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GENERAL STUDIES 2: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

TOPIC: INDIA – CHINA REALTION

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AN INDIA-CHINA RESET NEEDS BOLD AND NEW THINKING

Leadership and Dispute Resolution

- The hallmark of mature leadership lies in resolving disputes peacefully and avoiding escalation into full-scale conflicts. Both **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** and **President Xi Jinping** demonstrated such leadership in 2020 when tensions between their nations escalated over the violent clash in the **Galwan Valley**. Through diplomatic talks and military negotiations, they managed to prevent the situation from worsening and reached a **disengagement agreement**, highlighting their ability to de-escalate tensions despite the difficult circumstances.

The Bigger Challenge: Future Cooperation

- Following the de-escalation in 2020, the two leaders now face a more critical challenge: should they continue to pursue **comprehensive cooperation**, or will they allow historical tensions and accumulated **mutual distrust** to drive their relations in the opposite direction, leading to rivalry and confrontation? If they choose the latter, there is a high risk of renewed military clashes, especially considering that the **boundary dispute** between India and China remains unresolved. Any future conflict, no matter how minor, could destabilize the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)**, preventing further cooperation. On the other hand, a focus on cooperation could bring significant **economic, political, and strategic benefits** to both countries and contribute to **global peace and stability**.

Necessary Steps for China's Cooperation

- **China's Responsibility:**
 1. **Reassuring India on National Security:** China must take concrete actions to assure India that it does not pose a threat to India's **national security**, both now and in the future. This includes addressing concerns related to China's ties with **Pakistan** and the **Pakistan-sponsored terrorism** that has affected India, especially in **Kashmir**.
 2. **Support India's Global Role:** China should actively promote India's **inclusion as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**. This would demonstrate China's commitment to recognizing India as a significant player in global governance.
 3. **Respect India's Status as an Equal:** China must treat India as an equal partner in a **multipolar Asia** and **multipolar world**. This means acknowledging India's aspirations and strategic interests and refraining from attempting to undermine India's global stature.



India's Role in Building Cooperation

- **India's Actions:**

1. **Rejecting the Notion of Power Asymmetry:** India must resist the temptation to align with the **United States** and other Western powers in countering the so-called **China threat**. Joining initiatives like the **Quad** may give China the impression that India is pursuing a confrontational policy.
2. **Upholding the One-China Policy:** India must continue to uphold the **One China Policy** and avoid actions that suggest support for **Taiwan's independence** or interference in **Tibet**.
3. **Fighting Anti-China Narratives:** India should avoid allowing **anti-China narratives**, often propagated by Western media, to shape its public perception. Indian media and the government should not indulge in constant **anti-China propaganda**, as it only exacerbates tensions between the two countries. India should actively work to **counter misinformation** and promote a more balanced view of China.

Historical Context and Opportunities for Cooperation

- **India and China**, despite their historical differences, do not have a preordained destiny as adversaries. Both countries share **ancient civilizations** with rich histories of cultural and philosophical contributions to humanity. Given this, they have a unique opportunity to collaborate on global issues and act as **global leaders** in promoting ideals such as **peace, inclusive development, and sustainable growth**.
- By **cooperating**, they can create a more **just, equitable** global order. They can also work on urgent global issues such as **poverty eradication, climate change, and democratic governance**, setting an example for the world.

Trust-Building Ideas for Mutual Development

- **Economic Opportunities for Cooperation:**
 - **China's slowing economy and India's growing consumer market** provide ample opportunities for economic cooperation. By working together, both countries can enhance their economic resilience, with China benefiting from India's large market and India leveraging China's expertise in **infrastructure and technology**.
 - China can help India realize its **aspiration of becoming a developed nation** (Viksit Bharat), especially by providing technology and investments in key sectors like **green energy, electric vehicles, and infrastructure modernization**.
- **Shared Global Goals:**
 - India and China, as **Global South countries**, should lead efforts to address common challenges facing developing nations, including those in **Asia, Africa, and Latin America**.
 - By enhancing cooperation in foreign policy, they could bring greater **stability and fairness** to **global governance**, especially in multilateral institutions like the **United Nations**.
 - Possible areas of cooperation include working together on issues such as the **Russia-Ukraine conflict, peace in West Asia**, and resolving the humanitarian crisis in **Myanmar**. Their cooperation could also help alleviate problems in regions such as India's **Manipur** and other conflict zones in South Asia.



Immediate and Feasible Areas of Cooperation (Low-Hanging Fruits)

- **Practical Steps for Strengthening Relations:**

1. **Direct Flights:** The **resumption of direct flights** between India and China, which were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, should be prioritized. This will help increase **people-to-people ties** and promote economic exchanges.
2. **Visa Issuance:** India should **increase visa issuance** to Chinese nationals, including businesspeople, tourists, and students, to encourage cultural and economic exchange. In 2023, India issued less than **10,000 visas** to Chinese citizens, whereas China issued over **200,000 visas** to Indians.
3. **Journalist Exchanges:** Both countries should reverse the **expulsion of journalists**, which has negatively impacted bilateral ties. Allowing media personnel from both nations to work in each other's countries would help create a more balanced narrative about their relations.
4. **Lift Chinese App Ban:** India should consider **lifting the ban** on Chinese apps like **WeChat**, which was imposed following the Galwan Valley clash. This would help ease tensions and encourage **technological cooperation**.
5. **Trade and Investment Expansion:** Both nations should take swift action to improve **bilateral trade**. China can address its **trade deficit with India** by importing more goods, while both nations can collaborate on **joint ventures** and **technology exchanges**.

Looking Ahead: A Breakthrough in 2025

- Both **India** and **China** have a pivotal opportunity to make 2025 a year of significant diplomatic and economic **breakthrough**. The two leaders, **Modi** and **Xi**, must push forward with an agenda of mutual cooperation and trust-building.
- **Official Visits:** A **visit by Xi to India** or **Modi's visit to China** in 2025 could serve as a significant demonstration of their commitment to enhancing relations and charting a new course for **India-China ties**.

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