



Indo - China Relations -an Overview

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OBJECTIVES

- To look into the relationship of India and China from a historical perspective.
- To analyse the various factors for dispute between the two nations.
- To see whether there has been any change in the relationship of India and China.
- To see what can be done to improve the bilateral relationship of India and China.
- Initiatives taken by both the countries to solve their issues

INTRODUCTION

- India and People's Republic of China are geographically located in the continent of Asia and are in the southern part of it.
- Both the nations have major role to play in the South Asian politics as well as the world politics and are considered superpower nations.
- Initially, both the nations shared a cordial relationship and also had a brotherly bond with each other.
- There were slogans which were made to strengthen this bond like "Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai"
- The pact signed between the two countries named the Pancasheel Agreement, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, served as a symbol of friendship between two of the world's most populous countries .
- It also codified the process of interaction within the developing world and became an antecedent to subsequent norms of regional interaction, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' Treaty of Amity and Cooperation.

DIFFERENT PHASES OF INDO-CHINA TIES

- The evolution of India-China relations has been complex and has gone through various phases since their independence.
- **Early Years (1950s-1960s):**
- After India's independence in 1947, the leaders of both India and China, Jawaharlal Nehru and Mao Zedong, envisioned a close friendship based on shared historical and anti-colonial sentiments.
- In 1950, India recognized the People's Republic of China and established diplomatic relations.
- The two countries signed the Panchasheel Agreement in 1954, emphasizing peaceful coexistence and non-interference in each other's internal affairs.
- However, border disputes over the region of Tibet escalated tensions, leading to the Sino-Indian War in 1962, which China won decisively

Strategic Distance (1970s-1980s):

- After the war, India and China had minimal diplomatic and trade relations, and mistrust prevailed.
- India's growing proximity with the Soviet Union and China's rivalry with the USSR further strained the relationship.
- In 1978, Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms in China initiated a period of economic growth and openness, paving the way for improved relations

Efforts for Normalization (1980s):

- In the 1980s, both countries sought to normalize relations through diplomatic engagement and confidence-building measures.
- In 1988, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited China, marking a significant step in improving ties.
- The two sides signed agreements to maintain peace and tranquillity along the disputed border, leading to the establishment of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India China Border affairs (WMCC) in 2012.

Post-Cold War Era (1990s onwards):

- With the end of the Cold War, both India and China aimed to develop a more cooperative relationship.
- Economic engagement became a central pillar of their engagement, with trade and investment increasing significantly.
- In 2003, the two countries agreed on the formation of the Special Representatives Mechanism to address the boundary question.

However, border disputes, particularly over the regions of Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh, persisted and occasionally led to military standoffs.

Recent Developments:

- In recent years, India-China relations have faced significant challenges.
- The Doklam standoff in 2017, where Indian and Chinese troops faced off in the disputed Doklam plateau, strained ties.
- The deadliest clash in decades occurred in June 2020 in the Galwan Valley, resulting in casualties on both sides.

CURRENT SCENARIO

- The recent developments in India-China relations have raised concerns about the possibility of a future conflict between the two nations.
- The use of Sun Tzu's philosophy of winning without fighting has also been questioned, with others arguing that China is preparing for war.
- India and China's strained relationship has been fuelled by recent Chinese provocations, including
 - The allocation of names to places in Arunachal Pradesh,
 - Denial of visas to Indian media personnel,
 - President's statements on preparing for war.

These events have led to concerns about China's intentions and the need for India to be prepared for any eventualities.

- In this context, India's defence preparedness has come under scrutiny, with the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence highlighting the need for urgent modernisation of the armed forces.

THE AREAS OF THE INDO-CHINA CONFLICT

THE INDIA-CHINA BORDER

India shares **3,488 km** of border with China that runs along

Jammu & Kashmir
1,597 km

Himachal Pradesh
200 km

Uttarakhand
345 km

Sikkim
220 km

and
Arunachal Pradesh
1,126 km

ITBP has established **173** border outposts along the Line of Actual Control (LoAC): **35** in the western sector (**Jammu & Kashmir**), **71** in the middle sector (**Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand**), and **67** in the eastern sector (**Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh**).

