

China factor in India-Vietnam Defense and Security Relations

Srinivas Junuguru*

Abstract

Both India and Vietnam demonstrate ambivalence in their relations with China. Given China's revisionist policies, the strategic partnership between India and Vietnam has intensified, motivated by mutual apprehensions regarding Chinese assertiveness. The primary focus of the research paper lies in scrutinizing the defense and security aspects of the India-Vietnam relationship, with specific attention to the influence exerted by China. However, the paper highlights a disparity between the actual trajectory of bilateral relations between Vietnam and India and the anticipated outcomes, underscoring the imperative for diversification in their relationship.

* Dr. Srinivas Junuguru, Associate Professor (Alina Mungiu-Pippidi Professor of Public Policy) Co-Chairperson of CoE-Public Policy Research, Woxsen University, Kamkole, Sangareddy, Hyderaabd, India, 502345, Email: sreenujnu@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0001-9673-7258, SCOPUS ID: 57212834801, Mob: +91-9899959478

Keywords: India, Vietnam, China, defense, and security

I. Introduction

India and Vietnam have a rich history of diplomatic relations. India and Vietnam were close allies of the USSR during the Cold War. Initially, it was India and Vietnam's socialist ideological inclination that made them huddle together. As Vietnam started building relations with various countries globally, the relationship between India and Vietnam began growing in strength, coupled with several high-level visits by leaders from both countries. India's Look East Policy and Vietnam's renewed interest in a relationship with Asian Superpowers like India incentivized the relationship's growth between the two countries. Vietnam is an important regional partner in India's Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The two countries work together in many regional forums, like the ASEAN, East Asia Summit, Mekong Ganga Cooperation, Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM), and the United Nations Organization.¹ Further, 2021 marked the 5th anniversary of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between India and Vietnam. Earlier in 2022, both countries celebrated 50 years of creating diplomatic ties.

¹ "India-Vietnam Relations," Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2017, https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Bilateral_Relations_Website__Sept_17_.pdf and "India-Vietnam trade and economic relations," Embassy of India in Hanoi, 2022, <https://www.indembassyhanoi.gov.in/page/economic-and-commercial/#:~:text=INDIA%20VIETNAM%20TRADE%20AND%20ECONOMIC%20RELATIONS&text=According%20to%20Indian%20data%20during,amounted%20to%20USD%208.79%20billion.>

However, China's adversarial attitude towards India and Vietnam is one of the flashpoints for India-Vietnam bonding. India and Vietnam have acrimonious relations with China, which seems to be constantly widening and causing consternation in India and Vietnam's internal stability and political sovereignty. Therefore, China has proven to be an essential contributing factor to the growing relations between India and Vietnam. Over time, China exponentially increased its defense and security budget, followed by its military modernization, establishing it at par with other advanced countries like the U.S. and Russia. Likewise, in 2022, China's defense spending spiked to 7.1 percent year-on-year. It is an increase to outpace the GDP growth target of 5.5 percent.²

This alarming trend in China's increasing defense and security budget threatens many countries worldwide, including India and Vietnam. Given this background, India and Vietnam committed to enhancing their collaboration. For example, Vietnamese Defense Minister General Phan Van Giang visited India on June 18, 2023, and discussed with India's Defense Minister Rajnath Singh focusing on industry cooperation and maritime security considering China's dominance in the South China Sea and the Indo-Pacific region.³ In this context, the

² Yew Lun Tian. "China Plans 7.1% Defence Spending Rise This Year, Outpacing GDP Target," *Reuters*, 2022.

³ "India, Vietnam agree to amplify defence cooperation," *The Hindu Business line*, June 19, 2023,

China factor in India-Vietnam Defense and Security Relations

123

research article's objective is to explore India and Vietnam's defense and security relations vis-a-vis possible China's role. The article expounds on the role of defense and security in strengthening India-Vietnam relations. The research paper explains how and where India and Vietnam could cooperate for a win-win situation in the emerging and complicated international order to counter China's influence on India and Vietnam's defense and security relations.

The study delves into examining the impact of China on India-Vietnam defense and security relations. This article begins by reviewing the existing literature on India-Vietnam relations and the China factor to gain insight into the defense and security aspects of India and Vietnam relations. Later, the paper will discuss the historical evolution of India and Vietnam relations. It later emphasizes how India and Vietnam enhanced their defense and security relations with the growing threat of China's presence as their neighbor. Finally, the article discusses the possible ramifications of growing India and Vietnam's defense and security relations. Thus, the study rigorously reviewed pertinent articles and documents focusing on defense and security roles and their impact on India and Vietnam relations and how, particularly, how much influence China has on India and Vietnam's defense and security relations. Primarily, two critical limitations of the

study are: (i) no primary data or surveys were used, and (ii) it is confined to examining the impact of China at the regional level only.

The first section introduces India's and Vietnam's defense and security relations. The second section rigorously studies the existing literature on India and Vietnam's defense and security ties and the role of China in it. The third section focuses on giving the theoretical perceptions of the relations between India and Vietnam relations by using realist theory and hedging strategy. The fourth section talks about the historical evolution of India and Vietnam relations. The fifth section highlights the role of China in India and Vietnam's defense and security relations. The sixth section underscores the ongoing defense and security relations between India and Vietnam. The final section emphasizes that India and Vietnam must diversify and enhance their relations in growing more complicated emerging regional and international order.

II. Literature review

India and Vietnam have a long history of relations. These relations have been upgraded yearly regarding socio-political, cultural, economic, trade, and strategic turns it has taken. However, it must prioritize AI's importance in defense and security relations for mutual benefits. For example, bilateral political ties increased from a partnership in 2003 to strategic and comprehensive relationships in 2007 and 2016. However, there

China factor in India-Vietnam Defense and Security Relations

125

has been a growing security threat to the freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea, including the other non-traditional security issues in the maritime area, particularly piracy and terrorism.⁴ Scholar Temjenmeren Ao observed that,

*“Defence cooperation between India and Vietnam is multi-faceted in scope and intensity and includes defence dialogues, training and exercises, collaboration in capacity building and Navy and Coast Guard ship visits. Vietnam at the same time is following a pragmatic and diversified foreign policy approach and has strengthened relations with other major countries such as Japan, South Korea and Russia.”*⁵

The revisionist approach of China has been causing concern in the South China Sea and Asia Pacific region. Therefore, Vietnam’s approach towards China has become complex and a mixture of challenge and opportunity due to Vietnam’s geographic proximity to China and overwhelming power. More

⁴ Thi Bich Tran and Yoichiro Sato. “Vietnam’s Post- Cold War Hedging Strategy: A Changing Mix of Realist and Liberal Ingredients,” *Asian Politics & Policy*, 10, no. 1 (January 1, 2018): 73–99, <https://doi.org/10.1111/aspp.12368>. Also see, Xuan Vinh Vo, “Vietnam–India Maritime Cooperation,” *Maritime Affairs*, 13, no. 1 (January 2, 2017): 63–72, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09733159.2017.1315888>.

