

## Sino-India relations: A new paradigm

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### Abstract

China–India relations, also called Sino-Indian relations or Indo-China relations, refer to the bilateral relationship between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of India. China and India are separated by the Himalayas. China and India today share a border with Nepal and Bhutan acting as buffer states. Relations between contemporary China and India have been characterised by border disputes, resulting in three military conflicts — the Sino-Indian War of 1962, the Chola incident in 1967, and the 1987 Sino-Indian skirmish. India never suspected that China would ever launch an attack, but it did. India was attacked on October 20, 1962 in what famously came to be known as Sino-India war of 1962. 2003: Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee makes a landmark visit to China -- the first Indian head of government to visit China in ten years -- to strengthen relations. China acquires Top position in Asia for Nuclear Technology. If India enters to NSG will fluctuate Asian flow on Nuclear Technology, which will adversely effect on Chinese power full position on Asia. Should India get membership to the NSG, it can block Pakistan from its membership as entry into the grouping is by consensus only. This is one of the reasons why China is pushing to include Pakistan as well as pointing out that India as a non-signatory to the NPT cannot be a member. 8<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit concluded with adaptation of Goa Declaration. Several steps have been taken to enhance bilateral issues between the two counterparts, one of them was -The summit “Building Responsive, Inclusive and Collective Solutions”. In nutshell smooth SINO-India relations are integral for the growth and development of India and China as well so as to present themselves supreme powers in the world.

**Keywords:** sino-indian relations, indo-china relations

### Introduction

China–India relations, also called Sino-Indian relations or Indo-China relations, refer to the bilateral relationship between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of India. China and India are the two most populous countries and fastest growing major economies in the world. Growth in diplomatic and economic influence has increased the significance of their bilateral relationship. Cultural and economic relations between China and India date back to ancient times. The Silk Road not only served as a major trade route between India and China, but is also credited for facilitating the spread of Buddhism from India to East Asia <sup>[1]</sup>. During the 19th century, China's growing opium trade with the British Raj triggered the First and Second Opium Wars <sup>[2]</sup>.

Relations between contemporary China and India have been characterised by border disputes, resulting in three military conflicts — the Sino-Indian War of 1962, the Chola incident in 1967, and the 1987 Sino-Indian skirmish. However, since the late 1980s, both countries have successfully rebuilt diplomatic and economic ties. In 2008, China became India's largest trading partner and the two countries have also extended their strategic and military relations <sup>[3]</sup>.

The first records of contact between China and India were written during the 2nd century BCE. Buddhism was transmitted from India to China in the 1st century CE. Trade relations via the Silk Road acted as economic contact between the two regions.

### British India

The British East India Company used opium grown in India as export to China. Britain used their Indian sepoys and the British Indian Army in the Opium Wars and Boxer Rebellion against China. The British used Indian soldiers to guard the foreign concessions in areas like Shanghai.

### India-China War Of 1962

India never suspected that China would ever launch an attack, but it did. India was attacked on October 20, 1962 in what famously came to be known as Sino-India war of 1962. The belief of not ever being attacked by China did not let the Indian army prepare and the result was the standoff between 10,000-20,000 Indian troops and 80,000 Chinese troops. The war continued for about a month and ended on November 21, 54 years ago, after China declared a ceasefire. On the 54th anniversary of the end of Sino-Indian War, let us take you through a timeline regarding how the war began and all that took place during its course:

### How did it start?

With the independence of the Republic of India and the formation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the year 1949, one of the policies for the Indian government was that of maintaining cordial relations with China.

When China announced that it would be occupying Tibet, India sent a letter of protest proposing negotiations on the Tibet issue.

<sup>1</sup> Backus, Maria. *Ancient China*. Lorenz Educational Press, 2002. ISBN 978-0-7877-0557-2.

<sup>2</sup> Janin, Hunt. *The India-China opium trade in the nineteenth century*. McFarland, 1999. ISBN 978-0-7864-0715-6.

<sup>3</sup> India-China trade surpasses target, *The Hindu*, 27 January 2011

China was even more active in deploying troops on the Aksai Chin border than any other Indian republic was India was so concerned about its relations with China that it did not even attend a conference for the conclusion of a peace treaty with Japan because China was not invited. India even strove to become China's representative in matters related to world since China had been isolated from many issues. In July 1954, Nehru wrote a memo directing a revision in the maps of India to show definite boundaries on all frontiers; however, Chinese maps showed some 120,000 square kilometres of Indian Territory as Chinese. On being questioned, Zhou Enlai, the first Premier of People's Republic of China, responded that there were errors in the maps. Top People's Republic of China leader, Mao Zedong felt humiliated by the reception Dalai Lama obtained in India when he fled there in March 1959. Tensions increased between the two nations when Mao stated that the Lhasa rebellion in Tibet was caused by Indians.

