

Chindia's Revival: A Threat To US Led Global Order?

Dr. Sadia Khanum¹, Dr. Sidra Pervez²,
Muhammad Abdullah³

¹Assistant Professor, Social Sciences Department,
Iqra University, Islamabad sadia.khanum@iqraisb.edu.pk

²Assistant Professor, Business Administration Department,
Iqra University, Islamabad sidra.pervez@iqraisb.edu.pk

³Lecturer, Social Sciences Department, Iqra University, Islamabad.
muhammad.abduallah@iqraisb.edu.pk

Abstract

The Nehru-Mao's phase of Cino-Indian ties was the reflection of two newly established republics willing to cooperate on bilateral and multilateral fronts for their shared interests like anti-imperialism/colonialism, development of newly independent states in Asia and Africa (through NAM platform) and the global and regional peaceful coexistence. Bipolar World's dynamics, as well as border disputes, soon changed the bilateral and regional dynamics of their relations. Throughout the Cold War period, Cino-India relations remained hostile, and both countries relied on military buildup to counter each other's aggressive moves on borders. By the end of the Cold War, both countries were in a more adaptative mode as the system's structure also dictated its choices; however, there was a brief period in the early 1990s when bilateral ties improved to the extent that negotiations made it possible to idealize more friendly relations between them in terms of border dispute solutions and interdependence in trade. Recently, the amount of mutual dependency between both states make them natural partner despite changing geopolitical realignments at global level. It is like the same level of correlation that existed during 1990s. China-India partnership is more a regional matter. Be it ASEAN, SCO or any other regional forum, both states are working together and enhancing their relations despite of India's inclination towards the west in recent years. Their

regional challenges cannot deny the prospects of cooperation between them. There so many similarities at their political social and economic level domestically as well as their geographic proximity and their size of economy become complementary factor in the revival of “Chindia” during contemporary global order. The Sino-India interdependence and some common political and economic interests make them a team against the existing global order dominated by the US and its western allies.

Introduction

Sino-India ties saw many ups and downs from cooperation and confrontation to friendly brotherhood and full-scale war throughout the Cold War period. The border disputes turned the brotherhood in to hostility. The Cold War politics also contributed in distancing them further. By the end of the Cold War, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited China and the series of talks to resolve border disputes started between two countries. Rajiv Gandhi’s visit to China in December 1988 was the first by an Indian Prime Minister in 34 years. Both sides reaffirm their desire to follow the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence¹ jointly initiated by China and India as the guiding principles for state to state relations and the establishment of a new international political and economic order. They agreed to restore, improve and develop good neighborly relations for the sake of people of both countries as well as for the peace and stability in both Asia and the world at large.² In coming years, bilateral relations of both countries improved as leaders exchanged frequent visits and hold dialogue throughout the early

¹ Nehru and Zhou signed the treaty on 29 April 1954 to lay the roadmap for stability in the region.

Its preamble states: 1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty 2. Mutual non-aggression 3. Mutual non-interference 4. Equality and mutual benefit 5. Peaceful co-existence

²Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited China. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China. Retrieved from https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/ziliao_665539/3602_665543/3604_665547/t18017.shtml 29/04/2019

1990s. On 7 September 1993, India and China signed an agreement, “reiterating their commitment to abide by and implement the Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas”³, and the Agreement on Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas, signed on 29 November 1996 in which both countries exhibit their resolve to ensure peace along the LAC.⁴ Another agreement on Reaffirming the Declaration on Principles for Relations and Comprehensive Cooperation between India and China, signed on 23 June 2003: “Recalling that the two sides have appointed Special Representatives to explore the framework of settlement of the India-China boundary question and the two Special Representatives have been engaged in consultations in a friendly, cooperative and constructive atmosphere, Noting that the two sides are seeking a political settlement of the boundary question in the context of their overall and long-term interests, Convinced that an early settlement of the boundary question will advance the basic interests of the two countries and should therefore be pursued as a strategic objective.”⁵