⁵ “India-Vietnam Defence Partnership Gaining Ground,” *IDSA*, June 26, 2023, <https://idsa.in/issuebrief/india-vietnam-defence-partnership-t-ao-260623>.

precisely, China is a perennial strategic challenge that cannot be avoided due to historical reasons. The relations between Vietnam and China involved cooperation and struggle and not confronting but finding a way to live with China and benefit from its resources and power.⁶

Considering this, Vietnam initiated the process of improvising its relations from a strategic angle. As part of this, the India-Vietnam Strategic Partnership Agreement 2007 should be regarded as a formalization of strategic ties between both countries. Likewise, India and Russia had enhanced strategic relations with Vietnam. After that, Vietnam signed a strategic partnership with countries like Japan and the Philippines. Further, Vietnam has more strategic alliances in the Indo-Pacific region than any other country in the Southeast Asian area. The more important reason is due to its domestic compulsion and the external environment.⁷

Further, relations between Vietnam and China have changed drastically, and they have evolved from strategic antagonism to ideology-shared partnership and later from economic cooperation to security rivalry. Moreover, the Vietnam-China worldview has been significantly widened. Due to the geographical proximity

⁶ Vo. "Vietnam-India Maritime Cooperation."

⁷ Lena Le and Khac Nam Hoang. "Forging Strategic Partnership in the Indo-Pacific Region: Vietnam's Diplomatic Direction," *Political Science*, 73, no. 3 (September 2, 2021): 270-89, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00323187.2021.1957955>.

China factor in India-Vietnam Defense and Security Relations

127

between the two countries, relations between Vietnam and China are determined by four factors. They include the security environment, internal factional politics, economic calculations, and rising nationalism.⁸ These factors will play a significant role in determining the relationship between Vietnam and China.

Later, China changed its foreign policy strategies. China's aggressive enhancement of security cooperation with Pakistan, active participation in Indian Ocean Affairs, and regular skirmishes in the South China Sea are reasons for India's worrisome situation. As several scholars and policymakers intended, China's growing relations with Pakistan are always a threat to India's foreign policy. Therefore, to counter China's moves and hostility, India needs to boost its relations with Southeast Asian Countries.⁹ For that purpose, India may diversify its relations with ASEAN region countries. Similarly, Vietnam will adopt the same strategy to strengthen its relations.

Therefore, for Vietnam, India is a critical partner in emerging international relations. Likewise, Vietnam is a crucial stakeholder in India's foreign policy towards the Indo-Pacific region. However, other critical pillars are responsible for increasing the

⁸ Đỗ Thanh Hải. "Vietnam and China: Ideological Bedfellows, Strange Dreamers," *Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies*, 10, no. 2 (May 26, 2021): 162–82, <https://doi.org/10.1080/24761028.2021.1932018>.

⁹ Aditi Malhotra. "Indo-Vietnam Relations: An Answer to Sino-Pak Partnership?" *Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India*, 8, no. 1 (2012): 71-92.

relations between India and Vietnam, for example, the rise of China, the leading role of the U.S. in both the country's strategic areas, and the evolving Indo-Pacific architecture.¹⁰

The importance of India in Vietnam's policymaking is reflected in action because, before Vietnam's first strategic partnership with Russia in 2001, Vietnamese state president Tran Duc Luong used the term 'strategic' in 1999 while describing India-Vietnam relations. Mr. Tran Duc Luong even expressed it to the then-Indian foreign minister, Jaswant Singh, in mid-November 2000.¹¹ That clearly shows how significant India-Vietnam ties have been evolving.

China's biggest strategic policy in international relations, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is regarded as a geo-economic strategy. China has pledged to invest billions of dollars in infrastructure and industrial sectors in the Eurasian and Indo-Pacific regions. It has the potential for geostrategic consequences in international relations. This colossal investment in the region under BRI policy will change China's stature and international security. It may lead to security competition between China and other major powers of the Eurasia and Indo-Pacific

¹⁰ "V.N.'s trade with India sees strong growth," Viet Nam News, 2018, <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/464534/vns-trade-with-india-sees-strong-growth.html>.

¹¹ Xuan Vinh Vo. "India in Vietnam's Foreign Policy," *Strategic Analysis/Strategic Analysis*, 44, no. 1 (December 25, 2019): 31–44, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2020.1699997>.

China factor in India-Vietnam Defense and Security Relations

129

region.¹² This policy poses a potential threat to India and Vietnam's security architecture. Therefore, it can be considered another primary reason for India and Vietnam to huddle together regarding defense and security.

Scholar Harsh V Pant¹³ pointed out that India and Vietnam should be alarmed at China's aggressive stand in the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. Therefore, India is helping Vietnam to build its capacity to repair and maintain its defense platforms. The armed forces of both countries have started cooperating with Vietnamese army personnel's information technology and English language training. Moreover, both India and Vietnam have a familiar friend called the United States of America, which is trying hard to counter China's assertiveness in this region. Hence, these three countries can cooperate to contain China's domination in the Indian Ocean region.¹⁴

That is why Vietnam's growing tensions with assertive China's historical claims concerning the South China Sea have

¹² Mingjiang Li. "The Belt and Road Initiative: Geo-economics and Indo-Pacific Security Competition," *International Affairs* 96, no. 1 (January 1, 2020): 169–87, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiz240>. Also see, Nguyễn Thị Hoà and Phạm Thảo Nguyễn. "The Reception and Implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative in Vietnam," *Strategic Analysis*, 45, no. 2 (March 4, 2021): 128–43, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2021.1893507>.

¹³ Hoà and Nguyễn. "The Reception and Implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative in Vietnam."

