

## Reviving India's China Outreach

### What is the issue?

\n\n

\n

- There is now a mutual recognition in both India and China that a posture of hostility has undermined everybody's interests.

\n

- While sprouts of recalibrating the relationship has started to show up, the process needs to be sustained to attain sufficient benefits.

\n

\n\n

### How has Indo-China relations progressed lately?

\n\n

\n

- The India-China relationship has always been too complex and has varied from "Competition to cooperation to discord" at different points in time.

\n

- 2017 witnessed all facets of this relationship through varied events:

\n

\n\n

\n

- India's trenchant critique of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI),

\n

- India's entry into the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation,

\n

- The Doklam Crisis (The most significant of all)

\n

- BRICS - acceleration of multilateral cooperation

\n

- Both positive and negative economic engagements

\n

\n\n

\n

- But despite these variations across engagements, the Doklam standoff

highlighted a clear case of simmering animosity.

\n

\n\n

### **Why did Doklam escalate to such proportions?**

\n\n

\n

- While trigger for Doklam was for control over a narrow stretch of barren land, the conflict nucleus was formed much earlier in other arenas.

\n

- The main reason for the conflagration is the recent development of a deep rooted negative perception on both sides for the other's foreign policy moves.

\n

- This collapse in geopolitical trust was a striking factor that was widely visible across domains - and China's expansionist ambitions only aggravated this.

\n

- China's rising economic and political profile along with its massive initiatives like the BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) had got India concerned.

\n

- Chinese foray into India's South Asian neighbourhood through infrastructure and strategic projects has been seen by India as an affront on its sovereignty.

\n

- On the other hand, India's pursuit of deeper military engagement with "U.S. and Japan" (Beijing's main strategic rivals) wasn't to the liking of China.

\n

- These conflicting pursuits nudged both countries to adopt an assertive foreign policy against the other to keep things under check.

\n

- Consequently, India tilted closer to the U.S., while China moved towards Pakistan, and on a scale that wasn't witnessed even during the Cold War.

\n

\n\n

### **What was the result of such a hardball approach?**

\n\n

\n

- Throughout the hard-line phase, neither side was able to extract any significant concessions from the other.

\n

- NSG membership (Nuclear Suppliers Group) proved elusive for India majorly because of Chinese resistance.

- \n
- Contrarily, China's wasn't successful in its bid to get India to tone down its resistant rhetoric against its BRI.
- \n
- While China shielded Pakistan aided terror networks in international forums, India openly allied with anti-China forces as a counter.
- \n
- In this backdrop, the heightened escalation at Doklam proved to be a wake up for both sides to realise the futility of such masochistic approach.
- \n
- Hence, a policy reset seems to have commenced currently, and optimism is brewing on both sides for enhanced cooperation.
- \n

\n\n

### **How does the future look?**

\n\n

- \n
- The conciliatory approach to China in the current setting has aroused scepticism from some, as they fear that vital issues might get compromised.
- \n
- But the government seems to be thinking that with a conciliatory approach with China, India can't tide over the multiple challenges in the neighbourhood.
- \n
- Further Indo-China friction will only enhance Pakistan's leverage over Beijing and reduce India's bargaining power vis-a-vis Japan and USA.
- \n
- Notably, despite their adverse relationship with China, both Japan and USA have truly valued their interdependence with Beijing, particularly in trade.
- \n
- Further, India also sees value in enhancing economic cooperation with China, which could better shape the overall geo-political outcomes in the region.
- \n

\n\n

\n\n

**Source: The Hindu**

\n



**SHANKAR**  
**IAS PARLIAMENT**  
*Information is Empowering*