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## Between 'China Threat Theory' and 'Chindia': Chinese Responses to India's Military Modernization

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Since India's nuclear tests in 1974 and 1998 and China's 1989 Tiananmen Square incident, the two countries have faced the flow and ebb of western sanctions. Under these controls, China and India's initial development occurred largely within a military supply vacuum that resulted in an early dependence on Russian, and later Israeli cooperation, increasingly supplemented and in some cases replaced by domestic production. In 2000, however, this pattern began to undertake a marked shift.

It was during this year that then US President Bill Clinton made the first visit by a sitting US president to the subcontinent since that of Jimmy Carter in 1978. This momentous occasion set analysts talking about the potential lifting of United States sanctions against India. Within a year, and with the lifting of sanctions, the US–India strategic partnership became a reality. In 2001, the United States conducted a large-scale removal of Indian companies from the US Entity List and in 2005 came the announcement of US–India intent to engage in civil nuclear cooperation.

This article explores the impact of these two once similar and increasingly divergent military modernization and procurement trajectories. Given that India has become the primary beneficiary of this shift, this article will quantitatively and qualitatively measure changing Chinese perceptions of India's forces in the wake of sanctions lifting on the part of the West and the military procurement imbalance it left behind.

### Chinese Perceptual Shifts toward India

Under the disparity induced by the US and EU lifting of sanctions on India and their arms ban that remains in place on China, perceptions, particularly in China, are undergoing a range of both perceptible and imperceptible

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shifts. This is not necessarily an issue of causation, but rather of correlation. The lifting of sanctions has triggered an inundation of global military supply offers and US competitive bidding. Combined with a comprehensive political warming in the United States to the issue of high-technology cooperation with India, Sino-Indian relations and interaction continue their rise.

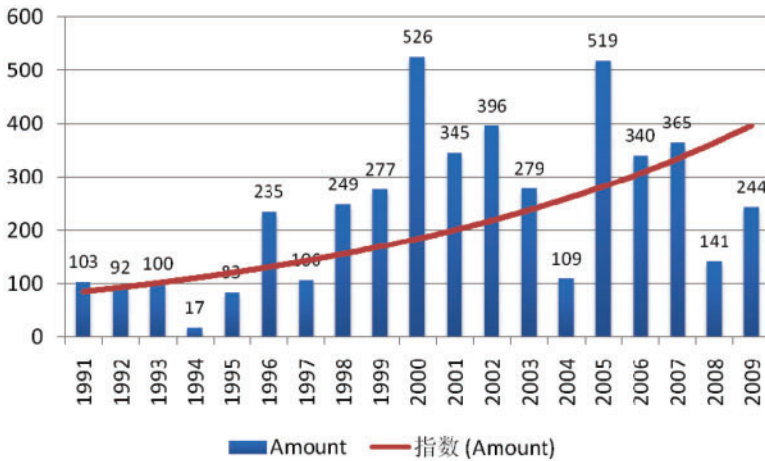
These shifts could not be further from the case with regards to US relations with China, where the arms ban remains in place, and concerns over China's recent military advances have led to discussion in the United States of re-instituting previously cut weapons programs.<sup>1</sup> Hence, it is not surprising that throughout discussions conducted within China,<sup>2</sup> China's strategic, technical, and academic analysts are displaying varying degrees of response to these changes in the international system. A qualitative review of these perceptions shows that China is paying growing attention to India's military modernization. A quantitative review of military and strategic sources makes this trend even more apparent.

Figure 1 shows a clear upward trend line.<sup>3</sup> Even taking into account fluctuations and margins of error, the spike in 2000 (the year of Clinton's visit) and 2005 (the year of the announcement of intended US-India civil nuclear cooperation and the New Framework for the US-India Defense Relationship) is pronounced. And although the figure also reflects a small spike in 1998 and 1999 following India's nuclear tests, this showing is far less stark. This challenges the conventional wisdom that these tests, and former Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's letter to Washington citing China as a factor, have been the primary drivers of the spike in attention towards India.

<sup>1</sup> Elisabeth Bumiller, 'U.S. Will Counter Chinese Arms Buildup', *New York Times*, January 8, 2011, [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/09/world/asia/09military.html?\\_r=1&hpw](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/09/world/asia/09military.html?_r=1&hpw) (accessed on January 15, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Discussions in China were conducted with experts at the Academy of Military Sciences, National Defense University, People's Liberation Army and People's Liberation Navy, China Atomic Energy Institute, Northwest Nuclear Tech Institute, Beijing Institute of Physical Engineering and Computational Mathematics, National Defense Science and Technology University, China's Nuclear Engineering Institute, China's Physical Engineering Institute, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, China Reform Forum, Tsinghua University, Beijing University, China South Asia Studies Forum, Nanjing University, China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, Dalian Foreign Language University, Henan Teachers University, Sichuan University, Yunnan University, Fudan University, Shanghai Institute of International Studies, Hunan Teachers University, Shandong University, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Renmin University, and Tongji University. The authors of open publications are quoted by name, but those experts participating in closed conferences and discussions remain anonymous.

<sup>3</sup> Because other factors, such as thicker journals, could induce a trend-line rise, the author also conducted a follow-up study on the length of journals used as primary sources. In doing so, she found that although these journals did become thicker, this was due to the addition of full-page color photos and features such as letters to the editor rather than to an increase in actual contents. In fact, from 2002, journals such as *Modern Weaponry* began including more than eight additional pages of photos.



**Fig. 1** Number of References to India's Military Modernization in Chinese Journals (1991–2009).

Source: *Bingqi zhishi* (Ordnance Knowledge); *Xiandai bingqi* (Modern Weaponry); *Junshi jianshe* (Military Building); *Junshi jishu* (Military Technology); *Binggong keji* (Ordnance Industry Science and Technology); *Junshi lilun yanjiu* (Military Theory Study); *Shijie junshi* (World Military Affairs); *Xiandai junshi* (Modern Military); *Bingqi* (Ordnance); *Hangkong bingqi* (Aviation Weaponry); *Jianchuan zhishi* (Naval and Merchant Ships); *Xiandai jianchuan* (Modern Ships Magazine); *Zhongguo hangtian* (Aerospace China); *Binggong keji* (Weapons Engineering Technology); *Junshi jishu* (Military Technology); *Daodan yu hangtian yunzai jishu* (Missiles and Space Vehicles); *Hangtian* (Space); *Hangtian dianzi duikang* (Aerospace Electronic Countermeasures); *Hangtianqi gongcheng* (Spacecraft Engineering); *Guti huojian jishu* (Solid Rocket Technology); *Feihang daodan* (Aerodynamic Missile Journal); *Guoji hangkong* (International Aviation); *Hangkong zhishi* (Aviation Knowledge); *Hangkong kexue jishu* (Aerospace Science and Technology); *Hangkong yu hangtian* (Air and Space); *Hangkong jingmi zhizao jishu* (Aviation Precision Manufacturing Technology); *Hangkong jingmi jishu yu gongcheng* (Aviation Precision Technology and Engineering); *Hangkong ceshi jishu* (Aviation Test Technology); *Hangkong dongli xuebao* (Aerospace Propulsion Journal); *Hangkong jisuan jishu* (Aeronautical Computing Technology); *Hangkong jice jishu* (Aviation Measurement Technology); *Jianchuan dianzi duikang* (Maritime Electronic Countermeasures); *Tanke zhuangjia cheliang* (Tanks and Armored Vehicles); *Bingqi keji yu gongcheng* (Weapons Technology and Engineering); *Dangdai yatai* (Journal of Contemporary Asia-Pacific Studies); *Guoji zhengzhi kexue* (International Political Science); *Zhongguo waijiao* (China's Diplomacy); *Yafei zongheng* (Asia and Africa Review); *Guoji luntan* (International Forum); *Xiandai guoji guanxi* (Contemporary International Relations); *Junbei kongzhi yu anquan* (Arms Control and Security); *Guoji zhanlue yanjiu* (International Strategic Studies); *Nanya yanjiu* (South Asian Studies); *Nanya yanjiu likan* (South Asian Studies Quarterly), 1991–2009.

One arms control expert at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) points out that this waxing attention can be easily explained. He argues that in 2000, China's focus on all countries intensified, thereby diminishing the significance of heightened interest in India. While this may be true to an extent, a review of China's journals reveals an early and pronounced interest in a specific number of countries, in particular Japan, the United States, and Russia. Interest accorded to India, while of a lower level than that directed towards these three countries, has nonetheless undergone a marked rise. The multi-valence of China's focus might have expanded in the years following 2000, but this makes its concentration on India no less significant.

Moreover, other CASS experts argue that, from 2000 onward, China not only intensified its attention towards India, but also began to accord it greater significance. One expert suggests that from that date there were fewer dismissive or negative articles within the Chinese media and government statements on India. He contended that China began making an apparently concerted effort within the new century to focus on positive ties.

Tsinghua University Professor Yan Xuetong during an open lecture also observed that although in the past China had been dismissive of India and unwilling to accord it 'great power status', this attitude changed after the 2005 announcement of intended US–India civil nuclear cooperation. Its rhetorical manifestation came with Hu Jintao's 2006 trip to India, when he used for the first time the term 'great power' to refer to India.

India's ascent to a higher plane in terms of rhetoric is also reflected in the numbers of analysts working on South Asia. When speaking with Chinese experts on the United States from various research think tanks throughout Beijing, at least four to five revealed that they were shifting their specialization towards India. In fact, one even received a phone call during our conversation on an upcoming research visit to the subcontinent.<sup>4</sup> This anecdote uncovers just a hint of the larger shift within China of attention towards India.<sup>5</sup> A cache of textual evidence reveals similar trends.

For example, one article the author was unable to open due to its classification within the Tsinghua University electronic database is by People's

<sup>4</sup> Increasingly stringent Indian visa requirements threaten this trend, with a number of younger Chinese analysts expressing frustration and more established experts discussing shifting their focus to other regions in their interactions with the author.

