

## India-China Relations: Problems and Prospects



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### ABSTRACT

*Both China and India have a number of ethnic minorities. Due to historical reasons there has been ethnic engagement in different degrees in both countries, sometimes leading to separatist movements. It is certain that conformity with the common interest of India and China to refrain from supporting these movements in each other country. This paper shows that Sino-Indian relations have become more mature. This maturity will be an important factor in stabilizing relations between the two countries. In general the prospect of Sino-Indian relations in new century is good and bright. It is hoped that India and China, through their friendship will make new historical contributions to civilization as they did in ancient times.*

**Keywords:** India; China, bilateral relations, border issue

### Introduction

Since beginning relationship of India-China can be characterized as the direction "from friendship to confrontation, from confrontation to détente and from détente to normalization". As they step into 21st century, they shared the common historic responsibility of promoting social and economic development of their vast population, of safeguarding regional and global peace and establishing a just and rational new world order. Indeed these objectives are seen as setting out the strategic framework for their relationship. A new revival in the relationship of India and China came with the visit of Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to China in 1988.

During his visit various efforts were made to find out a settlement of border dispute. To resolve the boundary dispute, the two countries decided to constitute a Joint Working Group (JWG). The leaders of both the countries agreed to increase cooperation in economic, cultural and technological fields. Two sides expressed full faith in the five principles of 'Panchsheel' and indicated their desire to promote good neighbourly and friendly relations on the basis of those principles.

After 1991, the relations of India and China got momentum with the visit of Chinese Premier Li Peng (after a gap of 31 years). As a result of a visit two sides decided upon periodic meetings between military personnel on regular basis to

ensure peace and tranquility on their borders. Both the sides agreed to resume border trade and to encourage the expansion of economic relations and joint ventures. They determined to cooperate in the fields of health, education, energy and agriculture. It was also agreed that India would re-establish a consulate in Shanghai and China in Bombay after the gap of 29 years, (both now functioning).

In May 1992, Indian President, R. Venkata Raman paid a formal visit to China (first visit by any Indian President). On this occasion the leaders of the two countries showed their keenness to solve the boundary issue and political directive to be given to the 'Joint Working Group' to speed up the search of the solution for the boundary question. During the visit, the President of India said in one of his speeches that Tibet is an autonomous region of China and India does not support Dalai Lama's any anti-Chinese political activities.

In 1993, the visit of Indian Premier P.V. Narshimha Rao to China and agreed for the maintenance of peace and tranquility along the line of actual control. During the visit of Chinese President Zemin (the first ever visit by Chinese President) in November 1996, an agreement was signed on not to cross the line of actual control and reduce troops and armaments on border of India-China and established a 'Construction Cooperative Partnership'.

## Problems

These relations suffered a setback in early 1998 when Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes stated that China is India's threat No.1. Apart from this Sino-Indian bilateral relations further deteriorated with the explosions at Pokhran in May 1998. China strongly condemned these tests and describes them as 'outrageous contempt' for the International community. China also insisted that India should be covered by the entry into the force clause in CTBT even though its means foisting a treaty opposed by the Indian people.

Despite all this India try to give a projection that it wants the best relations with China and would continue her dialogue. India's relation with China showed some improvement in the beginning of 1999, when India sent a delegation to Beijing. The two countries agreed to cooperate in the fields of culture, human resources and environment. During the Kargil conflict, China remained neutral. In April 2000, India China celebrated the 50th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations. In June 2000, Indian President K.R. Narayan paid a visit to China, during the visit and agreement was set up i.e. 'Eminent Persons Group' (EPG).

In June 2003, during the visit of Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to China some agreements were made related to human resource, development of visa procedure and science and technology. In April 2005, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visited India; during this visit a joint statement was made by the both Prime Ministers i.e. to establish a strategic and cooperative partnership for peace and prosperity. Such partnership is totally based on the principles of 'Panchsheel'. Wen Jiabao however, did not categorically support India's candidature for the permanent seat in United Nations Security Council. Instead he indicated that India would be welcomed as "an important player in the UN". After 44 years the reopening of 'Nathula Pass' on July 6, 2006 is a clearcut index of their cordial relations.