These agreements are a clear manifestation of interests on the part of both countries to resolve disputes bilaterally and improve their trade ties. Officials of both countries several times expressed their desire to cooperate on areas of mutual interests and shun conflict. Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee at one occasion stated, “There is enough space for developing together, growing together, not at the

³Agreement between the government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Peoples’ Republic of China. Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. Retrieved from <https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/6534/Agreement+between+the+Government+of+the+Republic+of+India+and+the+Government+of+the+People+s+Republic+of+China+on+the+Political+Parameters+and+Guidin+g+Principles+for+the+Settlement+of+the+IndiaChina+Bou> 29/04/2019.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

expense of the other but independent of each other.”⁶ Bilateral trade between them was the main source of increasing interaction. In 1984, the two sides granted the Most Favored Nation Agreement to ease trade restrictions. Gradually India-China bilateral trade reached US\$ 61.7 billion in 2010, making China India's largest goods trading partner. In 2008, China replaced the US as the largest trade country in India.⁷ Bilateral trade between India and China is the major cause of normalization of relation though they have many bilateral disputes; trade is the source of bringing them closer or in other words increasing their interdependency.

India and China have agreed to open three border passes to improve and facilitate trade exchanges and easing of tensions along the border, Lipulekh is the first border post opened for trade in 1992. This was followed by the opening of Shipkila in 1994 and Nathula in 2006. The Nathula pass connects Yadong in Tibet and Sikkim and is perhaps strategically most important. Though there is a lot of work required on building infrastructure alongside the border regions to enhance the capacity of bilateral trade and fast communication but still initiative of opening the borders show the willingness of both countries to improve trade ties.⁸

Both the countries are heavily dependent on energy imports for their growing industrial needs and this ever-increasing need is pushing them into competition for energy resources outside their territories and security of energy resources transports. Despite the competition and confrontation over securing energy markets, there are instances when they

⁶PS Suryanarayana. India is a Core State for Asian Security: Pranab Mukherjee. *The Hindu*, 04 June 2006. Retrieved from <https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-international/india-is-a-core-state-for-asian-security-pranab-mukherjee/article3114775.ece> 29/04/2019.

⁷India China Bilateral Relations. Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. Retrieved from <https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/China-January-2012.pdf> 30/04/2019.

⁸Diki Sherpa. (2017). Sino-Indian Border Trade: The Promise of Jelep La. Institute of Chinese Studies, No. 45. Retrieved from <https://www.icsin.org/uploads/2017/05/15/6ad1daff8feba472aeb443df3cf8a949.pdf> 01/05/2019.

cooperate. It was the first time that the largest oil companies China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and India's Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), jointly won a bid to acquire 37% of Petro-Canada's stake in Syrian oilfields for US\$573 million in 2005.⁹ The cooperation between the private or government sector institutions of two countries benefits both nations and proves that they do not need to outbid each other. India and China's dependence on energy resources in countries like Iran, Iraq, Syria, Myanmar and Sudan is the reason they have not supported the US proposed sanctions and declaring them rogue regimes. Indo-China cooperation in energy sector has once again exhibited recently when both countries refused the US and European countries pressure to boycott cheap Russian energy resources (oil and Coal) and endorsed their mutual national interests over geostrategic alignment with the West.

