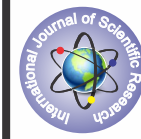


Indo-China Strategic Relations: An Analysis



Political Science

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ABSTRACT

When the political and economic conditions of India and China are analyzed, it is found that these countries are more or less on equal footing. Both of these countries have bilateral relations in terms of trade during ancient period. Even both the countries have gained independence in 1940-50s. During the then, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's period, there was good relationship and after Indo-China war, such relationship ended. Due to the continuous efforts of political leaders and officials of both the countries, the relationship reestablished. The paper described the Indo-China strategic relations.

Introduction:

The India-China relations were traced during ancient historical period. As recorded by great Chinese Historian Si Maqian (145-90 BC) in his work, Shiji Xinanyizhun (Records of the Historian: Foreigners in Southwest), there was interface between India and China during Hans Dynasty (206BC-220 AD). It revealed that the people in the Shu or Sichuan province were wearing clothes that were brought from Sindhu region of India. Hence, it can be said that Indo-China relations were prevailed since 2nd century.

Later Ban Gu (32AD – 92 AD) writes about Kashmir (Jibin State) in his book Qian Hanshu (early Han Annals), and talks about state of affairs there, its weather and products like pearls, corals and lapis lazuli, etc. From the above mentioned facts it could be established that by 4th to 5th century AD there was already a sea route between India and China¹. As regard to the material; exchange, India supplied the trade items that were in demand in China and available only in India. According to literary sources, imported items transported from India to China included coral, pearls, glass and fragrances. On the other hand, silk appears to be the major item transported from China to India². Trade relations were also extended between both the countries during Tang (618-907), Song (960-1278) and Yuan (1279-1368) dynasties of China. Buddhism was become major means for relations between India and China.

During modern period, both the Chinese and India have similar views on polity. Taiping Uprising (1850—1864) in China was made so as to end colonial rule and on the other hand, in India, there was armed revolts against the British during 1857-1860. China attained independence on October 1949 in the culmination of Chinese Civil War (1945-1949) and India gained independence in August 1947.

India-China relations were cordial in the late 1940s and early 1950s as both countries emerged as modern states. Keen to dissuade the influence of external powers in the region and to assert Asia's independence and resurgence in world affairs, the two countries became increasingly close in their relations. Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai visited India in 1954 and Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru initiated signing of the Panchsheel Agreement in 1954 that embodied five core principles - respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; non-aggression; non-interference in each other's internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit; and peaceful co-existence. The relations turned hostile, when China aided Naga and Mizo insurrections in North-east India. The gap was widened when North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) was founded in 1959. Consequently, it led war in October 1962 and there was incursion of 92,000 Kms of Indian geographical territory by China, which has become disputed territory. There were also minor skirmishes in Nathu La on the Sikkim-Tibet border in September 1967. India-China relations further deteriorated in June 1967 with the expulsion of two Indian diplomats from Beijing on alleged charges of - espionage activities³. The winter of 1967 witnessed skirmishes on India-China border. On 11 September, Chinese troops attacked Indian troops on the Sikkim

border across the Nathu La and opened heavy mortar and artillery fire. After repeated Indian protest and proposal for ceasefire, by 15 September there was a virtual cessation of all hostile activities. The Chinese again fired heavily on the Indian positions at Chola, on 1 October and both sides suffered casualties.

In spite of these incidents of disturbances, Indian administrators endeavoured for better relations with China in the forthcoming years. Such relationships were expressed in 1970 by both the countries. India and China restored their diplomatic ties by restoring their ambassadors in 1976. Consequently, there was resumption of diplomatic relations in July 1976.