¹⁴ Srinath Raghavan. "The Security Dilemma and India–China Relations," *Asian Security*, 15, no. 1 (November 2, 2018): 60–72, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14799855.2019.1539818>.

made Vietnam alter its foreign policy objectives and defense policy. Therefore, Vietnam started vocalizing its animosity towards China. In the process, Vietnam is widening its options and hobnobbing with countries like the U.S. and India, allowing them some space in the South China Sea.¹⁵ Due to China's overarching position in the South China Sea, expanding infrastructural investments in India's periphery region have caused a security dilemma in the Indian Ocean Region. Therefore, India has been exploring opportunities and avenues to counter China's foreign policy in the region. Therefore, Vietnam has become one of its key allies of India in the Act East Policy.¹⁶

However, it is not the recent aspect of thickening relations between India and Vietnam, rather, it started from the 1990s. Both countries have made strategic readjustments to enhance their cooperation with various countries that can walk along with them and develop commonalities in their politico-strategic visions and policies. More importantly, just like the way India did, Vietnam diversified its foreign policy in the Indo-Pacific calculations by maintaining warm ties with Japan and the US. Due to growing uncertainties between Vietnam and China, it is apparent that India

¹⁵ Apila Sangtam. "Vietnam's Strategic Engagement in the South China Sea," *Maritime Affairs*, 17, no. 1 (January 2, 2021): 41–57, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09733159.2021.1939868>.

¹⁶ R. S. Aswani, Shambhu Sajith, and Mohammad Younus Bhat. "Realigning India's Vietnam Policy Through Cooperative Sustainable Development: A Geostrategic Counterbalancing to China in Indo-Pacific," *East Asia*, 39, no. 2 (July 13, 2021): 97–115, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12140-021-09371-0>.

and Vietnam further emphasize their defense and security cooperation while deepening their ties with Japan and the US in emerging international relations.¹⁷

III. Theoretical underpinning

The relationship between India and Vietnam is a complex phenomenon due to China's impact. China is aimed to become one of the dominant powers in emerging international relations. Likewise, India aims to become one of the prominent players in contemporary international relations. Both are the fastest emerging countries with highly ambitious targets. However, both countries are adopting different pathways. Therefore, there is a possibility of differences between India and China, causing skirmishes and practicing a balancing act while engaging with each other. To understand the nature of defense and security relations between India and Vietnam and the role of China, the author used realism and hedging strategy. The reason for using these two theories is because of the dominance of the realist phenomenon in India-Vietnam defense and security relations. Moreover, realism is very much relevant in contemporary international relations. Further, the other factor for adopting the Hedging strategy is to study the defense and security relations of

¹⁷ Rahul Mishra. "Vietnam's Regional Security Perceptions and Priorities: Role of India," *India Quarterly* (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1177/09749284211004983>.

India and Vietnam to explore how small power countries adopt their strategies to keep themselves in a stable position.

The classical realist school of thought believes that human nature is the driving force of international relations. Whereas Structural realists like Kenneth Waltz argue that the international relations system will always be in anarchic condition. Anarchy leads to jealousy, suspicion, and insecurity. In such a scenario, the states will maximize their security¹⁸ and focus on building strategic alliances.¹⁹ Due to China's location, revisionist strategy, and aggressive move towards the Indian Ocean and South China area deeply caused concern for both India and Vietnam. Apart from that, China's political and economic support for Pakistan is another trouble in India's backyard. China's one-sided claim in the South China Sea and its involvement in neighboring countries triggered a rising temperature in the foreign policy circles of Vietnam. Therefore, India and Vietnam are trying to hobnob and diversify their relations. To further elaborate on the defense and security relations of India and Vietnam, another critical realist scholar, Mearsheimer,²⁰ in his book called "The Tragedy of Great Power Politics," observed that there would be lawlessness (anarchic) in the international system. As there is disorderliness in

¹⁸ S. Telbami. "Kenneth Waltz, Neorealism, and Foreign Policy," *Security Studies*, 11, no. 3 (March 1, 2002): 158–70, <https://doi.org/10.1080/714005344>.

¹⁹ John Baylis and Steve Smith. *Globalization of World Politics*. Oxford University Press (2001): 149

²⁰ John J. Mearsheimer. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics (Updated Edition)*. W. W. Norton & Company (2003).

China factor in India-Vietnam Defense and Security Relations

133

the system, as an individual country, it will go for self-help in the first step and later try to maximize its relative position in the international system. Thus, it will be in a safer place.²¹ It is called the offensive realism theory, as India and Vietnam are vulnerable due to neighboring China's moves. Hence, it naturally makes India and Vietnam feel insecure and forces them to strengthen their defense and security apparatus.

Another vital strategy that Vietnam has been adopting is the 'hedging strategy', while dealing with other countries. The concept of 'hedging' in international relations started being used in the recent past. The word hedging is used in the context of national security or alignment strategy adopted by one state on another. It essentially implies that states adopt a mixture of cooperative and confrontation features. However, there is a difference in balancing or bandwagoning concepts prevalent during the Cold War. During the Cold War time, it was adopted by small states to resist great powers and mighty powers. Conversely, the hedging strategy of states started becoming important in the post-Cold War period.²² However, the contemporary literature on hedging strategy debunked that it can be used only in economic strategy, rather it can be used in other states' strategies to understand the behavior of small states in international relations.

²¹ Mearsheimer. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 20.

²² John D. Ciorciari and Jürgen Haacke. "Hedging in International Relations: An Introduction," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 19, no. 3 (September 1, 2019): 367–74, <https://doi.org/10.1093/irap/lcz017>.

The hedging strategy is being used as a third strategic choice of any state in parallel with balancing and bandwagoning.²³ Though the term hedging strategy is a commonly used element, it has been a less explored concept in international relations. However, the hedging strategy aptly applies to understanding Southeast Asia and smaller states' foreign policy choices in international relations.²⁴ Vietnam has adopted a hedging strategy in its foreign policy since the normalization of ties between Vietnam and China in 1991. It is best described as a multi-tiered and omnidirectional hedging strategy. Further, the hedging strategy of Vietnam is comprised of four elements, and they are economic pragmatism, direct engagement, hard balancing, and soft balancing.²⁵ Studying the foreign policy objectives of Vietnam in dealing is still in a quagmire due to India, China, and the US's role in Southeast Asian countries.²⁶ Moreover, Vietnam has its own needs and requirements with all three powers in international

²³ Yuzhu Wang. "Hedging Strategy: Concept, Behavior, and Implications for China-ASEAN Relations." *East Asian Affairs*, 1, no. 02 (2021): 2150012.

