



Indo-Sino: Obfuscated Unrelenting Relations

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Abstract:

The relations between India and the People's Republic of China commence with an initial atmosphere of cordiality. But the affinity become sour after the Tibet issue, giving asylum to Dalai Lama in Dharamshala, the border dispute, the mistrust of each other took them into the war of 1962. After 1962 war, diplomatic relations between two countries were severed and after 1988, a period of reform began in it. Currently the Indo-Sino relations are in ambivalent, intimacy and vacillate by affinity mode. In the 21st century, Indo-Sino relations have evolved with notable positive aspects despite inherent complexities.

Keywords: Panchsheel, co-existence, expansionist policy, strategic, superficialities, tactical and economic relations, global geopolitics, treaty, bilateral, global geopolitics.

Gratified Commencement: -

Before World War II (1939-45), China was called the sick man of Asia. Superpowers like Britain, France, America & Japan victimized it politically and economically. But subsequently the Mao Zedong's communist revolution (1949), China emerged as a superpower in world politics and known as the People's Republic of China. About 200 years old Napoleon Bonaparte apprised the world about China when he said "*There is a sleeping Giant, let him sleep, for when he wakes, he will shake the world.*"

Panchsheel Fame/Prominence:-

India was the 1st non-communist country to give accreditation China. India was unacquainted its pseudo neighbor. On the 70th anniversary of Panchsheel, Xi Zinging, president of China giving reference of 5 principles called Panchsheel as the principles that'll stop the growing threats to the world. On 29 April, 1954 Panchsheel was born in response to a world asking for a new set of principles for the conduct of international relations that would mirror the appetency of all demos to co-exist and prosper halving in peace and harmony. The vision caught the chimera of the peoples of Asia and the cosmos. Panchsheel was incorporated into the ten principles of international peace and cooperation enunciated into the Declaration issued by the April, 1955 Bandung Conference of 29 Afro-Asian nations.

The Universal relevance of Panchsheel was emphases when its tenets were incorporated in a resolution on peaceful co-existence presented by India, Yugoslavia and Sweden and unanimously adopted on Dec 11, 1957, by the U.N. General Assembly. In 1961, the conference of non-alienated nations in Belgrade accepted Panchsheel as the quintessence tenet of the NAM.

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“There principles are good not only to our two nations but for others as well..... each country would have freedom to follow its own policy and work out its own destiny learning from other, cooperating with others, but basing itself essentially on its own genius.”

[Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, speaking at banquet held in honor of Premier Zhou Enlai in New Delhi on June 26, 1954]



Conflict-Pastiche began: -

China wanted to be the solely vigor, it first captured Tibet & made it part of China in 1950. China rejected all ceasefire proposals and participated enthusiastically in the Korean War. In 1956, Myanmar accused China of interfering in its internal affairs and providing repository and armature to anti-Myanmar governmental groups eke inciting minorities, especially the Kochin. Similar recrimination was pasted by realm such as Japan, Indonesia, Nepal, Vietnam & USSR. In 1959, for as much of atrocities on the Tibetan people and Dalai Lama fled Tibet, India endues refuge to Lama and his adherent in India. The buffer state gone omitted. China accused the Indian government of internally embolden anti-China activities. The underlay for the war amidst India & China in 1962 was border controversy. On 20 Oct 1962, the Chinese legion launched a fierce attack on the eastern & western regions of India. They seizure several whereabouts of Ladakh and NEFA. By the time, about 25000 square miles of superficies had come under Chinese confining. The war with China tainted the visage of India both at home and the world. India shares 3488 km of border with China that runs along the Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand (erstwhile part of UP), Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh and UT of Ladakh (erstwhile state of J&K). The border is not fully demarcated and the process of clarifying and confirming the LAC is in progress. The Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force (ITBP) is the Border Guarding Force at Indo-China Border.

