

The Harmony and Prosperity of Civilizations

Selected Papers of Beijing Forum(2004)

文明的和谐与共同繁荣

——北京论坛(2004)论文选集

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한국고등교육재단

THE KOREA FOUNDATION FOR ADVANCED STUDIES

On behalf of the Korea Foundation for Advanced Studies, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to Peking University on the publication of *The Harmony and Prosperity of Civilizations—Beijing Forum (2004)*.

I believe that this compilation of selected papers presented on August 23 to 25, 2004 at the First Beijing Forum represents the quintessential spirit of this important academic event, which was to share knowledge and grow together. As a region, the countries in Asia need to listen to one another and strive to narrow the gap that exists in the areas of philosophy, economics, science and technology, education, and knowledge basis. This is to achieve peace and development as a region that will in turn benefit the growth of each country.

Approximately 600 renowned scholars gathered at the Beijing Forum 2004 and contributed by sharing their knowledge and research findings under the theme “The Harmony and Prosperity of Civilizations”. Their active participation and enthusiasm for learning was vital in making the forum a successful gathering of great minds. Now, their collective academic spirit is reflected in this publication for even more people around the world to share and benefit from.

For organizing the Beijing Forum 2004 and allowing *The Harmony and Prosperity of Civilizations—Beijing Forum (2004)* to be published, I wish to thank the Beijing Forum Organizing Committee and leaders of Peking University. I hope the Beijing Forum 2005 will be just as successful, if not more.

Sincerely,



Kim Jae-youl, PhD
Secretary General

Message to the 2004 Beijing Forum On the Harmony and Prosperity of Civilizations

Kofi Annan

Beijing, 23 August, 2004

I send my warmest wishes to all who have gathered in Beijing to discuss the importance of building harmony among civilizations. Your theme goes to the heart of the mission of the United Nations, which was created in the belief that dialogue can triumph over discord, that diversity is a universal virtue, and that the peoples of the world are far more united by their common fate than they are divided by their separate identities.

The idea that there is one people in possession of the truth, one answer to the world's ills, or one solution to humanity's needs, has done untold harm throughout history. That idea continues to endanger us today. It divides group from group. It fuels conflict and hatred both within countries and across international borders. It thrives on ignorance, fear and mistrust.

All peace-loving peoples must stand squarely against this idea, and most people do. More and more people recognize that we share one planet, and that we cannot build true peace without building true harmony among all human beings. Each one of us can take pride in their heritage and culture, while understanding and welcoming the fact that others do too. We can rejoice in our diversity, while never losing sight of the fact that our common humanity binds us together. We can build bridges of understanding among peoples of different faiths and cultures, and teach our young people the virtues of tolerance.

By coming together in Beijing to discuss this critically important subject, you have shown your determination to strengthen our sense of global community. I thank you for that, and I send you all my best wishes for a successful event.

The Opening Speech to the First Beijing Forum, 2004

Min Weifang

Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the First Beijing Forum
Chairman of Peking University Council

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are here today to celebrate the opening ceremony of the First Beijing Forum, 2004. On behalf of Peking University, which is the host of this forum, I would like to extend our warmest welcome and most sincere thanks to all our distinguished guests of more than 400 prestigious scholars from Asia, Europe, Africa, America and Australia, and to all our friends in the media who are covering this forum !

The aim of the Beijing Forum is to promote the studies in humanities and social sciences and to accelerate the academic and social developments in Asian-Pacific region and all over the world, in order to make contribution to the progress and prosperity of mankind. The Beijing Forum also aims to become a world-class forum focusing on academic and cultural topics. Based on the deep-rooted cultural tradition of Beijing and even China, as well as the rapid and scientific development of China's economy, our forum will unite international academic forces by introducing and publishing the most up-to-date achievements in humanities and social sciences made by the first-rate scholars in academic circles, so that the disciplines in humanities and social sciences may exert a greater influence on the progress of human civilizations.

The theme of this First Beijing Forum is "The Harmony and Prosperity of Civilizations." In contemporary world, humankind is confronted with all kinds of intricate and complex conflicts, as well as many difficult problems. Yet no matter how many the conflicts are, we must rely on ourselves to resolve them; however great the difficulties are, we still have to overcome them. We are convinced that the mankind of the 21st century would be experienced enough, capable enough, and especially intelligent enough, to resolve these conflicts and to overcome these difficulties. Through the efforts of our generation and perhaps even the next one, human civilizations will be able to coexist in wisdom and in peace, on the basis of mutual understanding and cooperation, and to develop into an epoch of new glory !

