

BREAKING THE ICE INDIA AND CHINA ON THE PATH OF RAPPROACHMENT

Abstract

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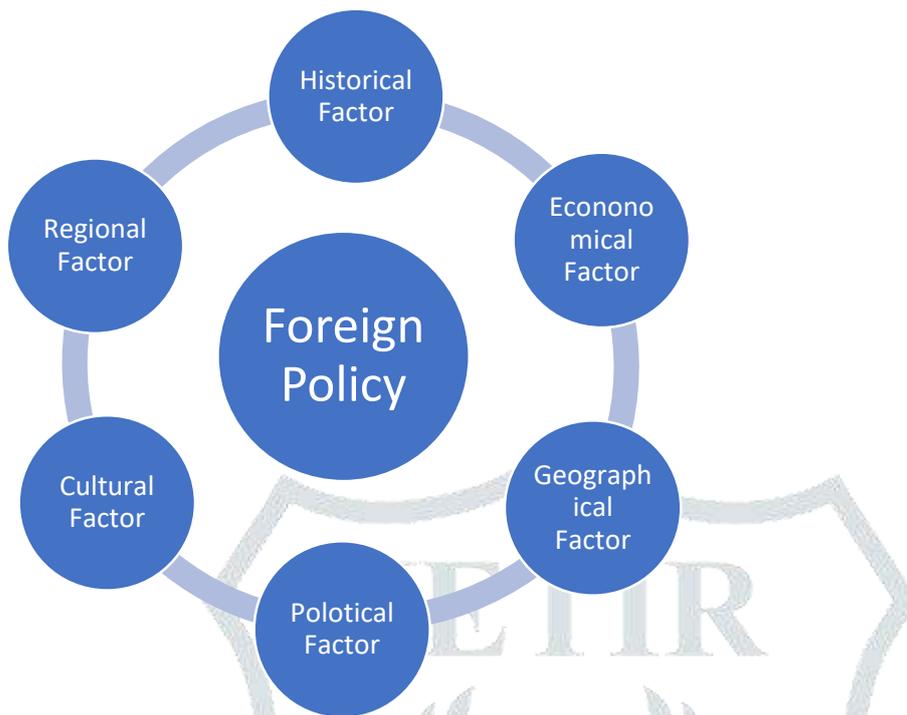
The major characteristic feature of foreign policy of India is, 'live and let live'. It has never had the history of aggression, but at the same time, has never compromised with the sovereignty of its country at any cost and never tolerated anyone eyeing toward its border. This research paper will through light on the relation of India and China in the changing circumstances and the ever-dynamic foreign policy of both the nation. The foreign of India which is based on the principle of **Panchsheel** in the initial periods, believing in complete non-aggression friendship and cordiality with the neighbours as well as the other nations of the world changed itself bringing firmness and strength. The research paper will also emphasize the lack of initialization in the foreign policy of India in the initial period which has been corrected with the establishment of National Security Council and National Security Adviser's post. The research paper will make a humble effort to show the changing attitude of China towards India because of the enriching military strength of India. The impact of various factors will be emphasized which helped in turning the relation towards a positive direction and the effect of economy will be specially mentioned. The effort made by the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi towards breaking the ice from the relationship will be specially mentioned which worked as a landmark in the history of relationship of India and China.

“What does independence consist of? It consists fundamentally and visibly of foreign relation. That is the test of independence. All else is local autonomy. Once, foreign relation goes out of your hands into the charge of somebody else and in that manner, you are not independent”

Jawahar Lal Nehru, during a debate in Constituent Assembly in March 1949.

