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## INDIA AND CHINA AT THE CROSSROADS: THE IMPERATIVES OF REWORKING INDIA'S STRATEGY

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### Abstract:

Any discussion on India- China relations is incomplete without mentioning that today the center of gravity of the whole world is slowly shifting to Asia. Besides, one-third of the world's population lives in countries, bordering the Indian Ocean. The security environment is uncertain and great power transitions are taking place. India and China both are aspiring powers in Asia, however, with a certain degree of asymmetries in their power and strength. In the eighties, both the economies were of the same size but today the Chinese economy is way ahead and most global supply chains run through it. China is the world's manufacturing superpower and with its technological expertise, its military expansionist ways, and its distinct footprint in India's neighborhood, both land and maritime, all make it a serious force to contend with. Over time, the relations between the two neighbors have been a cause of grave concern. The interests of both India and China intersect. They have expanding geopolitical horizons and earnestly strive for 'strategic space' in the same region. The present essay reflects upon the relations between India and China that have been oscillating from cooperation to competition and from confrontation to conflict. Further, an attempt is made to focus on the challenges that are galore and the potentiality of reworking India's China strategy.

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### 1.0 Introduction:

The Year 2020 was historic in more ways than one. First, the novel coronavirus pandemic has taken the world by storm. Second, China's aggressive designs along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), its incursions in Ladakh, and the Galwan killings occupied center stage in the bygone year. The escalating boundary dispute, China's debt-trap policy and the string of pearls strategy, its ever-growing military prowess, and its ambitious BRI Project have caused much alarm to India. India too, with its tilt towards the US, its bold initiative of revoking Article 370, and refusing to be a signatory to the RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership), have resulted in the deteriorating relations between the two powerful giants. The RCEP is a trade deal comprising of sixteen countries in the Indo-Pacific region and is significant because these contribute to nearly thirty percent of global GDP. These countries have formed the world's largest trading block and the pact is yet another example of China's influence in the region.

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