Superficies Controversies: -

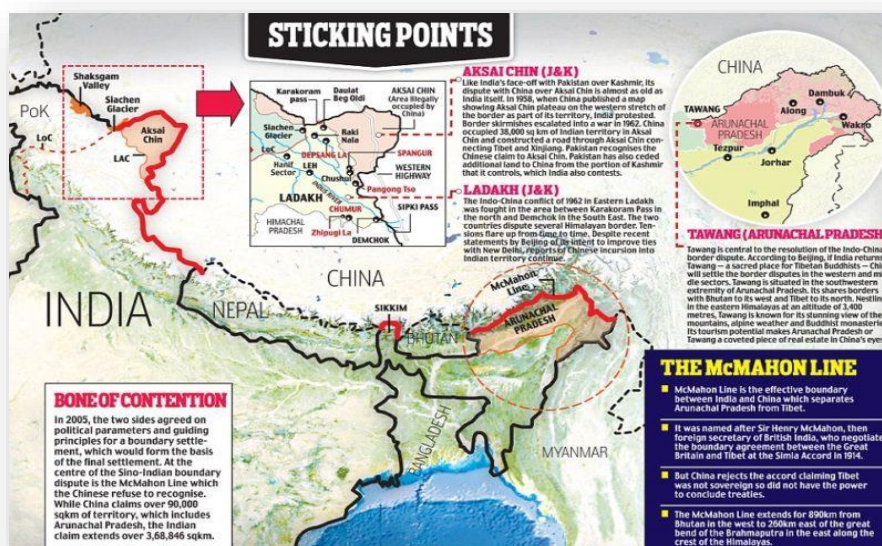
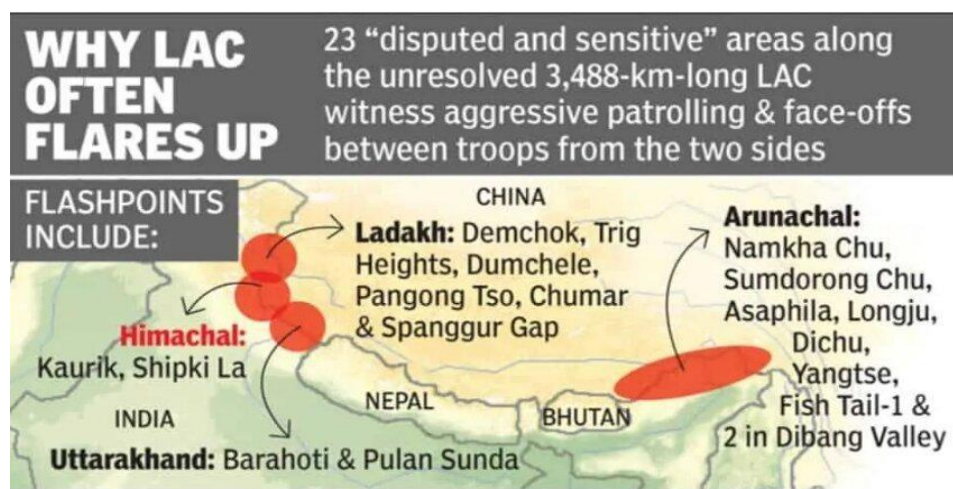
The border dispute amid Indo-Sino is dispensed into 3 parts mainly:

- **Western Sector: -** The main controversy here is over the ascendancy of Aksai-chin. Primordially, it was a segment of J&K is claimed by China as part of its autonomous Xinjiang region. China bereaves the Aksai-chin territory as well as the Shaksgam valley. Shaksgam valley part of Gilgit-Baltistan was prone away to China by Pakistan in 1963. Johnson line was proposed in 1865 and it marks Aksai-chin as an Indian

territory, India's accepted demarcation. Macartney-MacDonald line proposed in 1893 and it places Aksai-chin under Chinese territory.