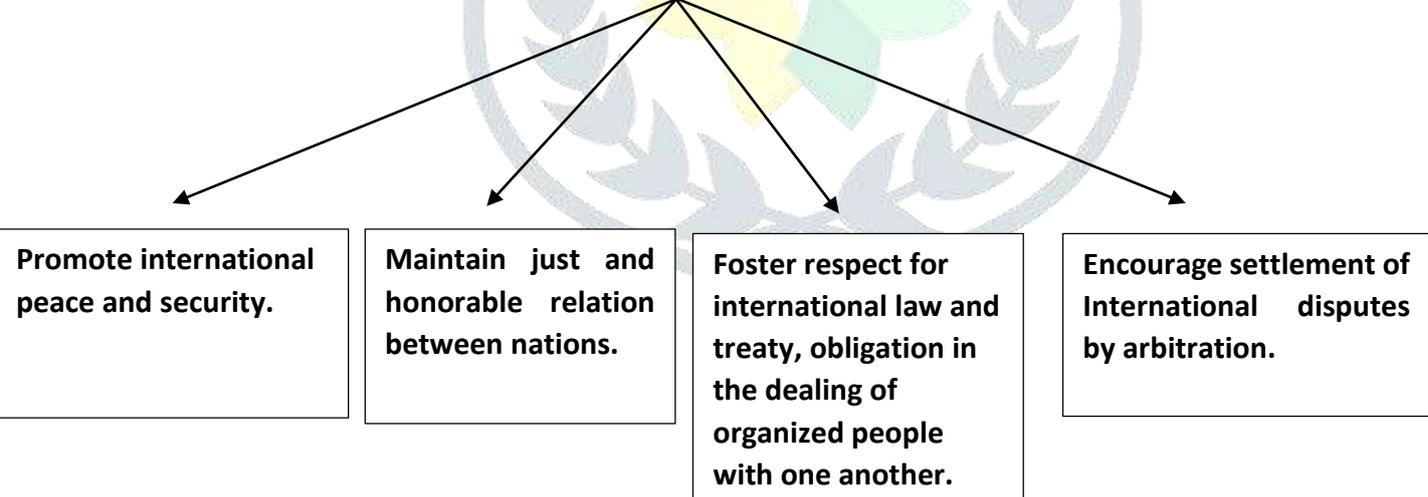
Introduction- Foreign relation is the effect of the policies and the steps through which the interaction and the behavior between and among the countries of the world are guided and managed. It provides the direction to the way, the common issues between the countries are solved, and relations move in either positive or negative direction, depending on the way the issues are directed. It is the foreign relation which brings the development in the relation between the countries because of the pattern of deal and taking up of the policies.

The foreign policy of any country is affected by many factors which are as follows: -



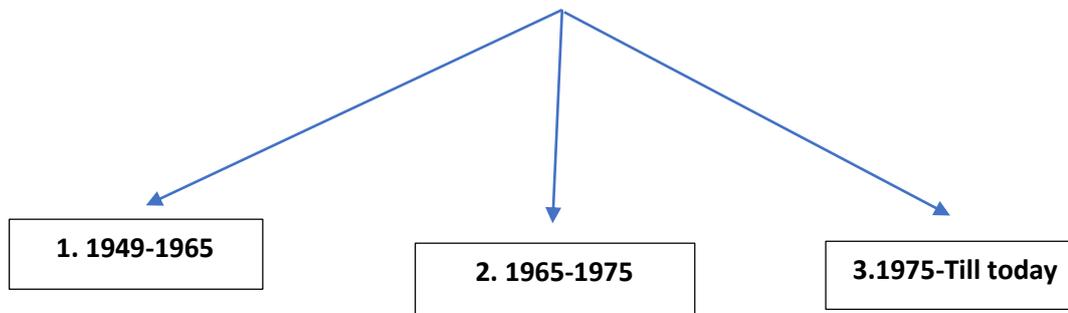
So far as the case of Foreign Policy of India is concerned, it always respected the philosophies given in the Constitution of India in Article-51 which clearly says: -

Article-51 of Indian Constitution



The foreign relation between India and the Peoples Republic of China can be broadly divided in three timelines on the basis of the type of relation maintained by these two Himalayan countries and this timeline is as follows: -

