



"INDIA'S STRATEGIC CHOICES TOWARDS CHINA IN THE CONTEMPORARY MULTIPOLAR WORLD ORDER"

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"One cannot wish away the fact that before good neighbours can truly fraternize with each other, they must first mend their fences. After a hiatus of a few decades, India and China embarked on this important venture a few years ago. We have made good progress. I am convinced that, with steadfast adherence to the Five Principles of peaceful co-existence, with mutual sensitivity to the concerns of each other, and with respect for equality, our two countries can further accelerate this process so that we can put this difference firmly behind us."

- Prime Minister, Shri A. B. Vajpayee, Beijing University, June 23 2003."

Abstract

India and China have emerged as global players in the 21st century in the contemporary global world. The historical ties between India and China were established during the 2nd century BC. India played a vital role in the first century AD by disseminating the values and ideas of Buddhism to China. Chinese Monk Fa Xian (Fa-Hsien, AD 399-414) visited India in AD 402 and stayed for ten years. He has translated many Buddhist and Sanskrit texts into the Chinese language to explain the significance of great Indian traditions and heritage. World leaders, security thinkers, academicians, media analysts, diplomatists, ambassadors, human rights activists, security analysts, and military experts have analyzed the issues and challenges of India – China bilateral relations. According to the database of the United Nations, India has contributed 1.37 billion population, and China has contributed 1.43 billion population to the world population; According to the Military Expenditure Database of Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI 2021), India's share of world military expenditure is 3.7%, and China's share of world military expenditure is 13%. India and China contribute 18% earth area, 30 % of the world energy use, 25% of the world economy. Thus, India and China have been extensively contributed to the global economic-political landscape. India and China have been playing a dynamic role in the various multilateral organizations, i.e. Brazil, Russia, India, China South Africa (BRICS), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and Russia – India – China Trilateral Summit (RIC). It shows the significance of India – China relations in the contemporary global world. China and India have been struggling to further their ambitions at the global level. In the 1950s, the famous slogan of the Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai has strengthened the bilateral ties between India - China. Shri Rajiv Gandhi, the then Indian Prime Minister of India, visited China in 1998 and signed various agreements with China to revitalize India - China relations.

The misunderstanding and incorrect understating have been led to frequent border conflicts, lack of trust and tensions in the India – China bilateral relations. 73-day military standoff at Doklam in summer 2017; recent military standoff at Galwan Valley had shaken India - China bilateral relations. Bilateral relations have been deteriorated due to the military standoff at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh since April 2020. This episode has led to the deterioration of the bilateral relations between India and China. In recent times, India - China relations have declined further due to misunderstanding and lack of trust. India and China have to extensively work on mutually acceptable resolution methods to resolve the border issues and conflicts. In this context, the proposed article will critically analyze India's strategic choices towards China in the contemporary global world.

Keywords: Panchsheel Pact, Strategic Choices, Military Standoff, Galwan Valley, LAC, BRICS, SCO, Belt & Road Initiative (BRI), Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, Offensive Realism



Introduction

The India – China diplomatic relations will be having an impact on the future of South Asia. Active engagement, negotiations, bilateral, diplomatic and military dialogues have played a pivotal role in India – China relations (Swaran Singh 2008, China Report, Sage). China's growing military power has further intensified the security dilemma. After the 1962 war, India's military position in the India – China border was defensive. It has been described as "*deterrence by denial*". Since both the nations have modernized defence equipment, the increasing security dilemma and dynamic changes in India's military strategies have led to "*deterrence by punishment*" (Joshi 2018, Mukherjee 2018). Security dilemma has emerged during the cold war, and it has been associated with India – China relations (Barsur, 2018, Mukherjee 2018, Paul 2018). China has been trying to establish a strategic maritime presence in the Indian Ocean region. It will be having profound implications for the regional balance of power, maritime safety, regional stability and maritime security. To contain the belligerence of the behaviour of China in the Himalayan region and the Indian Ocean, India has been actively engaging with the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue along with the USA, Australia and Japan in the Indo – Pacific region (Khurana 2015.).

India and China have signed the agreement on *border peace and tranquillity* in 1993. It has led to the revival of diplomatic relations between India and China. China has remained one of the major trading partners of India. Both the nations have participated in various multilateral forums, i.e. BRICS, SCO and Russia, India, China Trilateral Summit (RIC). India has been pursuing its policy towards China with hedging and engagement (Horimoto 2017, Journal of Contemporary East Asian Studies, Taylor & Francis).

On the one hand, China has been implementing a counter-hedging strategy towards India for active engagement with India and security pressures on India, on the other hand. China has realized that it has to adopt engagement and peaceful negotiations with India to further diplomatic ties in the contemporary global world (Jikang 2019 & Li Mingjiang 2019). India and China have emerged as superpowers in the global world. The then Prime Minister, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru Ji, has aspired for joint leadership for Asia's revival. Mao's realism and Nehru's idealism has led to the India - China war of 1962. China has followed a counter-hedging strategy towards India. It took nearly three decades to revive and also to establish bilateral relations with Chinese political realism. In India – China relations, bilateral ties have been converged and whereas security interests have diverged. China had adopted *offensive realism*, whereas India has followed *defensive realism*. In the Doklam standoff, which has continued for a 73-day military standoff, India has demonstrated *offensive realism* under the dynamic leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji. After analyzing the geopolitical scenario and the advancement of Indian military technology, China had adopted *defensive realism* (Ahlawat 2018, Huges 2018).