- **Central Sector:** - It comprehends the hilly areas of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. In 1975, Sikkim was merged with India by 35th and 36th constitutional amendments but China opposed it and called it India's expansionist policy. In 2003, China recognized Sikkim as a part of Indian Territory, but still considers Finger Tip Region in the north of Sikkim as agonistic. There is initiated trade at Nathu-La Pass, but Doklam issue creates trouble at all.
- **Eastern Sector:** - India's claim in the eastern part is from the McMahan line in Arunachal Pradesh. It was created in the Shimla agreement of 1914, where the representative of British India was Henry McMahan. China doesn't accept this line as valid and claims almost the entire Arunachal Pradesh and called it Southern Tibet. China stakes his claim on the Tawang Monastery.

The main border issues are Barahoti, Demochok, Chumar, Nelang, Pulan Sumda Sang, Jadhang and Laphthal, Kaurik, Shilpki La, Depsang Plains, Aksai-chin, Galwan valley, Trans-Karakoram tract.



The Dragon and the Elephant: The evolving dynamics & navigating relations In the Modern era: -

“The dragon and the elephant” symbolize the contrasting yet intertwined relationship between India and China. These nations, among the world’s fastest-growing economies and most famous countries, significantly shape global geopolitics. The phrase encapsulates the evolving complexities of their association, characterized by economic collaboration and global participation, alongside rivalry in strategic interests and territorial disputes. The management of contemporary relations necessitates adept navigation of the dichotomy between cooperation and competition, amidst confronting challenges such as border tensions not only significantly affect their bilateral relations but also wield substantial influence over overarching global dynamics in the 21st century. The Chinese dragon and Indian elephant must not fight but dance with each other, China’s foreign minister Wang Yi said as he called on the two nations to shed mental inhibitions, manage differences and meet each other half way to enhance bilateral ties.

Recent time has seen the India-China relationship exhibiting severe bipolar tendencies. The year began with China refusing to support India’s entry into the Nuclear Supplied Group (NSG), stating membership to the group “ is not something to be given privately between countries as a farewell gift” - referring to the outgoing Obama administration’s strong support for India. Chinese veto to India’s NSG membership followed by an Indian boycott to the inaugural Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) Summit, held in the month of May.

Despite the participation of 120 countries, including 29 top leaders, at the Summit, India's conspicuous absence was underscored by its reservations concerning the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a pivotal component of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) perceived to undermine Indian sovereignty. The narrative shifted when Prime Minister Modi attended the 17th leadership Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Astana in June. This marked India's formal induction into the organization as a full member, and the brief interaction between Indian PM Modi and Chinese President Xi was interpreted as a tentative step towards ameliorating prior animosities, notably stemming from India's objections to its bid for membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