Timeline of Relation between India and China

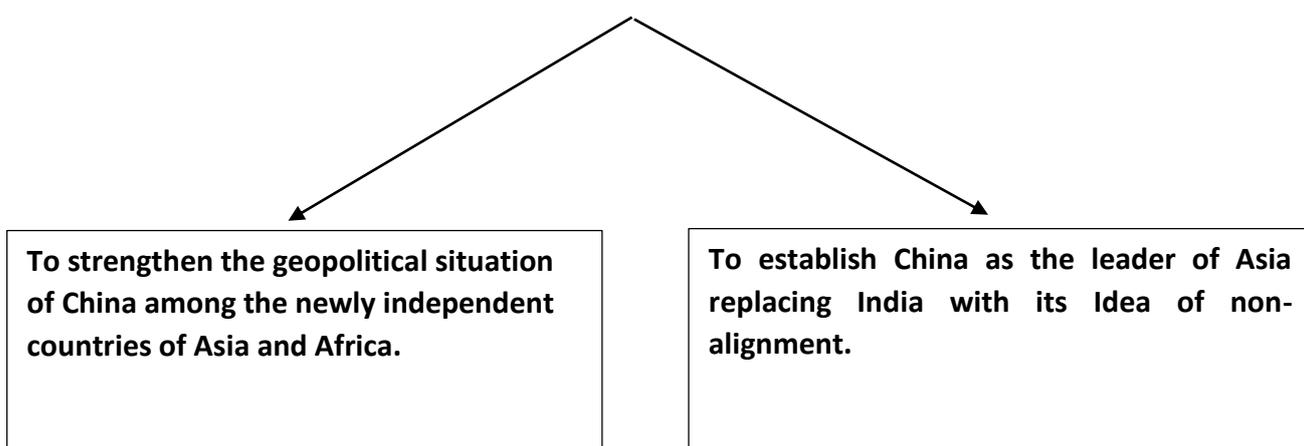


Relation of India and China between 1949-1965 and its impact on the later period-

If the relationship is observed in the Pre-War era that is before the War of 1962, the Indian politicians, leaders and media has visioned China as a brotherly figure and the relationship was termed as good as “Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai” that is the Chinese and Indians were considered as a brother but, very painfully this mis-conception had been broken by the situations which arose between India and China.

Although India was moving with the finest and most cordial foreign policy based on Panchsheel, the policy of Mao, who was the Communist leader of China and President of China from 1949 till 1976, regarding India can be cited as hostile towards India. He wanted to place China at the highest position of power in Asia. And his major objective was to establish the geo-political Hegemony of China. He considered India as an obstacle and wanted to target it in such a manner that India could never be in a position to raise its head and, Mao moved in the direction of imposing the heavy and humiliating War on unalarmed India.

Mao had twin objective behind the War of 1962-



The War of 1962 had massive influence on the Foreign Policy of India. India and China became prisoners of their own articulation of border disputes. They did not see, except for brief moments, that to make the inch-by-inch retention of a challenged frontier, a matter of national honor was to make impossible a settlement without force¹.

The War had damaged India and the present government on many fronts, and all of a sudden India's vulnerability in terms of defense preparedness was exposed. There came a serious demand for the change in the foreign policy of India including NAM, defense policy, economy planning processes etc. Besides, the requirement was felt to procure defense production and advanced weapons from the friendly nation like USSR which were already developed in every sphere.

SILVER LINEING IN THE RELATION: - Mrs. Indra Gandhi, the then Prime minister of India shared her views about moving on the positive path and searching ways which could solve the issues and conflict with the age-old partner. She had a press conference on 1st July 1969 in which she made herself very clear by taking firm step while declaring that the solution would be through

1. **Bhabani Sen Gupta, The Fulcrum of Asia, India China Relations- The Border Issue and Beyond by Mohan Guruswamy and Zorawar Daulat Singh.**

talks and there should not have been any pre-condition. India did not want herself to be bounded by many conditions. The then external affairs Minister, Dinesh Singh also made the same statement on the Floor of the parliament and cleared his view of going on for better relationship with China¹. China playing its role also in the same direction moving on the path of resolving the issues and conflicts. On 1st may 1970, Mao had a meeting with the Indian Charge de Affairs Mr. Brajesh Mishra expressing great feeling about India and said, "India is a great country and the Indian people are a grate people. Chinese and Indian people ought to live as friend, they cannot always quarrel."²

The Process of Rapprochement- As it is true, that, time is the best healer and all the scars get fad away with passing of the time. In case of the relation equation of India and China, the changing time appeared working in positive manner and the relation started going towards betterment. The foreign policy between India and China started moving although slowly, on a right track and India started trying to improve the relation with the neighbour China and promoted cooperative majors. After long period of setback, their came a silver lining, and in 1976, the diplomatic relation was once again established between the two close neighbours-India and China.

First time after the devastating war of 1962, the step of exchanging the ambassadors took place when Mr. K.R. Narayanan of India and the Chinese ambassador visited each other the news of exchange of diplomatic envoys after nearly 15 years was great and left the entire world community in the state of surprise. The New York times had published this news that, on April 15th 1976, India announced to send ambassadors to Peking for the first time in 15 years¹.