Theoretical Understanding

China India relations are very complex intermix of political economic and security underpinnings in empirical as well as in theoretical terms. A comprehensive theoretical understanding of their relations requires to look at the diverging and converging factors in their relationship. In this scenario one must look at how their bilateral economic engagements have prevented them to escalate security related issues, or how their mutual economic interdependence would affect their strategic aspiration which is highly conflicting in nature. Therefore, no one theoretical framework alone can comprehensively define the China India relations. This study will take the two of the most relevant theories of international Relations, as China India relations have both elements of strategic competition as well as economic interdependence, they need to follow a very careful path to maintain an intricate balance between economic and geopolitical aspirations. This research will

⁹India China Win on Venture's Bid for Syria Oil Stake. Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, December 21. 2005. Retrieved from <https://www.mea.gov.in/articles-in-foreign-media.htm?dtl/15770/India+China+Win+On+Ventures+Bid+For+Syria+Oil+Stake> 01/05/2019.

take the most essential and relevant parts of neo-realism and neo-liberalism as both are system level theories. In this anarchic world system, the theoretical analysis of China India relations must be looked at in the context of structural changes in the world system. Neo realism looks at the structural changes and balance of power in the world. Both China and India are strong supporters of multipolar world order on the one hand and strategic competitors on the other. Similarly, Neo liberalism theory with a specific focus on complex interdependence gives another strong view of China India contemporary relations in the prevalent Liberal economic order.

The discipline of IR has always been somehow dominated by the realist school of thought and the emergence of new approaches and theorists with contending world views have always been put forward to counter the established academic hegemony of the realist scholars. The bases of realism go back to Thucydides' account of Peloponnesian war in 5th century B.C. But the real substance to the discipline overall and realist school of thought specially was added when Hans Morgenthau introduced his *Politics Among Nations* (1948). His conception of world politics and explanation of states' behavior based on selfish and mean human nature that seeks power to survive in an anarchic international system where confrontation is eminent and cooperation is less likely, provides a more pragmatic and empirical approach to understand the messed up political scenario where other schools of thought were providing more normative solutions. Morgenthau's realism dominated the discipline for long until Kenneth Waltz's neorealism (1979) came with a more scientific and calculable approach to understand the world politics and states' interactions. Kenneth Waltz's theory emphasizes the importance of structure over the units. Structure determines states not the human nature or domestic factors. Consequently, the world politics only get affected by the changes occurred and approved at structural level whether it is distribution of power or it involves any other phenomena having a profound impact on power politics and behavior of the states (Waltz, 1979: 108). As Alexander E. Wendt rightly observed that neorealists have their defined

parameter of understanding international system structures on the bases of empirical existence of attributes of their member states in terms of their distribution of measurable capabilities (power).¹⁰

Neorealists' focus is on developing and clarifying the concept of system's structure and how states (units) within the system are dependent on it and how their interactions are influenced by it despite having their unique or similar domestic attributes. The system of structure determines the outcomes of different kind of interactions among the units. For example, the interaction of middle or small size states is always influenced by the alignment or hostility of major power actors. States behave differently in bipolar system (politics of alignment with one power pole or another) and their behavior in unipolar system would be more conscious and flexible to deal with the sole hegemon. Though, it is true that international structure is the product of interactions between the states but at the end it is the structure that forms and influences the units' behavior. The role of anarchy in making and defining the international structure is quite persistent in all schools of realism and the neorealist theorists like Kenneth Waltz also emphasis that international structures are defined by anarchy and the distribution capabilities of the states operating within the system.¹¹ Since the main concern and subject of neorealism is major powers with capabilities to force their will on medium and small size (size in terms of tangible resources and the capability to translate those resources into competitive power) states, the structure as well then respond and changes when the number of major powers changes (unipolar, bipolar and multipolar). Units' behavior varies according to the numbers of big powers in the system as the chances of leverage changes. Unlike traditional realists, neorealism theorists contend that international politics' complexities are only comprehensible if we are able

¹⁰ Alexander E. Wendt. The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory. *International Organization*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (Summer, 1987), pp. 335-370