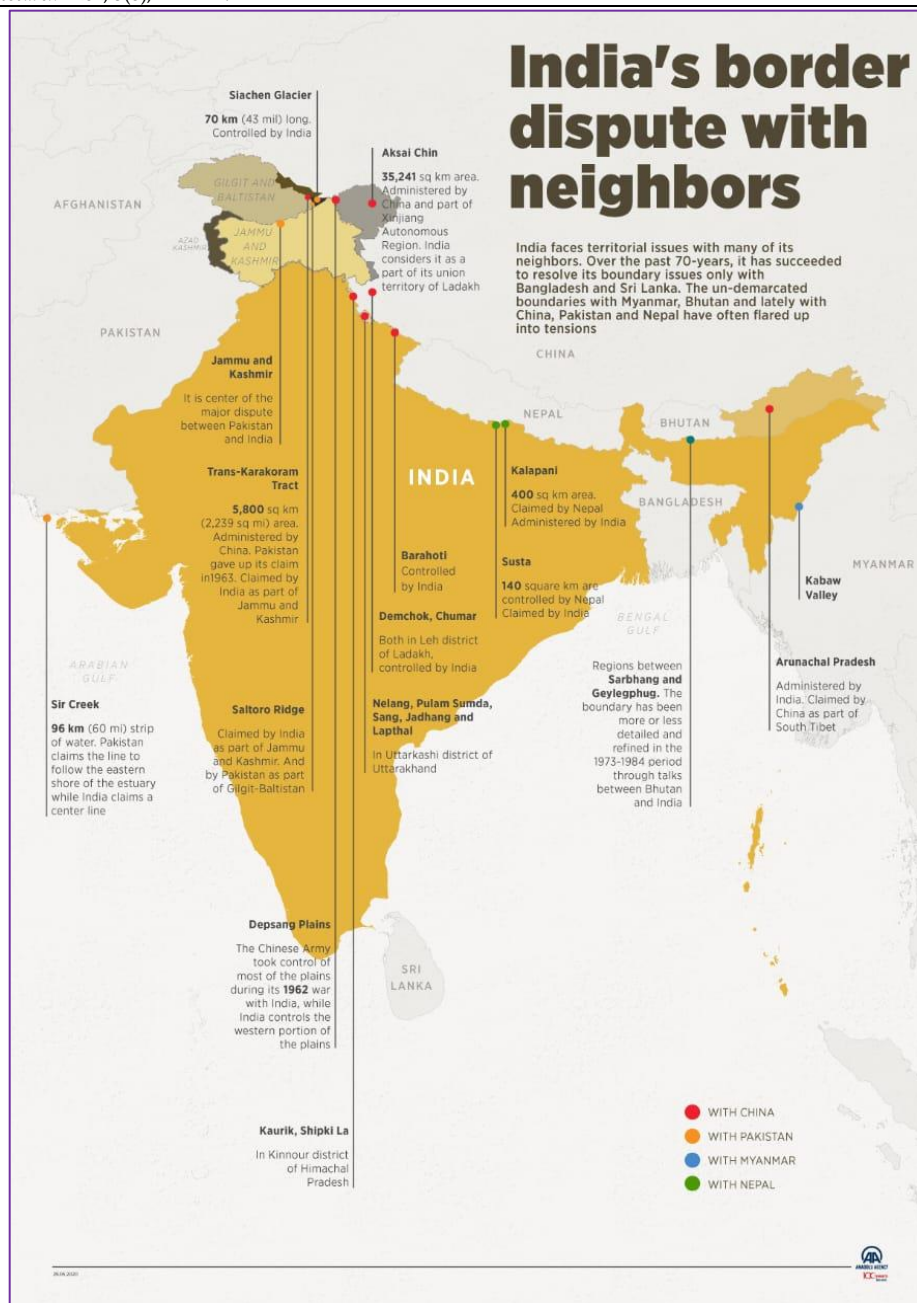
Trilateral Interplay and Nexus: -

The intricate triangular relations involving India, China and US are pivotal in shaping global geopolitics. These dynamics encompass a complex interplay of cooperation, competition, and strategic maneuvering among these major powers. Key focal points include trade relations, geopolitical influence in the Asia-Pacific region, and arrangements for regional security. Each nation’s policies and actions significantly influence not just their bilateral ties but also exert profound effects on global economic trends, security frameworks, and diplomatic alignments. Effectively managing these intricate triangular relations demands adept navigation of shared interests, divergent agendas, and the evolving complexities of global strategic landscapes. The triangular dynamics between China-India-USA are a key factor in the evolving power structure in the Asia-Pacific and India’s position in this strategic triangle is considered as a critical variable.

During the 1971 unrest in Eastern Pakistan, India encountered significant pressure from both the United States and China, prompting Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to pursue a 20-year treaty of peace, cooperation and friendship with the USSR on August 9, 1971. The treaty was signed by the Soviet Union’s Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko and foreign minister of India Sardar Swaran Singh. Article 8 and 11 of the treaty stipulate defense cooperation and mutual defense assistance. The US sent the USS Enterprise (CVN-65) fleet twice- For the 1st time to support India during India & China war and to scare India in the Indo-Pak war of 1971 i.e., to support Pakistan. America did not endorse India’s