India-China Political Relations

India had recognized the Peoples Republic of China on April 01 1950. The then Prime Minister of India, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru Ji, visited China in October 1954 to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China; India and China signed the Panchsheel Pact on October 19 1954. The Five Principles of Panchsheel are: (i) "*Mutual respect's territorial integrity and sovereignty* (ii) *Mutual non-aggression* (iii) *Mutual non-interference* (iv) *Equality and mutual benefit*, and (v) *Peaceful co-existence*". (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2021). 1962 border conflict has led to the deterioration of relations between India and China. Afterwards, the then Prime Minister of India, Shri Rajiv Gandhi Ji, visited China in 1988 to start a new phase of bilateral between India and China.



The then Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi, gave the following statement (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2021).

"In 1954, India and China enunciated the Panchsheel, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. The principles we commended commanded scant acceptance then. The world was too intent on pursuing confrontation to consider the alternative path that Panchsheel represented. Now, thirty tortured years later, the trajectory which the Five Principles indicated for the evolution of the world order is beginning to emerge as the world's path. We believe as you do, that the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence provide the best way to handle relations between nations. Bloc politics and spheres of influence lead only to conflict, sharpening international relations."

- Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi, Beijing, December 19 1988; Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India."

The then Prime Minister of India, Shri Narasimha Rao Ji, visited China in 1993 and signed an "Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the Line of Actual Control on the India-China Border Area". This agreement played a vital role in the revival of India – China diplomatic relations. The then Prime Minister of India, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji had visited China in 2003. In this connection, India and China have signed the "Declaration on Principles for Relations and Comprehensive Cooperation and mutually decided to appoint Special Representatives (SRs)" 'to mitigate the border tensions. Chinese Premier Win Jiabo had visited India in 2005 and signed the agreement on "Strategic and Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Prosperity". It has played a pivotal role in furthering bilateral relations between India and China (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2021).

India - China relations have been redefined under the dynamic leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi Ji. Chinese President Xi Jinping had visited India in September 2014. In this regard, both India and China have signed 16 agreements related to establishing industrial parks, cooperation, commerce & trade, sister-city arrangements, and railways. An MoU has been signed to open the Nathu La route for Kailash Mansarovar Yatra (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2021). These all developments led to the strategic partnership between India and China.

Further, Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji also visited China in May 2015. Indian Prime Minister Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping have extensively discussed various bilateral and regional issues. Prime Minister Modi and Premier Li Keqiang also addressed the State/Provincial Leaders' Forum in Beijing. Both the leaders have signed 26 MoUs related to business; 24 agreements on Government – to – government side. Prime Minister Modi Ji also has announced an E- Visa facility to facilitate Chinese tourists. President Pranab Mukherjee had visited China in May 2016 and signed 10 MoUs in research and education (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2021).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi have extensively discussed various bilateral and global strategic issues at the first Informal Summit in Wuhan. Both the leaders have decided to strengthen bilateral relations through various convergence approaches. This dialogue has immensely contributed to the India - China strategic partnership in the contemporary global world. Similarly, Prime Minister Modi and President Xi met in Chennai during 11-12 October 2019 and have decided to further India - China strategic partnership. They have resolved to mitigate the border disputes and issues in a very amicable to play a significant role in the contemporary global world (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2021). Indian Prime Minister and Chinese Presidents have frequently visited both countries to participate in various multilateral forums. In this connection, Prime Minister Narendra



Modi Ji visited China in September 2016 to participate in the G20 Summit in Hangzhou. Modi Ji also participated in the BRICS Summit at Xiamen in September 2017; India Prime Minister also had participated in the BRICS summit at Qingdao in June 2018. President Xi also participated in the BRICS summit at Goa in October 2016. Thus, India Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji and Chinese President Xi Jinping have participated in various global multilateral organizations to strengthen the strategic cooperation between India and China (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2021).

India and China have signed various dialogue mechanisms related to economic, people-to-people, bilateral relations, cultural relations, various global issues and consular matters. Dr. S. Jaishankar, Ministry of External Affairs Minister, has visited China from 11- 13 August 2019 to participate in the 2nd meeting of the "*India-China High-level Mechanism (HLM) on Cultural People-to-People Exchanges*". Chinese Foreign Minister Mr. Wang Yi has also participated in this meeting. Both the Ministers have extensively discussed various bilateral issues (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2021). In this connection, Five MOUs have been signed between the two Foreign Ministries related to traditional medicine, culture, museums, sports. The Foreign Ministers also participated in the SCO Foreign Ministers' Meetings in Moscow on September 10 2020, and Dushanbe on July 14 2021. Similarly, Indian and Chinese Defence Ministers participated in the SCO Defence Ministers' Meeting in Moscow on September 04 2020. Thus, both the Ministers from India and China have played a vital role in resolving the border issues very amicable (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2021). Indian National Security Advisor Mr Ajit Doval, and Chinese Foreign Minister Mr Wang Yi, have participated in the 22 rounds of talks as part of the mechanism of "*Special Representatives (SR) on the India-China Boundary Question*" to discuss the border issues extensively. This meeting took place in New Delhi on December 21 2019. "*An Agreement on the Establishment of a Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs*" (WMCC) was signed during the 15th Round of SR talks in New Delhi in January 2012. The WMCC has organized 22 meetings, including the latest meeting at New Delhi on June 25 2021. *The Senior Commanders' Meeting (SCM)* mechanism and the WMCC have been engaging since June 2020 for de-escalation, disengagement in the border areas at the LAC in Eastern Ladakh, Galwan valley and Pangong Tso valley (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2021).