¹¹ Kenneth N. Waltz. Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory Source. *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Spring/Summer 1990), pp. 21-37

to understand the influence and effects of structure in unit level analysis. Though neorealists give due importance to unit level interaction, the outcomes and their impact on the structure, however simultaneously they believe that interacting units and structural happenings are interdependent and we cannot be able to draw conclusion by monitoring and emphasizing on unit level interactions alone. Structure influences the units as much as units' interactions contribute to structural changes in international politics. And structure is defined by the major powers in the system so more often system structure is able to enforce the outcomes of interactions of units. Hence, any explanation ignoring structure and focusing on units alone would not be considered accurate and sufficient to explain the international politics. The theory which concentrates on structural and unit level analysis can only evaluate the changing dynamics of world politics.¹²

Looking at their geostrategic competition, neo realist approach very well describes the structural level conflict in their relations. While complex interdependence theory emerges as the most suitable theoretical paradigm to discuss the economic realities and economic interdependence. both collectively defines the overall political reality of Sino Indian relations. Dependence of one actor in international system makes it sensitive to the external factors.¹³ Therefore the mutual interdependence in case of China and India creates economic, social and political sensitivities. This can further be divided into two categories. Here the level of economic relations between them makes them sensitives for their economic interests, while social and political similarities, like their attitudes towards minorities especially creates social and political sensitivities. The constant increase in India China trade have reached \$125 billion in 2021. ¹⁴ Despite the fact that

¹²Kenneth N. Waltz. Ibid.

¹³AalapHajarnis, A theoretical Purview of India China Relations: Different shades of Political Realism, August 6, 2020. Online available, <http://thekootneeti.in/2020/08/06/a-theoretical-purview-of-india-china-relations/>

¹⁴Ananth Krishnan, India China bilateral trade crossed \$125 billion in 2021, "The Hindu", January 15, 2022. Accessed online June 9,

structural changes at global and regional levels especially in recent decades have created a strong geo political competition between them and they have emerged as strong rivals for regional supremacy. There is little doubt that both will compromise their economic interests which provides the basis for their regional standings. Here we must comprehend to the idea that long term interdependence also creates vulnerabilities for them. The level of economic interaction might have a severe effect in case of policies from any one side. But there is lesser chance of such measures. In fact, increased interdependence between China and India have more chances to reduce their level of conflict. Therefore, neo realist approach might well explain the structural vulnerabilities in their relations in the context of power, while neo-liberal approach and complex interdependence well covers the process level aspects of Sino-Indian relation. This kind of theoretical explanation where we find that despite geo strategic competition, the level of interdependence creates more chances in reduction in conflict promotes the idea creating “Chindia”.

Sino-India Cooperation and Shaping of “Chindia”

The emergence of some big developing economies in late 1990s and early 2000s set a new trend in regional and global power politics. The rise of China and India and their multilateral cooperation along with other rising countries like Brazil, Russia, South Africa (BRIC/BRICS/BASIC) changed the global economic order previously dominated by the US and allies. The manifestation of the will of new power players and stake holders was demonstrated on many occasions of global importance like climate change or trade regulations.¹⁵

The rise of China and India is a very interesting development especially when they share geographical proximity,

2022. <http://www.thehindu.com/business/india-china-trade-crossed-125-bn-in-2021/article38275450.ece>

¹⁵Saibal Dasgupta. Copenhagen conference: India, China plan joint exit. The Times of India, Nov. 28, 2009. Retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Copenhagen-conference-India-China-plan-joint-exit/articleshow/5279771.cms> 30/04/2019.

ambitions and huge potential and resources. India and China's rise in regional; and global economy and politics attracted the attention of academia and experts of global trends simultaneously. The development was considered the "irresistible" shift of global power to Asia.¹⁶ The rise of Asia or as it is called the "Asian century"¹⁷ is very much depended on the power capabilities and potentials of India China. It is also a matter of great importance that how these two countries behave in the region and bilaterally. Their cooperation or confrontation is decisive in the reshaping or continuing the world order.