Revival of the relationship: - After 15 long years of shadowed relationship, a new revival came in 1976 with the exchange of envoys at the ambassadorial level, which seemed bringing a change in the relationship equation. The

1. INDIA CHINA RELATIONS THE BORDER ISSUE AND BEYOND MOHAN GURUSWAMY, ZORAWAR DAULET SINGH
2. C.V. Rangnathan and Vinod C. Khanna, India and China, The Way Ahead After Mao's India War, New Delhi: Her Anand Publication 2000 P.P. 56-62 in INDIA CHINA RELATIONS THE BORDER ISSUE AND BEYOND MOHAN GURUSWAMY, ZORAWAR DAULET SINGH

ambassador of India to China, K.R. Narayanan tried his level best to dilute the tension and create an environment of trust, farsightedness and diplomatic out view. His all endeavor did not go in vain. His appointment was followed by the visit of the then external affair minister Shri Atal Bihari Bajpayee, in 1979, which was certainly a landmark visit. This visit left a deep impact on the relationship and people at both sides started assuming about the revival of century old friendly relationship. With visit of a mature and understanding leader with the farsightedness, first time after the war of 1962, some serious sign of rapprochement had appeared which was very welcoming.

During the visit of Atal Bihari Bajpayee, the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping had stated, we should have common ground while resolving differences. As, "for the boundary question between our two countries we can solve it through peaceful consultation. This question should not prevent us from improving our relations in other fields"¹. By saying this publicly, China indicated its intension of improving the relations with India.

Landmark visit of Rajiv Gandhi and its impacts on the relations: -The positivity in the relation was further followed by the visit of young Prime Minister of India Mr. Rajiv Gandhi which left an everlasting impact on the foreign policy of India towards China. This visit of Rajiv Gandhi to China had been the first after 34 years of deadlock by any Indian Prime Minister, which had certainly been taken by China in a very positive note and the political experts all around the world started analyzing this visit as a new beginning in the foreign relation between India and China. Rajiv Gandhi also said that China and India should promote a peaceful and friendly relationship, based on the doctrine of peaceful Co-existence of Panchsheel which had been signed in 1954. All of a sudden it started appearing that the Summit Level Diplomacy has got momentum which helped in the expansion of ties in economic, cultural and military spheres. Not only this, the visit led the speculations regarding cooperation at the political level also.

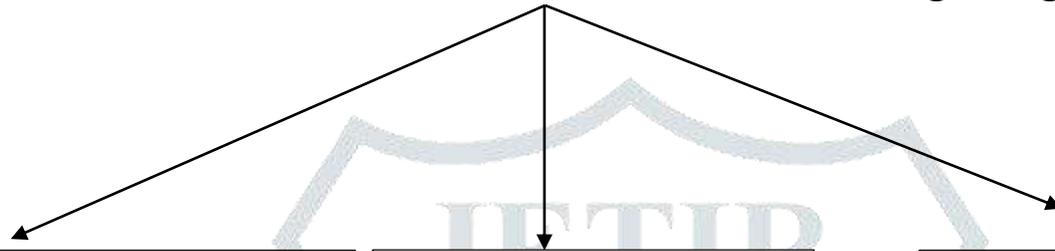
This visit is considered as a landmark visit, creating history and it started a new

1. nytimes.com, April 16 1976.

chapter in the relation between the two countries. During Rajiv Gandhi's visit there were discussion and talks on bilateral, regional and international issues with leaders of top ranking order and many Agreements on cooperation in science and technology also were signed which had a potentiality to benefit both countries in multifarious ways. Besides, one Agreements related to Civil Air Transport and on Executive programme for 1988-90 had been signed for cultural cooperation which all had going to have positive impact on the development of both the countries.

The leaders at both side had started realizing that fighting for small reasons like few kilometers of land is not benefit them in any way .

The realization of the leaders of India and China regarding relation.



Their economy had already been oppressed by the colonizers and the countries also wasted lots of time and resources on mutual tension instead of mutual cooperation.

The top policy makers realized that the border issues should not be the top priority of the agenda of developing countries like India.

Most importantly, cooperation noy competition should be the basis of the relationship between India and China.

Progress of bilateral relation in the decade of 90's: -The establishment of the Joint Working Group at different level grounded for defense cooperation and military evolvment in positive way during the decades of 90's.

*In December 1991 Chinese Premier Li, visited India and expressed China's sincere concern to resolve border dispute moving on the path of friendly bilateral talks and consultation with mutual consent.

1. B.M. Jane: India-China relation: issues and emerging trends, in the Round Table Routledge (2004) page 256

*This positive environment was further accelerated with the visit of the then President K.R. Narayanan to China in May 1992 which was first of its kind, that is the first head of the state visited from India to China.