²⁴ Cheng-Chwee Kuik. "Getting Hedging Right: A Small-state Perspective," *China International Strategy Review*, 3, no. 2 (November 23, 2021): 300–315, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42533-021-00089-5>. Also see, David Martin Jones and Nicole Jenne, "Hedging and Grand Strategy in Southeast Asian Foreign Policy," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 22, no. 2 (February 23, 2021): 205–35, <https://doi.org/10.1093/irap/lcab003>.

²⁵ Le Hong Hiep. "Vietnam's Hedging Strategy Against China Since Normalization," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 35, no. 3 (January 1, 2013): 333, <https://doi.org/10.1355/cs35-3b>. Also see, Tran and Sato, "Vietnam's Post- Cold War Hedging Strategy."

²⁶ Ngo Di Lan and Truong-Minh Vu. "The Sino-US-Vietnam Triangle in a Belt and Road Era," *East Asia*, 36, no. 3 (September 1, 2019): 229–41, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12140-019-09318-6>.

relations. That is how Vietnam's foreign policy tools reflect the hedging strategy adopted by small power states. Nonetheless, the hedging strategy has much more to be explored in international relations.

IV. Evolution of India and Vietnam relations

India and Vietnam have had a long history of good relations. The Hindu kingdom of *Cham Pa* existed along the southern and central coast of present-day Vietnam from the 7th to 18th Century. This kingdom had excellent trade relations with India.²⁷ In recent history, the first phase of India and Vietnam relations predates India's *Look East Policy*. The relationship between the countries became stronger after the end of the Cold War in 1991 when both countries accepted the liberalization policy. Later, bilateral trade spiked immediately. Until 2000, it was US\$200 million. Bilateral trade between the two has been steadily increasing over the years. The statistics say that, during the Financial Year April 2020-March 2021, bilateral trade between India and Vietnam reached US\$11.12 billion. India's exports were U.S. \$4.99 billion, and the imports from Vietnam were U.S. \$6.12 billion. However, it indicated a decreasing trend of 22.47 percent in bilateral trade yearly. Probably, it is due to the COVID-19-induced disruptions. One optimistic takeout from this is that India's trade deficit with

²⁷ See Seng Tan. "Faced With the Dragon: Perils and Prospects in Singapore's Ambivalent Relationship With China," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 5, no. 3 (July 26, 2012): 245–65, <https://doi.org/10.1093/cjip/pos012>.

Vietnam reduced from U.S. \$2.22 billion during the Financial Year 2019-2020 to U.S. \$1.12 in the Financial Year 2020-21. This led to Vietnam becoming the 15th largest trading partner globally and the 4th largest within the ASEAN group countries in 202-21. India became Vietnam's 10th largest trading partner globally.²⁸ However, slowly the trade recovery took place from 2021-22 onwards.

These figures clearly show the existence of strong trade relations between the two countries since 1991. However, apart from focusing on trade and economy, both India and Vietnam slowly tilted into a more comprehensive strategic and security-related relationship. At the same time, China has been constantly obstructing India-Vietnam relations by discomforting them in various ways. The methods like strategically encircling both countries through maritime agreements with the neighboring countries of India and Vietnam. For example, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and several others. Hence, India and Vietnam have concerns about energy security and open maritime communication issues with China. Further, China has been aggressively creating inroads into the strategic regions of India and Vietnam in the Indian Ocean and Asia Pacific area. China became a significant threat to India and

²⁸ "India-Vietnam trade and economic cooperation," Embassy of India in Hanoi, Vietnam, 2021, <https://www.indembassyhanoi.gov.in/page/economic-and-commercial/>.

China factor in India-Vietnam Defense and Security Relations

137

Vietnam as far as navigational freedom was concerned.²⁹ Because of China's aggressive positions in the Indian Ocean and Asia Pacific region during the last few decades, India and Vietnam have installed sophisticated defense systems, including anti-missile systems, in their strategic areas. The creation of the artificial islands in the South China Sea indicated to India and Vietnam that China has sinister intentions in this region.³⁰ Moreover, China made Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Maldives, and several other countries the biggest debtors to China. It observed that Pakistan owes the U.S. \$77.3 billion of external debts to China, Sri Lanka owes the U.S. \$6.8 billion, Angola 36.3 billion, Ethiopia at U.S. \$7.9 billion, and Kenya at U.S. \$ 7.4 billion.³¹ The Chinese interventions in Maldives and Sri Lanka's political

²⁹ “Joint Declaration of India and Vietnam, May 1, 2003, Joint Declaration on the Framework of Comprehensive Cooperation between the Republic of India and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam as they enter the 21st Century,” *Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India*, May 1, 2003,

<http://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral/documents.htm?dtl/7658/Joint+Declaration+on+the+Framework+of+Comprehensive+Cooperation+between+the+Republic+of+India+and+the+Socialist+Republic+of+Vietnam+as+they+enter+the+21st+Century>, Also see, Kunal Mukherjee, “Assessing Security Relations in the Asia Pacific: The Cases of China, India and Pakistan,” *Canadian Foreign Policy*, 24, no. 1 (June 8, 2017): 56–73, <https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2017.1331174>.

³⁰ Harsh V Pant. “India and Vietnam: A truly strategic partnership,” *Observer Research Foundation*, 2018, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/india-and-vietnam-a-truly-strategic-partnership/>, Also see, Mukherjee, “Assessing Security Relations in the Asia Pacific.”

³¹ Ani. “Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Maldives Stand Neck-deep in Chinese Debt: Forbes,” *Www.Business-Standard.Com*, September 12, 2022, https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/sri-lanka-pakistan-maldives-stand-neck-deep-in-chinese-debt-forbes-122091200675_1.html.

and economic affairs, besides unilateral claims on the South China Sea, helped India and Vietnam become closer to each other and paved the way for more strategic cooperation.