Diplomatic negotiations have taken place at a higher level to resolve the border issues. Academicians and strategic experts have participated in the 4th India-China Think Tank Forum during November 28 - 29, 2019. Ambassador T.C.A. Raghavan, Director General of the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) and 15 member delegation members have participated in the academic forum, which was jointly organized by the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) and Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS).). *The 6th ICWA - Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs (CPIFA) Dialogue* was convened in New Delhi from 06 to November 07 2019. Both India and China have effectively participated in the exchanges on cooperation in water resources (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2021).

The 12th meeting of the "*India-China Expert Level Mechanism (ELM) on Trans-border Rivers*" occurred in Ahmedabad from 12 -13 June 2019. Further, both India and China have signed MoU related to the hydrological information of the Brahmaputra River, i.e. "*Implementation plan on the provision of hydrological information of Yaluzangbu/Brahmaputra River in flood season*". Another MoU also has been signed with regard to hydrological information on the Sutlej River. The Ministry of External Affairs has organized The Kailash Manasarovar Yatra from June to September (Ministry of



External Affairs, Government of India, 2021). Eighteen batches consist of 1005 Yatris through Lipulekh Pass, and ten batches comprising 341 Yatris through Nathu-La Pass undertook the Yatra in 2019. This Yatra has been suspended for the time being due to COVID -19 pandemic and other travel restrictions by China. Many Indian students studying in China have returned to India in early 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other entry restrictive measures. The Ministry of External Affairs has been talking to the authorities in China to resolve this issue (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2021).

Table 1: India - China Bilateral Trade:

| <i>"INDIA CHINA BILATERAL TRADE(Figures in US\$ Billion)</i> | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Year</i> | <i>India's Export to China</i> | <i>%Change</i> | <i>India's Import from China</i> | <i>%Change</i> | <i>Trade Imbalance</i> | <i>Total Trade</i> | <i>%Change</i> |
| 2015 | 13.4 | -18.39 | 58.26 | 7.42 | 44.86 | 71.66 | 1.42 |
| 2016 | 11.75 | -12.29 | 59.43 | 2.01 | 47.68 | 71.18 | -0.67 |
| 2017 | 16.34 | 39.11 | 68.1 | 14.59 | 51.76 | 84.44 | 18.63 |
| 2018 | 18.83 | 15.21 | 76.87 | 12.89 | 58.04 | 95.7 | 13.34 |
| 2019 | 17.97 | -4.55 | 74.92 | -2.54% | 56.95 | 92.9 | -2.93% |
| 2020 (Jan-Sept) | 15.32 | 14.9% (same period in 2019) | 45.18 | -19.8% (same period in 2019) | 29.86 | 60.51 | -13.1% (same period in 2019) " |

Source: Embassy of India, Beijing, China, Website: https://www.eoibeijing.gov.in/eoibeijing_pages/Mjg, accessed August 20 2021.

The above table depicts that India exported goods worth US\$ 13.4 billion to China in 2015. It has been increased to US\$ 16.34 billion in 2017. Further, it has been increased to US \$ 18.83 billion in 2018. There was a decline in India's exports to China, with US \$ 17.97 billion in 2019. Further, it has been reduced to US\$ 15.32billion by the end of September 2020.

The above table illustrates that India has imported goods worth US\$ 58.26 billion in 2015. It has been increased to US\$ 68.1 billion in 2017. There was an improvement in India's imports in 2018, with US \$ 76.87 billion. Further, it has been declined from US\$ 76.87 billion in 2018 to US\$ 74.92 billion. Finally, it has been further declined to US\$ 45.18 billion by the end of September 2020. It has been reduced to US\$ 58.04 billion in 2018. The trade imbalance has been increased from the US \$ 44.86 billion to US \$58.04 billion by the end of 2018. Further, the trade imbalance has been reduced to US \$ 29.86 billion by September 2020. Military standoff at the LAC/LOC has affected immensely the India - China bilateral trade.



Table 2: Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's visit to China (2014 -2021):

| <i>Sl.No</i> | <i>Place of Visit</i> | <i>Duration</i> |
|--------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | China, Mongolia, South Korea | April 14 - May 19 2015 |
| 2 | Vietnam and China | 02 September - 05 September,2016 |
| 3 | China and Myanmar | 03 September – 07 September 2017 |
| 4 | China | 26 – 28, April, 2018 |
| 5 | China | 09 June -10 June,2018” |

Source: Prime Minister of India Web Portal, Details of Foreign Visits, Website:
<https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/details-of-foreigndomestic-visits/>, accessed on August 18 2021

The above table depicts that Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi Ji, visited China 05 times during 2015 -2018. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping have met frequently at New Delhi and Beijing to discuss multilateral, bilateral and regional issues. In this connection, both India and China have signed key agreements to further diplomatic ties. Both the leaders have extensively participated in Brazil, Russia, India, South Africa(BRICS), Shanghai Cooperation Organization(SCO) and Russia – India – China Trilateral Summit(RIC) to discuss various strategic issues and contemporary global issues. It shows the significance of India – China strategic relations in the contemporary multipolar world order.