<sup>5</sup> Chen Guangwen, 'Yinduyang yao lai xin de bazhu' ('A New Hegemon is Coming to the Indian Ocean'), *Jianchuan zhishi* (*Naval and Merchant Ships*), Issue 6 (2009), pp. 49–55; Dong Shihong, 'Yindu ye gao disidai zhandouji! —Fang Xibei gongye daxue feiji zongti sheji zhuanjia wang zhengping jiaoshou' ('India is also Pursuing a Fourth Generation Fighter! Interview with Northwestern Polytechnic University Aircraft Design Expert Professor Wang Zhengping'), *Bingong keji* (*Ordnance Industry Science Technology*), Issue 5 (2009), pp. 7–15.

Liberation Army's Institute of International Relations analyst Li Zhimin. The abstract states:

In the past few years, the pace of development of India's defense technology power has increased, the national defense structure is improving daily, the level of weapons equipment modernization and domestic production is greatly enhanced. From its pronounced strategic position, it has maintained high investment, with attention paid to personnel training and foreign cooperation and exchange; optimal allocation of resources to promote military and civilian integration; the development of key technology projects; enhancement of R&D capabilities, and accelerated analysis of the impetus behind localization of the process of five aspects of Indian national defense technological power.<sup>6</sup>

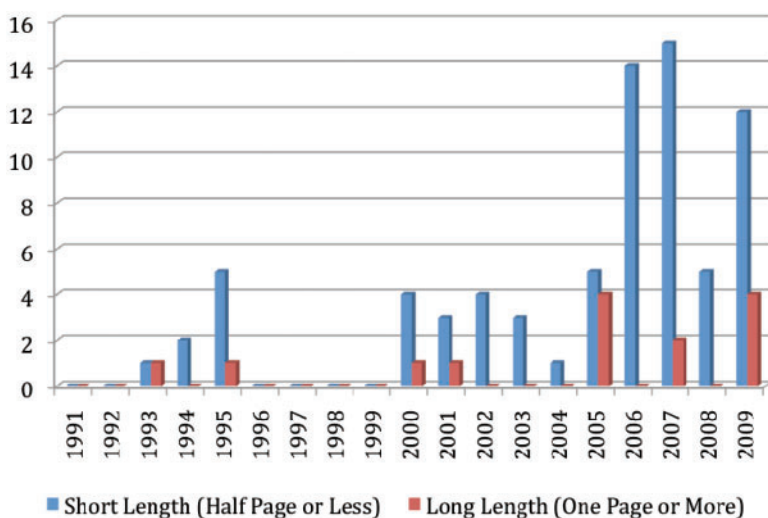
This is not an isolated analysis. It moreover reflects the comprehensive nature of Chinese awareness of India's civil-military integration and investments in both weapons procurement and domestic development. The changes visible through both interviews and journals within China illustrate both an increase in attention and a deepening of analysis. India is not the largest security concern for China, but its impact on China's interests in Asia is expanding. The following four points reflect the ways in which India is starting to occupy a new position in Chinese strategic conceptions:

(1) Chinese analysts are beginning to write more numerous and lengthier articles on India's military modernization. Figure 2 reflects this trend. Although statistics on the longer articles are erratic, there is nevertheless an expansion, particularly in 2005 and 2009. The two styles of articles are also significant. Long articles give more space to in-depth analyses; short articles report on current Indian military advances. The latter could simply reflect a rise in Indian military modernization activities, but they could just as easily demonstrate intensified Chinese interest. Both are mutually reinforcing phenomena.

Regardless of whether or not long or short articles dominate this growing discussion, both have significant implications for China and India's long-term military balance. As one Chinese expert on India at Beijing University notes, India's procurement and military modernization are unlikely to challenge China in the short term. However, if this ability to import higher technology continues, the long term is likely to favor India over China.

Although lengthy articles are fewer than shorter ones, both demonstrate an upswing in focus. As sanction lifting is a physical manifestation of US–Indian rapprochement, the increase in number of longer articles from 2000 to 2003 and 2005 to 2009 also illustrates a possible correlation with the shifts in sanctions behavior earlier discussed. A content survey also reveals that

<sup>6</sup> Li Zhimin, 'Guanyu Yindu guofang keji liliang pansheng de dongyin zhouyi' ('Discussion on Motivation Behind Indian Defense Scientific and Technological Strength'), *Keji qingbao kaifa yu jingji* (Science and Technology Information Development and Economy), Issue 3 (2009), pp. 13–7.



**Fig. 2** Lengths of Articles in Chinese Journals Referring to India's Military Modernization (1991–2009).

Source: *Bingqi zhishi* (Ordnance Knowledge); *Xiandai bingqi* (Modern Weaponry); *Junshi jianshe* (Military Building); *Junshi jishu* (Military Technology); *Binggong keji* (Ordnance Industry Science and Technology); *Junshi lilun yanjiu* (Military Theory Study); *Shijie junshi* (World Military Affairs); *Xiandai junshi* (Modern Military); *Bingqi* (Ordnance); *Hangkong bingqi* (Aviation Weaponry); *Jianchuan zhishi* (Naval and Merchant Ships); *Xiandai jianchuan* (Modern Ships Magazine); *Zhongguo hangtian* (Aerospace China); *Binggong keji* (Weapons Engineering Technology); *Junshi jishu* (Military Technology); *Daodan yu hangtian yunzai jishu* (Missiles and Space Vehicles); *Hangtian* (Space); *Hangtian dianzi duikang* (Aerospace Electronic Countermeasures); *Hangtianqi gongcheng* (Spacecraft Engineering); *Guti huojian jishu* (Solid Rocket Technology); *Feihang daodan* (Aerodynamic Missile Journal); *Guoji hangkong* (International Aviation); *Hangkong zhishi* (Aviation Knowledge); *Hangkong kexue jishu* (Aerospace Science and Technology); *Hangkong yu hangtian* (Air and Space); *Hangkong jingmi zhizao jishu* (Aviation Precision Manufacturing Technology); *Hangkong jingmi jishu yu gongcheng* (Aviation Precision Technology and Engineering); *Hangkong ceshi jishu* (Aviation Test Technology); *Hangkong dongli xuebao* (Aerospace Propulsion Journal); *Hangkong jisuan jishu* (Aeronautical Computing Technology); *Hangkong jice jishu* (Aviation Measurement Technology); *Jianchuan dianzi duikang* (Maritime Electronic Countermeasures); *Tanke zhuangjia cheliang* (Tanks and Armored Vehicles); *Bingqi keji yu gongcheng* (Weapons Technology and Engineering); *Dangdai yatai* (Journal of Contemporary Asia-Pacific Studies); *Guoji zhengzhi kexue* (International Political Science); *Zhongguo waijiao* (China's Diplomacy); *Yafei zongheng* (Asia and Africa Review); *Guoji luntan* (International Forum); *Xiandai guoji guanxi* (Contemporary International Relations); *Junbei kongzhi yu anquan* (Arms Control and Security); *Guoji zhanlue yanjiu* (International Strategic Studies); *Nanya yanjiu* (South Asian Studies); *Nanya yanjiu likan* (South Asian Studies Quarterly), 1991–2009.



prior to 2000, Chinese strategic journals primarily featured lists of Indian military equipment but with limited comment. From 2000 and 2001, articles also began to explore the utility and capabilities of these systems.

For example, a 2001 article in the journal *Xiandai Bingqi* (*Modern Weaponry*) presents a marked change from previous articles by including, along with the brief list of India's missile developments, analysis of the developmental trends and strategic capabilities of these systems.<sup>7</sup> Another article in *Bingqi Zhishi* (*Ordnance Knowledge*) exhibits a similar trend in discussing how India's pursuit of military capabilities has an impact on regional stability and thereby China's interests.<sup>8</sup>

In spite of the intensified attention towards India as revealed in Figures 1 and 2, these graphs show a falling-off around 2008. Before interpreting this as a significant trend, there are several points worth emphasizing. First, the author faced limitations in the availability of print periodicals dating to 2008.<sup>9</sup> Second, when US President Barack Obama entered office, his initial focus on India was perceived in India and China as less committed than that of his predecessor, former US President George W. Bush. For example, Obama's first trip to Asia featured China, but not India. Given this and other trends, discussion of the level and sustainability of US commitment to India naturally ensued within India.

Had it not been for the strong support Obama showed through his November 2010 visit to India, this initial weakening of US rigor in maintaining the US–India strategic partnership might otherwise have had a lingering spin-off effect on China. Engagement on high technology trade and November 2010 announcement of US intended removal of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), (responsible for India's civilian space program), Bharat Dynamics Ltd (involved in the development and manufacture of India's ballistic missile defense systems), and four subsidiaries of the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO), (the main Indian government agency responsible for developing weapons systems) from the US Entity List,<sup>10</sup> solidified the US connection to India's strategic development and China's interest in the path India will take.

(2) Chinese analysts display another growing trend, namely a tendency towards de-hyphenation of Pakistan and India. These two countries still

<sup>7</sup> Li Xiangyang, 'Yindu daodan fazhan zongshu' ('Summary of India's Missile Development'), *Xiandai junshi* (*Modern Weaponry*), Issue 8 (2001), pp. 23–6; Cheng Bing, 'Liushen yindu "dadi"' ('Watch Out for India's Prithvi'), *Bingqi zhishi* (*Ordnance Knowledge*), Issue 3 (1994), p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> Zhou Wei, 'AAD yu PAD: Yindu zizhu daodan fangyu xitong' ('AAD and PAD: India's Independent Missile Defense System'), *Bingqi zhishi* (*Ordnance Knowledge*), Issue 5 (2009), pp. 66–8.

<sup>9</sup> A portion of journals dated to 2008 was undergoing binding at the Tsinghua library during the period of research.