India and Vietnam signed a memorandum of understanding on defense cooperation to strengthen bilateral relations in 2009. Further, the relationship between the two countries has sought new avenues of cooperation and friendship. Indian ships have called on Vietnamese ports on numerous visits. Vietnamese boats participated in the *International Fleet Review* at Visakhapatnam in February 2016.³² Apart from this, there are continuous engagements by the leaders of India and Vietnam on many shared concerns. For instance, when COVID-19 struck in March 2020, the government asked India's Foreign Secretary, Harsh Shringla, to engage with select countries between March 20, 2020, and May 15, 2020. This engagement aimed to share ideas and the best practices to prevent the spreading of COVID-19. Vietnam was a recipient of this engagement.³³ This illustrates how the two countries have nurtured their cooperation by creating friendly gestures for strengthening their bilateral relations. The two countries are constantly upgrading and maintaining their defense

³² "India-Vietnam Relations," Ministry of External Affairs of India, 2017, https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Bilateral_Relations_Website___Sept_17_.pdf.

³³ "Cooperation among select countries of the Indo-Pacific in fighting COVID-19 pandemic," Ministry of External Affairs of India, May 14, 2020, <https://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/32691/cooperation+among+select+countries+of+the+indopacific+in+fighting+covid19+pandemic>.

cooperation to meet future security needs and enhance India and Vietnam's connections and engagements.

V. Defense and Security Cooperation

The relationship between India and Vietnam has rapidly advanced, focusing increasingly on practical cooperation in defense and security. The signing of a Defense Protocol in 2000 marked the beginning of this collaboration, enabling India to sell military helicopters to Vietnam, supply maintenance equipment for Vietnamese aircraft, and offer training for Vietnamese military personnel. To enhance their defense and security capabilities, the two states have started sharing intelligence regularly, and their coastguards participate in joint training exercises to combat piracy in the Indian Ocean. Additionally, to prepare for potential challenges, India has supported Vietnam with jungle warfare and counter-insurgency training, and in the maintenance of aircraft and helicopters. India has also trained numerous Vietnamese pilots and assisted in the production of small and medium-scale arms.³⁴ As their relationship has diversified, both states have strengthened their defense and security ties.

³⁴ David Brewster. "India's Defense Strategy and the India-ASEAN Relationship." *India Review* 12, no. 3 (2013): 151-164. Also see, David Brewster. "The Strategic Relations between India and Vietnam: The Search for a Diamond on the South China Sea?" *ANU Open Research Paper*. (2008), <https://>

Expanding beyond bilateral cooperation, India has integrated Vietnam into MILAN, a multinational naval exercise. India further strengthens this partnership by offering 50 annual scholarships to Vietnamese defense cadets through the Indian Technological and Economic Cooperation Program, fostering a future generation of defense leaders. A significant contribution came in the form of four offshore patrol vessels sold by India to Vietnam. These vessels enhance Vietnam's ability to secure its interests in the strategically important South China Sea. Standardization plays a key role in their cooperation, as both nations utilize similar Russian platforms for much of their defense equipment. This compatibility simplifies maintenance and logistics.³⁵

Furthermore, driven by the complexities and uncertainties of the global political landscape, particularly in their volatile region, both India and Vietnam have recognized the need for stronger strategic partnerships. This strategic imperative manifested during Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2016 visit. The visit resulted in a commitment to implement both India's "Joint Vision" statement and Vietnam's "Defense Relations" strategy, established in May 2015. Underscoring India's interest in deeper

openresearchrepository.anu.edu.au/bitstream/1885/13058/1/Brewster,%20D.%20India's%20Strategic%20Partnership%20with%20Vietnam%202009.pdf

³⁵ "V.N.'s trade with India sees strong growth," Viet Nam News, 2018, <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/464534/vns-trade-with-india-sees-strong-growth.html> Also see, Pant, "India and Vietnam."

China factor in India-Vietnam Defense and Security Relations

141

collaboration, Prime Minister Modi pledged a new line of credit specifically for defense industry cooperation. This commitment materialized with a contract signed between Larsen & Toubro (India) and the Vietnam Border Guards for offshore patrol boats, utilizing the \$100 million credit line extended by India.³⁶ Further strengthening ties, India offered Vietnam a \$5 million grant to establish an Army Software Park at the Telecommunications University in Nha Trang.³⁷ The focus of this partnership has shifted towards regional security and trade cooperation, especially in the face of China's growing assertiveness. This necessitates a stronger foundation of mutual trust and coordination to address shared concerns. Both India and Vietnam, acknowledging the importance of each other's maritime security, established a strategic partnership. Vietnam granted India access to its port in Nha Trang, situated close to the strategically significant Cam Ranh Bay. This move has allowed for regular visits by the Indian Navy.

Besides, Vietnam, seeking to develop its naval capabilities, requested India's assistance in upgrading the Nha Trang port facilities. This decision, made despite US presence in the region,

³⁶ Pant. "India and Vietnam: A truly strategic partnership."

³⁷ Pant. "India and Vietnam: A truly strategic partnership." Also see, "L&T Bags Major Order from Vietnam Border Guard for High-Speed Patrol Vessels," *L&T Press Release*, September 22, 2016, <http://www.larsentoubro.com/media/33614/2016-09-22-lt-bags-prestigious-defence-export-order-from-vietnam.pdf>

reflects Vietnam's strategic calculus in a complex geopolitical environment. Since 2011, Vietnam has sought extensive Indian training for its personnel, including submarine warfare for sailors and pilot conversion training for Sukhoi-30 fighter pilots. Additionally, Vietnam expressed interest in acquiring medium-sized warships and cruise missiles from India. India has demonstrably responded positively to these requests. The Indian Navy trains 500 Vietnamese sailors in submarine warfare at INS Satavaham, while the Indian Air Force provides pilot conversion training for Vietnamese Sukhoi-30 pilots.³⁸

To further relations between India and Vietnam, India's President, H.E. Ramnath Kovind, visited Vietnam on November 21, 2018. He and Vietnam's President, H.E. Nguyen Phu Trong, issued a joint statement during the visit. The leaders discussed key aspects of defense and security cooperation between the two countries and expressed satisfaction with the progress made in these areas. They praised the successful organization of defense cooperation mechanisms such as the annual Deputy Ministerial Defense Policy Dialogue and the First Security Dialogue held in July 2018. The presidents also welcomed the ongoing mutual

³⁸ Ritu Sharma. "Jet set no go: Plan to train Vietnam Sukhoi pilots grounded," *The New Indian Express*, 2016, <http://www.newindianexpress.com/thesundaystandard/2016/nov/19/jet-set-no-go-plan-to-train-vietnam-sukhoi-pilots-grounded-1540496.html/> Also see, Dinakar Peri. "India to train Vietnam's Sukhoi fighter pilots," *The Hindu*, 2016, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/India-to-train-Vietnam%E2%80%99s-Sukhoi-fighter-pilots/article16765719.ece> and Pant, "India and Vietnam."