Table 3: Global Arms imports to the 10 top Largest Importers, 2010 - 2020

| Rank 2010-2020 | Rank 2009-2019 | Recipient | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|----------------|----------------|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1 | 1 | India | 2911 | 3598 | 4392 | 5381 | 3347 | 3117 | 3003 | 2909 | 1485 | 3075 | 2799 |
| 2 | 2 | Saudi Arabia | 1083 | 1222 | 1033 | 1614 | 2740 | 3377 | 2961 | 3931 | 3315 | 3419 | 2466 |
| 3 | 3 | China | 981 | 1055 | 1571 | 1289 | 1077 | 1262 | 1139 | 1338 | 1962 | 1347 | 811 |
| 4 | 4 | Australia | 1513 | 1557 | 867 | 245 | 906 | 1464 | 1026 | 1653 | 1557 | 1184 | 1658 |
| 5 | 7 | Egypt | 686 | 630 | 281 | 673 | 420 | 1436 | 1690 | 2395 | 1677 | 1046 | 1311 |
| 6 | 5 | UAE | 644 | 1235 | 1154 | 2306 | 768 | 1224 | 956 | 966 | 1196 | 691 | 432 |
| 7 | 9 | South Korea | 1299 | 1570 | 1078 | 191 | 723 | 254 | 1058 | 1052 | 1100 | 1480 | 1317 |
| 8 | 6 | Pakistan | 2205 | 1128 | 1014 | 1095 | 828 | 779 | 837 | 837 | 799 | 521 | 759 |
| 9 | 8 | Algeria | 835 | 1125 | 661 | 362 | 620 | 898 | 2903 | 1128 | 1284 | 164 | 549 |
| 10 | 10 | United States | 1091 | 1012 | 1207 | 791 | 590 | 513 | 451 | 516 | 380 | 866 | 687 |
| | | Others | 12510 | 15911 | 14737 | 13228 | 15056 | 14315 | 15415 | 15037 | 12275 | 13312 | 10041 |
| | | Total | 25757 | 30043 | 27995 | 27174 | 27073 | 28638 | 31438 | 31762 | 27028 | 27105 | 22831 |

Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, https://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/html/export_toplist.php, Data generated on August 18 2021. Figures of SIPRI Trend Indicator Values (TVs) have been expressed in millions



The above table depicts that India has stood in the first place/the first rank by importing defence equipment from the global countries with US\$ 36016 million during 2010 -2020. Saudi Arabia has achieved the second rank by importing military equipment with a worth of US\$27160 million, and China has achieved the 3rd rank by importing defence equipment with the worth of US \$13831. Australia has imported weapons worth US\$ 13630 million and achieved fourth place. Finally, Egypt has emerged in fifth place by importing defence equipment worth US\$12245 million. Pakistan has stood in eighth place by importing defence equipment with a worth of US\$ 10802 million during 2010 – 2020. It shows that India, China, and Pakistan have been heavily importing defence equipment from the global countries, leading to an arms race in the South Asian region.

Table 4: Global arms exports from the top 10 largest exporters, 2010-2020,

| Rank 2010-2020 | Rank 2009-2019 | Supplier | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2010-2020 |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| 1 | 1 | United States | 8062 | 8940 | 9056 | 7485 | 9604 | 9937 | 9868 | 12070 | 9895 | 10788 | 9372 | 105078 |
| 2 | 2 | Russia | 6214 | 8676 | 8180 | 7919 | 5469 | 5922 | 6790 | 6088 | 6753 | 5226 | 3203 | 70440 |
| 3 | 3 | France | 870 | 1735 | 1029 | 1493 | 1656 | 2043 | 2088 | 2359 | 1784 | 3269 | 1995 | 20321 |
| 4 | 4 | Germany | 2666 | 1311 | 750 | 791 | 1790 | 1763 | 2506 | 1944 | 1070 | 978 | 1232 | 16802 |
| 5 | 5 | China | 1475 | 1271 | 1526 | 2067 | 1212 | 1780 | 2410 | 1438 | 1169 | 1472 | 760 | 16580 |
| 6 | 6 | United Kingdom | 1157 | 1055 | 929 | 1608 | 1651 | 1180 | 1393 | 1237 | 703 | 907 | 429 | 12248 |
| 7 | 7 | Spain | 262 | 1428 | 545 | 733 | 1051 | 1162 | 471 | 820 | 1025 | 989 | 1201 | 9686 |
| 8 | 9 | Italy | 538 | 963 | 741 | 861 | 672 | 676 | 618 | 791 | 535 | 321 | 806 | 7523 |
| 9 | 8 | Israel | 640 | 546 | 458 | 419 | 399 | 790 | 1464 | 1268 | 704 | 363 | 345 | 7395 |
| 10 | 10 | Netherlands | 370 | 546 | 858 | 374 | 631 | 461 | 471 | 1050 | 448 | 238 | 488 | 5936 |
| | | Others | 3503 | 3573 | 3922 | 3422 | 2941 | 2924 | 3357 | 2697 | 2942 | 2554 | 2999 | 34834 |
| | | Total | 25757 | 30043 | 27995 | 27174 | 27073 | 28638 | 31438 | 31762 | 27028 | 27105 | 22831 | 306843 |

Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, https://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/html/export_toplist.php, Data Generated on August 18 2021. Figures of SIPRI Trend Indicator Values (TVs) have been expressed in millions

The above table illustrates that United States has stood in the first place/first rank by exporting defence equipment to the global countries with US\$ 105078 million during 2010 -2020. Russia has achieved the second rank by exporting military equipment with a worth of US\$70440 million, and France has achieved the 3rd rank by exporting defence equipment with a worth of US \$20321. Germany has exported weapons worth US\$ 16802 million and achieved fourth place. Finally, China has emerged in fifth place by exporting defence equipment worth US\$12245 million. Israel has stood at ninth rank by exporting defence equipment with a worth of US\$ 10802 million during 2010 – 2020. It shows that the United States of America (USA), Russia and France have been heavily exporting defence equipment to



the global countries. Indian defence policymakers have to extensively work on indigenous defence technology as part of the 'Make in India' programme to manufacture advanced defence equipment and be acquainted with the latest defence technology.

