

Rationale for the Wuhan Summit (India-China)

What is the issue?

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- Indian PM Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping had an informal meet recently in the Chinese city of Wuhan.

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- China's assent to going for an informal summit with India needs a deeper analysis in the prevailing geo-political scenario.

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What was China's possible motive?

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- India by itself may not be a serious problem for China.

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- But China regards India as a potential ally of the US and Japan against China.

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- The border is in control of the Chinese if they wish to exercise it.

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- It's because they are on higher slopes and have more troops there.

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- But arresting India's potential drift towards the US and its allies is in China's interest.

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- Being informal, no documentary evidence was required for any agreements of great significance.

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- So an informal summit was a low-cost, high-benefit option for China.

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What do post summit statements suggest?

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- Statements made by Xi Jinping after the summit, clearly indicate the above motives.
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- **Strategic perspective** - He emphasised that India and China should look at their relations from a strategic perspective.
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- This is clearly in mention of India's increasingly closer ties with the US.
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- Further, compared to India, China takes Japan more seriously.
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- There is possibility for a clash in the East China and South China Seas.
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- Japan and India, by themselves would not worry China.
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- But the combined might of the US and Japan would be a serious blow to the Chinese.
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- **Economy** - Economic development also appeared in the post-summit statements.
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- The Chinese do not think they need India for its development.
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- However, deeper economic relations with India could be viewed as a means to an end.
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- A means to ensure that India does not drift off into a US-Japan-India strategic triangle.
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- **Civilisation** - Xi also stressed on a deeper and wider exchange between the two great civilisations.
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- Generally, to talk about India's civilisation is a good diplomacy.
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How does it benefit India?

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- Until the 2019 elections, the government in power would prefer to avoid any border threats.
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- This is particularly in relation with problems with Pakistan.
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- India used the summit as a kind of assurance from the Chinese.
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- It is to ensure that China, as Pakistan's benefactor, did not interfere on the border.
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What does the summit mean for Pakistan?

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- Post-summit statements suggested that India and China should pursue "a joint economic project" in Afghanistan.
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- India cannot take up its Afghanistan projects all alone.
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- This would invite attacks from the Taliban, supported by Pakistani military.
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- But the Taliban would not attack joint China-India projects.
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- This is because the Pakistanis would not allow that to happen.
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- Pakistan is too indebted to China, and China has its own interests in Pakistan.
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- China is building a port there, and there is a China-Pakistan economic corridor, serving Chinese interests.
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Source: Indian Express

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Quick Fact

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Wuhan

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- Wuhan is the capital city of Hubei Province in central China.

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- It has been a major industrial city for a long time.

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- The 1911 Republican revolution started there.

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- An informal summit would normally take place in a place other than Beijing or Shanghai, and Wuhan was a natural choice.

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