



A chill in U.S.-China relations

Context:

- Vijay Gokhale, a former Foreign Secretary of India and a former Ambassador to China, has given his views on the US-China relations.

American administration since the 1960s have been complicit in China's rise:

- US have been complicit in China's rise in the unrealised hope that China will become a 'responsible stakeholder' under US Hegemony.
- **President Richard Nixon** gave China the international acceptability it craved in return for being admitted to Mao's presence in 1972.
- **President Jimmy Carter** terminated diplomatic relations with Taiwan in order to normalise relations with China in 1978.
- **President George H.W. Bush** washed away the sins of Tiananmen in 1989 for geopolitical gain.
- **President Bill Clinton** ushered the Chinese into the World Trade Organization at the expense of American business.



What has been Chinese action in return for US support in these decades?

- In return China have spoken anti-Soviet rhetoric during the Cold War and promoted the market principles.
- Every Chinese leader from Chairman Mao to President Xi Jinping has been clear that the U.S. represents an existential threat to the continued supremacy of the communist regime.
- The collapse of the Soviet Union only reinforced China's suspicious view of US and strengthened China's resolve to resist by creating its own parallel universe.
 1. Alternate trading system – the Belt and Road Initiative;
 2. A multilateral banking system under its control – Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, New Development Bank;
 3. China's own global positioning system –BeiDou
 4. China's own digital payment platforms – WeChat Pay and Alipay
 5. A world-class digital network -Huawei 5G
 6. Development of a modern military force.

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- General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Hu Jintao's assured about "peaceful rise" so as to allay the fears of other and also to utilise the financial and technological resources of the West.
- China started building military installations in the South China Sea as its economic power increased.

What are the recent announcements on China by U.S. President Donald Trump?

- President Trump is the first one to finally acknowledge the uneasy facts about the Chinese.
- It was Mr. Trump's 2017 National Security Strategy document that, perhaps for the first time, clubbed China along with Russia as a challenge to American power, influence and interests.
- Trump has called China out on trade practices and on 5G.
- U.S. is heavily dependent on supply chains in China, while the Chinese have been unable to break free of the dollar. Both Trump & Xi-Jinping wants to decouple their closely inter-linked economies.
- Trump administration has stated it would revoke Hong Kong's special trade status under U.S. law.
- US administration has passed an order limiting the entry of certain Chinese graduate students and researchers who may have ties to the People's Liberation Army.
- U.S. President has also ordered financial regulators to closely examine Chinese firms listed in U.S. stock markets, and warned those that do not comply with U.S. laws could be delisted.

What does all these announcements indicate?

- It is a clear indication that the competition between the U.S. and China is likely to sharpen in the post-COVID world.
- The points of divergence, even dispute, between US-China have so far been in the material realm. With Hong Kong, the U.S.-China rivalry may be entering the **ideological domain**.

Conclusion:

- A binary choice between the U.S. and China is likely to test India's capacity to maintain strategic and decisional autonomy.