The normalization of the Cold War hostilities between India and China and beginning of trade ties in the first decade of the twentieth first century gave birth to hopes of an era of cooperation and partnership. As Pete Engardio observed, "Never has the world seen the simultaneous, sustained take offs of two nations that together account for one-third of the planet's population."¹⁸ The significance of Indo China cooperation and possibility and hurdles in realizing the dream of Chindia (economic partnership and mergence of Indian and Chinese markets) is put forward in detail by Jairam Ramesh in his book "Making Sense of Chindia: Reflections on China and India."

The journey of better and improved bilateral economic ties that started in late 1980s by the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi gradually entered a period of reconciliation. The relations never remained smooth and stress free but there is willingness to cooperate despite problems. A major breakthrough in bilateral ties was the President Jiang's visit to India in 1996, the two countries established the "constructive and cooperative partnership" for the 21st

¹⁶ Kishore Manbubani. (2009). *The New Asian Hemisphere: The Irresistible Shift of Global Power to the East*. (New York: PublicAffairs).

¹⁷ [Valentina Romei, John Reed](https://www.ft.com/content/520cb6f6-2958-11e9-a5ab-ff8ef2b976c7). The Asian century is set to begin. *Financial Times*, March 26, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.ft.com/content/520cb6f6-2958-11e9-a5ab-ff8ef2b976c7> 30/04/2019.

¹⁸ Pete Engardio. (2007). (Edit.). *CHINDIA: How China and India Are Revolutionizing Global Business*. (New York: McGraw-Hill), p. vii (preface)

century.¹⁹ Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit to China in 2003 was the first visit by an Indian prime minister in 10 years. The joint statement signed by Vajpayee and Wen holds a historical significance as India explicitly recognized Tibet as part of Chinese territory and agreed not to permit "anti-China activities" by Tibetan exiles living in India.²⁰ They also signed several Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) on enhancing cooperation in different sectors of mutual interests. During Premier Wen's visit in 2005, they established "strategic and cooperative partnership" for peace and prosperity.²¹ Premier Wen and Prime Minister Singh jointly declared the year 2006 as the year of China-India friendship and in that connection many activities in economic, political and cultural spheres took place throughout the year. The normalization and development of Indo-China ties was stated like this by a Chinese diplomat, "Beijing now views its relationship with India as one of global and strategic importance that is long-term, all around, and stable."²²

These two rising economies presume the role of the flag bearers of the rights of less privileged countries of the global south. It was India and China's cooperation and strong stance at the 2003 Cancún meeting that led to the collapse

¹⁹ Kathy Chen. China's Jiang Visits India, Expanding Growing Links. The Wall Street Journal, Nov. 28. 1996. Retrieved from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB849120993882176000> 30/04/2019.

²⁰ Declaration on Principles for Relations and Comprehensive Cooperation Between the Republic of India and the People's Republic of China. Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, June 23, 2003. Retrieved from <https://www.mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?7679/Declaration+on+Principles+for+Relations+and+Comprehensive+Cooperation+Between+the+Republic+of+India+and+the+Peoples+Republic+of+China> 30/04/2019.

²¹ Synopses of Agreements/MOUs/Memoranda - Visit of Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao to India, April 9-12, 2005. Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. Retrieved from <https://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/6563/Synopses+of+AgreementsMOUsMemoranda++Visit+of+Chinese++Wen+Jiabao+to+India+April+912+2005> 30/04/2019.

²² Quoted in Vincent Wei-cheng Wang. (2011). "Chindia" or Rivalry? Rising China, Rising India, and Contending Perspectives on India China Relations. Asian Perspective, Vol. 35, No. 3., p. 459.

of the Doha Round of trade talks; the multilateral negotiations to unlock global trade in countries where many barriers still exist, in sectors such as agriculture, services and manufacturing, under the aegis of the World Trade Organization (WTO). China and India raised the issue of the European countries' monopoly in the main Bretton Woods institutions, the WTO, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank, that is the violation of democratic norms and advocated equal role and status for the countries of the Global South in international financial decision making.²³ China and India also criticized the developed countries of the Global North for their mean and self-serving intentions for pleading for open access to the services, investment, and information technology sectors of the developing countries like India, China, Brazil and South East Asian economies while denying the same privileges and facilities to them in their countries and protecting their own politically influential agricultural sectors.²⁴

