

An Alternative Understanding of China-India Relations: the Distrust-Building between China and India



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Abstract

China and India have laboured to improve bilateral relations for years. Several CBMs agreements were signed to maintain peace and tranquillity along the disputed border. High level visits have been exchanged between the two countries frequently while various dialogue mechanisms have been established to deal the issues of mutual concerns. More recently, the two countries decided to mark the 60th anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence (*Panchsheel*) in 2014 by designating it as the "Year of Friendly Exchanges". But China and India have failed to evolve an effective model of friendly coexistence, and the relationship between China and India are still characterised by suspicion and distrust. Some pundits may attribute the uneasy relations to the long-standing disputes such as the boundary problem and the Tibet issue. In fact, it is not uncommon to find disputes between the states. But it appears that China and India suffer a huge distrust which should not be seen as a normal phenomenon. Whiling working to improve relations, the presentation argues, there remains a distrust-building between the two Asian giants. China's assertiveness and reluctance to share India's concerns and India's exaggerated threat perception of China are the drivers of the process. Undoing the process of distrust building, therefore, is necessitated for transforming China-India relations.



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