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Recent purchase of Hambantota port by a China has worried India as the commercial port can easily be repurposed into a naval base. After relinquishing control on security and pilotage to Sri Lanka and thus partially allaying New Delhi's anxiety, the deal went through uneventfully with its approval. Politics aside, India has been spending more on its navy. With an addition of 100 warships added under his belt between February and March in 2017, Modi aims to maintain India's maritime dominance in the Indian Ocean. Both of which point to one fact that China has yet to refute; Beijing cannot ignore India as a potential obstacle for One Belt, One Road to go westward.

If we look only at the numbers, it is apparent why Beijing didn't even remotely consider India as a threat in 2007. China dwarfed India over GDP and export volume with its explosive growth in manufacture since Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms. China also emerged almost unscathed from the two financial crises in 2008 and 2011 with its strong internal market and strict control in renminbi. In contrast, starting a business in India is notoriously difficult, with its byzantine licensing system and bloated bureaucracy that originated from the Industries Act in 1951. Layers and layers of tariffs, installed to protect local enterprises, thwarted foreign capital, along with their superior manufacturing technology at India's doorsteps. Until its liberal reforms in 1991, the average growth rate of India's GDP staggered at 3 to 4%, half of China at that time.

However, as China struggles to transition from an export-oriented manufacturing economy, India harbours considerable potential in servicing sector and faces much less difficulties transitioning into a knowledge-economy. New Delhi has been keen on a decentralized government, seldom exerts direct control on Rupee, let alone market interference. Compared to China's centralized economy, India is much more anti-fragile and adaptive to free market. Though facing the same problem of rural-urban disparity, compared to the diminishing caste prejudice in India, China's stringent Hukou system is much more dampening to its social and population mobility.

Although China is catching up in its English proficiency, with an average score 0.2 lower than India's, code of commerce is not all about business English. As a former colony, though retaining (and recently has a trend to revitalise) Hindu values, India has inherited a recognized legal system from Britain and western traditions such as freedom of speech. The unique blend of Western and Indian traditions contributed not only to a favourable environment for western entrepreneurs, but also helped Indian corporations to thrive on the global stage. In 2013, while the Tata group flourished in the North American automobile industry, China's LeEco faced a bankruptcy in its treasury and confidence from its

investors. As economist Gary Shilling wrote on Bloomberg, China's transitions were accompanied by fundamental issues such as form of government, political modus operandi and population structure; for India however, despite of its seeming weakness, it only needed a boost in higher education, a trimming of its bureaucracy and commercial deregulation.

Economic development and military expenditure complement with each other. In India's case, military expenditure is naturally the fruit bore by economic prosperity. Not only the subsequent bigger stick ensures India's regional security, it also propels India to naval dominance and thus leads to greater influence on international maritime trade. In this sense, the edge of India over China is geographical, or more precisely, its proximity to the Indian Ocean that was the lifeline of China.

When India joined the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 2013, it was interpreted as kowtow from New Delhi by Chinese media. With the benefit of hindsight, on the contrary, it was India that had exploited the Chinese-operated organization to establish contact with Central Asian countries and paved way to counter China's economic expansionism. By 2016, India partnered with Japan, with China's One Belt as the blueprint, announced their plan with a not exactly subtle name: 'The New Silk Road'. On top of that, while China's 'belt' requires India's concession, for more pressing concerns, 80% of China's tankers go through the Indian Ocean and Malacca straits. Even though China's army can best India's, it would be difficult for the Chinese navy to break into the Indian Ocean. With two lifelines of Beijing in its grip, India can prove to be a greater threat than blockades by the United States.

From the comparison of military and economic strength of China and India, it is apparent to see China's past in India's present. A young and vast population, gradually relaxing regulations, inclinations to the global world and matured tertiary sectors, all of which contributed to the prosperity, optimism and explosive growth that was the signature of 1980's China. Though Beijing's military expenditure is thrice as large as that of New Delhi, with western backing and weaponry, the Indian navy was one that China would struggle to overcome. As the intersection between economics and military, maritime power and the Sino-Indian struggle for it would be one of the major issues of "One Belt One Road".

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