WHEN INDIA AND CHINA CLASHED

1962
India-China full-scale war

1967
Brief border clash in Sikkim

1975
Ambush at Tulung La in Arunachal Pradesh

1987
Sumdorong Chu standoff near Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh

2015
Faceoff in Burtse region of northern Ladakh

2017
Doklam military standoff

2022
Skirmishes including Gatwan valley clash

- INDIA, CHINA BORDER PERSONNEL MEETING POINTS
- INDIA, CHINA DISPUTED LOCATIONS (WESTERN SECTOR)
- INDIA, CHINA DISPUTED LOCATIONS (EASTERN SECTOR)

2013
Depsang

2020
Gatwan

2014
Chumar

2017
Doklam

2022
Tawang



CAUSES OF CONFLICT

1.The Dispute: India-China relations have gone through cycles of conflict and cooperation over nearly 75 years.

- The most serious recent episodes of conflict were in Galwan Valley in Ladakh in 2020 and in Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh in 2022.
- Observers on both sides of the border—the Line of Actual Control (LAC)—agree that the number of serious military confrontations has increased since 2013.

2.No Clear Demarcation: The border between India and China is not clearly demarcated throughout and there is no mutually agreed Line of Actual Control (LAC) along certain stretches.

- LAC came into existence after the 1962 Indo China war.
- India-China border is divided into three sectors.
- Western Sector: The Aksai Chin region is a territorial dispute where both countries claim it as part of their own territory.
- Middle Sector: China stakes claim over an area in Uttarakhand, creating a border dispute.
- Eastern Sector: The McMahon Line, the boundary between India and Tibet, is disputed by China.

Johnson Line vs. McDonald Line: India and China hold different positions on the demarcation of the border.


3.String of Pearls: China's strategic presence and infrastructure development in various countries surrounding India, such as Sri Lanka, Pakistan, the Maldives, Bangladesh, and Myanmar, raise concerns about encirclement.

4.Water Dispute: China's construction of dams in the upper reaches of the Brahmaputra River (Tsangpo) without a formal water-sharing treaty poses a threat to India, leading to concerns over water availability and flooding.

5.Dalai Lama and Tibet: China accuses India of fomenting trouble in Tibet due to the presence of the Dalai Lama and protests staged by Tibetans against China in India and other countries.

6.Arunachal Pradesh and Stapled Visa: China issuing stapled visas to residents of Arunachal Pradesh questions India's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

7.South China Sea: China's territorial claims in the South China Sea, contested by neighbouring countries, pose concerns for freedom of navigation and stability in the region, which affects India's strategic interests.



8. Bhutan and Nepal: China criticizes India's role and relationship with Bhutan and Nepal, attempting to influence their ties and play the "China card" against India.

9. China's Belt and Road Initiative: India opposes China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), particularly the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which passes through Indian territory claimed by Pakistan.

10. China-Pakistan Nexus: China's support to Pakistan in military

11. Doklam Standoff: The Doklam/Doka La region dispute between China and Bhutan, with India's military and diplomatic support to Bhutan, has led to tensions in the area.

12. Galwan Valley Standoff: The deadly clash between Indian and Chinese troops in the Galwan Valley, resulting in casualties, highlights the ongoing border tensions and the need for de-escalation efforts.

13. Partnerships with each other's main enemies, including the Soviet Union/Russia and the United States, have prevented them from becoming strategic partners and cooperating on strategic matters.

14. The growing power gap between China and India: With China's GDP being five times that of India's, has made it difficult for India to be accommodative without appearing to surrender.

15. Infrastructure build-up, particularly in Tibet, has led to a security dilemma in which military relations go into a spiral that could tempt one side or both to go to war.

These challenges have contributed to strained relations between India and China and require diplomatic efforts and negotiations to address and resolve the disputes.

THE BORDER DISPUTE SETTLEMENT MECHANISMS

- **The Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity:**
 - It was **signed in 1993**, which called for a renunciation of the use of force, recognition of the LAC, and the resolution of the border issue through negotiations.
- **The Agreement on Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field along the LAC:**
 - It was signed in 1996, which laid down pledges on non-aggression, prior notification of large troop movements, and exchange of maps to resolve disagreements over the LAC.
- **The Border Defence Co-operation Agreement:**
 - It was signed in 2013 following the Depsang Valley incident.

WAY FORWARD

1. Diplomatic Engagement:

It is crucial to maintain open channels of communication to avoid any misunderstandings or escalation of tensions.

2. Reassess Defence Acquisition Plans:

India needs to re-evaluate its defence acquisition plans to ensure that they are geared towards long-term sustainability, rather than just possessing capability.