*Another milestone in the foreign relation was achieved in the military relationship with the visit of Defense Minister Mr. Sharad Pawar in 1992 to China, which was also the first ever visit of the Defense Minister of India to the PRC. The cooperation and friendliness created a fertile

ground for the development of academic, military, scientific and technological exchange between the two nations.

Challenges to the relation- In the decade of 90's some challenges also came in the relationship, when India took a big step towards strengthening military capability by conducting Nuclear Test in 1998. But, acquiring nuclear power for India was somehow necessary and a wise step particularly when India was surrounded by a nuclear power neighbour, that too, an aggressive neighbour like China. It was an effort towards maintaining a balance of power in the neighborhood and with the other nations also, but the statement given by the then Defence Minister George Fernandes publicly that China, Not Pakistan is India's " potential threat number one" ¹

The development of foreign relation between India and China in the decade of 2000: -the decade of 2000, like the previous decade was filled with more positivity in the foreign relation with little ups and down.

*President K.R. Narayanan's visit to China on the 50th Anniversary of the country in May 2000 needs special mention which was made on the humble invitation of President Jiang Zemin, which was also first in the past eight years. The Indian Express, a leading daily of India in its addition of 12th June, 2000 commented very positively about the visit and described the speculated reason behind the visit. The Hindu, another reliable daily of India had also expressed its view that, the visit of the Constitutional Head of India to PRC, was an indicator of the fair relationship and also showed that, they share common view over Pakistan

1. G. Goh, *China and India: towards greater cooperation exchange.*

supported terrorism, Tibet, and permanent seat of India in United Nation Security Councils¹.

*The support of Chinese on the question of India's permanent seat at UNSC was considered as big achievement in the political sphere and foreign policy of India. First time it appeared that PRC is supporting India in the International Front also.

*Next significant step in the foreign policy of these two nation was the visit of India's Defense Minister, George Fernandes in 2003 to PRC.

*The visit of Indian Prime Minister Mr. Atal Bihari Bajpayee during 22nd to 27th June in 2003 accelerated the positive momentum. The signing of agreement during this visit was very special, as it officially accorded Chinese recognition to Sikkim for being part of India which was earlier considered disputed ².

*It was decided in various Joint Working Group that, an early classification and conformation of the LAC and exchange of maps of various sector would be completed soon, giving least chance of dispute and confrontation.

*It was also decided that, if any chance of military face-off is coming at the border, because of the uncertainty of LAC, they were supposed to exercise self-control and would try to avoid an escalation and simultaneously return to their base, inform to their respective head quarter. So that, early border meeting or diplomatic engagement could remove the disputes setback between the relation of these two neighbors and the bilateral relation kept on improving again.

*Next milestone was noticed in foreign relation between India and China in 2010 when Premier Wen Jibabo, who was as pragmatic as anyone can be, was invited by the then Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh from 15-17 December 2010. The significance of this visit can be based on the economic growth and it was the success of foreign policies of both the countries. The Premier Wen

1. Sino-Indian Equation in The Changing world scenario Alok Datta, page-35

2. Sino-Indian equation in the changing world scenario. Alok Datta page-32



Jibabo had been accompanied by 400 Chinese business leaders who were in favour to have business deals with different companies of India and wanted the deal to be signed¹.

Wen Jibabo showing his pragmatism and desire for economic gain, forgot the territorial issues and reminded the people about the historical ties of friendship between the countries. He, speaking at the Tagore International School on 15 December 2010, "India and China are two very populous country with ancient civilization, friendship between the two countries has a time-honored history, which can be dated back 2000 years and since the establishment of diplomatic ties between our two countries, in particular in last 10 years friendship and cooperation has made significant progress."²

*Moving ahead, when the countries met at the annual summit of BRICS in Sanya, Hainan at China, the meeting was very cordial and result oriented as the Agreement related with restoration of Defence Cooperation had been signed up again.

Negativity in the relation: - The relation took a little negative turn when the tension came in between the two, with the standoff between the troops of the two neighbours in very close nearness at the LAC in the areas between Jammu and Kashmir's Ladakh regions and Aksai Chin on 5th May 2013, that too, when Foreign Minister of India Mr. Salman Khurshid was about to make an official trip to China.

An environment of tension again came in the scene, when Indian President Pranab Mukharjee visited Arunachal Pradesh, one important state of North-Eastern part of India and which had severally been recognized by China as South Tibet.

