

Geopolitical Trap to India and China in Indo-Pacific

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ABSTRACT

The recent joint military air exercise of Japan and US conducted on 10 Dec 2025 in response to the Russia-China joint air exercise and radar locking of Japanese fighter jets by China has increased the geopolitical tension in Pacific. The China-Taiwan crisis and territorial disputes among the nations in South China Sea has magnified the ticking of Doomsday clock. The core objective of the study is to identify the geopolitical tension between US, China and India based on recent global and regional security and political dynamism in Indo-Pacific region. The study is particularly based on secondary data retrieved from various news sites. Using descriptive and analytical design, the paper finds the geopolitical trap spread for China and India in Indo-Pacific. It also examines the extension of geopolitical tensions from Indo-Pacific to North East India and along Himalayas including Nepal in great geopolitical game of big powers. The paper finds a hidden geopolitical trap to India inside the geopolitical trap designed to China in the present global and regional political buildups. It suggests India and China to build cooperative diplomatic relationship for the future of Asia.

KEYWORDS: Geopolitical Trap, Political Turmoil, Indo-Pacific, Himalayas, Gen Z Movement, North East India.

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INTRODUCTION

There is no debate among the scholars that the unipolarity enjoyed by USA after disintegration of USSR has been ended after the global financial crisis of 2008. However, there are debates among the scholars whether the present balance of power is multipolar or bipolar. Jo Inge Bekkevold (2023) views that the present world is not multipolar world and only USA and China keep the economic, military, technological and diplomatic (soft) capability to create poles in the present global security and political dynamism. The other powers including India, European Union, Russia, Brazil, Türkiye, South Africa and Saudi Arabia should not be regarded as other pole in present balance of power (Bekkevold, 2023). Analyzing the recent global politics and regional security Nathalie Tocci (2023) states the world is observed as bipolar, multipolar and nonpolar. On the other, Ashford and Cooper (2023) view that the present balance of power is multipolar. Emma Ashford (2025) repeatedly states that the rise of regional power India, Brazil and Türkiye has driving towards fragmented and complex multipolar world. John Mearsheimer (2001) presents the concept of 'unbalanced multipolarity' and analyzed the future of Europe and visualized China as a potential challenge to USA. The recent data of IMF shows that USA with \$30.50 trillion GDP (estimated growth 1.6%) ranked first, China with \$19.23 trillion (estimated growth 4.5% to 5%) ranked second, Germany with \$4.74 trillion GDP (estimated growth 0.3%) ranked third, and India with \$4.19 trillion GDP (estimated growth 6.5% to 7%) ranked fourth (Cerity Global, 2025). Kishore Mahbubani and Masahiro Kawai visualize twenty first century as an Asian century. The projected economic expansion of India and China as well as their advancement on technologies, military and diplomatic capabilities have not only threatened US global hegemony but also transforming global power from west to the east. Amitav Acharya (2025) argues that East (Asia) will lead re-globalization more than West in the multiplex world, and no single power can dominate the world order.

Mentioning the history of Peloponnesian War Graham Allison (2017) explains that USA and China are heading towards an unwanted war, should come out of Thucydides Trap learning lessons how the peace was made by the existing and rising powers on the four different scenarios in the past. Though, USA and China are not militarily confronting they are already on trade war which is directed targeting each other's economy. As an existing power USA is likely to keep all efforts to contain emerging China by hindering its economic growth and pushing China into other regional conflicts. The continuation 'China Containment Strategy' in Trump 2.0 is

particularly focused on limiting economic growth, technological advancement and increasing military presence in Indo-Pacific region. Samim Aktar (2025) states

“This strategy, which dominated much of Trump’s first term, includes several core elements, such as the aggressive pursuit of economic decoupling through tariffs and trade restrictions, efforts to limit Chinese access to critical technologies, and the reinforcement of U.S. military presence and alliances in the Indo-Pacific to counter China’s strategic ambitions” (Aktar, 2025).

Emma Ashford (2025) states that US Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth announced US plan to draw down US military from Europe and middle East for reinforcing the military presence in Indo-Pacific region. On 30 May 2025 addressing the 22nd Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth accused China to alter status quo in Indo-Pacific region and USA will not let its allies to be subordinated and intimidated in the region (Yeo,2025). The ‘China Containment Strategy’ instigated trade and tariff war, tech war and military build up in Indo-Pacific region. It seems that USA is containing China in the geopolitical trap in utilizing China’s dissatisfied neighbors especially Japan, Republic of Taiwan (part of China), Philippines and India.