China's perception of India as a threat to its rule of Tibet became one of the most prominent reasons for the Sino-Indian War On July 10, 1962, around 350 Chinese troops surrounded an Indian post at Chushul and used loudspeakers to convince the Gurkhas that they should not be fighting for India.

In October 1959, India realised that it was not ready for war after a clash between the two armies at Kongka Pass, in which nine Indian policemen were killed; the country assumed responsibility for the border and pulled back patrols from disputed areas <sup>[4]</sup>.

### 1980's the Decade of Change

In 1976 - China and India resumed ambassadorial level diplomatic relations.

In 1978, the Indian Minister of External Affairs Atal Bihari Vajpayee made a landmark visit to Beijing, and both countries officially re-established diplomatic relations in 1979.

In 1993, then Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao visited China and the two sides signed the Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Area.

1998 - Sino-Indian relations hit a low point in 1998 following India's nuclear tests. Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes declared that "China is India's number one threat", hinting that India developed nuclear weapons in defence against China's nuclear arsenal. In 1998, China was one of the strongest international critics of India's nuclear tests and entry into the nuclear club. During the 1999 Kargil War China voiced support for Pakistan, but also counselled Pakistan to withdraw its forces. Deterioration in Relations - There had been deterioration in Sino-Indian relations after the conduction of nuclear tests by India. China adopted a brazenly partisan attitude by terming India's nuclear tests as "outrageous" but describing Pakistan's nuclear tests an only "regrettable". Senior officials in the government of India articulated the "China threat"

Normalisation of Relations - In Apr 1999, China restarted an official dialogue with India. The Joint Working Group (JWG) was convened in Beijing after 11 months delay because of China's refusal to set dates. The visit by the (then) External Affairs Minister of India, Mr. Jaswant Singh, to China in June 1999, followed by the President, Mr. Narayanan's visit in early 2000, helped in the normalisation of bilateral relations.

### Series of Events

2003: Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee makes a landmark visit to China -- the first Indian head of government to visit China in ten years -- to strengthen relations.

2005: Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visits Bangalore to push for an increase in Sino-Indian cooperation in high-tech industries. India and China also sign an agreement aimed at resolving disputes over their Himalayan border. In the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Summit in 2005, China was granted an observer status. While other countries in the region are ready to consider China for permanent membership in the SAARC, India seemed reluctant.

2009: India and China become embroiled in a dispute over Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Arunachal Pradesh. China expresses "strong dissatisfaction" on the visit to the "disputed area." India responds by saying Arunachal Pradesh is an "integral and inalienable" part of India.

August 27, 2010: India cancels defense exchanges with China after Beijing refuses to permit a top Indian army officer a visa because he "controlled" the disputed area of Jammu and Kashmir. India subsequently refuses to allow two Chinese defense officials to visit New Delhi, according to The Times of India.

In 2012, then Chinese President Hu Jintao told Singh during their meeting at the 2012 BRICS summit that "it is China's unswerving policy to develop Sino-Indian friendship, deepen strategic cooperation and seek common development" and that "China hopes to see a peaceful, prosperous and continually developing India and is committed to building a more dynamic China-India relationship". Then Premier Wen Jiabao also had a bilateral meeting with Singh during the UN conference on sustainable development

In March 2013, Xi met with then Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during the BRICS Summit in South Africa. On May 18, Premier Li Keqiang made his first foreign visit to India to stimulate economic relations and increase diplomatic cooperation.

On July 14, 2014, Chinese President Xi Jinping met with India's new Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the first time during the BRICS Summit in Brazil. "Joining hands for peaceful, cooperative and inclusive development to enable the 2.5 billion people in both countries to live a better life, and to promote the peace and development in the region and the world, are our biggest common interests," Xi told Modi.

### Border Dispute

The era of the late 19th century and the early 20th century was ripe with the European colonial powers finding new ways of exerting their influence in Asia and dividing it up. Tibet was no exception. For years, many kings and empires, from Muhammad Tukluq to the British, had tried to wrench Tibet from China, with no significant successes. Finally, the British came up with an underhand ploy to divide Tibet from within; so as to create a buffer state between British India and China; just as Mongolia had been divided and part of it made into a buffer between Russia and China. Sir Henry McMahon proposed the division of Tibet into an 'inner' and 'outer' Tibet. The Chinese representative saw through British

<sup>4</sup> <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/education/story/india-china-war-of-1962/1/528159.html>

imperial designs and smelt a rat; and thus left the Simla conference.