<sup>10</sup> Sandeep Dikshit, 'India's Space-related Entities to be Removed from U.S. List', *The Hindu*, November 7, 2010, <http://hindu.com/2010/11/07/stories/2010110758681100.htm> (accessed on January 9, 2011).

receive parallel degrees of attention, but the majority of articles discuss either one or the other. India's military modernization, however, is no longer couched solely within the India–Pakistan dynamic. For example, Vice Director of the Shandong Province branch of CASS, Han Mingqing, writes:

India has greatly increased its military strength. India's famous defense experts have said that: India will become the centre of the various parts of Asia. Whether the Middle East, Central Asia or Southeast Asia or China, in the future they will all rely on India economically, politically or for defense purposes. So far, India has remained outside the 'Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty', [and] 'Missile Technology Control Regime', and has used its freedom from the limitations of any international treaty to vigorously promote its military. First, through building new aircraft carrier battle groups, and constantly improving the ability of offshore operations, India is now the only post-World War II Asian country to possess two aircraft carriers. With the increase of its national strength, India has begun to actively implement the 'new strategic concept of the sea'. Second, through comprehensive building of a strategic missile force, it is developing a three-dimensional low-altitude combat system. Third, through expanding its outreach strategy, in Central Asia, Mongolia and the east coast of Africa, it is establishing military bases, with a land-based, space-based 'strategic triad' of nuclear forces.<sup>11</sup>

This analysis is illustrative of the comprehensive nature of this new generation of articles on India within China. It is broad in its coverage of India's global impact, but Pakistan is not mentioned even once. India's strategic footprint is no longer a topic of interest or concern for just one neighbor. Han continues:

At present, India has set up a relatively complete national defense research and military industrial base that prioritizes the military, along with military and civilian integration. Missile manufacturing technology is gradually improving, with the ability to manufacture nuclear bombs and nuclear submarines, and near capability of launching intercontinental ballistic missiles for a country that already possesses nuclear weapons. Extremely large-scale Indian military procurement serves as a major characteristic of India's military equipment expansion.<sup>12</sup>

This quote delineates the central role that both domestic production and international procurement will play in India's defense modernization. The author, moreover, implies the importance of India's civil and military development feeding off of one another. This interplay is integral to what one Ministry of External Affairs Diplomat in India describes as the need for India to follow China's example in 'going high-tech'.<sup>13</sup> But it also throws

<sup>11</sup> Han Mingqing, 'Yindu de fazhan guiji yu jingyan jieti' ('Analysis of India's Development Path and Experience'), *Dangdai yatai* (*Journal of Contemporary Asia-Pacific*), Issue 3 (2007), pp. 34–5.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Ms Purushottam is currently a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses in Delhi. Smita Purushottam, 'Smita Purushottam: Lessons from



into question the argument that Indian officials and scientists used to bolster US–India civil nuclear and space cooperation, namely that India will be capable of, albeit much less willing, to set up a firewall or barrier between its civil and military pursuits.

(3) Chinese analysts have also begun to focus on specific details of Indian military equipment and systems, and to compare Chinese and Indian developments. In 2001, Professor Xia Liping of Tongji University writes that India, ‘is preparing for renovations of its aircraft carrier, purchasing from Russia the refurbished Kiev class Admiral Gorshkov aircraft carrier, and is reconstructing a 20,000-ton aircraft carrier that can carry 20 fighter aircraft, which would allow India’s navy to reach three aircraft carriers’.<sup>14</sup> Professor Xia follows this assessment with a discussion of the military application of such strategic shifts in Indian Ocean control.

When discussing matters concerning the Indian Ocean, and in particular sea lines of communication, Chinese analysts’ conception of how India and China’s military compares is also more pronounced. For example, a 2005 article in *Jianchuan zhishi* (*Naval and Merchant Ships*) explores China’s new generation of missile destroyers and compares China’s Navy with India’s advances, going on to discuss in parallel both India and Taiwan’s development of destroyers. The article states:

When assessing all of the factors, India’s Talwar frigate is relatively complete and balanced when compared to China’s new frigate in terms of anti-submarine, anti-ship and air defense capabilities. Difficulties faced in terms of use and maintenance are relatively few. However, Taiwan’s Kang Ding class, despite its more prominent anti-submarine performance, does not exhibit ideal performance in anti-ship and air defense, and particularly in air-defense capabilities has significant deficiencies.<sup>15</sup>

These analyses illustrate that Chinese analysts can no longer ignore the impact of India’s military capabilities on China’s security. Among articles published in military and strategic journals are a number that discuss systems capable of striking within China’s territorial interests and shipping lanes.

China Ongoing High-tech’, *Business Standard*, November 28, 2010, <http://www.business-standard.com/india/news/smita-purushottam-lessonschinagoing-high-tech/416331/> (accessed on November 30, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> When the author spoke at the National Maritime Foundation in New Delhi, one Indian naval officer expressed surprise at such assessments and claims that India could achieve, much less already possess, three operationally deployed aircraft carriers. This demonstrates the gap between perception and reality. Xia Liping, ‘Dangqian yatai diqu haijun fazhan de tedian he haijun junkong de qianjing’ (‘Characteristics and Prospects of Naval Arms Control in the Current Asia-Pacific Region’) *Dangdai yatai* (*Journal of Contemporary Asia-Pacific*), Issue 2 (2001), p. 28.

<sup>15</sup> Yin He, ‘“Kang ding” ji he “taerwaer” ji vs zhongguo xin yidai daodan huweijian’ (‘“Kang Ding” and “Talwar” vs China’s New Generation of Guided Missile Frigates’), *Jianchuan zhishi* (*Naval and Merchant Ships*), Issue 3 (2005), pp. 31–40.

In setting out a dual-tiered comparison of both India and Taiwan's frigates with those of China, the analyst Yin He makes it clear that India is becoming more central among the growing list of factors that shape China's core national interests, territorial integrity, and regional geopolitics. Among the sources researched, Yin's was the only article to make the India and Taiwan connection. Other discussions of the strategic implications of India's cooperation with other states, such as the United States and Japan, convey a strong interest in the implications of India's participation in multilateral military interaction in China's vicinity.

(4) Chinese analysts also increasingly mention India in articles on various aspects of China's military modernization. Although they have not reached the level of their Indian counterparts of embedding their neighbor in the country's security strategy and calculations, a growing number of analyses on China's military trajectory mention India.

For example, an article in the journal *Jianchuan zhishi* (*Naval and Merchant Ships*), when assessing China's 60 years of reform of its Navy, states,

India's first domestic aircraft carrier has already laid its keel, and it continues to actively pursue nuclear submarine technology. With the 60th anniversary of the founding of its Navy, China's comprehensive national strength, international security environment has changed dramatically. The times have required us to use a new perspective, from transformation of the military industrial base and the surrounding security situation, among other aspects, to re-examine the course of development of the Chinese Navy to facilitate its future prospects.<sup>16</sup>

A number of other articles discuss strategic relations among India, Japan, and the United States and their impact on China's nuclear deterrent force. These articles are noteworthy in that they illustrate both the categorization of India in the same camp as the United States and Japan, as well as the aforementioned process of embedding of India in articles about China's military modernization. Among these, 'Zhongguo haijun 60 nian yu junshi biange' ('The Chinese Navy's 60 Years and Military Reforms') states, 'Although US missile defense cooperation serves as a precursor to military cooperation, Japan and India continue to be instigated by the United States, with China as the common enemy, and the carrying out of military cooperation to build a paramilitary alliance.'<sup>17</sup> Another article entitled 'Zhongguo yinggai fazhan haiji he liliang' ('China Should Develop Nuclear Force Naval Bases') contends 'The East Sea and South Sea are important regions of

<sup>16</sup> Bai Ma, 'Zhongguo haijun 60 nian yu junshi biange' ('The Chinese Navy's 60 Years and Military Reforms'), *Jianchuan zhishi* (*Naval and Merchant Ships*), Issue 8 (2009), p. 24.

<sup>17</sup> 'Zhongguo daodan hewuqi ku' ('China's Nuclear Missile Arsenal'), *Jianchuan zhishi* (*Naval and Merchant Ships*), Issue 4 (2009), p. 21.

nuclear force naval bases, with Japan and India's missile defense destined to encircle the Pacific Ocean and Indian Ocean'.<sup>18</sup>

These quotes are not isolated and demonstrate that not all sources in China are measured or instrumental in their assessments of India.<sup>19</sup> Although these journals cater to a varied circle of analysts and readers, some more hawkish than others, they are nonetheless available to any would-be reader in China. The broader dissemination of these journals shows that a segment of strategic-minded analysts in China are focused on India's military modernization. Furthermore, this expansion has become an extenuation of the strategic relationship between India and the United States, and the latter's strategy when it comes to China.

## Chinese Views on India's Military Divisions

India's high-technology cooperation, conventional weapons imports, space and nuclear exchange, military exercises and training with the West all exacerbate the aforementioned underlying strategic thinking in China vis-à-vis India. The specificity of such analyses, particularly with regards to India's Navy, demonstrates what some might even argue is a nascent 'threat perception' regarding India's military modernization and cooperation with countries like the United States. To better understand how theories can be distinguished from threats, the author will make a deeper examination of certain specifics of Chinese attention paid to Indian military systems.

## Chinese Perceptions of India's Army

India's Army has long been beneficiary to the largest portion of India's defense expenditure.<sup>20</sup> In Chinese analyses, however, India's Army and the border issue occupy nowhere near the level of attention they do within India. Heightened interest in this arena generally surrounds a specific act, such as the increased troop and Su-30 MKI fighter deployments that India announced in 2009. But this attention dissipates rather than sustains its focus, in contrast to that within India on China and its border incursions. The author found that Chinese analysts generally maintain the view that China's Army will always be a step ahead.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Hong Hai, 'Zhongguo yinggai fazhan haiji he lilian' ('China Should Develop Nuclear Force Naval Bases'), *Jianchuan zhishi* (*Naval and Merchant Ships*), Issue 4 (2009), pp. 24–6.

<sup>19</sup> Zhou Guang, 'Mei yin zouxiang "junshi tongmeng"'? ('Are the United States and India Headed towards an Alliance'), *Xiandai junshi* (*Modern Weaponry*), Issue 8 (2009), pp. 24–6.

<sup>20</sup> Defence Accounts Department, Government of India, <http://cgda.nic.in>.

<sup>21</sup> When it comes to India's achievements in the Navy and Air Force (as discussed below in sections 'Chinese Perceptions of India's Navy' and 'Chinese Perceptions of India's Air Force'), this attitude shifts.

