

The Himalayan Barrier: India-China Relations since Galwan

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Abstract

The bilateral relation between India and China in the coming decades will shape the Asian landscape, and arguably the global order as well. Similar yet distinct in several ways, China and India are inheritors of ancient civilizations, colonial depredations, significant geographic expanse, considerable demographic foundations, robust internal political systems and expanding economies. Historically both have been significant players in the global order, but their rising profiles and geographic proximity complicate their contemporary relationship. Despite an initial period of bonhomie, the rivalry between China and India predates the Asian century; their concurrent rise in the post-Cold War era has only contributed to the complexity. Since the Sino-Indian border clashes of 1962, India has consistently sought to balance China—however the precise method and mechanisms to do so have remained inchoate. The clashes on the Himalayan border in 2020 however had the effect of removing residual doubts in India about the confrontational dynamics of the relation—in both elite and public opinion—and this is an extraordinary and irreversible shift in India's policy on China. These events accelerated a series of steps by New

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