## Prospects

The prospects of economic cooperation between the two countries are very bright. Bilateral between the two countries has risen significantly from US \$ 100 million in 1994 to US \$ 13.6 billion by 2008, US \$ 13 billion by 2010 and US \$

66 billion in 2012. It is now recognize by both the countries that India's software capabilities could be combined effectively with Chinese hardware strengths. A number of Indian Companies have shown their interest in China, Indian total contracted investment in China is about US \$ 235 million. It is evident from the preceding account that efforts have been steeped up by both sides and remarkable progress has been made in their economic relations. Both the states have realized that stable, purposeful and peaceful relations between them are favorable in their long term interest.

Trade volume between the two countries grew quite fast in the last decade and there is a great potentiality in further developing trade between them. Both China and India has huge markets. They are engaged in economic reforms for more economic development in both the countries. More varieties of commodities could be offered for exchange, economic cooperation in the fields of steel, petroleum, space, software etc. has been developed. Exchange of experience in their economic reform can be very useful since both countries have a number of common problems.

India and China have identical views and stands on many international questions both support the reform of United Nations and hold the same view that expansion of Security Council should follow the principle fair distribution of different regions and ensure an appropriate balance between developing and developed countries. Both are in favor of a multi-polar world. With all these common interests a constructive partnership between the two countries will certainly be realized in the 21st century.

It is inevitable that there will be some problems and differences between two close neighbors like China and India, both are handling these problems and differences in a correct way is essential for the maintenance of their friendly relations. The boundary question i.e. based on Mac Mahon Line between India and China the most important question in their bilateral relations and has always been challenge to the wisdom of the leaders of both countries. Both the countries share 3540km borderline with each other. So the controversy on such a long borderline is not a strange thing.

This very line became one of the reasons of Sino-Indian war of 1962. Due to these boundary question the entire process was almost remain stable up to 1988. The agreement on the maintenance of peace and tranquility along the line of actual control in the India-China border areas on 7th September 1993 and the agreement on 'Confidence Building Measures' in the military field along line of actual control in the India-China border areas on 29 November 1996 have shown that both sides have adopted a wise two step approach on the boundary question.

India has expressed its concern on the development of relations between China and Pakistan especially on China's arms sales to Pakistan. Beijing knows very well the direction in which these missiles and weapons may be used. In view of China's long standing friendship with Pakistan and its assistance in Pakistan Nuclear Weapon Programme, it was expected by Pakistan that China would stand by it on the Kargil issue but China did not give any positive support. At this movement like the rest of international community China also asked Pakistan to withdraw its regular as well as other intruders from Kargil.

Thus China for the first time after several years took a position that supported India's strength. In recent years China has adopted a policy of separate development of its relations with India and Pakistan. China's relations with either India or Pakistan are not directed against any third country or at the expense of any third country. China is

also in favor of solving the Kashmir problem through peaceful negotiation.

On the question of Tibet, the Chinese side has expressed its concern about the continued activity in India by some Tibetans against their motherland. India has reaffirmed that it does not allow Tibetans to engage in any anti-China political activities in India. It is expected that with more effort by India to fulfill its commitment, differences between China and India on the question of Tibet have been gradually diluted. On the question of Sikkim, China has adopted a flexible attitude. In October 2004, Sikkim was removed from the list of regional countries on Beijing official website and Chinese World Affairs year Book 2003-04 and showed Sikkim as part of India.

### Conclusion

Though there are still some differences between China and India on the nuclear issue. But all this has been delinked from their bilateral relations in recent years. To maintain their relations friendly, there is good sign that both China and India have adopted practical and flexible policies. On the one hand both are making great efforts to resolve these differences through the visits of the heads of governments of both the states and dialogues: On the other hand both agree that problems and differences should not become barriers to the development of their friendly relations. The further development of friendly relations will create more favorable conditions and the ultimate solution of problems and differences.

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