**Table 1** Number of References to India’s Army Systems in Chinese Journals (1991–2009)

Strategic journals		Scientific journals		Academic journals	
SAM System	89	Adv Light Helicopter	14	Mil Equip/Tech	17
Arjun Tank	57	Arjun Tank	14	Defense Budget	6
Trishul	41	Trishul	10	T-90 Tank	2
T-72 Tank	40	BMP I-III	8	Multi Light Transport	2
Adv Light Helicopter	36	T-90S Tank	8	C4ISR	1
Viper Anti-Tank	35	S-300 Missile	7	Transport Plane	1
T-90 Tank	25	Viper Anti-Tank	6	SAM System	1
BMP I-III	15	Patriot Missile Defense	5	Mi-17 Helicopter	1
Nishant UAV	11	Milan Anti-Tank	4	Precision Machinery	1
Patriot Missile Defense	11	Arrow Missile Defense	3	Supercomputers	1

Source: *Bingqi zhishi* (Ordnance Knowledge); *Xiandai bingqi* (Modern Weaponry); *Bingong keji* (Ordnance Industry Science Technology); *Junshi jishu* (Military Technology); *Dangdai yatai* (Journal of Contemporary Asia-Pacific Studies); *Guoji zhengzhi yanjiu* (International Politics Quarterly), 1991–2009.

Chinese analysts display in this assessment the social psychology concept of ‘actor observer difference’ that underpins ‘fundamental attribution error’.<sup>22</sup> Overviews of China’s indigenous capabilities and military modernization are inclined to avoid references to external contributions to these programs. When discussing India, however, Chinese analysts lay emphasis on India’s procurements over time from foreign sources. On systems listed in Table 1 that India claims as examples of domestic production and innovation, Chinese analysts frequently add the word ‘so-called’ or place ‘indigenous’ in quotes.

These rhetorical flourishes suggest elements of derision and dismissiveness in Chinese attitudes towards India’s domestic programs and abilities. References to the Indian Army Arjun tank and Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) are two common examples of India’s army that feature this linguistic phenomenon. It is also apparent in such arena as the Navy’s Advanced Technology Vehicle (ATV) and the Air Force’s Light Combat Aircraft (LCA).

To a degree these perceptions reflect reality. China’s domestic military industry has indeed made significant achievements in indigenization, while that of India remains stymied domestically and hence more reliant on external sources. But these stereotypes do not necessarily hold. China has also historically relied on foreign technology through imports from Israel and Russia and reverse engineering, while India has made significant strides in

<sup>22</sup> Within social psychology, fundamental attribution error may be defined as, ‘The tendency of observers to underestimate situational influences and overestimate dispositional influences upon others’ behavior’. Dawei maiersi (David G. Myers), *Shehui xinlixue* (Social Psychology) (Beijing: Renmin youdian chubanshe, 2008), p. 88.

indigenization.<sup>23</sup> Neither country's military modernization, therefore, can be characterized as wholly foreign or domestic in nature.

These descriptions also cannot avoid use of 'relative deprivation' to characterize China's relations with foreign suppliers as compared to India's.<sup>24</sup> Greater focus is levied on the externalities that constrain China and which have pushed it down the path of indigenization. In true 'fundamental attribution error' style, Chinese analysts pair these discussions with analyses of deficiencies inherent in the Indian domestic military industry. Making such assessments and not recognizing corollaries at home can induce 'overconfidence phenomenon'<sup>25</sup> and also complacency and underestimation within China with regards to the modernization of India's Army.

### Chinese Perceptions of India's Navy

The Navy ranks third among India's armed forces as regards military investment.<sup>26</sup> Yet, a survey of Chinese analysts, particularly those that study military and strategic trends, instead reveals a high estimation of the importance of India's Navy. Chinese military industry and strategic journals frequently examine India's naval pursuits in articles longer than those allocated to India's other armed forces. In discussions, the majority of Chinese experts argue that India's Navy has the greatest potential among its armed forces to surpass China.

While recognizing the delays and setbacks India has experienced with the Admiral Gorshkov aircraft carrier and other such systems, and its dependence on Russian assistance in the nuclear submarine arena, there is also vibrant discussion of the hegemonic trajectory of these programs, including indigenous development of frigates and destroyers. Chen Guangwen argues, 'Over the years, the Indian Navy has followed the doctrine, to continue to strengthen its actual control in the Indian Ocean, and Indian Navy strategists believe that the aircraft carrier serves as the most powerful weapon to achieve this goal.'<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Jeremy Page, 'A Chinese Stealth Challenge?' *The Wall Street Journal*, January 5, 2011, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703808704576061674166905408.html> (accessed on January 10, 2011); Dinakar Peri, 'Indian Navy's Indigenous Ship Building: A Success Story', *Idrw.org*, October 27, 2010, <http://idrw.org/?p=1046> (accessed on January 8, 2011).

<sup>24</sup> This phenomenon is particularly visible in the section Chinese Perceptions of India's Air Force.

<sup>25</sup> Within social psychology, overconfidence phenomenon may be defined as 'the tendency to overestimate the accuracy of one's beliefs'. David G. Myers, *Social Psychology*, p. 109; Within China, Sui Xinmin has conducted one of the most comprehensive studies on perceptual issues between China and India, in which he delves into the concept of victim mentality. Sui Xinmin, *Zhong Yin guanxi yanjiu: shehui renzhi shijiao (A Study of Sino-Indian Relations: From the Perspective of Social Cognition)* (Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 2007).

<sup>26</sup> Defence Accounts Department, Government of India.

<sup>27</sup> Chen Guangwen, 'A New Hegemon is Coming to the Indian Ocean', pp. 49–55.

Another article states,

During the early Nehru era, India, in order to realize its dream of great power, proposed and established an “India Centre Theory”, such that India sought in South Asia a “dominant position” in the Indian Ocean and strove to be an “impressive” world-class power. This is the ultimate goal of India’s comprehensive practical strategy. From this, India formulated its maritime strategy. India’s maritime strategy has also absorbed the impact of Mahan’s “Sea Power,” such that in future the issue of strategic sea lanes will be the core level content of the impact of the issue, as sea lanes will be the strategic core.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to aircraft carriers, Chinese analysts also engage in frequent discussion and analysis of nuclear submarines, such as the ATV. India’s pursuit of nuclear submarines and the long distances they can travel without surfacing constitutes a major stepping-stone towards achieving a blue-water navy and second-strike capability. As both of these advances would have implications for China, the July 2009 test deployment of the ATV nuclear submarine served as impetus for greater attention from China.<sup>29</sup>

Within China, India’s current and future activities in the Indian Ocean, Andaman Islands, South China Sea, and Pacific Ocean all receive varying levels of attention. India’s import of naval systems, joint research and development, multilateral exercises, and international training underline the importance of external cooperation. Such interaction draws China’s gaze. This is particularly true of India’s participation in the multilateral Malabar exercises, which in 2007 and again in 2009 reached into Japan’s Okinawa maritime zone, apparently too close to China’s shores for comfort.<sup>30</sup>

In 2009, an article in *Jianchuan zhishi* (*Naval and Merchant Ships*) points out,

On August 3, India announced a massive shipbuilding program with an increase of more than 125 warships and submarines to occur over the next 10 years, so that the strength of the Indian Navy would be comparable only to that of the United States, achieving second place globally. Becoming a military power is a clear long-term national goal of India, and even poverty will not reduce investments in military aircraft carrier manufacture and purchases, which have not stopped.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Shen Xiaolong, ‘Yindu haiyang zhanlue zhong de haishang tongdao celue’ (‘Sea Lane Tactics in Indian Maritime Strategy’), *Waiguo junshi xueshu* (*Foreign Military Academics*), Issue 5 (2009), p. 36.

<sup>29</sup> ‘Yindu didiao dazao guochan ATV ji heqianting bimian guanjian jishu xielou’ (‘India Builds Low-Key ATV-class Nuclear Submarines to Avoid Disclosure of Key Technologies’), October 22, 2008, *Junshi renmin wang* (*Military People’s Web*), <http://military.people.com.cn/GB/52937/52942/8211978.html> (accessed on January 5, 2011).

<sup>30</sup> ‘Mei yin ri ‘malabaer-09’ junyan fanqian zhuti nai ren xun wei’ (‘Interesting Issues in U.S., Indian and Japanese ‘Malabar-09’ Military Exercises’), May 8, 2009, *Xinhua wang* (*Xinhua Net*), [http://news.xinhuanet.com/mil/2009-05/08/content\\_11333994.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/mil/2009-05/08/content_11333994.htm) (accessed on January 5, 2011).

<sup>31</sup> ‘Yindu haijun neng ganchao Zhongguo haijun ma?’ (Can India’s Navy Overtake China’s Navy?), *Jianchuan zhishi* (*Naval and Merchant Ships*), Issue 10 (2009), p. 51.



**Table 2** Number of References to India's Naval Systems in Chinese Journals (1991–2009)

Strategic journals		Scientific journals		Academic journals	
Gorshkov Carrier	49	Brahmos Missile	30	Kilo 877EKM Sub	4
Viraat Carrier	47	Gorshkov Carrier	24	Gorshkov Carrier	4
ATV Nuclear Sub	43	Club Missile	17	Viraat Carrier	1
Sea King Helicopter	37	Delhi Destroyer	16	Charlie Nuclear Sub	1
Delhi Destroyer	36	Godavari Frigate	15	Sea Hawk Missile	1
Kilo 877EKM Sub	34	Scorpene AIP Sub	15	Fast Patrol Boats	1
Talwar Frigate	34	Kilo 877EKM Sub	13	Sagarika Missile	1
Barak Missile	26	Talwar Frigate	13	209-Type Sub	1
Sagarika Missile	22	Barak Missile	13	C-130 Transp Aircraft	1
Tu-42 Recon Aircraft	22	P-3C Orion Recon	9	P-3C Orion Recon	1

Source: *Bingqi zhishi* (Ordnance Knowledge); *Xiandai bingqi* (Modern Weaponry); *Bingong keji* (Ordnance Industry Science Technology); *Junshi jishu* (Military Technology); *Dangdai yatai* (Journal of Contemporary Asia-Pacific Studies); *Guoji zhengzhi yanjiu* (International Politics Quarterly), 1991–2009.