USA considered India as a strategic partner in Indo-Pacific region to counter China. India and US signed a ten-year defense pact "Framework for the US-India Major Defense Partnership" with the aim of sharing intelligence and technological collaboration. US Secretary of state Hegseth mentioned the pact as a ‘cornerstone for regional security and deterrence’ whereas Indian Defense Minister Rajnath Singh states as ‘growing strategic convergence’ (Sobhan, 2025). India is also a member of Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) along with US, Japan and Australia which is aimed at containing China in Indo-Pacific region. The defense pact between India and USA, and India’s participation in QUAD shows thriving relationship between India and USA. However, USA is also cautious with the huge population resources and economic, military and technological capabilities of India which is likely to be a pertinent challenge to the global hegemony of USA. Therefore, USA has been luring India against China and spreading geopolitical trap to India as well. The paper analyzes the geopolitical trap against China and India in Indo-Pacific region. It aims at identifying the geopolitical trap to China in south China sea, Taiwan Island, and in conflict with India. The paper also aims to define US strategy of luring India against China.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive and analytical. It is qualitative in design. The study is primarily based on secondary data published in various journals, online news, books and websites. The news required for the study is retrieved from various national and international daily and weekly online news portal. The news articles particularly cover the security and political incidents related to the Indo-Pacific region and North-East India. The relationship between US and China, US and India, India and China are retrieved from the news portal of related government agencies as far as possible. The data related to the Gen-Z movement of Nepal is retrieved from the investigative report of ‘The Grayzone’ news site. The data collected from various sources are analyzed to identify the strategies to contain China and lure India in the geopolitical trap in Indo-Pacific region.

Literature Review

The literature review analyzes the geopolitical trap of USA against the emerging Asian powers China and India to maintain the global hegemony of USA in international politics. The literature review focuses on defining US strategies to contain China. Some scholars view thriving relationship between China and India in the present context. However, the literature review centers on identifying the sustainability of Sino-India relationship. The literature review also focuses on analyzing skeptic relationship between India and China and its impact to Asian century. It also analyzes the recent developed political and security dynamism in south Asia especially mass movements of Bangladesh and Nepal, a four-day military conflict between India and Pakistan, and geopolitical activities observed in Bay of Bengal and North East India. The literature review particularly focuses on analyzing the geopolitical trap set to contain China and US strategy of luring and trapping India in geopolitical trap in south Asia to ensure US global hegemony in present and future.

US POLICY TOWARDS CHINA

The normalized bilateral relationship between USA and China orchestrated by expert diplomat Henry Kissinger during Nixon administration ended the isolation of China in 1971, succeeded to contain USSR, and isolate Vietnam. The ‘Pacific Doctrine’ introduced by Ford Administration provided the status of American partner to China to maintain balance of power in Asia-Pacific (Goncharenko & Polyakova, 2019). Carter Administration established formal diplomatic relation with People’s Republic of China from 1st Jan 1979, recognized PRC as an only legal Chinese government, withdrew diplomatic relation with Taiwan, and accepted ‘One China Policy’ (Wong,2024). Carter Administration continued the relationship with PRC as the policy of balance of power against USSR. On the other, it also passed Taiwan Relation Act. Regan Administration lifted trade restrictions to China which was previously imposed due to communist government, and provided arms to Taiwan based on ‘Taiwan Relation Act which adversely impacted US diplomatic relationship with China (Gwertzman, 1981). President George H W Bush forwarded the bilateral relationship between US and China constructively and positively, and rejected the idea of adversary China (George H W Bush Foundation, 2023). During Clinton Administration US-China Relation Act, 2000 was signed which made China a full member of