China factor in India-Vietnam Defense and Security Relations

143

visits by naval and coast guard vessels and agreed to advance human resources training. They emphasized promoting collaboration between the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Coast Guards and decided to enhance cybersecurity and information-sharing networks to strengthen their partnership further. The two leaders agreed to share experiences in personnel training for United Nations peacekeeping operations and cooperation in addressing war legacies in Vietnam. They also agreed to enhance the exchange of criminal information and law enforcement experiences. A key aspect of their joint statement was their commitment to actively support each other and increase coordination through multilateral defense and security cooperation frameworks. They emphasized the importance of maritime cooperation, including anti-piracy measures, sea lane security, and the exchange of white shipping information.³⁹

However, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic soon after this agreement impacted global relations. Despite the restrictions imposed by COVID-19 lockdowns, India and Vietnam regularly held virtual meetings to discuss various bilateral and multilateral issues. After the lockdown hiatus, on September 13, 2022, the

³⁹ “India-Vietnam Joint Statement during State Visit of President to Vietnam, At the invitation of H.E. Mr. Nguyen Phu Trong, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, H.E. Shri. Ram Nath Kovind, President of the Republic of India, paid a State visit to Viet Nam from 18 - 20 November 2018,” Ministry of External Affairs of India, 2018, https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/30615/IndiaVietnam_Joint_Statement_during_State_Visit_of_President_to_Vietnam.

Vietnamese delegation, led by Deputy Minister of Public Security Sen. Lie. Luong Tam Quang, and the Indian delegation, led by Deputy National Security Advisor Vikram Misri, held the second India-Vietnam Security Dialogue. During this dialogue, the two countries reiterated their shared concerns, and India emphasized the importance of the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) initiated by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This initiative aims to collaborate on preserving, maintaining, and protecting the maritime industry. Additionally, India offered to train Vietnamese military forces for participation in UN Peacekeeping operations. Both countries resolved to combat terrorism, extremism, and the illegal production and trafficking of drugs and weapons in the Indo-Pacific region.⁴⁰ While there is potential for further improving relations by focusing on natural calamities, pandemics, the blue economy, and the importance of AI, the influence of China will remain a significant factor in India-Vietnam relations.

VI. The China factor

The threat perception of China has been there in this region of Asia for a long time. China's aggressive actions towards India and Vietnam during the Cold War. Even after the Cold War, this attitude did not change and increased recently, as evidenced by

⁴⁰ Hannah Nguyen. "Vietnam, India held second security dialogue held in New Delhi," *Vietnam Times*, September 14, 2022, [ht/vietnamtimes.org.vn/vietnam-india-held-second-security-dialogue-held-in-new-delhi-46835.html](http://vietnamtimes.org.vn/vietnam-india-held-second-security-dialogue-held-in-new-delhi-46835.html)

China factor in India-Vietnam Defense and Security Relations

145

China's aggressive behavior in international affairs. In fact, during the 1970s, Vietnam requested India to include the defense aspect in the bilateral treaties between the two countries because Vietnam noticed China's increasing stature as a severe threat to the existence of their nation. For instance, in 1978, General Giap of Vietnam, enroute to Moscow to negotiate Vietnam's friendship treaty with the Soviet Union, made an unpublicized stop in New Delhi, where he requested the Indian government's assistance in establishing local arms manufacturing capability to reduce their dependence on the USSR. However, India politely rejected this offer because of the geopolitical situation.⁴¹ That shows how potent the China factor is in between India and Vietnam relations. But the fact of the matter is for India and Vietnam to bolster their defense and security relations, the recent adventures of China in the Indo-Pacific region, and China's footprints in the strategic areas of India and Vietnam causing consternation.⁴² To be more specific, for India, it is South Asia, and for Vietnam, it is the South China Sea. Therefore, to neutralize China's potential threat India and Vietnam have strengthened their relations. Consequently, the strategic partnership between India and Vietnam softened the Chinese threat somewhat. Further, India and Vietnam have launched various mechanisms to institutionalize their relations to

⁴¹ Nayan Chanda. *Brother enemy: The war after the war*. Harcourt, (1986).

⁴² Ralf Emmers and Huong Le Thu. "Vietnam and the Search for Security Leadership in ASEAN," *Asian Security*, 17, no. 1 (June 7, 2020): 64–78, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14799855.2020.1769068>.

cement their cooperation. It led to the deepening convergence between India and Vietnam in defense and security.

Both India and Vietnam promulgated a *Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation* in 2003. The two countries have envisaged building an 'Arc of Advantage and Prosperity' in Southeast Asia and thus paved the way for establishing strategic dialogues in 2009.⁴³ Likewise, through the Joint Declaration on the Vietnam-India Strategic Partnership in 2007, these two countries agreed to develop strategic discussions at the vice-ministerial level in the Foreign Office. Until now five such strategic dialogues have already been conducted. Since 2007, the two countries have been working on annual defense policy dialogues, and the latest one was held in March 2017. Furthermore, in 2015, the two countries signed a Joint Vision Statement for 2015-20, paving the way for regular defense exchanges and interactions, defense trade, training, and cooperation in developing new technologies.⁴⁴ Consequently, the 13th Defense Secretary-level Annual Defense Policy Dialogue was held virtually on January 12, 2021. This indicates that both countries want to strengthen their defense and security relations further.

At the same time, Vietnam cannot depend on other countries to seek any help if at a war takes place between Vietnam and

⁴³ Pant. "India and Vietnam: A truly strategic partnership."

⁴⁴ Pant. "India and Vietnam: A truly strategic partnership."

China factor in India-Vietnam Defense and Security Relations

147

China. This is why it has focused on increasing its partnership with India concerning security issues.⁴⁵ This partnership is suitable for Vietnam and the other countries in the Indian Ocean region, constantly affected by China's bullying tactics. This is why the leaders of both countries have been engaged continuously in strengthening the relations. Apart from this, China's military and defense budget has been increasing year after year in the recent past. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)⁴⁶ said that a few countries military spending increased during the pandemic year. The SIPRI report says that a 2.6 percent increase in world military spending came when the plethora of countries' GDP shrank by 4.4 percent. It was primarily due to COVID-19 as the world economy was shattered. However, military spending as a share of the country's GDP of nations, the military burden reached a global average of 2.4 percent in 2020, up from 2.2 percent in 2019. It says that it was the most significant increase in countries military spending since the global financial and economic crisis in 2009. Likewise, the world's second-largest spender on its military, China, is projected to have totaled \$252 billion in 2020. China's spending has therefore

⁴⁵ Ralph Jennings. "Vietnam Is Chasing India To Escape The Grip Of China," *Forbes*, 2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ralphjennings/2017/07/10/vietnam-is-chasing-india-in-a-new-gambit-to-resist-china/#19b191f35f59>.