Besides China having good relation with Pakistan, started building road routes in the disputed Kashmir territory, which further raised the anger of India.

1. "China prime minister Wen Jibabo begins bumper Indian trade trip" (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/BBCNews>) 15 December 2010.
2. The tribune Chandigarh India-Mant News Tribune India.com November 2nd, 2012.

Another serious setback took place in the bilateral relation in 2017 on 16th June when some development took place in Doklam. The Chinese troops, on 16th June 2017 had started construction of road with all equipment's which was extending towards Southward in Doklam. The event went very fast as on 18th June around 270 Indian troops equipped with not only weapons but carrying too bulldozers and intruded into Doklam in an effort to put obstruction in the path of Chinese activity of road construction. This event led to the age-old series of mutual allegations, and China alleged India of intruding into its territory which according to China was mutually agreed regarding China-India boundary and violation of territorial sovereignty and UN Charter also¹. After a series of allegations from both the sides, a consensus took place between the two nation on 28th August and a formal standoff was ended.

All these stances reminded India of the bitterness of the relationship between the two nations.

All the above year by year incidents sometime of friendliness and many time animosities made it evident that somehow, both the countries lack firmness in their foreign policies. But at the same time, it can also be said that with such a long border such type of few scuffles is as natural as the waves in the Ocean.

But both the country, as earlier also always kept on bringing change in their foreign policies, so as to make it friendly to each other and supportive to their own country.

China proceeded one step ahead towards normalcy and gave admission to India to Shanghai Cooperation Organization on 8 to 9 June 2017 as full member. During his meeting with Xi Jinping the Chinese President, Indian Prime Minister Modi showed his positive gesture by thanking him for his support and also assured the same from India's side to Shanghai Cooperation Organization².

1. "Press Release-Ministry of Foreign Affairs" (<https://web.archive.org/web> on 30th June 2017.)
2. (<https://www.google.com/amps/s/www.livemint./comPolitics/India-and-China-A-timelineof-how-ties-have-unfolded-over-t-html%3Ffacts%3Damp>.)

The Wuhan Summit and its importance- Wuhan Summit, which took place on 27 to 28 April between India and China was significant as the President Jinping held his first Informal Summit to exchange views over acting issues. The distance from the Doklam crisis to the Summit of Wuhan proved boon to the relationship and the Chinese Foreign Minister said that, the sound development of China-India relation confirms to the fundamental interest of the countries during the profound dynamic interactive situation. The Foreign Ministry of China in reply to PTI said, “Looking forwards to year 2019 China is ready to work with India to enhance political, mutual trust, deepen exchange and cooperation across the various fields, properly manner differences and promote faster, better and more stable development of China-India relations, guided by the important consensus reached by leaders of two countries”¹

The year 2019 came with a new ray of hope as the heads of State of both the nations were willing for friendliness and somehow compromising with the ambitions of each other. The Foreign Ministry of China referred that China seriously want increasing political trust and expanding cooperation. China supported India giving consensus on the issue of Jaish-e-Muhammad Chief-Masood Azhar, declaring him a global terrorist in UN. It was considered as great achievement of India’s foreign policy and diplomacy. Besides China tried to reduce the tension between India and Pakistan also.

Development in Galwan Valley.

Recently in a very bold and daring step, China started another act of incursion at Ladakh part of India in 1st week of May 2020 in the Galvan Valley.

The Galvan Valley incident was more likely an accident that happen on the spur of the moment due to the hot-headedness of soldier on the ground. China’s primary security concern is the US followed by the Northeast Asian peninsula and South China sea. India is not China’s primary security concern, nor are China’s deterrence capability India-centric. India is a secondary in imagination and security concerns.

1. ([https://www.google.com/amp/s/m.economictimes.com/news/defence/from-Doklam-to-when-2018-will-go-down-as-watershed-year-in-tisty-India-China-lies/.](https://www.google.com/amp/s/m.economictimes.com/news/defence/from-Doklam-to-when-2018-will-go-down-as-watershed-year-in-tisty-India-China-lies/))

Conclusion- The relation between India and China, after observing all the above development, can be termed as cordial and we can say proudly that, we are successful in maintain almost sound and healthy relationship with our biggest and very powerful neighbour China. The credit for this, obviously goes to the wisely made foreign policies and its proper implementation. This sound relationship will help both the nations in making Asia a noticeable power in the international sphere.

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