To answer the question of whether or not India can rival China's Navy, the article calls upon a shipbuilding expert, a ship designer, a submarine expert, and other relevant experts to engage in a technical discussion. During the interview, one expert stresses that India's 'fast introduction of foreign capital and foreign technology will rapidly improve the level of their manufacturing industry. Western countries have even predicted that its manufacturing will catch up to China within five years. This should cause us great concern'.<sup>32</sup> This comment is significant for it reveals not only the strategic import of India's maritime advances, but also the economic side of Sino-Indian competition.<sup>33</sup>

Table 2 shows the physical manifestation of these concerns among Chinese analysts through a quantitative review of the marked attention within China towards the Admiral Gorshkov aircraft carrier, ATV, Delhi-class stealth ship/air defense destroyers, P-3C Orion anti-submarine reconnaissance systems, and maritime anti-submarine P-8I aircraft. It again constitutes a manifestation of 'fundamental attribution error', as these systems provide the very transport, reconnaissance and second-strike capabilities that China seeks. In the context of China's military modernization, such platforms are described as means of self-defense from external interference

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>33</sup> Tan Zhengping and Li Pengchao, 'Yindu haijun zhanjian de yaolan – Mazhagang chuanwu youxian gongsi' (The Cradle of India's Military Warships – Mazagaon Docks Ltd), *Jianchuan zhishi* (Naval and Merchant Ships), Issue 10 (2009), pp. 55–61.

and threats, but when describing India are presented as pursuit of 'regional hegemony', 'great power dream', and 'Indian Ocean control'.

When discussing the concept of 'Indian Ocean control', Chinese strategic periodicals frequently mention India's pursuit of both the Admiral Gorshkov aircraft carrier and its decision in 1999 to develop Vikrant class aircraft carriers [then called the Project 71 'Air Defence Ship' (ADS)], which were the Indian Navy's first aircraft carriers to be designed and built within India.<sup>34</sup> Although these programs have experienced numerous delays, they nonetheless generate discussion within China, which has been debating for some time its own pursuit of aircraft carriers.<sup>35</sup>

In fact, despite its many delays, the Gorshkov is frequently viewed within China as among India's 'three' aircraft carriers, serving as more of a perceptual catch phrase than a reality.<sup>36</sup> But aircraft carriers, even conceptually, still serve as power projection devices. This is particularly true in the Indian Ocean, where India is seen to be shoring up its ultimate ability to exert control over sea-lanes of importance to China and the region. Moreover, such platforms are the harbinger of increasing forays into the Malacca Straits, South China Sea, and even the Pacific Ocean, as pointed out in a number of such articles and discussions within China.

Regardless of the accuracy of these perceptions, their existence plays a role in shaping China's own defense decisions and strategic planning, and, thereby, in impacting India's response. Similarly, although in India various systems like the ATV nuclear submarine are referred to as domestic systems, the assistance received from external sources, like Russia, continues to permeate Chinese analyses.

## Chinese Perceptions of India's Air Force

India's Air Force takes second place in military expenditures,<sup>37</sup> yet for Chinese analysts it ranks, along with the following discussion of space, in first place in terms of attention among Chinese scientists. It also occupies a prominent position with regards to the concept of 'relative deprivation'.<sup>38</sup> India's ability to procure high-technology systems and engage in space and

<sup>34</sup> Chen Guangwen, 'A New Hegemon is Coming to the Indian Ocean', p. 49; Liu Jiangping, 'Neng zìjiàn hangmù jiù neng dāng hǎijūn qiáng guó ma? – Píng yīndù zì jiàn hangmù' ('Does Indigenous Building of Aircraft Carriers Mean the Ability to Become a Naval Power? – Analysis of India's Indigenous Aircraft Carrier'), *Huanqiu fēiháng* (*World Flight*), Issue 3 (2009), pp. 26–8.

<sup>35</sup> 'Yīndù quèdìng gòu E hangmù jiàgé' ('India Decides to Purchase Russia's Aircraft Carrier at its Price'), *Jiānchuan zhīshì* (*Naval and Merchant Ships*), Issue 1 (2009), p. 15.

<sup>36</sup> Indian experts and data refute this oft-cited Chinese characterization of India possessing three aircraft carriers.

<sup>37</sup> Defence Accounts Department, Government of India, <http://cgda.nic.in>.

<sup>38</sup> Within social psychology, relative deprivation may be defined as, 'The perception that one is less well off than others to whom one compares oneself.' The author quotes Karl Marx to emphasize the core of relative deprivation, 'A house may be large or small; as long as the surrounding houses are equally small, it satisfies all social demands for a dwelling. But let a

**Table 3** Number of References to India's Air Force Systems in Chinese Journals (1991–2009)

Strategic journals		Scientific journals		Academic journals	
Su-30 MKI Fighter	100	Su-30 MKI Fighter	42	Su-30 MKI Fighter	3
MiG-29 Fighter	90	Mirage-2000 Fighter	24	F-16 Fighter	2
Mirage-2000	76	Light Combat Aircraft	19	F/A-18E/F Fighter	2
MiG-21 Fighter	63	MiG-29 Fighter	17	Fifth Gen Aircraft	2
Light Combat Aircraft	63	Akash SAM	11	Typhoon Fighter	1
Elec. Recon/Jam	35	Jaguar Fighter	10	Mirage-2000	1
Jaguar Fighter	34	F-16 Fighter	7	Rafale Fighter	1
IL-76 Transport Aircraft	25	Phalcon AEW	6	Gripen Fighter	1
EL/M Green Pine	18	A-50 Recon Aircraft	6	C4ISR System	1
Phalcon AEW	15	IL-78 Refuel Aircraft	4	Tu-22 Bomber	1

Source: *Bingqi zhishi* (Ordnance Knowledge); *Xiandai bingqi* (Modern Weaponry); *Bingong keji* (Ordnance Industry Science Technology); *Junshi jishu* (Military Technology); *Dangdai yatai* (Journal of Contemporary Asia-Pacific Studies); *Guoji zhengzhi yanjiu* (International Politics Quarterly), 1991–2009.

nuclear cooperation, combined with conventional weapons purchases, all exacerbate these perceptions.

As Table 3 shows, Chinese analysts contrast India's ability with that of China to engage in the following arenas: Russian supply of more advanced weapons platforms, like the Su-30 MKI fighters; Russian engagement on joint aerospace ventures, like the Brahmos cruise missile;<sup>39</sup> Israel's unimpeded ability to supply India Phalcon early warning aircraft; US supply of F-16s,<sup>40</sup> P-3C Orion anti-submarine reconnaissance systems; France's

palace arise beside the little house, and it shrinks from a little house into a hut.' David G. Myers, *Social Psychology*, p. 381.

<sup>39</sup> 'India is the primary purchaser. India will use the Brahmos supersonic cruise missile to fully change out its old backward Navy, Army and Air Force missile system equipment, with the goal of becoming a strong global military, and the regional hegemon in the South Asian continent and Asia.' Zhong Jianye and Zhang Zuocheng, '“Bulamosi” chaoyinsu xunhang daodan' ('“Brahmos” Supersonic Cruise Missile'), *Bingqi zhishi* (Ordnance Knowledge), Issue 7, (2006), pp. 38–9; 'E yin gongtong yanzhi bulamosi-2 gao chaoshengsu daodan' ('Russia and India to Jointly Develop Hypersonic BrahMos-2 Missile'), *Feihang daodan* (Aerodynamic Missile Journal), Issue 3 (2009), pp. 1, 8; Du Chaoping, 'Yin e lianhe dazao “boluomosi” chaoyinsu fanjian daodan' ('India and Russia Jointly Build “Brahmos” Supersonic Anti-ship Missile'), *Xiandai bingqi* (Modern Weaponry), Issue 12 (2001), pp. 19–20; Wang Fengwu, Wang Chunfeng, Cao Gongzhu, Guan Yongjun, 'Yin e lianhe yanzhi de bulamosi daodan' (India and Russia Jointly Develop the Brahmos Missile), *Feihang daodan* (Aerodynamic Missile Journal), Issue 7, (2009), pp. 4–7.

<sup>40</sup> Dong Shihong and Wu Jiachuan, 'India is also Building Fourth Generation Fighter Jets', p. 11; Liu Wenshou, Sun Manhong, and Chen Haipeng, 'Yindu lujun hangkong bing zhuangbei fazhan tanxi' ('Exploration of the Development of Indian Army Aviation Equipment'), *Jundui jianshe* (Military Building), Issue 6 (2009), p. 60; Li Ziyu, 'Nanya tianyan de deyu shi' ('Gains and Losses of the Eye in the Sky Over South Asia'), *Jianchuan wuqi* (Shipborne Weapons), Issue 9 (2008), pp. 51–4.

supply of the nuclear capable Mirage-2000 and maritime anti-submarine P-8I aircraft.<sup>41</sup>

The much touted international bidding on India's intended procurement of 126 medium multi-role combat aircraft (MMRCA) also demonstrates the global scope of this shift in weapons procurement, moreover, the beneficial political and economic terms to be gained by drawing out its decision.<sup>42</sup> This access to the international market is much broader than that of China, which remains constrained by the US–EU Arms Ban. Taking into account the intangibles of fighter jet training and exchanges between India and the international community through such exercises as the 'Red Flag' military drills with the United States, China is compelled to pay attention to India's global interaction, particularly with the United States.

Enhanced interoperability is just one by-product that feeds into Chinese sensibilities that the United States is attempting to draw India into a military partnership with the aim of balancing against China. The fact that Su-30 MKI fighters were part of such drills, that they were increased at the Sino–Indian border in 2009, and that they have the potential for use in nuclear weapon delivery all bolster the perception that, directly or indirectly, the United States is working counter to China's security interests.

This view is exemplified by an expert from China's National Defense University, who cited this very training, education, and exchange between officers, facilitated by the English level of Indian troops and the greater level of military exchange between India and the West, as a trend carrying far greater implications for Sino–Indian military modernization and competition than any weapon or platform. India's access to and China's exclusion from such interaction represents a classic form of 'relative deprivation'.

Questions over such lacunae in China's military modernization are often met with strong assertions that China has benefited from this isolation through enhanced indigenization. Nonetheless, there lingers a sense that China has been deprived of its rightful ability to interact within the larger international community at the military level. This is reflected by the

<sup>41</sup> In reality, much of this cooperation with the United States comes with caveats and strings attached that have led to contentious debates between India and the United States, such as the requirement of an End-User Monitoring Agreement, Technical Safeguards Agreement, or the issue of enrichment technology transfer that emerged in 2009. Similarly, a number of China's experts argue that China's military modernization has benefited from its isolation, forcing it to indigenize its programs and achieve greater independence. 'India, US Reach End-User Pact', *Rediff*, July 20, 2009, <http://news.rediff.com/report/2009/jul/20/india-us-reach-end-user-pact.htm> (accessed on July 20, 2009); 'India-US Defence Relations', *South Asia Monitor*, October 20, 2010, <http://www.southasiamonitor.org/index.php?option=com> (accessed on January 5, 2011); Paul K. Kerr, 'U.S. Nuclear Cooperation with India: Issues for Congress', *Congressional Research Service*, 7-5700, RL33016, October 28, 2010.