World Trade Organization, and US grantee the status of Permanent Normal Trade Nation (PNTR) (CBS News, 2000). After 9/11 terror attack in USA, Bush Administration introduced Global War on Terror (GWOT) and East Asia policy redefined relationship with China and considered China as a 'responsible stakeholder' instead of 'strategic competitor' (Lee, 2024). Obama Administration introduced 'Pivot to Asia' policy refocusing economic, military and diplomatic priorities in Indo-Pacific region especially to counter the challenges posed by the emergence of China as a global power (Fontaine & Blackwill, 2024). Trump Administration 1.0 considered Indo-Pacific region as 'world's center of gravity' and adopted confrontational strategy in trade and technological front with China. Biden Administration announced 'Indo-Pacific Strategy' aimed to advance a free and open Indo-Pacific, build connections within and beyond the region, drive regional prosperity, bolster Indo-Pacific security, and build resilience to transnational threats (Executive Office of the President, 2022). Trump 2.0 Administration China policy is also prioritized on economic issues including trade and tariff, technology, and Taiwan issue (Yin, 2025).

US-INDIA RELATION

Makota Kojima (2011) states that during cold war India played a leading role on the formation of non-alignment movement (NAM) however its proximity towards USSR kept India far from USA which made USA closer to Pakistan. USA temporarily suspended aid to India after the Indo-Pak war in 1965, and deployed nuclear-powered aircraft carrier in Bay of Bengal during Indo-Pak war 1971 (Kojima, 2011). Vivek Katju (2025) explains the global political situation and a twenty year 'Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation between the Government of India (GOI) and the Government of USSR' in 1971 which was signed considering the threat from the cooperation and alliance between Pakistan, China and USA. US also criticized the 1974 nuclear test of India and imposed economic restrictions on the second nuclear test of India in 1998. The US-India relation from 1947 to 2000 can be considered as fluctuating and cautious with severe differences on global issues including NAM, USSR-India proximity. The global geopolitical context developed after 2000 brought US and India closer and developed partnership between the two nations (Kojima, 2011). In 2005 India and US signed 'New Framework for the U.S.-India Defense Relationship' and 'Civil Nuclear Cooperation Initiative' which are considered as the significant agreements on US-India partnership in defense and nuclear programs (Council on Foreign Relation, 2025). Various high-level diplomatic visits and summits were exchanged after 2000. US and India signed Cybersecurity Memorandum in 2011, President Obama recognizes India as major defense partner of USA in 2016. In 2018, 'Two plus Two' dialogue 'Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement-COMCASA', and in 2020 Intelligence Sharing Agreement signed between the two nations. Trump ends the special trade status of India and India imposed tariffs on twenty-eight US products which impacted US-India trade relation. In 2021 PM Modi participated in QUAD summit hosted by President Biden in White House. In 2025 February, PM Modi and President Trump discussed on U.S.-India Catalyzing Opportunities for Military Partnership, Accelerated Commerce & Technology (COMPACT) in 21st century. In August 2025, Trump Administration increase tariff by 50% to Indian products which moved US-India relation towards skepticism (Council on Foreign Relation, 2025).

Tanvi Madan (2025) explains India is helpful for USA for the balance of power in Indo-Pacific region, and to prevent BRICS to go against existing international order and organizations. The negative turns in US-India relations especially increment of tariffs in Indian products, pressurizing India over Indo-Russia relation, and supporting Pakistan with military hardware will ruin the relations between two nations. The unpredictability of President Trump and the change in global political context will determine the future relations between India and USA.

Duvvuri Subbarao (2025) states that the US increment of tariffs to Indian products by 50% has significant adverse impact in Indian economy as well as bilateral relations between US and India which will be short term pain for India whereas long-term pain for USA. The tariff war has undermined India which will have strategic impact to USA for balance of power in Indo-Pacific to contain China (Subbarao, 2025).

Lindsey Ford, Lisa Curtis, Richard Fontaine observed deteriorating US-India bilateral relationship and view India as a key actor to contain China in Indo-Pacific (The Hawk, 2025).

SINO-INDIA RELATION

Sino-Indian relation is observed as a complex relation because of conflicts, historical ties, trade and cooperation between the two nations. The diplomatic relation was established in 1st April 1950, both nations advocated non-alignment movement during cold war whereas the full-scale war was held in 1962 between two nations. The unsolved border dispute has become a permanent problem that led to various military skirmishes in Doklam (2017), Galwan (2020), and Yangtse (2022) which adversely affected the bilateral relations between India and China. India and China are the two emerging and rivaling Asian powers which have different civilizations and political system. However, these nations have historical and cultural ties with deep economic engagements and involved in multilateral organizations such as BRICS, SCO and G20 (Vajiram Editors, 2025).