India and China hold the same position against the US and developed world's narrative on global climate change issue in the Copenhagen Summit in December 2009. Both countries joined hands to oppose any policy to hinder the economic growth and development of the developing countries and refused to accept mandatory cuts in pollution levels and proposal to decrease the energy intensity of industries, that led to the failure of the summit.²⁵ In multilateral forums like (Brazil Russia India China South Africa) BRICS, China and India have tried to coordinate their

²³Lee Hudson Teslik. The Doha Trade Talks. Council on Foreign Relation. Feb. 22, 2008. Retrieved from <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/doha-trade-talks> 01/05/2019.

²⁴Sandra Polaski, Arvind Panagariya. The Suspension of the Doha Round and the Future of the WTO: Two Views. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Sept. 14, 2006. Retrieved from <https://carnegieendowment.org/2006/09/14/suspension-of-doha-round-and-future-of-wto-two-views-event-911> 01/05/2019.

²⁵Tobias Rapp, Christian Schwägerl, Gerald Traufetter. How China and India Sabotaged the UN Climate Summit. Spiegel Online, May 5, 2010. Retrieved from <https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/the-copenhagen-protocol-how-china-and-india-sabotaged-the-un-climate-summit-a-692861.html> 01/05/2019.

policies on several issues like global trade and issues related to governance.

The bilateral, regional and multilateral engagements and cooperation on global issues and policies definitely is a big cause of concern for the US as it challenges its global hegemony and capacity to get its policy approved without losing any of its interests. China's growing capabilities and influence are exhibited from the platform of Shanghai Cooperation Council (SCO) where it is joining hands with India along with Russia and energy producing countries of Central Asia in the geopolitical and military realms. The SCO is a regional energy and security alliance which has the capacity to become a major power hub with the participation of Russia's military capabilities and India and China's combined economic strengths and since Pakistan is also the member of SCO, so geostrategic importance of the organization is increasing. It has become an alternative power center for the rising economies of Asia. The member countries conducted first joint military exercises under the banner of SCO in summer 2007 with the participation of the Chinese airborne troops and it was first that they were deployed outside Chinese territory.²⁶ One of the aims of the SCO is balancing the US influence in energy rich Central Asia and India becoming a member of the organization make it an ideal platform to forward regional powers interests by overcoming the weaknesses of member countries. Though the materialization of such aims take time and it is complexed to overcome bilateral rivalries in short period, but this organization is a significant actor in energy-rich and geostrategically important region.²⁷

The US' tilt towards India should be seen in this changing regional political dynamic. If India becomes a member of Chinese or a larger Asian block as the desire is there and being expressed by several times by the Indian heads of

²⁶ Bates Gill, Mathew Oresman. (2003). *China's New Journey to the West*. (Washington DC: Centre for Strategic and International Studies), pp 5-12.

²⁷ William Piekos, Elizabeth C. The Risks and Rewards of SCO Expansion. Council on Foreign Relations, July 7, 2015. Retrieved from <https://www.cfr.org/expert-brief/risks-and-rewards-sco-expansion> 02/05/2019.

government and policy makers (India's "Look East" policy, for instance), then it would be difficult for the US to counter China's growing power in the region and beyond. Hence, in late 1990s and throughout the first decade of the twenty first century, despite differences and contradicting policies on some global matters of trade and security, the US keeps India closer and keep exploiting the Sino-Indian rivalries on bilateral and regional matters.