<sup>42</sup> Ashley J. Tellis, 'Dogfight! India's Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft Decision', Carnegie Report, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, January (2011), <http://carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=42361> (accessed on February 10, 2011).

inundation of in-depth Chinese research into the issue of US export controls, particularly as they relate to China.<sup>43</sup> The symbolic significance of the sanctions on China supersedes the physical limitations their existence causes.

Chinese and Indian analysts were earlier able to find common ground on the double standards and discriminatory approach of the West. This view continues even today, with some Chinese analysts asserting that India will never become a full-fledged ally or participant in US regional strategy, due in large part to its Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) history and stance. Yet, with the removal of the majority of Indian companies from the US Entity List in 2001, as well as discussion of civil nuclear and space cooperation, and the announcement of the New Framework for the US–India Defense Relationship in 2005, there has been growing re-evaluation of the nature of the US-India strategic partnership and its implications for China.

Acceptance by the United States and the international community into the global arms market and military exchange network has caused a profound shift in India's 'social identity' from outsider to insider.<sup>44</sup> Given this new role, India has access to equipment, technology, and deals that are still largely banned from China, such as the Phalcon Early Warning aircraft from Israel. With US and international support, in terms of access, little is out of reach for India, while China finds itself mired in what it perceives as an outdated system of strategic limitations.<sup>45</sup>

With signs that China has taken reverse engineering and indigenous development and spin-offs to the next level with its J-20 stealth bomber, this disparity in international treatment might not equate with a future major gap between China and India in material terms.<sup>46</sup> In terms of social identity, however, India's Air Force and its exposure to open international markets

<sup>43</sup> Yuan Ma and Liu Yun, 'Meiguo chukou guanzhi zhengce dui hua de yingxiang ji fazhan qushi yanpan' ('U.S. Export Control Policies' Impact on China and Assessment of this Development Trend'), *Guangdong jinrong xueyuan xuebao (Journal of Guangdong University of Finance)*, Issue 4 (2006), pp. 93–9; Guo Youqun, 'Zhanhou xifang duihua jishu chukou guanzhi de lishi yanbian' ('The Historical Evolution of Western Export Controls on China Following the War'), *Jingji wenti (Economic Issues)*, Issue 8 (2006), pp. 75–6.

<sup>44</sup> In social psychology, social identity theory suggests that actors place themselves and others into categories, identification with certain groups leading to an ingroup phenomenon (a sense of common identity and belonging) and contrasting with another group leading to an outgroup phenomenon (distinctly different or apart from the ingroup). Within social dynamics this can lead to bias and prejudice. In the Sino–Indian case, the ingroup and outgroup phenomenon can be applied to the security arena upon which they focus, the tendency among actors being to pay greater attention to the arena from which one is excluded and finds itself in a weaker position. David G. Myers, *Social Psychology*, pp. 350–1.

<sup>45</sup> Delays are more often caused by internal procurement and budgetary constraints and inefficiencies than external controls.

<sup>46</sup> Jeremy Page, 'A Chinese Stealth Challenge?' *Wall Street Journal*, January 5, 2011, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703808704576061674166905408.html> (accessed on January 6, 2011); Elisabeth Bumiller, 'U.S. Will Counter Chinese Arms Buildup', *New York Times*, January 8, 2011, [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/09/world/asia/09military.html?\\_r=1&hpw](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/09/world/asia/09military.html?_r=1&hpw) (accessed on January 8, 2011).

and training promises stands in sharp contrast to the isolation that continues to leave China out in the strategic cold.

Chinese Perceptions of India’s Space Force

Aerospace is a field that crosscuts all of the military force divisions within this essay, including Army, Navy, Air Force, and nuclear. The term ‘space force’ (*tianjun*) within Chinese remains broad and ill-defined, in part because space-related technology is dual-use by nature. This is evident in a review of Table 4 that features a number of civilian technologies and systems, but which cannot ignore the fact that they contribute to or may one day have a military role.

Global positioning and navigation systems, remote-sensing satellites, communication satellites, and C4ISR can be used in everything from missile guidance and reconnaissance to command and control of nuclear forces. Launch technology used to propel satellites into space is readily applicable to missiles and hit-to-kill intercepts. If India were to decide to engage in an anti-satellite test (ASAT), its system of choice could very well be to imitate its neighbor and use a ballistic missile.

Despite the evident crossover between civil and military technology, Indian analysts and scientists have long claimed to have a firewall between the two arenas. Nonetheless, India’s achievements in the civil realm are likely to have spin-on effects in the military realm, either through scientist interaction or technology sharing. The success of the Chandrayaan remote sensing satellite for lunar exploration, development of the next generation Geosynchronous Launch Vehicle (GSLV) Mark–III, and refinement of

**Table 4** Number of References to India’s Aerospace Systems in Chinese Journals (1991–2009)

Strategic journals		Scientific journals		Academic journals	
Prithvi Missile	117	Agni Missile	47	Prithvi Missile	4
Agni Missile	110	GSLV	43	Chandrayaan	3
Surya Missile	23	Prithvi Missile	28	Space Tech	2
GPS System	34	PSLV	14	Info Tech	2
C4ISR System	12	Cryogenic Engine	14	Optoelectronics	1
Space Launch Vehicle	11	GPS Systems	11	GPS System	1
PSLV	9	GSAT	7	SAM System	1
Remote Sensing	9	C4ISR System	4	C4ISR System	1
Laser Range Finder	9	Space Launch Vehicle	3	Satellite	1
GSLV	7	GPS System	3	Super Computer	1

Source: *Bingqi zhishi* (Ordnance Knowledge); *Xiandai bingqi* (Modern Weaponry); *Bingong keji* (Ordnance Industry Science Technology); *Junshi jishu* (Military Technology); *Dangdai yatai* (Journal of Contemporary Asia-Pacific Studies); *Guoji zhengzhi yanjiu* (International Politics Quarterly), 1991–2009.



remote sensing technology and launch capabilities all imply technological precision and advances beneficial towards achieving more military-oriented goals.<sup>47</sup>

India's achievements in launch vehicle technology, even if occasionally beset by setbacks, combined with analyses of India's ballistic missile and missile defense pursuits, occupy a particularly significant number of briefs in Chinese scientific journals.<sup>48</sup> Polar Satellite Launch Vehicles (PSLV) and GSLV can serve as the foundation for anti-satellite tests, improvements to India's intermediate-range Agni-III missile, and pursuit of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) dubbed the Surya. Moreover, these pursuits are

<sup>47</sup> Rushi Bakshi, "'India" Space Odyssey, Part 3: Recent News and Future Developments', *Technisch Wetenschappelijk Attachés*, Ministerie van Economische Zaken Landbouw en Innovatie, Netherlands, <http://www.twanetwerk.nl/> (accessed on January 10, 2011).

<sup>48</sup> Ma Junsheng, 'Yindu "liehuo" dandaodaodan tufang jishu xingneng fenxi' ('An Analysis of India's "Agni" Ballistic Missile's Penetration Technology Capabilities'), *Hangtian dianzi duikang (Aerospace Electronic Countermeasures)*, Issue 6 (2008), pp. 1-4; 'Yindu jinyibu tuidong dandaodaodan fangyu xitong jihua' ('India's Plan to Further Promote Ballistic Missile Defense System'), *Daodan yu hangtian yunzai jishu (Missiles and Space Vehicles)*, Issue 2 (2009), p. 11; 'Yindu lujun zhengshi liezhuang luji xing bulamosi xunhang daodan' ('Indian Army Officially Fields Land-Based Brahmos Cruise Missile'), *Daodan yu hangtian yunzai jishu (Missiles and Space Vehicles)*, Issue 4 (2007); Dong Sichun and Gong Gao, 'Yindu jinxing diwen fadongji shiche' ('India Conducts a Cryogenic Engine Test'), *Daodan yu hangtian yunzai jishu (Missiles and Space Vehicles)*, Issue 4 (2007); Liao Shaoxu, 'Yindu diwen huojian fadongji dianhuo shiyan beipo zhongduan' ('Interruption of Indian Cryogenic Rocket Engine Test Firing'), *Daodan yu hangtian yunzai jishu (Missiles and Space Vehicles)*, Issue 1 (2007); Sun Weiping, 'Yindu jiang yanfa zaizhong 10t de huojian' ('India is Developing a Rocket with a Load Capacity of 10 Tons'), *Daodan yu hangtian yunzai jishu (Missiles and Space Vehicles)*, Issue 2 (2007); 'Yindu zhengfu pizhun 7450 wan meiyuan de dengyue jihua' ('India's Government Approves a 74.5 Million Dollar Moon Landing Plan'), Issue 4 (2003), p. 44; 'Yindu chenggong jinxing bulamosi xunhang daodan di san ci feishe' ('India Succeeds in Conducting the Third Test Launch of the Brahmos Cruise Missile'), *Daodan yu hangtian yunzai jishu (Missiles and Space Vehicles)*, Issue 1 (2003), p. 39; 'Yindu jiang shengchan shecheng geng yuan de daodan' ('India Will Produce Missiles with Greater Range'), *Daodan yu hangtian yunzai jishu (Missiles and Space Vehicles)*, Issue 2 (2003), p. 24; Yu Tian, 'Yindu chenggong fashe shiyan tongxin weixing' ('India Succeeds in Launching an Experimental Communication Satellite'), *Daodan yu hangtian yunzai jishu (Missiles and Space Vehicles)*, Issue 3 (2001), p. 61; Xi Yin, 'Yindu de hangtian yusuan zengzhang 6.4%' ('India's Space Budget Grows 6.4%'), *Daodan yu hangtian yunzai jishu (Missiles and Space Vehicles)*, Issue 3 (2001), p. 62; 'Yindu jiang ba huojian jianzao he weixing fashe deng huodong yijiao siying qiye' ('India Will Transfer Rocket Manufacture, Satellite Launch Among Other Activities to the Private Sector'), *Daodan yu hangtian yunzai jishu (Missiles and Space Vehicles)*, Issue 3 (2000), p. 10; 'Yindu kaishi yueqiu tance renwu de yanjiu' ('India Begins Research into Moon Exploration Missions'), *Daodan yu hangtian yunzai jishu (Missiles and Space Vehicles)*, Issue 3 (2000), p. 10; 'Yindu jiang shiyan jiada shecheng de liehuo shi daodan' ('India Will Conduct Tests to Expand the Range of the Agni Missile'), *Daodan yu hangtian yunzai jishu (Missiles and Space Vehicles)*, Issue 3 (2000), pp. 61-2; 'Yindu jigui weixing yunzai huojian fashe chenggong' ('Successful Launch of India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle'), *Daodan yu hangtian yunzai jishu (Missiles and Space Vehicles)*, Issue 1 (1995), p. 75; 'Yindu yi jianzao di 2 ge fashe tai' ('India Intends to Build Two Launch Pads'), *Daodan yu hangtian yunzai jishu (Missiles and Space Vehicles)*, Issue 4 (1995), p. 54; 'Yindu jiasu yanzhi tongbu weixing yunzai huojian' ('India is Accelerating the Development of a Synchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle'), *Daodan yu hangtian yunzai jishu (Missiles and Space Vehicles)*, Issue 5 (1995), p. 76.

not alone in attracting Chinese attention, which is also frequently captured by India's advances in electronic reconnaissance and jamming equipment.