Levesques & Solanki (2025) the various level of diplomatic negotiations and talks is succeed to deescalate the conflict in Himalayan frontier between India and China. However, the security concerns arose due to geopolitical dynamism in Indo-Pacific, competition to stimulus in other's sphere of influence in south Asia, southeast Asia and Indian ocean, use of Chinese origin military equipment

in India-Pakistan four-day military conflict in 2025 have added distrust between India and China. Both nations need to develop reliable confidence building measures and create common ground to prevent the contradictions (Levesques & Solanki, 2025).

Bajpae & Jie (2025) view the Sino-India bilateral relations keeps greater significance in international political order as well as for the future of Asia. The authors mention that few Chinese scholars view India and EU's strategic autonomy will play greater role for transforming the international order into multipolar, few Indian scholars also opine that India and China should be partner rather than rival. US views India as a counterweight to China in Indo-Pacific, and India and US have shown their common concerns regarding Chinese assertiveness (Bajpae & Jie, 2025).

Aditi Roy Ghatak (2025) explains the tariff imposed by USA over India and China brought the Asian powers closer. Indian and Chinese scholars' highlights the importance of cordial bilateral relations between India and China in an academic conference name 'Shifting Geopolitics: A New Framework for India-China Relations' organized in Kolkata in September 2025. Chinese Scholar Zhang Jiadong mentions India and China should be allies as well as should not be enemies because that will be a great global risk (Ghatak, 2025).

Murali Krishnan (2025), quoting various analysts regarding India-China bilateral relations mentions the high-profile diplomatic visits and negotiations between India and China is succeed to deescalate the situation in Himalayan frontier. However, the core unresolved border dispute is not addressed and the bilateral relations depends on the development along the border between India and Chian (Krishnan, 2025).

POLITICAL AND SECURITY DYNAMISM OF SOUTH ASIA

Bangladesh Political Turmoil

Hindustan Times (2024) mentions that Bangladeshi PM Shiekh Hasina claimed she got a proposal from white man to create Christian State including the area of Bangladesh and Myanmar, and establishing military base in Bay of Bengal instead of easy re-election on her favor. Chandrajit Mitra (2024) also reports that Shiekh Hasina claimed conspiracies against her government and she might be assassinated like her father Shiekh Mujibar Rahman. She was offered easy re-election instead of providing military base in Bangladesh and creating Christian state including the territory of Myanmar and Bangladesh. The proposal was received from white man whereas she did not mention the country and name of the white man (Mitra, 2024).

Gazi Abbas Shahid (2025) mentions that Muhammad Yunus, the head of Interim government of Bangladesh has presented himself as an anti-India figure and rebuilding diplomatic and military relations with Pakistan which has adversely impacted Bangladesh-India relations. The secret visits of Pakistani senior military and ISI officials to the Rangapur Division in northern Bangladesh near Chicken Neck has taken as a serious security concern by India (shahid, 2025).

The Economics Times (2025) mentions that Bangladesh-India relation is strained after ousting Shiekh Hanseen form the government. The Head of Interim Government, PM Muhammad Yunus gifted the map of 'Greater Bangladesh' to Chairman of Pakistan Joint Chief of Staff Committee (CJCSC) Military General Sahir Samshad Mirza which includes Indian territory. Sushim Mukul (2025) states Bangladesh due to its geostrategic position is an 'only a guardian of the ocean' and China could use Bangladesh to extend up to the landlocked seven states of north east India. Yunus also suggested China to invest in the hydropower projects of Nepal and Bhutan during his China visit (Mukul, 2025). The death of Bangladeshi youth leader Sharif Ushman Hadi on 18 December 2025 during the treatment after he was shot on his head on 12 December has strained the diplomatic relations between India and Bangladesh. Ushman Hadi, a prominent youth leader with greater influence established as a prominent anti India leader and criticizing India for its interfering role on the internal affairs of Bangladesh. The death of the youth leader has raised anti-India sentiment among the people of Bangladesh (Shamim, 2025). On 19 Dec 2025 the US Embassy Dhaka express deepest condolences on the death of Sharif Ushman Hadi through its post on X (U.S. Embassy Dhaka, 2025).