Table 5: World Military expenditure, 2020, - SIPRI Data Analysis

| "Rank | | Country | Spending US\$ Billion 2020 | Change % 2020 | | Spending as share of GDP | | World Share% GDP |
|-------|------|----------------|----------------------------------|------------------|---------|-----------------------------|------|------------------------|
| 2019 | 2020 | | | 2019-20 | 2011-20 | 2020 | 2011 | |
| 1 | 1 | United States | 778 | 4.4 | -10 | 3.7 | 4.8 | 39 |
| 2 | 2 | China | 252 | 1.9 | 76 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 13 |
| 3 | 3 | India | 72.9 | 2.1 | 34 | 2.9 | 2.7 | 3.7 |
| 4 | 4 | Russia | 61.7 | 2.5 | 26 | 4.3 | 3.4 | 3.1 |
| 5 | 6 | United Kingdom | 59.2 | 2.9 | -4.2 | 2.2 | 2.5 | 3.0 |

Source: SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, Apr. 2021; SIPRI Year Book, 2021, Trends in World Military Expenditure, SIPRI Fact Sheet 2021."

The above table depicts that United States has stood at First Rank in the world military expenditure with US\$778 billion in 2020, according to the database of *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute* (SIPRI). China has achieved second place in military expenditure with a worth of US\$ 252 billion. India has achieved the third rank by spending military expenditure with the worth of US\$ 72.9 billion. Russia has emerged in fourth place by contributing a world expenditure of US\$ 61.7 billion in 2020. United Kingdom has emerged as the sixth global country as part of world military expenditure with a worth of US\$ 59.2 billion. United States share of world military expenditure as part of the world share % GDP is: 30%, China's share is 13%, India's share as part of the world expenditure is 3.7%, Russia's world share% in GDP is: 3.1%, and Finally United Kingdom's world expenditure as part of world share % in GDP is: 3.0%. It shows that the United States is allocating more budgets for defiance manufacture and production. China and India have been heavily incurring expenditure on defense sector expenditure by importing large scale defiance equipment from the global countries. While allocating budget to the defense sector, countries also have to give priority to social sectors like education, health and implementation of various welfare schemes for the empowerment of the citizens and development of the human development index (SIPRI Year Book, 2021).

Bilateral Investment and Commercial Dialogue Mechanisms

India and China have emerged as top investment destinations to the global countries. China has invested with a worth of US\$ 200 million by the end of 2020; Cumulative Chinese investment to India with the worth of US\$5343.2 million according to the database of Ministry of Commerce, China. India has invested with the worth of US\$12.01 million in China; Cumulative Indian investment to China with the worth of US\$ 937.64 million in 2020. To play a significant role in the contemporary global world, India and China must increase bilateral investment and trade by resolving the border issues very amicable (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2021). India – China economic relations have been shaped through various commercial dialogue mechanisms. *India-China Economic and Commercial Relations* are shaped through various dialogue mechanisms. "*Joint Economic Group*



(JEG") was established in 1988. The Commerce Ministers are heading "*the Joint Group on Economic Relations, Science and Technology (JEG)*". As part of this programme, 11 JEG meetings took place between India and China. Both India and China have constituted three working groups, i.e. "*Trade In Services (TIS), Economic and Trade Planning Cooperation (ETPC) and Trade Statistical Analysis (TSA)*".

During Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's visit, Strategic Economic Dialogue was established in December 2010 to expedite macroeconomic cooperation. In this connection, 05 SED meetings took place as part of this initiative. 06 Working Groups have been established as part of the SED : (i) *High Technology* (ii) *Environment* (iii) *Infrastructure* (iv) *Energy* and(v) *Policy Coordination* (vi) *Pharmaceutical*. *Strategic Economic Dialogue is co-chaired by the Vice-Chairman of NITI Ayog and the Chinese National Development and Reforms Commission (NDRC)* (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2021).

During the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to China in May 2015, "*The NITI Ayog – Development Research Centre of China (DRC) Dialogue*" was established to expedite global economic cooperation. The fifth NITI-DRC dialogue was convened at Wuhan during 28-29 November 2019. Vice-Chairman NITI Ayog and President (Minister-level) of DRC of China have actively participated in this meeting. Further, the "*India - China Financial Dialogue*" was convened according to the guidelines of MoU signed during the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's visit to India in April 2005 (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2021). The 9th India-China Financial Dialogue was organized in New Delhi on September 25 2019. India and China have established various *Joint Working Groups (JWG)* to further India – China bilateral trade relations: "*India-China Joint Working Group on Agriculture, Joint Study Group on BCIM Economic Corridor, JWG on Collaboration in Skill Development and Vocational Education, Joint Working Group on Industrial Park Cooperation, Joint Working Group on Information and Communication Technology & High-Technology*" (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2021).