Although India is often heralded for its domestic achievements in aerospace, these efforts have a degree of foreign influence. The surface-to-air missiles (SAM) supplied by Russia and the joint venture on Brahmos missiles also garner marked focus in China.<sup>49</sup> The latter system receives particular attention, not necessarily for its market value, but rather for its contribution to India's own missile force.

As another such example, India's Arrow-capable 'Green Pine' radar purchased from Israel's Elta in 2001 was reportedly employed in India's November 2006 anti-missile test, using a modified Prithvi short-range ballistic missile with an exo-atmospheric kill vehicle and a hit-to-kill warhead. Such cooperation, while once blocked by the United States, is increasingly in India's purview.<sup>50</sup>

Moreover, after India and the United States signed their strategic partnership agreement in 2005, the latter increased its offensive to sell India its Patriot missile defense system. Regardless of whether these deals reach fruition, the political and technological spin-off and spin-on effects are visible throughout US-India interaction. These cases show that India's reception within the international aerospace community has and will most likely continue to outstrip that of China.<sup>51</sup>

A review of journals and discussions with various members of the Chinese scientific sphere shows that India's Multi-layered Anti-ballistic Missile Defense system consisting of Advanced Air Defense (AAD) and Prithvi Air Defense (PAD) are matters of growing focus and interest. Marked by indigenous achievements and bolstered by Israeli, Russian, and potentially US contributions, Indian missile defense programs are no longer an issue for just Pakistan, but increasingly also one for China. However, while many of these discussions within China, particularly those appearing in scientific journals, show a pronounced interest, few directly voice the implications for China.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>49</sup> 'India is the primary purchaser. India will use the Brahmos supersonic cruise missile to fully change out its old backward Navy, Army and Air Force missile system equipment, with the goal of becoming a strong global military, and the regional hegemon in the South Asian continent and Asia.' Zhong Jianye and Zhang Zuocheng, "'Brahmos" Supersonic Cruise Missile', pp. 38-9; 'Russia and India to Jointly Develop Hypersonic Brahmos-2 Missile', pp. 1, 8; Du Chaoping, 'India and Russia Jointly Build "Brahmos" Supersonic Anti-ship Missile', pp. 19-20.

<sup>50</sup> Lora Saalman, 'White Elephants to Weapons Systems: The Role of Arrow Missile Defense in Israeli-Turkish-U.S. Military Cooperation', 2004, <http://www.mii.edu/docs/GSIPS-Arrow-Paper-Final-5-12-WR-2.pdf> (accessed on August 9, 2005).

<sup>51</sup> With the aforementioned engagement on high technology trade and November 2010 announcement of US intended removal of the ISRO, Bharat Dynamics Ltd, and four subsidiaries of DRDO from the US Entity List, the emergence of increased 'relative deprivation' in the analyses of Chinese experts cannot be ruled out.

<sup>52</sup> One Chinese expert at Peking University and several experts at CASS suggested that this demonstrates a desire on the part of Beijing not to display concern over such systems that

When quantitative analysis is used to supplement qualitative analysis, however, we find that significant attention is paid to these systems. This gap between 'expressed attitude' and 'suppressed attitude'<sup>53</sup> in this one arena is so ingrained that even Chinese analysts are seemingly unaware of the amount of time and interest they direct towards India's missile defense and missile pursuits. This demonstrates a dual manifestation of 'preconception bias'<sup>54</sup> and 'overconfidence phenomenon' in dismissing India's marked achievements in aerospace. If the scientific community remains the group primarily engaged on this front, the strategic and academic communities might miss out on the security implications of these trends.

These phenomena, however, are not lost on the entire strategic community within China. In an article entitled 'Zhong yin jungong nengli dui bi' ('A Comparison of Chinese and Indian Military Exploits'), Yu Ping states,

China's 'Shenzhou' spacecraft has in the past two years made continuous achievements. It demonstrates [China's] global rank of third in terms of space technology, after the United States and Russia, with the biggest irritation coming from its large neighboring country on the subcontinent. The government of India and aerospace departments later announced preparations for a plan to conduct a moon launch of spacecraft within five years, a rush in advance of China's Chang'e program to demonstrate its higher standards in this intensified space arena.<sup>55</sup>

Although this quote still places India behind China and bears marks of lingering 'overconfidence phenomenon', it reflects the fact that Chinese analysts are reacting to statements coming out of India. In fact, if one tendency is common within both countries, it is to use one quote and replay it endlessly as evidence of one another's intentions. For example, statements regarding India considering the Indian Ocean as 'India's Ocean' or using maritime, aerospace or nuclear achievements to achieve its 'great power dream' are commonplace in China.<sup>56</sup> This phenomenon is just as frequent

might attract attention, citing the Chinese adage that 'where there's no smoke, there's no fire'. These views could also reflect the fact that the scientific community often assumes a more technical than strategic view of such trends.

<sup>53</sup> David G. Myers, *Social Psychology*, p. 136; Dru C. Gladney, 'Relational Alterity: Constructing Dungan (Hui), Uygur, and Kazakh Identities across China, Central Asia, and Turkey', *History and Anthropology*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (1996), pp. 445–77.

<sup>54</sup> Within social psychology, belief perseverance may be defined as the 'persistence of one's initial conceptions, as when the basis for one's belief is discredited but an explanation of why the belief might be true survives'. David G. Myers, *Social Psychology*, pp. 101–2.

<sup>55</sup> Yu Ping, 'Zhong yin jungong nengli dui bi' ('A Comparison of Chinese and Indian Military Exploits'), *Xinlang junshi* (*Sina Military*), November 29, 2006, <http://mil.news.sina.com.cn/p/2006-11-29/0739415656.html> (accessed on January 6, 2011).

<sup>56</sup> Yin He, 'Yindu xin 'banjialuoer' quzhujian chulu ruier' ('India's New 'Bangalore' Missile-Guided Destroyer will Make its Appearance'), *Hangjian bingqi* (*Shipborne Weapons*), Issue 5 (2005), p. 5; 'Yindu hangmu qun xiang chang zhujiao jiang Yinduyang shiwei 'Yindu zhiyang'' ('India's Aircraft Battle Group to Play a Leading Role in Making the Indian Ocean "India's Ocean"'), *Sohu junshi* (*Sohu military*), January 14, 2007, <http://mil.news.sohu.com/20070114/n247602248.shtml> (accessed on January 13, 2011).

as the tendency in India to fixate upon individual articles or statements to surmise China's overall strategy, such as that of breaking India into pieces.<sup>57</sup>

From discussions within China, it is evident that the majority of Chinese analysts do not see a short-term or mid-term threat coming from India. China's Shenzhou launch in 2005 and anti-satellite experiment in 2007 demonstrate that China is still ahead of India in both civil and military terms. Chinese scientists, who have worked within this arena, express the view that whenever China makes an achievement in aerospace, India's government and experts start making statements that India will do the same. On the one hand, Chinese scientists acknowledge India's achievements in such arena as remote sensing; on the other, they construe these statements as implying that India is fundamentally insecure and has a long way to go to compete with China.

India, like the United States, Russia, and Japan, occupies scientific and technical industry journals within China, but does not comprehensively occupy the same threat level or strategic concern. As a result, the potential for Indian statements or decisions to mimic China's activities in space will not necessarily lead to a 'self-fulfilling prophesy' and Asian space race.<sup>58</sup> In fact, one scientist argues that even if India were to pursue anti-satellite capabilities, this would not necessarily be a negative trend. Expenses incurred in terms of time, money, and expertise would draw resources away from other aspects of India's military modernization that might pose a greater long-term challenge to China.

Other analysts see these advances as not necessarily harming Chinese interests, but rather those of other international players. One expert at Tongji University commented that the potential for US-India space cooperation to accelerate or contribute to India's realization of an ICBM that could reach the United States must not be dismissed. As a result, the political and strategic power projection capabilities of India would extend much farther than China. This tendency to look at India's developments objectively demonstrates a much stronger tilt towards an 'instrumental aggression',<sup>59</sup> perspective in Chinese interaction on the subject of India's future in space.

This may be contrasted with the much greater exhibition of a lens of 'hostile aggression' taken by a number of Indian analysts when viewing China's aerospace activities. Harsh V. Pant takes note of this approach by

<sup>57</sup> 'Break India, Says China Think-tank', *The Times of India*, August 12, 2009, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Break-India-says-China-think-tank/articleshow/4883573.cms> (accessed on February 10, 2011).

<sup>58</sup> In social psychology, self-fulfilling prophesy refers to a belief that leads to its own fulfillment. David G. Myers, *Social Psychology*, p. 121.