This forum is supported by international academic circles. Our

participants are all distinguished scholars in various academic fields. Besides, you are all busy fellows. Many have put aside their other important research work and declined the invitations of other influential academic conferences or activities, in order to come to Beijing in midsummer to present your most up-to-date discoveries here. We are deeply moved by your firm support, which laid the foundation for the successful convening of this international conference.

As this forum is held in Beijing and is entitled as the Beijing Forum, we owe our thanks first of all to the support and guidance of Beijing Municipal Government and its leading officials. During the process of our preparation for this forum, they were attentive to all our needs, hearing our work reports and giving us practical suggestions. The Ministry of Education has also provided constructive advices and support to this forum.

Among all the distinguished guests present at the forum, there is our honorable Princess of Thailand, Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. Also to our great honor, an outstanding ex-diplomat and a doyen in foreign affairs, Mr. Qian Qichen, is going to give a talk as our keynote speaker on this Forum.

Let us give a round of warm applause to express our sincere respect and thanks to Mr. Qian Qichen, Her Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, and all our distinguished guests !

Undoubtedly, such a large-scale international forum needs solid financial support. In holding this forum, Peking University has been generously supported by the Korea Foundation for Advanced Studies. Today Chairman Tae-Won Chey and General Secretary Jae-youl Kim of this foundation have specially come from Seoul to Beijing to attend this ceremony. Let us greet them with the most sincere thanks !

I would like to end this speech with my best wishes for the success of the First Beijing Forum. May every one of you enjoy yourself in Beijing !

(Trans. by Yang Zhiyi ; Revised by Shen Hong)

Declaration of Beijing Forum

We, who are scholars in humanities and social sciences from more than 30 countries in five continents, have assembled here to celebrate the successful conclusion of the first Beijing Forum. The subject of its forum was "The Harmony and Prosperity of Civilizations."

In the dawn of human civilization, our ancestors of all nations in the world had already engendered their own glories. In the long river of history, waves of civilization encountered and were united, propelling human race in an ascendant arc, evolving ceaselessly on the ladder of civilization. Looking back on the past two millennia, we find that although history is marked by numerous conflicts and wars, the dynamic and basic assurances of its development are still the exchanges of cultures in friendship and the convergences of civilizations in peace.

Today, standing on a land brightened by the rising sun of a new century, peoples of all countries are assembled at the starting line of the advancement of civilization. The advancement of civilization in the 21st century is facing unprecedented opportunities as well as challenges. There exist in contemporary world all kinds of complicated and intricate conflicts, however great the difficulties are, we can only count on ourselves to overcome them. We have a firm trust in the peoples of the 21st century, that they are experienced enough, capable enough, and especially intelligent enough, to solve these conflicts and overcome these difficulties. Through the efforts of this generation and the next, human civilizations will be united in wisdom and in peace, united in understanding and cooperation, and united by overcoming all hindrances, and developing continually to embrace new glory.

As human civilization advances in the 21st century, the mission for the entire human societies clear: solve the conflicts, overcome the difficulties, co-exist in harmony, and prosper in common. We, who are intellectuals in humanities and social sciences, should be especially responsible for this goal. Knowledge in humanities and social sciences is knowledge about human being; it is a search into the destiny of mankind, and into the questions accompanying the progress of human society. Achievements in humanities and social sciences arise from the accumulation of experience-lessons acquired from the progress of human society. Scholars in humanities and social sciences should never stop interrogating and responding to the soul of man concealed behind all the social phenomena.

For this purpose, we, scholars from all countries attending the first Beijing Forum have agreed to the following: the disciplines of humanities and social must be ever engaged with furthering the progress of human civilization and the development of human society in the 21st century; scholars in our disciplines accordingly have heavy responsibilities. As a solemn response to the call of history, let us unite our force and try our best to uphold the success of the Beijing Forum, and make it better and better, as is our responsibility to history !

Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the First Beijing Forum, 2004

Zhu Shanlu

Vice-Mayor of Beijing Municipal Government

Great Hall of the People

09:30 a.m., Monday, August 23, 2004

Honorable Her Highness Princess of Thailand, Maha Chakri Sirindhorn,
Honorable Former Vice-Premier, Mr. Qian Qichen,
Honorable Vice-Chairman of NPC, Mr. Han Qide,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning !

It is my honor to be invited here today to celebrate the opening ceremony of the First Beijing Forum. On behalf of Beijing Municipal Government, I would like to extend our warmest congratulations !

With the generous support of Korea Foundation for Advanced Studies, Peking University is hosting the First Beijing Forum as a world-class academic forum aiming to promote academic and cultural exchanges. Attended by many distinguished scholars, this forum is an influential event not only in the academic, but also in the cultural and educational circles of our capital city. The opening of the First Beijing Forum, I believe, will play an active role in making Beijing open up to the outside world, in developing Beijing into an international metropolis, and in improving the educational, cultural, scientific and technological causes in the capital city.

I sincerely wish that the Beijing Forum will become a successful academic forum, attracting scholars from all over the world. May it be held year by year to integrate the global research in Asian-Pacific studies, and to promote the academic and social progress in Asian-Pacific region and the world. As one of the initiators of this forum, Peking University has contributed greatly to the preparation of the forum and the conference. Here on behalf of the Beijing Municipal Government, I would like to express the most sincere thanks to all the efforts they have made !

Finally, my heartfelt congratulations to all of you in advance for the success of the First Beijing Forum !

(Trans. by Yang Zhiyi ; Revised by Shen Hong)

Speech at the Opening Ceremony of Beijing Forum, 2004

Zhang Xinsheng

Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Education, P. R. C.

Great Hall of the People

August 23, 2004

Honorable Former Vice-Premier, Mr. Qian Qichen,
Honorable Her Highness Princess of Thailand, Maha Chakri Sirindhorn,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning !

Today I am delighted to have this chance of being invited here, to attend the opening ceremony of the First Beijing Forum with all of you.

Since China's reform and opening up to the world, our government has taken serious measures in promoting educational progress and in strengthening the international cooperation and exchange in educational and academic fields. We have made a policy to "cooperate with other governments and non-government organizations bilaterally or multi-laterally, take into consideration the strategic balance, give priority to the development of some key universities, and make sure that efficiency will always be emphasized." As a result, international cooperation and exchanges in the field of education have developed in the direction of a more comprehensive, interdisciplinary and high-level one.

In the trend of making higher education open to the outside world, the convening of the First Beijing Forum is undoubtedly a significant event of far-reaching influence. With "The Harmony and Prosperity of Civilizations" as the theme, it has assembled more than 400 scholars from more than 30 countries, to discuss key issues in the fields of philosophy, history, literature, education, art, political science, economics, law, management, archaeology, information science and sociology. This forum will undoubtedly provide a chance for researchers and scholars in different countries to learn from one another and to cooperate more closely among themselves.

I wish wholeheartedly that the Beijing Forum will be carried on year by year, in order to make a positive contribution to world peace and

development, and to solve all kinds of problems confronted by mankind.

On behalf of China's Ministry of Education, I would like to extend the warmest welcome to all the scholars gathered here at this forum, and congratulate them in advance for the success of the First Beijing Forum, 2004.

Thank you !

(Trans. by Yang Zhiyi ; Revised by Shen Hong)

China-India Relations

—Reviving Confidence Building Measures Approach

Swaran Singh*

The return of Congress Party to power during May 2004 general elections in India followed by the making of China's old-friend Mr. Natwar Singh as India's Foreign Minister was to once again revive speculations about the pace and direction of China-India relations.^① Most agreed that in view of the fresh chessboard of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's government Mr. Natwar Singh was expected to emerge as the sole architect and spokesperson for India's foreign relations. While India's enthusiasm of behaving like the junior partner of the United States had already begun to be rectified during the last two years of Vajpayee government, the high-pitch on China-India, India-Pakistan, India-Israel dialogue was also expected to be reviewed. Though old policies were expected to continue, these were now to be organised more around a well-defined grand strategy rather than carried out in an issue-specific and crisis-management mode which had been the case with coalition government led by former Prime Minister Vajpayee.

As regards India's China policy, China this was expected to be viewed more like India's most important neighbour and partner in international initiatives rather than the rising power of 21st century or India's competitor for Asian leadership. From Foreign Minister's initial statements and initiatives, China was to emerge as part of his exceptionally favoured league. In one of his very first statements, he had proposed that China-India negotiations be treated as a model framework for India's relations with other

* Swaran Singh is Associate Professor at School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and author of *China-South Asia: Issues, Equations, Policies* (2003). He is formerly of School of International Studies (Peking University), Shanghai Institute of International Studies, Center for Asian Studies (University of Hong Kong) and of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (New Delhi).