⁴⁶ "World Military Spending Rises to Almost \$2 Trillion in 2020," SIPRI, April 26, 2021, <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2021/world-military-spending-rises-almost-2-trillion-2020>.

increased for 26 consecutive years. The SIPRI says this is the most extended series of uninterrupted increases in any country's global military expenditure. But one interesting fact in this regard is that China stands out as the only major spender in the world not to increase its military budget in 2020 despite increasing its military expenditure.

Moreover, the defense expenditure was enhanced when China's border feud began with India. While announcing the annual report to the national legislature, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang declared that China would boost military training and prepare its forces to respond to security risks in all areas and situations. Further, Chinese President Xi Jinping has vowed to make the nation a great military power and modernize China's armed forces by 2035 to build a world-class military capable of winning all types of war by 2050.⁴⁷ Simultaneously we learn that Pakistan's Defense budget has increased significantly. The 2021 Budget of Pakistan allocated 1.37 trillion for defense services marking an increase of 6.2 per cent.⁴⁸ Therefore, it is becoming more concern for India and Vietnam. Notably, after COVID-19, the Ukraine crisis, and the ongoing Israel and Palestine issue, the world security environment has been rapidly changing. The SIPRI

⁴⁷ "China's Defense Budget Climbs 6.8% as Economy Recovers," *Bloomberg*, March 4, 2021, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-03-05/china-s-defense-budget-climbs-6-8-as-economy-recovers>.

⁴⁸ Baqir Sajjad Syed. "BUDGET 2021-22: Defence Allocation Goes up by 6.2pc," *DAWN.COM*, June 12, 2021, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1628903>.

China factor in India-Vietnam Defense and Security Relations

149

data indicates that even during the pandemic, many countries have increased their defense and security budgets. That clearly indicates how crucial the defense and security aspect is in emerging international relations.

VII. The assessment of India and Vietnam's defense and security relations

However, India and Vietnam diversify their engagement and encourage more research and development investment in the defense and security sector. Education and higher education collaboration are imperative. Regular exchange of knowledge and information on growing technology and science development. To mark 45 years of relations between the two countries, Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang visited India in early 2018. This visit came barely after a month after Vietnam Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc came to India to attend the India-ASEAN Commemorative Summit, Republic Day Parade, and other ASEAN leaders. This indicates the intensification of high-level bilateral ties with Vietnam emerging as one of India's most vital partners in the Southeast Asian Region.⁴⁹ During the international workshop “*India-Vietnam Ties Amid the Changing Geopolitical Situation in the India-Pacific*,” held at Vivekananda International Foundation in January 2018, many scholars pointed out that “India-Vietnam strategic partnership was key to maintaining

⁴⁹ Pant. “India and Vietnam: A truly strategic partnership.”

peace not only in Southeast Asia but also in the entire India-Pacific region”.⁵⁰ While delivering the keynote address at the same workshop, the former National Security Agency director commented, *“China’s growing ambitions have created ripples in the region. The concept of Indo-Pacific cannot be developed without ASEAN on board. Under such circumstances growing Indian presence in Vietnam and vice-versa are imperative. The two sides can explore joint defense production, wider cybersecurity, and space Cooperation.”* Later, 27 November 27, 2020, India’s Defense Minister Rajnath Singh and National Defense of Vietnam H.E. General Ngo Xuan Lich held bilateral talks via video conferencing. During the meeting, both Ministers reaffirmed the strong India-Vietnam Defense cooperation as the vital pillar of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the two countries. Further, the leaders discussed scores of ongoing projects and the future trajectory of bilateral Defense engagements. The more critical part of the discussion is the collaboration in defense industry capability building, training, and Cooperation in U.N. Peacekeeping Operations. Furthermore, both sides have signed an arrangement for Cooperation in Hydrography between the National Hydrographic Office to enhance the bilateral partnerships. This will pave the way for sharing Hydrographic data and producing nautical charts by India

⁵⁰ Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury. “India, Vietnam Strategic Partnership Key to Stability in Indo-Pacific Region,” *The Economic Times*, January 11, 2018, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/india-vietnam-strategic-partnership-key-to-stability-in-indo-pacific-region/articleshow/62454195.cms?from=mdr>.

China factor in India-Vietnam Defense and Security Relations

151

and Vietnam. Another significant development in recent years is the institutionalization of defense industry cooperation.⁵¹ However, the aim of institutionalizing the relations between both countries takes more time than anticipated. Periodic visits of the India-Vietnam officials in both countries should be encouraged more. On January 12, 2021, India's Defense Secretary, Dr Ajay Kumar, co-chaired the 13th India-Vietnam Defense Security Dialogue with Sr Lt Gen Nguyen Chi Vinh, Deputy Defense Minister of Vietnam. The virtual interaction between the leaders expressed satisfaction with the ongoing defense cooperation between the two countries despite disruptions caused by the COVID-19-induced lockdowns. Further, they exchanged views on the plan of action drawn from the recently concluded virtual summit between India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Vietnam's President H.E. Nguyen Xuan Phuc in December 2020. Both leaders expressed satisfaction with the growing defense ties between the two countries. They reviewed the progress on various bilateral defense cooperation initiatives and expressed commitment to elevating further engagements between the Armed Forces under the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Both countries stressed the need to enhance even greater Cooperation in the defense industry and Technology.⁵² On April 6, 2021, India

⁵¹ "Talks Between Defense Ministers of India and Vietnam," *PIB*, November 27, 2020, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1676523>

⁵² "13th India-Vietnam Defence Security Dialogue," *PIB*, January 12, 2021, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1687915>.

and Vietnam held their second maritime security dialogue in a virtual format. The consultations revolve around development in maritime security, regional cooperation, and opportunities for collaboration between the two countries.⁵³ To further enhance the cooperation between the two countries, Vietnam's National Assembly Chairman Vuong Dinh Hue visited India from December 15 to 19, 2021. During the meeting, both sides emphasized the importance of trade diversification and strategic ties. Both sides agreed to diversify it to pharmaceuticals, oil, gas, and I.T. services as the two countries were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly the service sector, as India has become one of the important exporting countries for the service sector of the world. Another significant aspect of the meeting was that it deepened the strategic ties between the countries.⁵⁴ Because China has been becoming aggressive daily by diversifying its might in defense and security areas. Moreover, China's tinkering with the South China Sea countries. Further, China's activities in the Himalayan region and the Indian Ocean openly transgress India's strategic area. Therefore, it is now time for India and Vietnam to strike a balance with China's growing

⁵³ "2nd India – Vietnam Maritime Security Dialogue," Ministry of External Affairs of India, April 6, 2021, https://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/33772/2nd_India__Vietnam_Maritime_Security_Dialogue_April_06_2021.