<sup>59</sup> Within social psychology, instrumental aggression may be contrasted with hostile aggression, which may be defined as 'aggression driven by anger and performed as an end in itself'. Instrumental aggression is defined as a 'means to another end'. Hostile aggression is 'hot' and instrumental aggression is 'cool'. David G. Myers, *Social Psychology*, p. 381.

arguing, 'Compared with the good policies of China, India at times displays extreme anger in its attitude towards China ... India does not seem to have established a coordinated, long-term strategy to deal with their most important neighbor China.'<sup>60</sup>

In part, this perspective derives from the prominence of 'victim mentality' in such assessments.<sup>61</sup> Vestiges of the 1962 border conflict continue to inform Indian views of China's actions at the edges of its territory. Space represents the next border across which some Indian analysts feel China may display aggressive behavior. Given the lengthy history between the two countries, 'preconception bias' and 'belief perseverance' will continue to play instrumental roles in Sino-Indian interaction.<sup>62</sup>

### Chinese Perceptions of India's Nuclear Force

Much as in the case of aerospace, India's pursuit of a Strategic Nuclear Triad extends Chinese expert discussion of India's nuclear capabilities into each of the military arena discussed above. Ballistic missiles, such as the Agni-III; fighter jets, such as the Su-30 MKI and Mirage-2000; and nuclear submarines, such as the ATV all have the potential to serve as platforms for nuclear warheads. Their ability to shape India's future nuclear force explains their prevalence within Table 5.

The Prithvi missile, which targets Pakistan, receives the largest number of citations, but by a short margin. It is less evident in more recent articles in which the China-directed Agni-III missile dominates. In contrast to the specificity that characterizes commentary on India's missile development, China paints Indian nuclear matters in much broader strokes. The predominance of academic analysts in this arena, combined with the sensitivity of nuclear concerns effectively limit specificity in favor of the predominating generalized concepts, such as India's seeking of great power status or second-strike capabilities.

Although they do not go into technical specifics in discussions of India, these analyses nevertheless demonstrate an interest in the number of India's nuclear warheads and potential expansion of its nuclear deterrent. Unlike their Indian counterparts, however, Chinese analysts rarely discuss the implications of these issues for China. Instead, they couch their discussions in terms of damage to the non-proliferation regime that measures such as the US-India agreement on civil nuclear cooperation imbue. There is also an

<sup>60</sup> Harsh V. Pant, 'Indian Foreign Policy and China', *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (2006), pp. 762-3.

<sup>51</sup> Within China, Sui Xinmin has conducted one of the most comprehensive studies on perceptual issues between China and India, in which he delves into the concept of victim mentality. Sui Xinmin, *A Study of Sino-Indian Relations*.

<sup>62</sup> Within social psychology, belief perseverance may be defined as the 'persistence of one's initial conceptions, as when the basis for one's belief is discredited but an explanation of why the belief might be true survives'. David G. Myers, *Social Psychology*, pp. 101-2.

**Table 5** Number of References to India's Nuclear Systems in Chinese Journals (1991–2009)

Strategic journals		Scientific journals		Academic journals	
Prithvi Missile	117	Agni Missile	55	Nuclear Equip/Tech	41
Agni Missile	110	Su-30 MKI Fighter	44	Agni Missile	8
Su-30 MKI Fighter	100	Prithvi Missile	28	Prithvi Missile	4
Mirage-2000	76	Mirage-2000	24	Surya Missile	2
Nuclear Equip/Tech	39	Nuclear Equip/Tech	13	F-16 Fighter	2
GPS System	34	GPS System	11	F/A-18E/F Fighter	2
Electronic Recon/Jam	27	ATV Nuclear Sub	9	Typhoon Fighter	1
Surya Missile	23	Surya Missile	5	Mirage-2000	1
C4ISR System	12	Missile Defense	5	Rafale Fighter	1
Laser Range Finder	9	C4ISR System	4	MiG-35 Fighter	1

Source: *Bingqi zhishi* (Ordnance Knowledge); *Xiandai bingqi* (Modern Weaponry); *Bingong keji* (Ordnance Industry Science Technology); *Junshi jishu* (Military Technology); *Dangdai yatai* (Journal of Contemporary Asia-Pacific Studies); *Guoji zhengzhi yanjiu* (International Politics Quarterly), 1991–2009.

ongoing tendency among Chinese analysts to raise the issue of India's use of China as an excuse for conducting nuclear tests.

Still, some Chinese arms control experts expand these themes beyond damage to the non-proliferation regime. They argue that international nuclear cooperation and fuel supply could benefit India's nuclear weapons development. Whether through enhanced access to high technology or freeing-up Indian domestic uranium sources earmarked for an accelerated military nuclear program, many of these arguments mirror those that occurred in the West among the US arms control community immediately after the announcement of intended US–India civil nuclear cooperation.

Journals and experts surveyed reveal that Chinese analysts view with skepticism the Indian argument that it conducted a 'peaceful' nuclear explosion in 1974. This extends towards arguments that India can effectively firewall its civil and military nuclear programs today. These analysts perceive India as exhibiting in this respect 'cognitive dissonance'.<sup>63</sup> Given that India's 1974 nuclear explosion came after civil nuclear assistance from countries including Canada and the United States, it seems difficult to ensure that an effective barrier between civil and military could be achieved.

Moreover, one Chinese nuclear scientist expresses the view that India would find it difficult to achieve its goal of building a 'strategic nuclear

<sup>63</sup> According to cognitive dissonance theory, there is a tendency for individuals to seek consistency among their cognitions (i.e., beliefs, opinions). When there is an inconsistency between attitudes or behavior, something must change to eliminate the dissonance. In the case of a discrepancy between attitudes and behavior, it is most likely that the attitude will change to accommodate the behavior. David G. Myers, *Social Psychology*, p. 103; Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 402–431.



triad' without expanding its nuclear deterrent. Depending on the scale of expansion, this could mean effective abandonment of India's minimum nuclear deterrence posture. Rather than constraining India's military nuclear program, US–India civil nuclear cooperation and the door it opened for the waiver granted to India by the Nuclear Suppliers Group on September 6, 2008 are seen to be sustaining and potentially expanding it. News reports that Pakistan may be building a fourth plutonium reactor at the country's Khushab nuclear complex place this potential in even higher geostrategic relief.<sup>64</sup>

A conversation with an expert from China's National Defense University suggests that China would not idly sit by if the United States were seen to be actively promoting India's nuclear weapons program or harming Chinese interests. The same is true of provocative acts on the part of India. Yet, most Chinese analysts stress that a shift in India's nuclear deterrent or posture would not impact China's stance.

Views expressed in Chinese journals, however, smack of 'revised history'. Many of the Indian arguments lambasting the discriminatory nature of the non-proliferation regime echo those voiced within China before it formally acceded to the NPT in March 1992. Thus, while China retains a somewhat conflicted internal stance when it comes to the Iranian or DPRK nuclear programs, it has emerged not only as an adherent to the nonproliferation regime, but also as its defender when it comes to critiques of the damage caused by the US–India civil nuclear deal.

This is not to say that Chinese analysts are not aware of the evolution or irony of this new position. However, India's arguments against certain aspects of the nonproliferation regime are often devoid of any identification or support within China, particularly when it comes to India's justification for its own nuclear program.<sup>65</sup>

## Conclusion

Quantitative and qualitative analysis reveals that in the process of US–EU export control shifts, in particular the lifting of sanctions on India in 2001 and 2005, Chinese analysts' perceptions of India's military modernization have been undergoing a marked shift. The relationship between export

<sup>64</sup> Joby Warrick, 'Nuclear Experts Say Pakistan May Be Building 4th Plutonium Reactor', *Washington Post*, February 9, 2011, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/02/09/AR2011020906388.html> (accessed on February 10, 2011).

<sup>65</sup> The author attended a closed conference on Sino–Indian relations at Fudan University in 2009 and found that one Chinese arms control expert argued for China to return to its more communist stance that recognizes the discriminatory nature of the nonproliferation regime. In particular, he cited China's possession of a nuclear deterrent while denying that right to others as contrary to the country's core principles and as a sign of its double standards. This view, although heard behind the scenes at a few arms control conferences in reference to the DPRK in particular, is not one commonly voiced in public.

controls and perceptions is not causal, but there are signs of correlative relationship.

The lifting of sanctions on India is the physical manifestation of improved Indo-US relations that Clinton's visit to India in 2000 triggered, and which greatly expanded under the Bush administration. The figures, tables, and analyses above demonstrate a pronounced expansion between 2000 and 2001 and again between 2005 and 2006 of Chinese analyses of India's military modernization. The lifting of sanctions in 2001 and 2005, Clinton's visit to India in 2000 and Hu Jintao's visit to India in 2006, meanwhile, serve as temporal bookends to the series of events that have expanded US engagement with India and its implications for China.

A particular example is Hu Jintao's visit to India in 2006, during which Sino-Indian nuclear and space cooperation was discussed. This trip almost immediately followed and mirrored the US-India announcement in 2005. This demonstrates that, in spite of the widespread perception of the United States and India using one another to counterbalance China, China has thus far opted for closer engagement with India rather than confrontation.

The sheer volume of intervening variables suggests that a direct cause and effect relationship between US-EU sanctions lifting and Chinese perceptual shifts is not easily proven, but the impact of these material shifts on the two countries' perceptions merits greater inquiry within the military, scientific, and academic communities of both countries.

What is evident from this preliminary study is that in the light of such shifts as the US-India strategic partnership and US-EU lifting of sanctions on India, views within China on India have begun to change. Chinese analysts are: writing more in-depth analyses of India's military modernization; de-hyphenating Pakistan and India in their studies; analyzing specific details and strategic implications of Indian military systems; comparing Chinese and Indian military modernization; discussing the strategic implications for China of India's military modernization; and mentioning India in articles focusing on China's defense past and future.

These shifts stand in marked contrast to those of Indian analysts, who throughout the 19-year time span surveyed have not significantly altered their rhetoric on China. Although Chinese analysts continue to employ a degree of dismissive rhetoric regarding India's pursuit of great power and nuclear status, they are nevertheless undergoing a pronounced perceptual evolution.

In contrast to many of the available studies on Sino-Indian security relations that sustain focus on polarizing concepts like 'Chindia' and 'China Threat Theory', a more nuanced view results from placing greater attention upon China and these new perceptual trends. Understanding this evolution in thinking is a key to engaging in a more balanced assessment of the reality that exists between these two poles of Sino-Indian cooperation and conflict.