Indo-Pak Military conflict

Dawn (2025) states that a report presented by US-China Economic and Security Review Commission to US Congress explains Pakistan's military success over India in a four-day military conflict between India and Pakistan after Pahalgam terror attack in May 2025. China also tested its military technology by sharing intelligence, supplies of military hardware including J 10 fighters, air defense system, air to air missile PL 15 during Indo-Pak four-day military conflict (Dawn, 2025).

Keshav Padmanabhan (2025) mentions PM Modi announced that blood and water can't flow together while addressing the Independence Day from Red Fort. PM Modi reinforced the suspension of Indus Water Treaty after Pahalgam terror attack. Pakistani Army Chief General Munir threatened to destroy the dam to be made by India with missile while addressing American-Pakistani community in Tampa Florida (AA News Broadcasting System, 2025).

Nepal Political crisis

Akhilesh Tripathi (2025) states Tibet issue is a prime concern of China in Nepal. China is always worried because of liberal democratic system of Nepal where people cannot be arrested and punished for demanding 'Free Tibet'. China always wants to ensure the support of Government of Nepal regarding 'Free Tibet' movement and worries whether new generation of Nepal will accept Chinese placation to crush 'Free Tibet' voices. Therefore, Chinese strategists are worried about the anti-Chinese activities

with Gen-Z uprising in Nepal. The birth of new Dalai Lama outside China and probably from Tibetan refugee community sheltering in Nepal and Nepal's instability may stretch the fight with Western from Taiwan strait to South China Sea and up to Himalayas (Tripathi, 2025). Lekhnath Pandey (2025) mentions that Gen-Z movement of Nepal is more domestic than external influence. However, the recent geopolitical development in the region has influenced the domestic politics as well. PM Oli raised concern over the opening of trade and pilgrimage route through Kalapani. The one-on-one sideline meeting between PM Oli and Russian President Vladimir Putin, and Oli's participation in military victory parade of China alarmed West and Japan. Nepal has greater engagement with West and the strategic inclination towards China could push Nepal into unfavorable situation in the present geopolitical circumstances (Pandey, 2025). An investigative journalist Kit Klarenberg (2025), mentions that the leaked documents by 'The Grayzone' prove that the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) spent huge amounts of US dollar to train Nepali youths to organize protests and political demonstrations against the government before Gen-Z movement in Nepal. International Republican Institute (IRI), a division of NED spent USD 3,50,000 to conduct the program named 'Youth Leadership: Transparent Policy' from 2021-2022. Similarly, USD 5,00,000 was pursued for 'youth civic education project' but the disbursement of the fund is unknown. The programs were designed to establish network among the youths and trained on preparing various strategies to organize mass demonstrations. The main aim of US to fund Gen Z movement is to nullify Indian and Chinese influences in Nepal (Klarenberg, 2025).

Arunachal border dispute

Anbarasan Ethirajan (2023) consider Tawang (Arunachal/Zang Nan) as an intractable border conflict and probable flash point between India and China. Amrita Jash (2022) mentions China's rejection of Mc Mohan Line as a boundary between India and China and claim over the whole Arunachal (Zang Nan) province as a part of South Tibet territory. In December 2021 China issues its official map including territory of Arunachal (Zang Nan) province. India is strongly rejected the official map issued by China, claimed its administration and sovereignty over Arunachal province mentioning the map doesn't alter the fact (Jash, 2022). Sarah Shamim (2025) states Prema Wangjom Thongdok who was travelling to Japan with Indian passport was stopped and harassed because of carrying Indian passport while she was in transit at Shanghai Pudong International Airport by Chinese authorities. Amrita Nayak Dutta (2025) mentions that the Pentagon report submitted to US national congress includes North-Eastern Indian province - Arunachal as a core interest of China along with Taiwan, also covers the military cooperation between China and Pakistan. The report is published while the bilateral relationship between India and China is improving with various diplomatic moves and deescalating the military stand-off along LAC in Himalayas (Dutta, 2025).