① P. S. Suryanarayana, "Optimism in China on ties with India", *The Hindu* (New Delhi), 16 May, 2004, p. 13; K. Natwar Singh, "Foreign policy is evolutionary, not revolutionary", *The Pioneer* (New Delhi), 24 May, 2004, p. 6; Peter Kammerer, "India applies a below torch to icy relations with old foes", *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong), 11 June, 2004, p. A-20; also S. Rajagopalan and Saurabh Shukla, "Natwar hints at Iraq rethink", *The Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), 11 June, 2004, p. 1.

countries.^① Equally controversial has been his proposal for evolving a common India-China-Pakistan nuclear doctrine.^② In view of his initial visits to Nepal, United States, Pakistan and China within the first month of taking over as India's foreign minister, this new enthusiasm for redefining the contours of India's foreign policy was seen as projecting stronger focus on multilateralism and on India's immediate periphery both of which augur well for China-India relations.

It is in this new context of India's evolving fresh thinking on its China policy that this paper tries to revisit, enumerate and highlight the significance of several new initiatives and to examine them in the context of dominant trends in recent years in order to crystal-gaze likely future trends in China-India relations.

New Initiatives

To begin with, the new Indian government has already revived most of their bilateral channels and repeatedly expressed its commitment to continue the last government's China policy of "normalizing, strengthening and expanding" engagement with Beijing.^③ Indeed, the recent events vindicate new government's deeper tilt towards multilateralism as its approach in foreign policy and on multilateral forums as instruments for conduct of its foreign relations. This is bound to enhance chances of China and India working together beyond their bilateral concerns thereby strengthening frameworks like the United Nations, regional institutions and non-institutionalised forums like the Russia-China-India strategic triangle. As part of their established practice to discuss common strategies about issues on agenda for the annual General Assembly session in New York, the foreign ministers of these three countries are already scheduled to meet again for the

① Vinod Sharma and Saurabh Shukla, "Pak talks on China; Natwar", *The Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), 28 May, 2004, p. 15; Keshav Pradhan, "China ready to become part of SAARC", *The Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), 30 May, 2004, p. 20; B. Muralidhar Reddy, "China model not relevant in India, Pakistan relations", *The Hindu* (New Delhi), 31 May, 2004, p. 11.

② "China mum on India's call for 'common' nuclear doctrine", *The Indian Express* (New Delhi), 02 June, 2004, p. 14; "A halt to arms race" (Editorial), *Dawn* (Karachi), 06 June, 2004, p. 12; Shireen M. Mazari, "Dealing with Indian negativity", *The News*, 09 June, 2004, p. 10; "Jaswant slams Natwar on Pak, common nuke doctrine", *Outlook* at http://www.outlookindia.com/pti_news.asp?id=225738, 02 June, 2004, p. 1; "Security experts aghast over nuke doctrine", *The Economic Times* (New Delhi), 02 June, 2004, p. 2; "The First Step" (Editorial), *The Times of India* (New Delhi), 05 June, 2004, p. 12.

③ Ding Ying, "Sino-Indo Links In Good Shape" (Interview with Indian Ambassador to China), *Beijing Review*, Vol. 47 No. 23 (10 June, 2004), p. 25.

third time.^①

As regards new government's specific initiatives in relation to China, the most visible may include decision to (a) revive the boundary dialogue between their "special representatives," (b) Foreign Minister undertaking a successful visit to Beijing within a month of his taking office, (c) bilateral trade continuing to expand exponentially, and (d) a high level visit from Chinese side being widely expected to take place before end of this year.^② Amongst one of the first decisions of the new government, India had announced that new National Security Advisor to Prime Minister, J. N. Dixit, will be representing India at the border settlement dialogue with Dai Bingguo—as was agreed upon during former Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit to China during June 2003—and that their third meeting was to be organized "very shortly."^③ This was followed by announcement of Foreign Minister's visit to China for 21 – 23 June 2004 which was his first important foreign visit to be announced other than his visit to Nepal while his visit to the United States was unplanned (to represent India at funeral of former US President Ronald Reagan).