But the matter didn't end there. A note was appended to the Simla accord, which contained a map showing a part of Tibetan territory as Indian, based on a thick red line known as the McMahon line. Furthermore, China was barred from any rights and privileges of the Accord with respect to Tibet.

### Disputed Territories

The major territories which are disputed between these two countries can be divided into two distinct parts:

1) The Western Sector – Aksai Chin, which lies to the east of the Kashmir valley, covering an area of about 37,250 sq.km (14,380 sq.mi) – currently occupied by China.

### Aksai Chin

Historical claims on the Aksai China area are even more dubious. There has never been any concrete demarcation of this region.

Britain was concerned about Russia's designs in this area, and hence proposed to make the Karakorum Pass as the boundary, so as to again create a buffer between Xinjiang/China and India. In 1899, the British proposed to China that the whole of Aksai Chin would remain Chinese territory and the boundary would be along the Karakorum range; which is the status quo as of today. The Karakorum pass falls precisely on the boundary of territory controlled by India and China, marking northern end of Sino – Indian border, known as the Line of Actual Control. However, China didn't reply to this proposal, something which it would regret for years. If it had, the fate of Aksai Chin would have been sealed then and there.

2) The Eastern Sector – The Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, which China calls South Tibet, covering an area of 83,743 sq.km (32,333 sq.mi) – currently occupied by India.

In addition to these, there are also a few small chunks of territory in between these two sectors, but they are largely irrelevant when compared to these two major distinct territories.

### The McMahon Line

The McMahon line is the basis of the Indian claim to the area which was formerly known as the North-East Frontier Agency; and has since become the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. It was drawn with a complete disregard for cartographic techniques and the geography of the area. The scale was – eight miles to an inch <sup>[5]</sup>.

### India V China: The NSG Membership

A 48 member grouping that was formed in the aftermath of India's 1974 nuclear test with the aim of ensuring non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and nuclear technology. The 48 members of the NSG include the five nuclear weapon states, US, UK, France, China and Russia. The other 43 are signatories to the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT). India is not a signatory to the NPT which it calls discriminatory.

### Membership of the NSG means

1. Access to technology for a range of uses from medicine to building nuclear power plants for India from the NSG which is essentially a traders' cartel.
2. With India committed to reducing dependence on fossil fuels and ensuring that 40% of its energy is sourced from renewable and clean sources, there is a pressing need to scale up nuclear power production. This can only happen if India gains access to the NSG.
3. With access to latest technology, India can commercialize the production of nuclear power equipment <sup>[6]</sup>.

### Reason for China Opposing India's Membership

China acquires Top position in Asia for Nuclear Technology. If India enters to NSG will fluctuate Asian flow on Nuclear Technology, which will adversely effect on Chinese power full position on Asia. Should India get membership to the NSG, it can block Pakistan from its membership as entry into the grouping is by consensus only. This is one of the reasons why China is pushing to include Pakistan as well as pointing out that India as a non-signatory to the NPT cannot be a member. It comes down to a power game—keep India out and deny it access to various technologies. India's contention is that its nuclear technologies are indigenously developed and it has a clean non-proliferation record unlike Pakistan whose non-proliferation record was tainted with the revelations that its nuclear scientist A.Q Khan sold nuclear technologies to countries such as North Korea. China's non-proliferation record too is tainted with allegations that it has helped Pakistan on the sly, but given its economic clout the country is unlikely to attract sanctions <sup>[7]</sup>.

### South China Sea Conflict

China's claim to the South China Sea is based in history, dating back to records from the Xia and Han dynasties. China delineates its claims via the nine-dash line, which Chiang Kai Shek advanced in 1947. Control of the South China Sea would allow China to dominate a major trade route through which most of its imported oil flows. It would also allow China to disrupt, or threaten to disrupt, trade shipments to all countries in East and Southeast Asia — as well as deny access to foreign military forces, particularly the United States. The floor of the South China Sea may contain massive oil and natural gas reserves. Sovereignty over the region could give China a level of energy security and independence far beyond what it currently possesses <sup>[8]</sup>.

Since the publication of the nine-dash line, the region has grown increasingly concerned by China's perceived designs on the South China Sea. In 2012, Beijing bore out some of these concerns when it snatched Scarborough Shoal away from the Philippines. The two states had quarrelled over allegations of illegal poaching by Chinese fishermen. After a two-month standoff, the parties agreed to each withdraw from the Shoal. Manila did. Beijing did not. Since then, China has excluded Philippine boats from the Shoal's waters.

