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The journey from Xiamen, a Chinese port city across the Taiwan Straits, to Wuhan in Hubei province is more than 1,000 km long, and when Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) meets Chinese President Xi Jinping on April 27 in Wuhan, they would have taken eight months to cover it — the two leaders last met in September 2017 in Xiamen. It is welcome that the peace between Asia's biggest powers has held. Both leaders must now be congratulated for agreeing to meet face-to-face and talk about their differences and disagreements, and decide on how to resolve them. It is important for Beijing to understand Delhi's aspiration for a place on the international high table. Equally, Delhi must comprehend the ambition and passion behind the rise and rise of China, as it snaps at the heels of the US.

The announcement over the weekend in Beijing during External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj's visit has the potential to break the pattern of bitterness that has been developing between the two nations in recent years. Certainly, the Chinese seem to also want a "reset" in ties with India and have pulled out the carpet for Swaraj; she has met both President Xi and Vice-President Wang Qishan, a key decision-maker who has been seconded by Xi to deal with the US. It is being speculated that President Xi will treat Prime Minister Modi to a tour of the sprawling villa on the banks of the Yangtze river once favoured by Chairman Mao — the Great Helmsman's villa can now be rented for overnight stays. The extent to which the Communist Party of China has changed and remains the same can be gauged from the fact that Xi has picked relaxed and beautiful Wuhan for his informal summit with India's Prime Minister, not the relatively stiff Beijing.

The Modi-Xi meeting in Xiamen in August last year marked the formal end of the 72-day stand-off between India and China in Doklam. Other issues such as China's refusal to support India's full membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, its protection of Pakistan-based terrorist Masood Azhar at the UN, its determination to build a highway across Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir as well as its expanding presence across South Asia, have angered Delhi. With the future of 2.5 billion people at stake, there is no option for the leaderships of Delhi and Beijing but to sit across the table — or walk together on the banks of the Yangtze — and try and resolve their resentments. China's economy may be five times larger and its armed forces several times stronger than India, but the fact remains that there is no alternative to dialogue. A new modus vivendi between Asia's largest powers is the need of the hour

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