NAM policy. In the realm of Dwight D. Eisenhower administration, Foreign Minister John Foster Dulles labeled NAM as unethical policy. Until the thawing of the cold war, India and China were on opposing sides of a global rivalry. The US-Chinese rapprochement brought UN membership and a permanent seat on the Security Council for Beijing. India responded to China's new global status with its 1974 nuclear test & the annexation of Sikkim the following year, provoking loud Chinese protests. Vajpayee visit to China in 1979 as Foreign Minister of India. Unfortunately, the visit coincided with the Chinese 'Pedagogical war' with Vietnam and caused Vajpayee embarrassment. A large-scale military standoff between India and China in the eastern sector occurred at Samedorong Chu in 1986-87. Rajiv Gandhi initiating the process of normalization of bilateral relations. India-China formed a Joint Working Group for Confidence Building Measures (CBMs).

Since 1990's India's relations with the United States and China have significantly improved. The accord concluded between Prime Minister Vajpayee and Chinese PM Zhu Rongji in 2003. China acceded India's sovereignty over Sikkim, and India acknowledged Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. Between Indo-Sino economic ties have deepened, with trade volumes reaching significant levels, and cultural exchanges have enriched mutual understanding. Diplomatically, both countries have engaged in dialogues through platforms like BRICS and SCO, addressing common challenges such as climate change and terrorism. Efforts to enhance connectivity through initiatives like the Bangladesh-China-Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) also underscore potentially areas of cooperation. While border disputes and strategic competition exist, both nations continue to seek avenues for peaceful coexistence and regional collaboration. The QUAD countries collective focus is on fostering a free, open, prosperous and inclusive Indo-pacific region. On the other hand, the SCO plays a significant role in India's engagement with the important Central Asian region. Participating of India in these two groups is not contradictory or mutually exclusive for India. India's participation in SCO and QUAD creates a diplomatic triangulation. India's membership in both the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) underscores its strategic positioning in global diplomacy. The SCO, comprising major Eurasian powers, facilitates India's engagement in regional security and economic cooperation with countries like China and Russia. Simultaneously, the QUAD, involving the US, Japan, Australia, and India, focuses on maritime security and upholding a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region. India's dual involvement in these forums allows it to balance relationships between major powers, navigate regional complexities, and pursue its national interests on multiple fronts in global affairs.



Future Trajectories of India-China Rivalry and India’s Strategic Choices: -

The future trajectory of the Indo-Sino rivalry and India's strategic choices will likely be shaped by multifaceted geopolitical dynamics. Both nations are embroiled in a persistent struggle for regional hegemony, marked by intensified competition over economic alliances and infrastructure dominance. The unresolved border disputes, coupled with ongoing military modernization efforts, pose potential flashpoints for sporadic escalations. India confronts critical strategic imperatives, contemplating deeper entrenchment in alliances with global powers like the United States and Japan through strategic initiatives such as the Quad. Concurrently, India must fortify its indigenous economic and military capacities to effectively safeguard its interests amidst evolving Indo-Pacific dynamics. Undoubtedly, a significant power and status asymmetry exists between China and India. While both nations started as newly independent states with near parity, China has surged ahead as a dominant economic force since initiating reforms in the late 1970s. Despite India's rapid economic growth over the past three

decades, the disparity in power between the two remains substantial. Moreover, China enjoys a more established international standing, evidenced by its membership in prestigious global forums such as the UN Security Council and the Nuclear Suppliers Group, memberships that India aspires to attain but has not yet achieved.

Certainly, it is indisputable that a state's focus on its primary rival does not imply complete disregard for secondary rivals in its security calculations. China, since its inception, has consistently faced multiple rivals. Even during the 1950s, the United States was considered China's principal rival. Although India did not hold this status at the time, escalating strategic tensions culminated in the 1962 war. The preceding analysis underscores India's enduring status as a strategic rival in Chinese perceptions, despite not being categorized as a principal rival. Even amid ongoing phased disengagement in Ladakh, India-China relations are undeniably at a critical juncture. At the heart of the recent standoff lies deep-seated mutual mistrust, shaped by divergent perceptions and expectations within the broader global context. In conclusion, the recognition of rival perceptions within the India-China dynamic is no longer asymmetrical. This version maintains a rigorous academic tone while conveying the complexity and historical context of the India-China relationship and their strategic perceptions.