India's bilateral ties with China could not grow to the level of geostrategic partnership because of the prevailing trust deficit due to the unresolved border disputes and security competition in the region. The Cold War rivalries though no more dictate the course of relations between them, but the lingering disputes of past keep nourishing their insecurities in the post-Cold War period too. Growing trade ties and market interdependence is helpful in normalization of relations. The growth of Indo-China trade ties is one constant that do not get affected by any border dispute or global economic crisis. Although India tried to reduce its dependence on Chinese goods in the backdrop of tension at border and Modi's government's self-reliance policy, the country's bilateral trade with China has grown 44 per cent in 2021. Imports from China grew over a record 46 per cent and Indian exports were up 35 per cent.²⁸ As per the data by the December 2021, China exported \$9.63B and imported \$1.79B from India, resulting in a positive trade balance of \$7.84B.²⁹

Russia-Ukraine Conflict and the Possibility of Chindia's Revival

Russia's conflict with Ukraine has laid the foundations for a rapidly changing political and economic order where big

²⁸ KARUNJIT SINGH. EXPLAINED: INDIA'S BILATERAL TRADE WITH CHINA IN 2021. THE INDIAN EXPRESS, ACCESSED AT [HTTPS://INDIANEXPRESS.COM/ARTICLE/EXPLAINED/INDIA-CHINA-TRADE-EXPLAINED-7740518/#:~:text=INDIA'S%20TOTAL%20TRADE%20WITH%20CHINA,AND%20%2456.8%20BILLION%20IN%202019,6/12/2022](https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/india-china-trade-explained-7740518/#:~:text=INDIA'S%20TOTAL%20TRADE%20WITH%20CHINA,AND%20%2456.8%20BILLION%20IN%202019,6/12/2022).

²⁹ China-India bilateral trade, accessed at <https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-country/chn/partner/ind> 6/12/2022 11:49 AM

economies of Asia are clearly able to come out of the US lead western monopoly. India and China are the beneficiaries of this apparently changing world order. China's loyalties were quite obvious for many reasons but India's choice to keep its cards open in global politics by not clearly supporting Russian invasion of Ukraine and saying yes to enhancing trade ties with Russia by refusing the US and its NATO allies countries pressures and persuasions. India's strategy to take calculated risks, by maintaining its Russia-leaning neutrality and being benefited from cheaper Russian oil and other commodities, has won the country a special position in this new situation post-Russia Ukraine war. China found it convenient to reach out India in solidarity against the western pressures to cut down Indian imports from Russia. China and India share the same stance on prioritizing national interests and development over non-traditional security (the climate change prevention) management. India and China's growing energy needs depend on fossil fuels and both countries opposed the western nations insistence on adopting sustainable development mechanism. India and China believe that sustainable goals are unaffordable for newly rising economies with huge population and limited resources.³⁰ Western criticism on fossil fuel emissions has been taken as an unfair deal especially when the west themselves are depending on the same source of energy in bulk. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda has been perceived the neocolonial tactics to create monopoly of handful global north countries on the developing world by forcing them to compromise on their national interest, energy security and economic development based on conventional energy resources.

India and China not only are the beneficiaries of cheap energy products from Russia but also got an opportunity in post Russo-Ukraine situation to go for de-escalation of tensions as India's determined decision to buy Russian oil has create a chance for them to go low profile on border

³⁰ Mizo, R. (2016). India, China and Climate Cooperation. *India Quarterly*, 72(4), 375–394. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48505519>

dispute. Russia can play a mediator to cool down the dispute between India and China as Russia's long lasting cordial relations with China could win it a pacifier role. It would not be a surprise if Russia could use its influence to convince both states to come to more acceptable terms in a changing global geopolitical situation. China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit to India should be seen in this context as he himself said: "If the two countries join hands, the whole world will pay attention."³¹ He further stated, "as two major developing countries and representatives of emerging economies, China and India should walk steadily on the path the two countries have chosen, keep the development of bilateral relations on the right course, bear in mind a long-term perspective and join hands to make respective contributions to peace and stability in the region and beyond."³² Following Wang's visit, the Chinese Communist Party's mouthpiece, the Global Times, also enforced the Foreign Minister, writing: "China and India share common interests on many fronts. For instance, the West recently pointed the finger at India for reportedly considering buying Russian oil at a discounted price. But it is India's legitimate right."³³ If Chinese leadership takes post Ukraine war situation as an opportunity to leave the bitter past behind and start a fresh and Indian leadership approves the idea that India's revival is very much on cards.

