the bilateral negotiations on the territorial issues during his visit to China. For a long time before that, on various international occasions a variety of Indian think tanks have repeatedly published that many years ago Premier Zhou Enlai once came up with the “East-Exchange for-West” program, with the aim of probing China's attitude and informing the public that this program is not offered by India.

However, India does not really hope to solve the issues but attempts to create an atmosphere of India's advantage over China, aiming at highlighting India's international status and Modi's own political position. In fact, in view of Modi and BJP's domestic political position in India, there is no possibility that the Modi-led Indian government makes small concessions on the border issues in exchange for China's giving up the sovereignty claims to the territory of the southern Tibet. Modi is not India's most powerful prime minister in the half century, and his current high popularity is to some extent pushed up by the Indian electorates' and the media's dissatisfaction with the Congress Party-led government, as well as the mindset of seeking a change for the future, which is similar to the attitude of the American people towards Obama, marked with a strong subjective expectation. This expectation can not be translated into the popular support for Modi to make major decisions; on the contrary, it is easy to go to the other extreme because of the administration measures of the Modi-led government are inconsistent with their mental expectations—Obama's current ultra-low popularity is interrelated to his ultra-high popularity in 2008. At present it's also true for Modi. As for the so-called strong Modi, his sustainability yet remains to be seen. While dealing with issues related to India and China-India relations, China should not exaggerate Modi's personal role, but should consider and cope with such issues from the perspective of the long-term trends of the bilateral interactions.

2. On the “Belt and Road” strategy, India will neither raise explicit oppositions nor actively participate.

Since China launched the “Belt and Road” strategy, India's role and status has been a hot topic for Chinese academic and policy community to discuss. The mainstream view is that China must make attempts to have India participate in “Belt

and Road” and Modi revealed favorable attitude to China’s “Belt and Road” during Xi Jinping’s visit to India. But we must admit that India is always skeptical of “Belt and Road” and also actively takes measures to balance China’s influence.

Undoubtedly, India is an important country along “Belt and Road”, and its potential market value and important strategic location makes India more helpful than other countries to China in achieving the “Belt and Road”. However, it’s widely known that India’s ambition to dominate the Indian Ocean is deep-rooted, and the India elites from both ruling and opposition parties all agree that regardless of its nature China’s participation in the Indian Ocean affairs will pose a threat to Indian’s interests and privileges. Without “Belt and Road”, it will be more favorable for India to safeguard its superpower status in the Indian Ocean region, and India’s industrialization process itself, including its infrastructure can be achieved through introduction of third-party capital and technology. Even if it conducts cooperation with China, with just its huge market India can manage to attract the investments of Chinese enterprises without getting involved in “Belt and Road”. Based on the above considerations, although India has shown a positive attitude towards “Belt and Road”, it does not and will not take any substantive action in response to it.

Moreover, India also attempts to use its own regional cooperation plan to balance or hedge the impacts of China’s “Belt and Road”. Since Modi came to power, he first has promoted the “Look East Policy” to the “Act East” policy, and also launched the “Monsoon Program” aimed at enhancing the level of cooperation between India and the Indian Ocean coastal countries. In the spring of 2015, Prime Minister Modi started his visit to Sri Lanka and other Indian Ocean countries to implement the “Monsoon Program”. Based on India’s strength, it’s completely impossible for the “Monsoon Program” to offset and eliminate the impact of “Belt and Road”. The Program still reflects the routine mind of India competing against China in developing the Indian Ocean and promoting economic development in the region. India is well aware that its “Monsoon Program” outlook is not optimistic. But it never means that India will actively participate in “Belt and Road” like any other Indian Ocean countries. After all, India is not willing to see the success of “Belt and Road”. Driven by such a mindset, India will only wait for good opportunities to deal with “Belt and Road” issues, make frequent requests to China, and link the participation in “Belt and Road” with China-India border issues, in an attempt to utilize China’s urgent promotion of “Belt and Road” to compel China to make major concessions on other issues.