Table 6: Meetings/Dialogues

| “Sl.No | Meetings/Dialogues | Date /Period |
|--------|---|-------------------------------|
| 1 | 2nd Meeting of Joint Working Group on Skill Development | February 22 2019, New Delhi |
| 2 | 1st Meeting of Working Group on Pharmaceuticals | May 07 2019, Beijing |
| 3 | 6th SED | 7-9 September 2019, New Delhi |
| 4 | 9th Financial Dialogue | September 25 2019, New Delhi |
| 5 | 4th Meeting of JWG on Trade in Services | November 18 2019, New Delhi |
| 6 | 5th NITI Aayog-DRC Dialogue | 28-29 November 2019, Wuhan |
| 7 | JWG on IT. | 11-12 December 2019, Beijing" |

Source: Embassy of India, Beijing, China, Website: https://www.eoibeijing.gov.in/eoibeijing_pages/Mjg, accessed August 20 2021.

The role of India and China in the BRICS Summit

BRICS is playing a dynamic role in the contemporary global world. Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa have participated in the virtual BRICS Summit on September 09 2021. In this connection, *Brazil's Jair Bolsanaro, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa* have participated in the 13th BRICS summit (PTI, The Hindu, 09th



September 2021). Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji has chaired the virtual BRICS Summit. The five BRICS countries contribute 16% of the global trade; 24% of the global GDP, representing 41% of the global population (PTI, The Hindu, 09th September 2021). Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji has stipulated that "*It is a matter of great pleasure for me and India to chair this summit on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the BRICS*". Modi has reiterated that India had received full cooperation and coordination from BRICS countries during India's presidency of the BRICS Summit. BRICS has taken landmark decisions, which are of global strategic importance. BRICS countries have taken collective decisions to strengthen the reforms in the global multilateral systems. Thus, India and China are playing a vital role in the BRICS Summit. BRICS has played a dynamic role in the contemporary global world (PTI, The Hindu, and September 09 2021).

13th BRICS summit had strongly advocated for "an Inclusive intra – Afghan dialogue" to ensure Afghanistan's stability. Further, all leaders have adopted the BRICS Counter-Terrorism Action plan. BRICS countries have agreed to work on a Remote Sensing Satellite Constellation between the space agencies of BRICS countries. BRICS leaders have strongly condemned the terrorist attack on the Hamid Karzai International Airport., where 100 persons, including US security personnel, have been killed (The Hindu, Kallol Bhattacharjee, and September 09 2021). BRICS countries have advocated for inclusive infra-Afghan dialogue to ensure law & order, peace, and stability in Afghanistan. In this connection, BRICS countries have issued joint statements that Afghanistan Territory should not be used for terror harbour/ sanctuary to train the terrorists to carry out attacks on other countries. This BRICS summit adopted the New Delhi Declaration to address women, children, minorities and human rights and expedite humanitarian aid to Afghanistan (The Hindu, Kallol Bhattacharjee, 09th September 2021). The virtual summit of BRICS has extensively discussed the present scenario in Afghanistan and implications for security in the contemporary global world. Russian media has stated that the Taliban has invited China, Turkey, Iran, and China to the swearing-in ceremony. China has given US\$ 31 million to Afghanistan to help the Taliban Government. The summit has also taken decisions related to non – interference in international affairs, and conflicts have to be resolved very amicably. Shri Sanjay Bhattacharya, Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs, has stated that Afghanistan should not become worrisome and problematic to the neighborhood. All BRICS leaders have effectively participated in the virtual summit and have highlighted the Afghanistan issue. BRICS leaders have also discussed the conflicts in the Korean peninsula, Syria, Israel – Palestine, and Myanmar to establish a democratic form of Government (The Hindu, Kallol Bhattacharjee, September 09 2021). New Delhi Declaration also stated that force or threats should not be planned against the political independence of the democratic governments. BRICS leaders have also discussed the impact of COVID -19 and combating measures to eliminate COVID -19 from the contemporary global world. BRICS leaders have strongly advocated for reforms in the UN Security Council and revitalize the UN General Assembly (TheHindu, Kallol Bhattacharjee, and September 09 2021).

India and China's role in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

India and China have been playing a pivotal role in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). According to SCO sources, India, China, Pakistan, and other members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) will be holding joint anti-terrorism exercises (The Hindu, PTI, 2021). "*Joint exercise Pabbi – Antiterror 2021*" decision was taken in the 36th Council of the "*Regional Anti – Terrorist Structure (RATS)*" held at Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on March 18 2021(The Hindu, PTI, 2021). Further, SCO members have approved the framework of extremism, counter-terrorism and separatism for 2022 – 2024. India and China have extensively discussed various strategic and multilateral issues to strengthen the cooperation among the members of the SCO (The Hindu, PTI, 2021). India, China,



Russia, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan countries have been actively participating and developing the outline to develop coordination and cooperation among the members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The SCO has played the predominant role as an economic and security bloc in the contemporary global world (The Hindu, PTI, 2021).