Both countries' pro-Russian stance has made multilateral functioning further easier from the platform of BRICS where India and China are the member countries and both participated in BRICS's 2022 summit in China and agreed

³¹ Wang Yi: China and India Should Stick to Long-term Perspective, Win-win Mentality and Cooperative Posture, accessed at http://us.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zgyw/202203/t20220326_10656095.htm 2022/03/25 23:51PM

³² Ibid.

³³ Wang Jiamei. "It is necessary for China, India to mend their fraught relations," <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202203/1255159.shtml?id=11> Mar 17, 2022 08:23 PM

upon mutual cooperation in different regional and global matters of common concerns.³⁴

The new soft tones and a clear tilt towards reconciliation between China and India have created serious concerns in the West as they consider the new change as an attempt to take India away from the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD), the Indo-Pacific partnership that includes the United States, Japan and Australia and AUKUS (Australia, UK, US strategic collaboration against China in Indo-Pacific region which India greeted initially). The QUAD countries' premiers (Japan and Australia) contacted Narendra Modi to reaffirm the trilateral cooperation and to convince India to take a tougher stance against Russian invasion of Ukraine.³⁵ The U.S. Undersecretary of State also visited India for the similar agenda. China, on the other hand, fully endorsed India's Russian tilted neutrality and shuns the US and other western countries on pressurizing and threatening India and China for their energy purchases and enhancing bilateral and trilateral ties with Russia.³⁶

Conclusion

Chindia's revival somehow could sound wishful thinking or very ambitious claim but the fact is the two giant nations of South Asia has so much to win and very less to lose in case they decide to move on resolving their border dispute peacefully and increasing their economic and geostrategic

³⁴ 2022 BRICS Summit Theme and Cooperation Priorities of 2022 BRICS Summit, accessed at http://brics2022.mfa.gov.cn/eng/dtxw/202203/t20220302_10647107.html 2022-02-22 14:42

³⁵ Japan PM urges Modi to take tougher line against Russian invasion, accessed at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/20/japan-pm-presSES-modi-for-indian-action-on-ukraine> 20 Mar 2022 11:02
AUSTRALIAN PM MORRISON PRESSES INDIA ON WAR IN UKRAINE, ACCESSED AT [HTTPS://WWW.BLOOMBERG.COM/NEWS/ARTICLES/2022-03-21/AUSTRALIAN-PM-MORRISON-PRESSES-INDIA-S-MODI-ON-WAR-IN-UKRAINE](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-03-21/australian-pm-morrison-presSES-india-s-modi-on-war-in-ukraine) 12 JUNE 2022

³⁶ CHINA WOOS INDIA AS BOTH FACE WESTERN IRE OVER UKRAINE, ACCESSED AT [HTTPS://WWW.WASHINGTONPOST.COM/WORLD/2022/03/25/INDIA-CHINA-RUSSIA-WAR/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/03/25/india-china-russia-war/) 6/12/2022

cooperation further. The process of moving ahead with common goals and ditching the ages old rivalries would not be easy and smooth as there are structural constraints even in a multi-polar world. China and India would have to face opposition from the dominant economic and political powers and they might even have to go through sanctions as the most revisionist countries face however, unlike those handful revisionist, China and India have the benefit of their size and potential of growth and capability to survive any harsh opposition from the western hegemons. If Chindia revives in the backdrop of multi centric power dynamics and recent happening in the world than chances of materializing an Asian Century would be more bright and realistic.