2.4 “Modi Myth” and India’s Development Uncertainty

India’s assertive diplomacy is obvious. But it’s far from enough to only see the strong performance of India’s diplomacy in dealing with the relations with India and looking at the status of India in China’s peripheral country strategy. We must measure the possible consequences of India’s assertive diplomacy in reality.

Although Moody's strong performance is very eye-catching, its sustainability and actual effect are still questionable.

First of all, in terms of economic development, India's development prospect is not bright in every aspect. Over the years India has never got rid of the fear of globalization, reluctant to open its markets and allow both domestic and overseas enterprises to engage in fair competition in its own land. It's simply unthinkable in India that China offered super-national treatment to attract foreign companies, forcing the domestic enterprises to conduct unfair competition with them in those years. In this regard India's democratic system is more an obstacle than a protector of market economy-which is taken by many Western analysts as an implied fact. In reality, it's often seen that Indian democratic system is in a stubborn defense of local and partial interests, regarding the market spirit as an absurd argument, or even violating market rules in the name of democracy.

Secondly, in terms of social mobilization, the employment rate of India's working age population is significantly lower than that of China, and the age structure of India's population is far lower than that in China, which of course means that India theoretically has greater potential workforce. However, labor is never a simple addition of working-age population; India's population composition is much younger than that in China, but always has a lower employment rate than China, largely due to the caste system and long-term discrimination against women. As a result, a considerable part of work-age populations simply can not enter the market as an effective workforce. If hoping to convert its own large work-age population into effective labor, India needs to launch a full range of social reforms targeting at the caste system, of which the difficulty and significance is even more than that of most revolutions occurring in human history.

In order to make the India miracle continue, India must realize the dual self-liberation of both capital and labor. The former means a true market-oriented economy at a national level, breaking the intervention and limitation of the bureaucratic system in the disguise of democratic system; the latter means that the standard of using wealth as a measure of people's social status is carried out nationwide to stimulate the desire of Indian general people to become rich and change their fates.

Releasing the power of capital and the subjective initiative of people are the basic means of achieving economic growth under market conditions. It's also the most fundamental social change achieved by China in the past over 50 years. In China, the reform and opening up liberates the capital, and in human terms, the establishment of the new China breaks the traditional social structure, and thus completes a nationwide social mobilization, and then the reform and opening up, helps release human creativity. In terms of these two pieces of "experience", India has not had a long and effective practice. This result is precisely due to the democratic system established and always dominated by the Indian elites. India's democratic system not only ensures the privileges of capital but also restricts the vertical flow of personnel in the society. Such structural problem inherent in the system design in India does not require any data to show, but can be clearly presented in front of the viewers when they walk down the street. Modi's mission is

to break the overprotection of the bureaucratic system, overprotection for capital, and the restriction of hierarchical society on people.

Of course, it can be argued that the releasing process of capital and human desires obviously generates social split, environmental damage, and even spiritual decay, and may result in self-destruction of a society. But without experiencing all these, any major economy in the human history can not realize its industrialization, marketization and modernization, nor can they create an incredible miracle.

During his stay in Gujarat, Modi used to work with a strong will so as to attract foreign capitals to stimulate local employment, and also tried the “cause of capital and labor liberation” on a small scale, of which some moves even become a legend enthusiastically discussed by the Indian media and industry today. Today seven months have passed after his inauguration as Prime Minister. There is no longer such a legend occurring to Modi. Perhaps because of shouldering heavy tasks, Modi consciously or voluntarily becomes very cautious, or may encounter far more fetters and shackles at the power center than in a remote local place, making it more difficult to carry out drastic reforms. However, in any case, one should not overestimate the impact of Modi myth on the ancient Indian social system, at least some data or situations in a few months or a year can not be used to predict the development trends for the next ten years or even a longer time.

2.5 China’s Thoughts on Coping with the Relations with India

In practical effect, there is also a gap between the external conducts and the practical effect of India’s assertive diplomacy. India does not have the national strength in line with the international status alleged by it, and lacks the capacity to follow up and reach the desired effect while advancing its foreign policy goals. India is neither at a dominant position under the current international system nor an order maker declared by itself in the Indian Ocean region. The regional cooperation mechanism proposed by India has little impact, where there exist many variables in its economic development prospects. In terms of diplomatic practice, India remains a follower rather than a maker of the international order. India’s actual international status is not enhanced due to Modi coming to power; It’s India’s confidence and part of the Western countries’ expectations for India that are raised. While handling the relations with India, China must take into account India’s long-term development possibility, as well as structural factors that determine its direction, instead of its short-term stunning performance, especially not the so-called assertive message conveyed by India to the rest of the world.