India and China's perspectives on the Contemporary Global Order

Indian and Chinese military officials have extensively worked on "*mutual consensus to disengage*" to resolve the border disputes at the "*Line of Actual Control (LAC)*". Dr. S Jaishankar participated in the virtual Russia-India-China (RIC) Foreign Ministerial Meeting on June 22 2020 (Pant 2020, Observer Research Foundation 2020). In this connection, Dr. Jaishankar has reiterated that India believes in the "*time-tested principles of international relations*". India, Russia, and China have strongly advocated the significance of multilateralism, legitimate interests, and international law in the contemporary global world (Pant 2020, Observer Research Foundation 2020). Dr. Jaishankar has vehemently condemned the Chinese military troops' deliberate and planned action at the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The RIC platform has been playing a vital role in the post-cold war period. India, China and Russia have dealt very firmly with the various issues, i.e. global trade, climate change and military interventions (Pant 2020, Observer Research Foundation 2020). India and China have immensely benefitted from the proceedings' and dialogues of the Russia – India – China trilateral summit. During this time, India and China have established trade and economic links with the USA. Thus, India and China have been playing a predominant role in bringing changes in multilateralism through BRICS, SCO and RIC (Pant 2020, Observer Research Foundation 2020)

Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit (SCO) at Dushanbe, Tajikistan on September 17 2021:

Indian Ministry of External Affairs, Dr. Jaishankar and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi have participated in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit (SCO) at Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on September 17 2021. Dr. Jaishankar has stated that prolonging the conflicts at borders will be leading to negative implications of India - China relations. Both the leaders have reiterated that issues at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) have to be resolved in a very amicable manner to strengthen the India – China bilateral relations (Haidar 2021, Krishnan 2021, The Hindu 17th September 2021). Further, he has stated that China should not see India through its ties with other countries. The authorities have extensively discussed the stalemate at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh (Haidar 2021, Krishnan 2021, and The Hindu 17th September 2021).

Dr. Jaishankar has stated that by abiding by the agreements and protocols, both India and China have to resolve the border issues peacefully. India and China have to develop a joint mechanism to mitigate the border issues/conflicts in the LAC to further India – China's strategic partnership. Both the nations have to work for Asian Solidarity actively and should become trendsetters/role models for other South Asian countries. Further, Dr. Jaishankar has stated that "*China should avoid viewing our bilateral relations from the perspective of its relations with third countries*" (Jaishankar, The Hindu, and September 17 2021). Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has addressed the SCO meeting through a video conference on September 18 2021. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji will be travelling to the United States to participate in the Quadrilateral Security dialogue on September 24 2021 (Haidar 2021, Krishnan 2021, The Hindu 17th September 2021).

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has stated that the negotiations and dialogues between India and China have resulted in de-escalation. Further, he has stated that India and China must "*move from emergency response to regular management and control*" (Wang Yi, The Hindu, September 17



2021). Officials from both sides must work rigorously for disengagement and de-escalation based on shared understanding and agreements signed between India and China. Being the major economies, India and China should strive for strategic consensus and not threaten each other's opportunities and development. India - China 13th round of military talks could not occur due to a military standoff at the Eastern Ladakh (Haidar 2021, Krishnan 2021, The Hindu 17th September 2021). Due to negotiations, disengagement of troops took place in the banks of Pangong Tso, Gora and Galwan valley, but the friction points yet to be resolved at the *Depsang, Hot Springs and Demchok*. India and China have identified buffer zones to mitigate the border clashes (The Hindu, September 17 2021). Shri Bipin Rawat, Indian Chief of Defence Staff, has stated that China is developing proximity towards Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey and Iran. India's has to devise its military policy accordingly to deal with the situation very firmly. External Affairs Minister Dr Jaishankar has stated that India and China should establish diplomatic ties based on mutual respect (Haidar 2021, Krishnan 2021, The Hindu 17th September 2021).

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's virtual address at Shanghai Cooperation Organization:

Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji has virtually participated in "*the 21st Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)*" on September 17 2021, at Dushanbe. Modi has delivered his message through a video conference of the Joint SCO - CSTO outreach session on Afghanistan (Prime Minister of India Web Portal, September 18 2021). *The President of Tajikistan, H.E. Emomali Rahmon*, has chaired the meeting. Indian External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar, represented India at the SCO summit (Prime Minister of India Web Portal, September 17 2021). Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has stated that the SCO border region has been engulfed with religious extremism and terrorism. It will affect the progressive and moderate values of the region. Recent political changes in Afghanistan will further exacerbate religious extremism and terrorism (Prime Minister of India Web Portal, September 17 2021)

Further, he emphasized the scientific and rational thought and moderation values must be inculcated in the region's youth. Prime Minister Modi has stated that India will be sharing digital technologies and open source solutions with the SCO members to develop in the region. Modi Ji highlighted that connectivity projects must be developed in a participatory, consultative and transparent manner to develop mutual trust (Prime Minister of India Web Portal, September 17 2021). In this connection, Outreach Session also took place in Afghanistan between "*Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)*". Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji has strongly advocated for 'zero tolerance' towards religious extremism and terrorism. Further, he has emphasized the impact of human trafficking, drugs and arms from Afghanistan. Prime Minister Modi Ji has extended humanitarian assistance and Solidarity to the people of Afghanistan (Prime Minister of India Web Portal, 17th September 2021).