What lends credence to new Foreign Minister's enthusiasm about redefining the framework of India's foreign policy include (a) long years of experience of new foreign minister both as career diplomat and as junior minister in foreign office and (b) the strong likelihood of foreign policy returning to the foreign office (instead of being run from Prime Minister's office). More specifically, Foreign Minister's experience of China goes back to his years in Beijing University and as young diplomat in Beijing during prime minister, Nehru's peak years of his indulgence with the Chinese leaders (1956 – 1958) to his continued indulgence and several subsequent visits to China ever since. Besides, as old guard in the Congress lexicon, the old Congress Party culture and ethos will also be a good barometer to examine the future of his initiatives. Of course, foreign policy in general and India's China policy in particular has had the advantage of national consensus and the positive trends of last few years are likely to be further strengthened despite transitional hiccups that might just delay few ongoing

① The three Foreign Ministers have been holding such meetings since September 2002. See Vladimir Radyuhin, "India-Russia-China triangle has good prospects", *The Hindu* (New Delhi), 22 February 2004, p. 12; "China-India-Russia trilateral interaction of good prospect: Russian diplomat", *Peoples Daily* (Beijing), at http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/2004/24/eng20040224_135679.shtml

② the strong likelihood of foreign policy returning to the foreign office (instead of being run from Prime Minister's office).

③ Siddharth Varadarajan, "Dixit to be envoy for China talks", *The Times of India* (New Delhi), 01 June 2004, p. 1; "J. N Dixit to head China talks", *The Times of India* (New Delhi), 02 June 2004, p. 13.

parleys. But going by the pace of new Foreign Minister's activism this transition time is likely to be really short one.

Recent Trends

Talking of recent trends in China-India ties, former Prime Minister, Vajpayee's visit to China during June, 2003 is generally described as historic for two initiatives: (i) upgrading their border negotiations to the level of their 'Special Representatives' to provide a "political perspective" which meant desire to sign a package deal as soon as possible and (ii) opening of long-overdue Nathu La pass as their third border trade route which also underlined China's recognition of Sikkim as part of Indian republic while India also re-iterated its position on Tibet as being part of China's territory.^① In this positive political environment their bilateral trade has moved from \$ 1.9 billion for 1999 to \$ 7.6 billion for 2003 and it is expected to cross \$ 10 billion figure before end of year 2004. All this marks a full circle from the time India had conducted nuclear tests during May 1998 when China-India ties had reached their nadir.

As regards the traditions of Congress Party, the centrality of China as India's largest neighbour had been repeatedly underlined by the earlier Congress governments. In addition to Nehru's excessive indulgence with China, it was during Mrs. Indira Gandhi's time that first overtures were made during 1970 for reviving China-India ties and their diplomatic ties had been revived to the level of Ambassadors during 1975.^② The second trend-setting initiatives were again to begin with the breakthrough visit by Congress Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi which had marked the historic U-turn in India's China policy.^③ Later, two other historic agreements between China and India during 1993 and 1996 were also signed during Congress rule first as Prime Minister, P. V. Narasimharao, was visiting Beijing during September 1993 and later during the visit by Chinese leader Jiang Zemin to India during November-December 1996.

Keeping in tune with this track-record of Congress governments, the opening lines of the third paragraph on foreign policy in new coalition government's Common Minimum Programme were only to be expected. It reads: "Trade and investment with China will be expanded further and talks

① Swaran Singh and Zhao Gancheng, "Vajpayee's China visit", *SIIS Journal* (Shanghai) vo. 10 No. 3, (August, 2003), pp. 23 - 28; also Swaran Singh, *China-South Asia: Issues, Equations, Policies*, New Delhi: Lancer's Books, 2003, pp. 140, 142.

② Chua Shen-chun, "Peking-New Delhi relations in recent years", *Issues & Studies* (Taipei), vol. 22 No. 3, (March, 1986), p. 142.

③ Surjit Mansingh, "India-China relations in the post-Cold War era", *Asian Survey*, vol. xxiv No. 3, (March, 1994), p. 289.

on the border issue pursued seriously.”^① The same sentiment was again reinforced during Foreign Minister’s successful visit to Beijing during 21 – 23 June, 2004.^② Nevertheless, all such positive intent remains as-yet-fragile and continues to face the skepticism from both sides. As the events around India’s nuclear tests of May, 1998 aptly describe their bonhomie remains precarious and their fallback positions so parochial and conservative compared to the visible dynamism of leadership on both sides.