Activities centering Chicken Neck

Shivani Sharma (2025) states that strategically important Siliguri corridor, often known as 'Chicken Neck' is fortified because of increasing Bangladesh and China engagements in the region. Similarly, Girish Linganna (2025) mentions the fall of pro-Indian Shiekh Hasina's government, fostering partnership between Bangladesh, Pakistan and China in Muhammad Yunus interim government. The issue of construction of airbase in Lalmonirhat in Chinese assistance, increasing military air flights of Bangladesh and China in eastern border, and threat posed by the Chinese military presence in Doklam plateau has intensified security challenges to India's Chicken Neck. India has deployed Trishakti Corps in Sukna, recently deployed S400 air defense in Siliguri, send a squadron of Rafale fighters in Hasimara airbase, a unit of BrahMos cruise missiles, formed new unit Brahmastra Corps (Special forces unit) to address the increasing security threats from China over Siliguri corridor (Lingana, 2025).

East Asia

On 19 June 2024 Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un signed 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty' during Kim-Putin summit in Pyongyang. The treaty binds Russia and North Korea to provide military assistance using all means during the aggression by others. Similarly, the two nations also agreed to oppose Western sanctions (Aljazeera, 2024). China has been regularly conducting air, naval and full scale live military exercises since 2018 to threaten Taiwan and demonstrate military capabilities to US and Japan regarding Taiwan crisis (Jash, 2024). On 7 Nov 2024 Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi announced the mobilization of Japanese military if China attacked Taiwan. The statement of Japanese Prime Minister strained the diplomatic relations between China and Japan. On 10 Dec 2024 US and Japan conducted joint air patrols over the Sea of Japan in response to the China and Russia joint air exercise and radar lock of Japanese fighter jet by China (Lariosa, 2025). The formation of QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) comprising of USA, Japan, Australia and India is focused on free and open Pacific region as well as to counter Chinese influence in Pacific. AUKUS-a trilateral security partnership between Australia, UK and USA which is also focused in Pacific region to counter Chinese presence in Indo-Pacific region (Lam, 2025). US and Philippines conducted military exercise (Maritime Cooperative Activity-MCA) on 9-10 Dec 2025 to facilitate free and open Indo-Pacific (U.S. 7th Fleet Public Affairs, 2025). China has been also conducting its naval exercises in South China Sea in response to the US-Philippines joint exercises. The territorial disputes between China, Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia, Brunei over the islands of South China Sea has become an intractable issue and potential flash point in Pacific.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Henry Kissinger played significant role to establish official diplomatic relationship with China presenting pragmatic approach to contain USSR during cold war era. The US Congress passed Taiwan Relation Act realizing the bad bargain of Carter Administration while establishing diplomatic relationship with PRC (Bush, 2004). The US-China relation continued thriving during Regan, George H W Bush, Clinton and George W Bush administration. USA realized the emergence of PRC as a challenge to its global hegemony and focused on Pacific. Obama Administration, Trump Administration and Biden Administration vigorously centered on containing China in Indo-Pacific. USA recognized PRC through establishing official diplomatic relationship and provided trade and technological assistance to counter USSR during cold war era. USA less prioritized Indo-Pacific region, avoided China and focused on other theater of the world especially Europe and Middle East. However, the emergence of China as a global power threatened US global hegemony and USA refocused on Indo-Pacific to contain China. Fontaine & Blackwill (2024) and Tanvi Madan (2025) also support that USA has been continuously focusing in Pacific region with the aim of containing China. The 'Indo-Pacific Strategy' and trade war initiated by USA against China are also aimed to contain China. Through the analysis of present strategies adopted by USA it is proved that US has been concentrating on the containment of China.

Makota Kojima (2011) states that the bilateral relations between India and US-India relation from 1947 to 2000 was fluctuating and cautious. However, the geopolitical development after 2000 and US strategies to contain China has brought India and USA closer. The various agreements regarding defense cooperation shows growing relationship between the two nations after 2000. On the other, Duvvuri Subbarao (2025) states that the US increment of tariffs to Indian products by 50% has adversely impacted the bilateral relations between US and India. Lindsey Ford, Lisa Curtis, Richard Fontaine also observed deteriorating US-India bilateral relationship. It shows that India-US relationship was fluctuating during cold war, and start improving after 2000 with the aim of containing China. Therefore, China is a central common factor in the bilateral relationship between India and USA.