3. Prepare for Potential Conflict:

India needs to prepare for the possibility of conflict with China, particularly given the Chinese President's recent articulations at the National People's Congress.

This preparation should involve bolstering India's military capabilities, particularly in the Indian Air Force, Indian Army, and Indian Navy.

4. Allocate Adequate Funds for Defence:

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence has recommended that allocation for defence should be 3% of GDP to maintain India's deterrent posture.

The Indian government should seriously consider this recommendation and allocate sufficient funds for defence, rather than relying on emergency armament purchases from abroad.

5. Emphasize Negotiations from a Position of Strength:

India should adopt a negotiating strategy that emphasizes its strength and power, rather than capitulation.

This would involve casting a shadow of power across the bargaining table and making it clear that India is prepared to defend its interests.

6. Border Infrastructure Development:

Development of infrastructure along the border, such as roads and bridges, can help both countries access remote areas and reduce the possibility of any misunderstandings or conflicts.

CONCLUSION

- According to the majority of political experts, the global political architecture is changing as power gradually shifts from the West to the East.
- Despite favourable changes in the recent few years, the trajectory of the India-China relationship is still very convoluted and challenging to understand.
- India and China are still in tactical engagement, not in strategic partnership.
- India should focus on small and pragmatic steps to narrow the differences with China on bilateral issues especially the boundary dispute, trade deficit and development of regional infrastructure.
- India must have a broader but realistic vision to expand the awareness of deep tactical engagement with powerful China.

QUIZ

1. Which of the following principles is not mentioned in the Panchasheel Policy-

i) Equality and mutual trust

ii) Economic interdependence

iii) Mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity

iv) Mutual non-interference in internal matters

A. (i) (ii) and (iii) only

B. (i) (ii) and (iv) only

C. (i) (iii) and (iv) only

D. All the above




2. In which year did India face the China aggression-

A. 1955

B. 1964

C. 1962

D. 1965



3. Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity along with the Line of Actual Control (LAC) on India-China Border was signed during the Prime Ministership of-

A. Atal Bihari Vajpayee

B. Rajiv Gandhi

C. Jawahar Lal Nehru

D. Narshima Rao

4. Which of the following statement is correct-

(i) Chau-En -Lai held talks with Nehru about Dalai Lama's stay in India


(ii) Nehru asked Dalai Lama to go back to Tibet.

A. Statement (i) is correct

B. Statement (ii) is correct

C. Both the Statements are not correct

D. Both the Statements are correct




5. Which of the following Armed Forces had not participated during the Indo-China War-

A. Indian Army

B. Indian Navy

C. Indian Air force

D. Indo-Tibet Border Police



6. Which of the following soldiers from Indian Army was honoured with Mahavir Chakra after Indo-China War-

A. Captain Vikram Bhatt

B. Major Sandeep Unnikrishnan

C. Jaswant Singh Rawat

D. Captain Manoj Pandey




7. Which of the following Indian state does not share a border with China?

(a) Sikkim

(b) Assam

(c) Himachal Pradesh

(d) Uttarakhand




8. What is the name of the line between India and China border?

(a) Redcliff Line

(b) Durand Line

(c) McMahon Line

(d) Silent line



9. Which of the following is not the disputed site between India & China?

(a) Doklam

(b) Galwan valley

(c) Depsang Plains

(d) Lipulekh pass

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10. Which of the following country does not share a border with India?

A. Myanmar

B. Nepal

C. Bhutan

D. Maldives



11. Which of the following country has the longest border with India?

(a) China

(b) Bangladesh

(c) Pakistan

(d) Nepal




12. Which of the following country does not have a maritime border with India?

A. China

B. Myanmar

C. Pakistan

D. Bangladesh



13. Which force take care of the land border of India against China?

A. Border Security Force

B. Sashastra Seema Bal

C. Indo-Tibetan Border Police and Special Frontier Force

D. Central Reserve Police Force



14. What is the defence budget of India?

(a) US\$ 178 billion

(b) US\$ 70 billion

(c) US\$ 300 billion

(d) US\$ 110 billion

15. Consider the following statements regarding the India-China border dispute-

1. The boundary line at the LAC is called the McMahon Line in the Eastern sector.
2. The McMahon line was proposed under the Shimla Accord in 1914.
3. During the Sino-Indian war of 1962, Tawang fell under Chinese control but India gained it back with the help of Russia.

Choose the CORRECT answer using the codes given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 1 and 2 only
- C. 2 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3 only

THANK YOU