India’s Nuclear Tests

To briefly recall, apart from the fact that it was surely not the US-led non-proliferation regimes but China that was really the most affected party from nuclear tests by India and Pakistan, two specific events had hurt the Chinese beyond redemption. These were (a) then defence minister, George Fernandes’ reference to China as India’s enemy number one, and (b) a letter dated 11 May 1998 from Prime Minister, Vajpayee to President Clinton explaining India’s nuclear tests in terms of wars with China, China’s nuclear weapons and their proliferation to Pakistan. No doubt, India was quick to realized its folly and tried to make concerted efforts to explain its behaviour to Beijing as also to make amends but this still was to take some time. Nevertheless, by any standards, just like the building of China’s anti-India campaign during May–June 1998, China’s response was to begin sobering down before end of September 1998. Gradually, this campaign at global forum was to move towards bilateral channels and China was to begin exploring seriously into India’s limitations and motives.^③

Thereafter, most analyses were to relate these tests to India’s quest for becoming a great power or more specifically for obtaining a permanent membership of the UN Security Council or other regional forums. Before this, however, there were several other motives that were being attached to India’s nuclear tests like (a) trying to be a hegemon in South Asia by carving out Tibet as buffer against China and by keeping India Ocean as its exclusive domain, (b) building nuclear deterrence against China and Pakistan and

① “UPA Government to adhere to six basic principles of governance”, *The Hindu* (New Delhi), 28 May, 2004, p. 12.

② This was part of two-day meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue involving about 20 countries from June 21, 2004. At this meeting held at Qingdao (coastal city of Shandong Province) China’s Foreign Minister, Li Zhaoxing held separate meeting with Indian Foreign Minister, Natwar Singh and two sides exchanged views on whole range of issues.

③ The contrast is clearly visible in two statements one by China’s foreign ministry issued on 14th May, 1998 and other Speech by China’s Ambassador to India at India International Center (New Delhi) both available in *New From China* (Chinese Embassy Delhi), Issues published on 10 June, 1998 and 28 October, 1998.

taking a more aggressive approach at border settlements, (c) to dreaming of a great Indian Federation including Pakistan, Bangladesh and Tibet; and, (d) linking these to the ruling Bhartiya Janata Party's radical nationalism and its political compulsions and so on.^①

Apart from few interaction between the communist parties of China and India, the first focussed initiative marking the return to their post-1998 *rapprochement* was China Institute for Contemporary Relations (CICIR) inviting Indian experts to Beijing during October 1998 to discuss the future of India-China relations. This was reciprocated by Indian side inviting two Chinese delegations to India during November 1998 and January 1999 which were respectively hosted by Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS) and Center for Policy Research (CPR) in New Delhi. Of these, the second five-member delegation from Beijing was led by former Chinese Ambassador to India, Cheng Ruisheng. They visited New Delhi during January 24 – 29, 1999 and, in addition to their three-day deliberations with Indian experts, they also called on India's President, K. R. Naraynan. This was very significant in terms of sending positive signals about their post-1998 *rapprochement*. As next step, the Chinese business firms participated in trade fairs in New Delhi during 1 – 15 November, 1998 and 14 – 17 February, 1999 which projected return of normalcy in post-1998 India-China interactions.

All these non-official interactions were to provide the necessary base for the first Indian official delegation led by a Joint Secretary (East Asia) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that visited Beijing during February 24 – 28, 1999. This exploratory visit was a follow up to India's call for reviving official dialogue of India-China Joint Working Group on Boundary Question as also to explore the details of overdue visit by India's President to Beijing. Following this first official visit by India's official delegation, the two sides agreed to hold their fifth Joint Business Council meeting on March 15, 1999 and sixth one met soon in year 2000. The seal of normalcy was finally put on India-China ties as the two sides held the 11th meeting of the Joint Working Group on the Boundary Question in Beijing during April 1999. This forum, by far, remains the most generic and regular forum in China-India interactions and most of the important decisions often trace their roots in the deliberations at these interactions.

① See for example Ye Zhengjia, "Wushi nian lai de Zhong-Yin guanxi: Jingyan he Jiaoxun", (Experience and Lessons in 50 years of China-India ties), *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu* (Journal of International Studies), (Beijing), No. 4 (1999), p. 21; or Wang Hongwei, "Tancheng Duihua, Shiyi Zeng Xin", (Frank Dialogue, Dispel Doubts, Increase Trust), *Nanya Yanjiu* (South Asian Journal), (Beijing), No. 1 (1999), p. 15.