Visit of the Chinese foreign minister Huang Hua in June 1981 became not only remarkable but also very significant because there was an agreement and consensus reached during the deliberations that both sides, India and China would exchange official delegations at track one level to resume bilateral talks on the issues impacting India-China relations. But in 1986, soon after announcement of Arunachal Pradesh as state, China openly protested and denounced India's action. In this way, the bilateral relations between India and China have worsened. In December 1988, the then Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi visited China. The hallmark of the visit was the creation of Joint Working Group (JWG) for resolving the boundary issue. The larger objective of the JWG was to articulate each others' concerns and analyze the options available before both the countries. Though there were 14 rounds of talks to resolve border disputes, yet these disputes become unresolved.

When Chinese Premier Li Peng visited India in 1991, Both India and China signed five agreements during Li Peng's visit to India. These five agreements were relating to the Consul treaty between India and China, Agreement on Restoration of Consulate General in Bombay and Shanghai, Memorandum on the Restoration of Border Trade, India – China Trade Protocol for the year 1992 and Scientific and Technological Cooperation in Outer Space for the Peaceful use by the aviation ministries of India and China⁴. These bilateral relations were once again strengthened with the visit of the then, Indian President R. Venkataraman in May 1992.

A new era was began when the then, Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao visited China in September 1993 and signed Agreement on Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the LAC (Line of Actual Control) in the India – China border areas signified that the border issue would be resolved amicably through peaceful and friendly negotiations. During the then, Chinese President, Jiang Zemin's visit to India in November-December 1996, India and China had signed four important agreements – a) The agreement on Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) in the field of military deployment along the LAC in the India – China border areas; b) The agreement relating to the maintenance of the Consulate General of India in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the PRC; c) The agreement on cooperation for combating illicit trafficking in drugs

and other related issues; and d) the agreement on maritime transport.

The nuclear tests made by India enraged many of the countries including China and during this phase, there was resistance from China. The nuclear issue featured as an irritant in India-China relations for some time, which really put the bilateral relationship in a limbo. However, both countries were able to resume talks once again after a span of nine months. This was made possible by the visits to China made by the Minister of External Affairs Jaswant Singh in 1999⁴. The visit brought positive results and assured the restoring bilateral relations.

In May 2000, Indian President K.R Narayan visited China when his Chinese counterpart, Jiang Zemin, put forward a four-point proposal concerning the development of bilateral relations in the 21st century.—The two sides enhance the level of bilateral personnel visits to increase mutual understanding and trust; expand trade and economic cooperation; strengthen coordination and cooperation in international affairs; and properly handle issues left over from the past in the spirit of seeking common ground while reserving differences⁵.

During Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit to China in June 2003, leaders of both countries not only emphasized the categorical need to deepen economic, trade and strategic ties, but also the need to explore a feasible framework for an early settlement of the border question, which has been a contentious issue for more than four decades⁶. Realistically, the fast-changing economic and strategic milieu punctuated by uncertainty brought about by globalization in macrocosmic terms, has created challenges as well as opportunities for both India and China to free themselves of 'historic baggage' in terms of bilateral relations⁷.

Premier Wen Jiabao visited India in April 2005. A Joint Statement was signed by Premier Wen and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. During the visit, the two sides issued a Joint Statement establishing a Strategic and Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Prosperity. It reflects the consensus that bilateral relations transcend bilateral issues and have acquired a global and strategic perspective. The agreement on Political Parameters and Guiding Principles signed during the visit represents successful conclusion of the first phase of the work of the Special Representatives on the boundary question.

Chinese President Hu Jintao visited India in November 2006. During the visit, the two sides issued a Joint Declaration containing a ten-pronged strategy to intensify cooperation in all areas and to give greater content to India-China Strategic and Cooperative Partnership. President of the Indian National Congress and Chairperson of the United Progressive Alliance Smt. Sonia Gandhi visited China at the invitation of the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) President Hu Jintao on 25-29 October 2007. She met with President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao besides other leaders of the CPC. She paid another visit to China in August 2008 at the invitation of the Communist Party of China to witness the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympic Games and met, among others, PRC Vice President Xi Jinping.