The relations among India, China, and Pakistan within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) epitomize a dynamic interplay of cooperation, competition, and strategic maneuvering. India and Pakistan attained full SCO membership in 2017, aligning with China and Central Asian states in this pivotal Eurasian forum for political, economic, and security collaboration. Within the SCO's framework, all three nations participate in diverse cooperative initiatives, primarily centered on counter-terrorism, economic partnerships, and cultural exchanges. Nevertheless, underlying regional tensions, particularly the longstanding Indo-Pakistani disputes such as the Kashmir conflict, intermittently permeate SCO deliberations, impacting the cooperative milieu. China's influential role within the SCO as a significant regional power and India's strategic apprehensions regarding Beijing's South Asian influence introduce additional layers of complexity. The SCO, while serving as a conduit for dialogue and collaboration, also reflects broader geopolitical rivalries and strategic alignments across the region. Therefore, while facilitating opportunities for engagement and dialogue among India, China, and Pakistan, the SCO simultaneously mirrors the intricate dynamics and challenges inherent in their trilateral relations.

Indo-Sino Engagement: Pathways Amidst Strategic Rivalry: -

Over the past decade, India-China relations have undergone notable expansions and diversifications through numerous high-level engagements. In September 2014, President Xi Jinping's visit to India marked a pivotal moment as both nations redefined their bilateral ties as a Closer Developmental Partnership. Prime Minister Narendra Modi reciprocated with a visit to China in May 2015, engaging with President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang. Subsequently, Modi and Xi held their first Informal Summit in Wuhan in April 2018, followed by a second in Chennai in October 2019.

Beyond bilateral summits, Modi and Xi have frequently met on the sidelines of major multilateral events. Modi attended the G20 Summit in Hangzhou (September 2016), the BRICS Summit in Xiamen (September 2017), and the SCO Summit in Qingdao (June 2018) in China. President Xi visited India for the BRICS Summit in Goa in October 2016. Their meetings during the SCO Summit in Astana (June 2017) led to the Astana Consensus emphasizing that differences should not escalate into disputes. Additional interactions occurred during the SCO Leaders' Summit in Bishkek (June 2019), the G20 Summit in Osaka (June 2019), and the BRICS Summit in Brasilia (November 2019). A brief interaction also took place during the G20 Summit in Bali in November 2022. However, the relationship faced significant challenges due to skirmishes along the Line of Actual

Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh in April-May 2020, impacting bilateral ties adversely.



THE PATH AHEAD: -

It is imperative to uphold open channels of communication to prevent misunderstandings or escalation of tensions. The parliamentary Standing Committee on Defense has proposed that the allocation for the defense sector should constitute 3% of the GDP to uphold India's deterrence posture. It is crucial for the Indian government to earnestly contemplate this recommendation and allocate sufficient funds for defense rather than depending on ad hoc armament acquisitions from foreign sources.

India has adopted a dual strategy to handle China. **Firstly**, it maintains engagement through bilateral and multilateral channels like BRICS, SCO, and the Russia-India-China trilateral. This approach aims to ensure stability, deepen economic ties, and promote diplomatic cooperation on global and regional issues. During the Doklam crisis, India prioritized diplomatic resolution while sustaining scheduled bilateral meetings despite China's warnings through state-controlled media of potential conflict akin to 1962.

Secondly, India has bolstered its military and deterrent capabilities.

Thirdly, there's a new facet in India's China policy: external balancing. This includes strengthening ties with the US, Japan, and Australia, as well as the quadrilateral cooperation among them. This alignment reflects shared concerns about China's ambitions in the Indo-Pacific region, including territorial claims in the South China Sea and on Indian and Japanese territories. Tensions or conflict between India and China undermine the vision of an Asian century espoused by their leaders. Regular informal summits between their leaders could help manage these challenges.

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