1. The Chinese side should recognize the Modi-led government’s real intentions and the basis for negotiation on the Sino-Indian border issues, and carefully cope with the border issues on this basis. China should be more careful in expressing its stance of resolving the border issues as soon as possible.

Sino-Indian border issues are so complex that they cannot be solved in the short term. In previous stance, China has always focused on good faith in solving them as soon as possible, but has also affirmed the difficulty of solving the problem. This stance is balanced and rational. China should come to know that the Indian media are accustomed to quote a remark out of its context, often only highlighting that the Chinese have committed themselves to tackling this problem as soon as possible, while avoiding China's stress on the difficulty in solving them. This action has left an impression on the Indian people that Chinese is eager to solve the issues. The reality of the difficulty in achieving a major breakthrough regarding the India-China border issues in the near future, enables India to accuse China of lacking sincerity in improving the Sino-Indian relations and solving the historical issues. In this regard, China should firmly reiterate its stance, where it should first emphasize the complexity of the border issues and then moderately express the willingness to promote cooperation with India in solving the issues.

On the territorial issues, China should categorically deny the existence of the so-called "East-Exchange for-West" plan. In fact, the Chinese government has never formally made to India this proposal, and the so-called "East-Exchange for-West"-based "package program" is a very sloppy and rough summary for China's stance of solving the bilateral border issues in 1960, which has a huge difference from the facts. China's proposition should be that disputed Sino-Indian border issues should be coped with in sections or on a case-by-case basis. For example, if the current issue is on the eastern section, then the bilateral talk will focus on the eastern section; where there is a dispute, the bilateral negotiation will center on such dispute, regardless of all other disputes or issues.

China should also strengthen its military and economic activities in the disputed border areas in a timely and appropriate way, to resist and adequately fight back the infringement of India on the zone under the actual control of China. India's infringement action has not ended since the 1962 border war, and currently still continues in some areas, such as Pulan and Zanda Counties in the Ngari Prefecture of Tibet Autonomous Region. And sometimes local herders reported that the Indian garrisons moved forward. India's small move must not be taken lightly, or more importantly can not be left alone. If we can not take drastic measures to repel the Indian Army, we will fall into a passive position in the negotiations on the bilateral control lines in the border areas in the future; Furthermore, Chinese forbearance will only make India become more aggravated because India always thinks that it has certain advantages over China on the bilateral territorial issues. As a result, China's action will not only make India continue to erode China's actually controlled territory, but will also strengthen India's profit-seeking intentions by hyping border issues whenever the two sides hold high-level contacts, thus adding to some difficulty in bringing the Sino-Indian border disputes under control. China should really adhere to the principle of "making no trouble and being not afraid of trouble" and strengthen

its military presence in the forefront areas, to form an effective deterrent for India's attempts. It should be noted that recurrent border confrontations can also lower the public concern, which may do no harm to maintaining the basic stability of the Sino-Indian relations on the whole.

China should also stick to its stance of separating its efforts to have India participate in "Belt and Road" from solving the bilateral border issue, thus avoiding India from daydreaming. In terms of India's participation in the "Belt and Road" strategy, China must take a realistic attitude by considering the potential benefits brought by India's participation and understanding India's skeptical and profit-seeking mentality, and by stressing more openness and equality of the "Belt and Road" strategy, and talking less about the so-called Indian special strategic value to "Belt and Road". Such value may exist, but China should come to realize that the more China talks about this aspect, the stronger mindset India will have for regarding themselves as a "valuable commodity" which can be sold at a good price. As a result, China is less likely to get the support of India. China should lay clear emphasis on the economic cooperation nature of the "Belt and Road" strategy and reject any proposition of connecting the territorial political and security issues to "Belt and Road".

