



INSIGHTSIAS
SIMPLIFYING IAS EXAM PREPARATION

MAY. 23. 2024

INSIGHTS INTO EDITORIAL



Editorial

ANALYSIS

EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

A 'no-limit' bromance that is not just a bilateral matter

- **Prelims:** Current events of international importance (Indo-China relations, India Russia) China-Russia etc
- **Mains GS Paper II:** Multipolar World, Bilateral, regional and global grouping involving India or Affecting India's interest etc

ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS

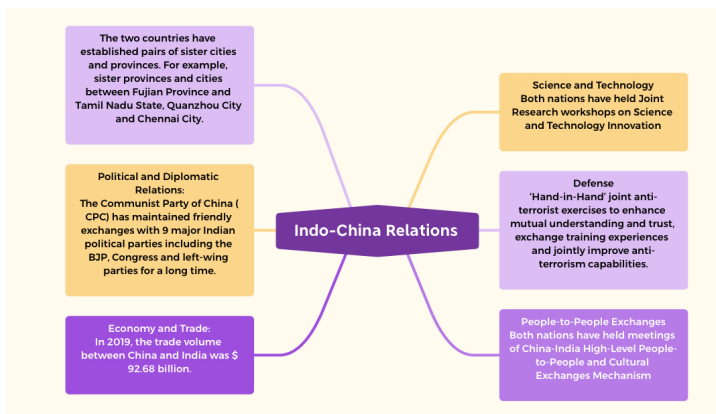
- **Russian President** concluded visit to **China** emphasizing the countries' **burgeoning strategic ties** as well as his own personal relationship with **Chinese leader** as they sought to present an alternative to U.S. global influence



INSIGHTS ON THE ISSUE

Context

China-India Cooperation:



The phases of Russia-China ties:

- **During the 19th century, Czarist Russia** took advantage of a weak China to expand to the Pacific, and the Soviet Union continued to hold these territories.
- **A decade of "Comintern brotherhood"** followed the establishment of the **People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949**
- **Russia and China** had armed clashes in **1969** over the **Ussuri River border dispute**.
- **The fourth phase commenced in 1972**, with the United States President's visit to China, aimed at weaning China from the **Russia-led Eastern Bloc**.
- **China tilted towards the West** which supported **Deng Xiaoping's "four modernisations"**, believing that "prosperity would make China a more liberal society".
- **After China's violent suppression of the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989**
 - **West continued to lavish China with investments, technology transfer, market access and diplomatic support** over the next three decades
 - **It transformed China into the "World's Factory."**
- **Moscow-Beijing ties withered** as the Soviet Union imploded and the Russian Federation, its successor, shed most of its Central Asian Republics which became an arena for geo-political competition with China.

The current phase:

- **It began in 2012** when China's growing assertiveness alarmed the U.S. into launching a "pivot Asia",
- **Growing friction with the West** led China to return to Russia
 - **China-Russia declared** at the **Beijing Summit in 2022** that their ties had **"No Limits"**.

- **Russia launched a “limited military operation”** against Ukraine.
- **The western blockade impelled Moscow** further towards China which was also under economic pressure from the same quarters.
- **The trade reached \$240 billion in 2023**, having grown **26% over 2022**.
- **Russia is now predominantly dependent on China** as a market for its energy exports and a source of critical inputs
 - **such as sanctioned items** and those required to pursue its Ukraine war.
- **Russia was the largest crude supplier to China** with volume averaging **2.1 million barrels** a day in **2023**.
- **Despite decoupling attempts**, China traded **\$575 billion with the U.S.** in **2023**, more than twice its trade with Russia.
- **India’s 2023-24 annual trade with the U.S. and China** was **\$118 billion** each; it traded **\$66 billion with Russia**.

Joint statement

- **It was issued after the Putin-Xi Summit** was conspicuously silent on bilateral economic, financial and military ties.
- **Possible Motives:** It was either to avoid invoking western opprobrium and sanctions or to paper over their mutual disagreement.
- **The joint statement omits any India-specific issues**, including the United Nations reforms
- **It confines treatment of Europe** to a sanitized version of the Ukraine conflict.
- **It accuses US of pursuing “dual containment”** (of both Russia and China, calling it “unconstructive and hostile”)
 - **An “Indo-Pacific Strategy”** with “a negative impact on the peace and stability of the region”.

The Beijing Summit’s impact:

- **It may lead to intensified bilateral cooper-**

ation, particularly in the supply of the **dual-use materials** needed by Russia for its Ukraine campaign.

- **China may seek better terms for Russian raw materials**, mining rights in Siberia and access to Russian know-how on a range of critical technologies such as **avionics, nuclear power and space**.
- **China may seek greater Russian acquiescence** for its dominance over Central Asia.
- China’s motives for quietly supporting Russia:
 - **The continuation of the Ukraine war** keeps a beleaguered Russia dependent on China and the U.S. preoccupied with eastern Europe
 - **Giving China** the freedom to bully Asia.
- **China would want to continue its profitable economic engagements** with both Russia and the West, the inherent contradictions may eventually make this pursuit untenable.
- **The early contours of the incipient China-driven global construct**, such as
 - BRICS
 - Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
 - The 109-member Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the 147-country
 - **\$1 trillion outlay Belt and Road Initiative** are already in place and just need ramping up.
 - **It could thus presage the opening** overture of a new global polarization.

Way Forward

- **India needs to carefully and objectively examine** the depth and durability of the current phase of the ties between Russia and China, given their erratic past.
 - **Both have strong leaders**, even as Russia’s GDP is currently less than one-seventh of China’s.
 - **This coupled with the Ukraine war**

and the sanctions makes Russia less than an equal partner

- **Russia's potential vulnerability to China's hegemony** could concern India given its still overwhelming dependence on Russia for defense supplies particularly as it has border tensions with China.
 - **India being Russia's largest defense market**, Moscow has an interest in retaining it.
 - **However, the reliability of Russian supplies** may become subject to Chinese pressures.
- **During the last Cold War**, India largely pursued the high moral ground often eschewing its core national interests.
 - **Instead of focusing on its socio-economic development** and the realpolitik it required
 - **It adopted a doctrinaire approach to Non-Alignment** and Third World solidarity.
- **Unlike the first Cold War, India is now a major global player** with hard-earned "strategic autonomy" providing it with real options.
 - **India should leverage its strengths judiciously**, and adopt a sharper and nimbler approach.
- **India needs to be clear-headed** about its core long-term national goals, adopt a commensurate strategy and pursue it with single-mindedness.

QUESTION FOR PRACTICE

Q. The USA is facing an existential threat in the form of China, that is much more challenging than the erstwhile Soviet Union." Explain.(UPSC 2021)

(200 WORDS, 10 MARKS)

Q. With the expanding influence of China, other Asian countries are also seeking to diversify its security partnerships. Discuss.

(200 WORDS, 10 MARKS)