Major irritants in India – China Bilateral Relations

(i) Doklam Stand-off

Doklam is a trijunction between India, Bhutan and China, and it is spread over 100 sq km and is surrounded by Bhutan's Ha Valley, Chumbi Valley of Tibet and Sikkim. Indian and Chinese military troops had stood-off on June 16 2017, at Doklam. Recent intelligent reports and satellite images have revealed that China stationed 1800 military troops and has established new trenches, a few helipads, and permanent military posts near the Doklam region (Joseph, The Hindu, and January 27 2018). Similarly, India also has strengthened its military presence in the Doklam region. China and Bhutan had several rounds of negotiations to resolve the issue of Doklam. Despite that, Chinese forces have



tried to construct the road in the Doklam area. This episode led to the standoff between the Indian and Chinese military forces. Doklam has strategic significance for India, located near Siliguri Corridor (Joseph, The Hindu, and January 27 2018). It has been described as a Chicken's neck, and it is vital for India. India and China have the longest disputed border of 37,000 sq km of Aksai Chin, Arunachal Pradesh, with 84,000 sq km and 1.4 million residents. Officials from both sides have convened high-level negotiations to disengage and deescalate the border conflicts, but nowhere near a solution for the border disputes at LAC (Joseph, The Hindu, January 27 2018)

(ii) Galwan military standoff/LAC/LOC

Military standoff between the Indian and Chinese troops occurred at the Galwan valley in Eastern Ladakh in the first week of May 2021. During these clashes, 20 Indian personnel and colonel were killed on May 14, 2021, at the Line of the Actual Control (LAC). It was the worst incident between both the countries. The military standoff was part of the de-escalation process at the Galwan Valley, wherein casualties happened from both sides. Negotiations and talks took place between the Major-General Level at Patrollong Pint 14 to deescalate the tensions. The standoff took place at Pangong Tso on the night of May 05 -06. 76 Indian personnel were injured during this incident. The second scuffle took place on May 09 at Naku La in North Sikkim (Dinaka Peri 2021, Suhasini Haidar 2021, Ananth Krishnan 2021, The Hindu, June 16, 2020). Shri Rajnath Singh, Indian Defence Minister, has conveyed the message at the Indian Parliament that "*India and China have reached an agreement for disengagement and de-escalation at the Pangong Lake area and de-escalation will be taking place in a coordination, phased and verified manner*". 11 rounds of talks took place between the military officials of India and China to resolve the border issues in a very amicable manner. However, disengagement is yet to occur at some fraction points at Ladakh, i.e. Hot Springs, Demchok, Gogra and Depsang (Vijaita Singh, The Hindu, May 23, 2021). India and China have to resolve the border issues through peaceful.

Conclusion

India and China have been playing a predominant role in the contemporary multipolar world order. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has stated that the '*Chennai Connect*' informal summit between India and China has led to a new era of cooperation between India and China (Kamal Sandesh 2019).

Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi Ji and Chinese President Xi Jinping participated in the second informal summit at Chennai during 11- 12,2019. The two leaders have extensively discussed various strategic issues and multilateral issues in the contemporary global world. India and China have firmly believed in the rule-based international order. Both India and China have unanimously agreed in the first informal summit in April 2018 that both countries will resolve the differences through various negotiation and peaceful methods. Further, they have strongly advocated for multilateral trading systems, global climate change and sustainable development. Since terrorism is a common threat for both countries, they have to resolve to address the menace of terrorism in the global world.

Since India and China have excellent traditions, civilizations, and both leaders have decided to expedite the cultural relations between India and China. It will be contributing to the strategic dialogue between both nations. An inclusive, stable, open, and prosperous environment is necessary for the region to ensure peace, progress, and prosperity. In this connection, the two leaders have agreed to "*sister-state relations between Tamil Nadu and Fujian Province and establish an academy to study Mahabalipuram*



and Fujian province and maritime research links between India and China" (Kamal Sandesh 2019). . Strategic communication and strategic dialogues have played a more significant role in India – China relations.

India and China strongly believe in strengthening bilateral relations, which will play a more significant role in developing strategic cooperation and dialogue. These developments have led to the declaration of 2020 as the year of India – China's decision to celebrate the "**70th anniversary of India - China Cultural and People to People Exchanges**". Both nations have decided to utilize the opportunity to the fullest extent of exchanges between political parties, militaries, legislatures, cultural organizations, and youth organizations. In this connection, India and China have established a "**High-Level Economic and Trade Dialogue mechanism**" to expedite trade and commerce relations. India and China have decided to join venture in the manufacturing sector in the High-Level Economic and Trade Dialogue meeting. India and China have agreed to the border disputes and conflicts as per the guidelines outlined in the 2005 Parameters and Guiding Principles Agreement. India and China have strongly advocated for tranquillity and peace in the border and Line of Actual Control (LAC) and Confidence Building Measures (CBMS). The two informal summits, i.e. Wuhan Spirit and Chennai Connect, have played a predominant role in developing India - China diplomatic relations. President Xi has invited the Indian Prime Minister for a third informal summit also.

Doklam Stand-off in Summer 2017, Galwan Standoff during April- May 2020, China's Belt Road Initiative (BRI), China's policy towards Pakistan and recent political support to Taliban military regime in Afghanistan have deteriorated the diplomatic, bilateral and strategic partnership between India and China. Recent dialogues and negotiations at Shanghai Cooperation Organization on September 16 2021, at Dushanbe, Uzbekistan summit have resulted in de-escalation and disengagement of the military forces and a joint framework to resolve the border disputes in a very amicable and peaceful manner. India and China have to resolve the border disputes at Line of Actual Control (LAC), Eastern Ladakh and Galwan Valley to establish and revive India – China bilateral relations in the contemporary global world.

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