2. China should remain practical and realistic in having Indian's participation in "Belt and Road", and Indian's participation is especially not used as the criteria to judge the success of "Belt and Road". As for "Belt and Road", India is actually only faced with three options: the first is to stay out of it by neither participating in it nor going against it; the second is to actively participate, thus attracting Chinese capitals to mainly flow into India; the third is not only refuse to participate, but also try to undermine the cooperation between China and the medium and small countries in the Indian Ocean region.

From a rational point of view, India should take the second option. First, India needn't worry about the ports constructed by China in India, which will pose no threat to the national security of India. India, as a country with nuclear weapons and aircraft carriers, should not have such minimum confidence. And if India endeavors to attract Chinese capitals, India's huge market potential will obviously provide more generous returns- more than the aggregation of Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh and Pakistan. India can entirely reach it to make India become a major partner of Chinese capital in South Asia. As a result, the central role of India in the Indian Ocean region will be further strengthened so that its right to speak to China will be further enhanced.

In this option, the two countries really need each other, but they also need to achieve win-win situation on the implementation of "Belt and Road". In fact, this is a reason for which a lot of optimist scholars in China and India believe that China needs India. However, this need shall be mutual, which will not lead to the introduction of the proposal that "China should strive for India to participate in "Belt and Road". For this reason, even if China does not go for India, India should also participate driven by its own economic interest. Therefore China's so-called fight for India's participation is simply superfluous.

If India shows no interest in China's proposal, it neither participates in it nor goes against it. For China, it is not a great loss. China will lose nothing but its market access privilege to some extent. The "privileges" for which China can certainly go for, but such pursuits must be in the scope of the market economic rules and laws. Excessive cooperative interests given to India is not allowed, as unfair distribution of the interests could lead to failure of the cooperation due to inconformity with the market law. This could also harm the relations between China and India. Or China must pay more subsidies to maintain it. But does such maintenance make sense?

In fact, people are most worried that India takes the third option in attempts to block the "Maritime Silk Road" strategy for their skeptical attitudes towards China. Although this was refuted by the outcome of Chinese President meeting with the Indian Prime Minister in 2014, its theoretical and realistic possibility still can not be ruled out. If this unfortunate situation happens, China should continue its efforts to clarify its strategy and policy intentions to "enhance the mutual trust", but at the same time, should China be committed to convincing India through all efforts to let India abandon its confrontational strategic choice, and even participate in the "Belt and Road" strategy?

In fact, China should make opposite choices or decisions. First, if according to India the "Belt and Road" is defined as the containment of India—as Indian media has always indicated, then China is unable to persuade India and only time will tell that China has no malicious intention, which is established on the premise that "Belt and Road" can be achieved in a staged way and can also bring some tangible and perceivable benefits to the Indian Ocean countries. If because of its worry about India's obstruction, China slows down the participation of other countries in the construction projects, or even stubbornly regards the Indian involvement as a precondition, then the "Belt and Road" will surely end in failure and there will be no hope for the "Belt and Road" to be proved by time.

Secondly, even if India is to thwart the construction of "Belt and Road", does India have the capacity to do so? In essence, the "Belt and Road" is an economic cooperation project, and in this respect there is nothing comparable between India and China. If India is to obstruct China, there is only military and diplomatic means available for India, but the result is not to draw closer the relations between India and neighboring countries, but instead to make these countries move farther from India. In this way India will have to urgently seek some powers outside the Indian Ocean region to involve in the Indian Ocean economic and even security order, which will in turn strengthen China's position in the region. So what China should do is just to take a more positive attitude as a builder to resist the regional development obstructer, rather than surrendering to the obstructer.

Ultimately, if the "Belt and Road" has a firm foothold in the Indian Ocean region, it's just a matter of time for India to participate; if not, it will make no sense whether India participates in it or not. Thus, the strive to have India participate in the "Belt and Road" could only be China's stance and even an

appeal, which however can not become China's policy goal in any case, neither should it become the pre-condition of the so-called success of the "Belt and Road". In other words, it is the worst of all policies to strive for the purpose of striving.

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