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh visited China on 13-15 January 2008. During the visit, he had extensive discussions with Premier Wen Jiabao and met with President Hu Jintao and NPC Chairman Wu Bangguo. A joint document entitled "A Shared Vision for the 21st Century of the Republic of India and the People's Republic of China" was issued during the visit, outlining common positions on a number of international and some bilateral issues. Prime Minister also addressed a high-level business event and delivered a speech at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Prime Minister visited China again in October 2008 to participate in the 7th Asia-Europe Summit held in Beijing on 24-25 October.

During the visit of Defence Minister Liang Guanglie in September

2010, China suggested that both militaries expand their cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. But no efforts were made in this regard on either side. Culturally, in order to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and China, Festival of India was celebrated across more than 45 cities in China. In December 2010, the two countries signed a Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) providing for greater people to people cooperation in various fields. During the visit of President Hu Jintao to India in March, it was decided to celebrate 2012 as 'The Year of Friendship and Co-operation'. In 2012, the Mission facilitated the signing of an agreement between the Central Board of Secondary Education [CBSE] with Han-Ban for teaching of Chinese in Indian schools.

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh visited Sanya, China from 12-15 April 2011 to attend the BRICS Leaders Meeting. Indian PM met Chinese President Hu Jintao on 13th April 2011 on the sidelines of the BRICS Leaders Meeting. There are regular Party-to-Party exchanges between the CPC and political parties in India. Karnataka Chief Minister visited China in September 2009, BJP President visited China in January 2011 and Bihar Chief Minister visited China from 12-18 June 2011.

India and China have marked 2014 as the 'Year of Friendly Exchanges'. The visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2015 was rich in symbolism and substance and it opened up a new chapter in India-China relations. For the first time, Chinese President Xi Jinping travelled outside Beijing to receive a foreign leader, in Xi'an in his home province of Shaanxi. President Xi also accompanied Prime Minister to the Big Wild Goose Pagoda and organized a grand welcome ceremony at the Xi'an city wall. There were 24 agreements signed on the government-to-government side, 26 MoUs on the business-to-business side and two joint statements, including one on climate change. The fact that India and China could come up with over 50 outcome documents in just eight months reveals the huge potential that exists between our two countries, as well as the efforts that we have made to elevate our partnership. They included such diverse fields as space cooperation, earthquake engineering, ocean sciences, mining, railways, skill development, education, culture, Yoga, tourism and many more. Prime Minister interacted with 21 CEOs of leading Chinese companies and over 40 prominent Indian CEOs attended the Business Forum along with their counterparts from China. The 26 business understandings worth over US\$ 22 billion signed at the Forum covered such varied sectors as industrial parks, renewable energy, thermal energy, telecommunication, steel, capital goods, IT and media. There was, moreover, an action-oriented accord on broad-basing the bilateral partnership, as could be seen from the range of agreements signed and in the establishment of new dialogue mechanisms, such as the one between the DRC and the NITI Aayog and the 'Think Tanks' Forum, besides a bilateral consultative mechanism on WTO negotiations. Three new institutions were launched in partnership, the Centre for Gandhian and Indian Studies in Shanghai, Yoga College in Kunming, and National Institute for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in Ahmedabad. Both sides decided to establish new Consulates in each other's country, in Chengdu and Chennai and to expand our interactions at the sub-national level.

Concluding Remarks:

Though, there was good relationship between India and China since ancient times, due to political developments in these respective countries, many years, there was suspicion between these countries. But the positive developments made during post-globalization period, both the countries have come closer. When the socio-economic and cultural conditions of both the countries are analyzed, it is found that both the countries are developing and are facing same problems such as population explosion, poverty, etc. Hence, during twenty-first century, the leaders of both the countries were felt it as essential to extend bilateral relations. As such, many of the developments were taken place especially after 2000, which have improved economic, strategic, military and cultural relations. Still,

there are differences of opinions between both the countries due to border disputes. Hence, it is essentially needed on the part of leaders, officials and delegates to discuss these issues so as to strengthen Indo-China bilateral relations.

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