<sup>5</sup>India China border dispute, (Feb 4, 8:22AM), <http://www.gktoday.in/blog/india-china-border-dispute/>

<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth Roche, Why an NSG membership is important to India, Live Mint, (Feb3, 8:43PM),

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/GgIv7xn2DuFpDbsmGTcGpK/Why-a-NSG-membership-is-important-to-India.html>

<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth Roche, Why an NSG membership is important to India, Live Mint, (Feb3, 8:43PM),

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/GgIv7xn2DuFpDbsmGTcGpK/Why-a-NSG-membership-is-important-to-India.html>

<sup>8</sup> William Johnson, Everything you need to know about the South China Sea conflict – in under five minutes, (Feb3, 8:43PM),

<http://blogs.reuters.com/great-debate/2015/06/09/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-south-china-sea-conflict-in-under-five-minutes/>

In response to this escalatory move, Manila filed an arbitration case against China on January 22, 2013, under the auspices of the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Philippine claims centre on maritime law issues, although China asserts that they cannot be resolved without deciding territorial issues first. For that reason, Beijing has largely refused to participate in the proceedings, although it has drafted and publicly released a position paper opposing the tribunal's jurisdiction<sup>[9]</sup>

### Recent Advancements

#### Hong Kong revokes visa-free entry to Indians

Hong Kong, a China-administered special territory has decided to withdraw visa-free facility for Indians from January 23, 2017. This decision was taken on the ground to prevent illegal immigration as number of Indian asylum seekers was on the rise. Over half a million Indians visit Hong Kong for business, trade and holidays. Under the new rules, Indian travellers will have to complete a pre-arrival registration. Such pre-registration would not be necessary for those transiting through the Hong Kong airport without leaving the airport transit area<sup>[10]</sup>.

#### India, China Joint Training Exercise Hand in Hand

The sixth edition of India-China Joint Training Exercise "Hand in Hand 2016" has started in Pune, Maharashtra. The aim of the bilateral military exercise is to share the expertise in drills and practices while tackling insurgency and terrorism between Indian Army and People's Liberation Army of China. Thus, it seeks to promote healthy military to military relations between the two armies and developing joint strategies for conducting operations in a counter terrorism environment.

Key Facts: The 2016 Hand in Hand Exercise has been planned at the company level with respective battalion headquarters controlling the training. The exercise will be supervised by a joint directing panel comprising senior officials of both the nations. It will be conducted in three phases. The first phase will consist of familiarization with weapons and equipment. The second phase will consist of basic training that includes combat conditioning, support weapon and practice of drills like establishment of covert observation post, firing of personal weapon, house clearing, cordon and search and humanitarian and disaster relief operations. The third phase of the exercise is the conduct of joint exercise. This exercise will enrich the two contingents of both armies in further honing basic military skills. China to block India's bid for NSG membership<sup>[11]</sup>.

#### India, China hold 1st high-level dialogue to combat terror

India and China have hold the first High Level Dialogue on Counter-terrorism and Security held in Beijing, capital city of China. The meeting was co-chaired by R N Ravi, Chairman of Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) and Wang Yongqing, Secretary General of Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission of China. Key Facts In the high level dialogue both countries discussed on ways to enhance security and cooperation to combat terror. They exchanged information on respective policies to deal with terrorism, and further enhance their understanding on issues of major concern. They also exchanged

views on the international and regional security situation. It also deliberated on measures to jointly deal with security threats and reached important consensus in this regard.

#### 8<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit held in Goa

The eighth BRICS summit was held in Goa from 15 to 16 October 2016. The summit concluded with adaptation of Goa Declaration. The theme for the summit was "Building Responsive, Inclusive and Collective Solutions".

Key Highlights of Goa Declaration: BRICS nations condemn terrorism in all its forms and stressed that there can be no justification for such acts. International terrorism, especially the Islamic State (IS) is an unprecedented threat to international peace and security. Urgent need to reform the UN Security Council, to increase representation of developing countries. Resolution of civil war in Syria, in accordance with the "legitimate aspirations of the people of Syria" and action against U.N.-designated terrorist groups like IS and Jabhat al-Nusra.

All nations must counter radicalism and block sources of financing international terrorism, dismantling terrorist bases and countering misuse of the Internet including social media.

Welcomed adoption of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals. Reiterated determination to use all policy tools to achieve the goal of sustainable and inclusive growth<sup>[12]</sup>.

In conclusion the smooth SINO-India relations are integral for the growth and development of India and China as well so as to present themselves supreme powers in the world.

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