Levesques & Solanki (2025), Bajpae & Jie (2025) & Murali Krishnan (2025) views India and China are succeeded to deescalate the situation along Himalaya frontier. The tariff imposed by USA to India and China has brought the two nations close. However, the unresolved border dispute will be remained as a permanent diplomatic challenge and flash point for military conflict between the two nations. The existing border disputes between India and China provides strategic leverages to USA to provoke India against China. USA maintained diplomatic relationship with China to contain USSR during cold war. USA has been increasing its relationship with India to contain China. Therefore, if US success to contain China it is likely to focus on India.

Chandrajit Mitra (2024) states that ousted PM Sheikh Haseena claimed conspiracies against her government and a white man offered easy reelection instead of establishing base in Bay of Bengal and creating a new Christian country including the territory of Bangladesh and Myanmar. The anti-Indian activities raised because of increased trilateral relationship between Bangladesh, Pakistan and China has forced India for the deployment of military forces in Siliguri corridor. It proves that the tension and skepticism is also deepened on the bilateral relationship between India and China which dragged Asian giants towards Bay of Bengal and North-East India. The construction of world's largest hydropower dam by China in Yarlung Tsangpo (Brahmaputra) river has added the energy centric conflict between India and China in North-East India (Sapkota, 2025).

S D Muni (2025) mentions that the recent regime changes in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal are a cocktail of domestic political turmoil and regional and global geopolitical rivalries between India, China and USA. India and USA are rivaling for strategic influence in South Asia against China. They always perceive expanding China influence as a serious threat in south Asia. Sudan Gurung (Leader of Gen-Z) is proved affiliated to Hami Nepal, NGO which admits the support of US Coca Cola Company. Similarly, some Gen-Z groups received external funding for the movement. US and India have common understanding regarding the closeness of PM K P Oli towards China, which pushed Oli government into uncomfortable position. It can be assessed that the Gen-Z uprising in Nepal is not the result of domestic politics but also the geopolitical rivalries between India, China and USA. Though, there is difference between India and US regarding Bangladesh regime change, both nations made common understanding regarding the regime change of Sri Lanka and Nepal because of their proximity towards China (Muni, 2025). The leaked files by 'The Grayzone' claims US funding on indoctrinating Nepali youths against the government through Gen Z movement is aimed to counterbalance the influence of India and China in Nepal (Klarenberg, 2025). It proves that US is enormously engaged on the recent political regime changes in small south Asian nations with the aim of containing China as well as restrict Indian influence.

Anbarasan Ethirajan (2023) consider Tawang (Arunachal/Zang Nan) as an intractable border conflict and probable flash point between India and China. The military build up centering the security of Siliguri corridor, and the recent engagement between Bangladesh, Pakistan and China also proves North-East India as a potential flash point of Sino-Indian conflict which is also fueled by the construction of world's largest hydropower dam in Yarlung Tsangpo (Brahmaputra) river.

The 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty' signed between Russia and North Korea has added complexities in the security dynamics of North East Asia which pressurized US and its allies South Korea and Japan to strengthen military cooperation. The ambition of China to integrate Taiwan into mainland China and the Chinese military exercises conducted targeting Taiwan, recent air exercises between China and Russia and radar locking of Japanese fighter jets by China followed by US-Japan air exercise over Sea of Japan shows the security vulnerability of East Asia. The entrance of Russia in Pacific in support of China and Russia-North Korea security pact has pressurized US and its allies Japan and South Korea, also added more complexities in the political and

security dynamism of Pacific. The new military coalition of China, Russia and North Korea is clearly visible against US lead alliance including Japan and South Korea. The formation of AUKUS and QUAD led by USA, US support to Taiwan against China, and US participation on the joint military exercises with South Korea, Japan and Philippines provokes China which can be considered as a geopolitical trap to China spread by USA in Pacific region.

The political turmoil and regime change in Sri Lanka in 2022 and Nepal's regime change because of Zen-G movement has brought India and US to the common understanding of growing Chinese influence in south Asia (Muni, 2025). India lost supportive Bangladeshi government of PM Shiekh Hassina after the political turmoil which raised anti India sentiments in Bangladesh and increased the security threat to India in North East India and Siliguri corridor. The death of Sharif Ushman Hadi, an anti-India youth leader of Bangladesh and the official condolence of the U.S. Embassy Dhaka has made India skeptic towards USA. Similarly, the fall of unfavorable PM Oli's government seems quick fulfillment of Indian interest however, the alleged support of NGO funded by western nations and their decisive role has curtailed India's traditional hegemony in Nepal. Pakistani Army Chief is warmly welcomed by USA after a four-day military conflict between India and Pakistan in May 2025. General Syed Asim Munir threatened to destroy any dam constructed in Indus River by India while he was in USA. The strengthening relationship between USA and Pakistan is always a matter of security concern to India. The participation of India in QUAD and the increasing defense cooperation between India and US has helped India to counter Chinese influence in south Asia. However, Indian participation in the dialogue is directly in the favor of USA to contain China in Pacific. Modi's warm welcome on runway to Russia President Vladimir Putin during the state visit of India on 4th Dec 2025, India-Russia increasing bilateral trades, and India's energy trade and defense cooperation with Russia is always a matter of concern to USA.

The tariff imposed against India, US support to Pakistan, loosing traditional hegemony in south Asia has declined India's role in Indian sub-continent. US influence and Chinese growing influence over the small south Asian nations have undermined India's regional hegemony. India has been losing its decisive role in south Asia and starts depending on US support to maintain its traditional hegemony. USA has been increasing defense cooperation with India, on the other supporting Pakistan and increasing influences in India's traditional sphere of influence. The Pentagon Report submitted to US National Congress in 2025 has created India's suspicion towards China because of defining Arunachal province as a core interest of China along with Taiwan. The unresolved border dispute between India and China attracted India towards USA, and USA has planned to take maximum advantages from the unresolved border dispute on the favor of its national interest. The geopolitical trap spread to China in Pacific has stretched to Indo-Pacific. The ongoing military build up centering India's Chicken Neck after the political turmoil of Bangladesh seems stretching geopolitical trap to China in North East India. The regime changes of Nepal in support of western nations, and India-China unsettled border dispute seem escalating the conflict along the Himalayas. Therefore, the geopolitical trap set for China in Pacific won't be restricted to the Pacific, it will expand to Indo-Pacific including North East India and finally along Himalayas. Though, the bilateral relationship between India and USA looks cordial, the snowy coldness is inherited. On the other, a hidden geopolitical trap for India is surfaced inside the geopolitical trap spread for China. The eagle seeing the fight between elephant and dragon on the ground will be pleased. The West will be benefitted if the emerging powers of Asia (East) fight each other and collapsed themselves. The fight between the Asian powers directly harms the Asian century, and the global powers again remained into the West. Therefore, the existing power always tires to contain emerging power, now China after that India or both nations simultaneously.

CONCLUSION

The transformation of balance of power from unipolar to multipolar has challenged the global hegemony of USA by the emerging power China and other regional powers India, Russia, Brazil and South Africa. The trilateral relationship between US, India and China shows the proximity of US and India to contain and counter China in Indo-Pacific. The recent security development in East Asia including the China-Taiwan crisis and Japan's support to Taiwan, the military exercises between China and Russia followed by Japan and US joint air exercise in the response has heightened the friction in Pacific. The involvement of Russia in Russo-China military air exercises and its defense partnership with North Korea has added more complexities in Pacific. Similarly, the border disputes between China, Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei over the islands of South China Sea, and the regular military exercises conducted by US and Philippines and Chinese military exercises in the response has made the region more vulnerable. The formation of QUAD and AUKUS with the aim of containing China, and US continuous support to its allies Japan, South Korea and Taiwan against China has irked China. US has been vigorously focusing on containing China in Pacific and empowering its allies to drag China into the geopolitical trap in Indo-Pacific. The role of US agencies to fund the Gen-Z movement of Nepal also proves that US is aimed to counterbalance Chinese and Indian influence in Nepal, contain China and to stretch the conflict towards Himalayas as well. The increment on anti India activities in Bangladesh and emerging security challenges in North East India and Chicken Neck has pushed India into new geopolitical trap. US has been luring India through defense cooperation to contain China by dragging India in QUAD taking the advantage of unsettled border dispute between two emerging Asian powers China and India. A hidden geopolitical trap to India is clearly visible inside the geopolitical trap designed to China. Therefore, India and China should be more cautious against the conspiracies, more cooperative to get out of geopolitical trap and build truthful relationship for the future of Asia.

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