⁵⁴ Shira Dezan. "Vietnam's N.A. Chairman Visit to India Underlines Increasing Trade, Relations," *Vietnam Briefing*, December 22, 2021, <https://www.vietnam-briefing.com/news/vietnams-na-chairman-visit-india-underlines-increasing-trade-relations.html/>.

China factor in India-Vietnam Defense and Security Relations

153

influence on contemporary international relations. It is now widely accepted that an Indo-Vietnam convergence and cooperation on security and trade matters is necessary to create a peaceful and stable Asia. When the outgoing Ambassador of Vietnam to India, Phan Sanh Chau, on September 2, 2022, underscored that Vietnam's relations with India do not intend to fight against China. India and Vietnam do not take sides and practice zero-sum games. The whole reason for strengthening is to promote and respect international law, as India and China are good friends of Vietnam.⁵⁵ However, China's supremacy has created an unpredictable and volatile situation in Asia-Pacific. Therefore, India and Vietnam must be proactive and take steps that are essential in the immediate future to counter the unforeseeable threat. Multiple actions should be encouraged to converge India and Vietnam relations more.

VIII. Conclusion

India and Vietnam are exercising smart strategy by engaging in security and trade cooperation and widening their mutual relationship to counter future uncertainties from the Chinese nation. China, on the other hand, is taking an aggressive stand on many issues. Simultaneously, China's increasing friendship with

⁵⁵ Manish Chand. "Defence, security cooperation becoming stronger in India-Vietnam partnership," *Guardian Online*, September 3, 2022, <https://www.sundayguardianlive.com/world/defence-security-cooperation-becoming-stronger-india-vietnam-partnership>.

Pakistan should not be ignored because it can destabilize the entire region. Countries like India and Vietnam have already shown a model for other players globally to follow by taking a united stand against Chinese expansionist tendencies. Apart from that, India and Vietnam can work in the future to combine their resources like Human Capital and Trade Potential to leverage a great push against Chinese domination. More importantly, Vietnam is strategically positioned for India, and India will benefit from having an ally in the South China Region. Similarly, India's resources and military power can support Vietnam whenever it needs. Likewise, Vietnam's other resources are very beneficial for India. For India, strengthening relations with Vietnam is one step ahead to fulfilling its ambitious program SAGAR Mala. Moreover, both India and Vietnam can mutually benefit from the Blue Economy strategy. Hence, it is the perfect time for India-Vietnam to work on more convergence in their bilateral security and defense relations.

IX. Bibliography

Ani. “Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Maldives Stand Neck-deep in Chinese Debt: Forbes.” *Www.Business-Standard.Com*, September 12, 2022.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/sri-lanka-pakistan-maldives-stand-neck-deep-in-chinese-debt-forbes-122091200675_1.html.

ASEAN-India Centre at RIS. “ASEAN-India Development and Cooperation Report 2021.” Accessed January 28, 2023.
<https://www.eximbankindia.in/Assets/Dynamic/PDF/Publication-Resources/ResearchPapers/88file.pdf>.

Aswani, R. S., Shambhu Sajith, and Mohammad Younus Bhat. “Realigning India’s Vietnam Policy through Cooperative Sustainable Development: A Geostrategic Counterbalancing to China in Indo-Pacific.” *East Asia*, 39, no. 2, (2021): 97–115. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12140-021-09371-0>.

Baylis, John, and Steve Smith. *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to international relations*. Oxford, United Kindom: Oxford University Press, (2001).

Bloomberg. “China’s Defense Budget Climbs 6.8% as Economy Recovers.” Accessed March 5, 2023.
<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-03-05/china-s-defense-budget-climbs-6-8-as-economy-recovers>.

Brewster, David. "India's Defense Strategy and the India-Asean Relationship." *India Review*, 12, no.3, (2013): 151–64.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14736489.2013.820987>.

Brewster, David. "India's Strategic Partnership with Vietnam: The Search for a Diamond on the South China Sea?" *Asian Security*, 5, no.1 (2009): 24–44.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14799850802611297>.

Business Standard. "Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Maldives Stand Neck-Deep in Chinese Debt: Forbes." September 12, 2022.
https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/sri-lanka-pakistan-maldives-stand-neck-deep-in-chinese-debt-forbes-122091200675_1.html.

Chand, Manish. "Defence, security cooperation becoming stronger in India-Vietnam partnership." Guardian Online, September 3, 2022,
<https://www.sundayguardianlive.com/world/defence-security-cooperation-becoming-stronger-india-vietnam-partnership>.

Chanda, Nayan. *Brother Enemy: The War after the War*. New York: Collier Book, (1986).

Chaudhury, Dipanjan Roy. "India, Vietnam Strategic Partnership Key to Stability in Indo-Pacific Region." The Economic Times. January 11, 2018.
<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/india-vietnam-strategi>

20to%20Indian%20data%20during,amounted%20to%20USD%208.79%20billion.

Emmers, Ralf, and Huong Le Thu. 2020. "Vietnam and the Search for Security Leadership in ASEAN." *Asian Security*, 17, no. 1 (2020): 64–78.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14799855.2020.1769068>.

Hannah Nguyen. *Vietnam, India held second security dialogue held in New Delhi*, Vietnam Times, September 14, 2022, [ht/vietnamtimes.org.vn/vietnam-india-held-second-security-dialogue-held-in-new-delhi-46835.html](http://vietnamtimes.org.vn/vietnam-india-held-second-security-dialogue-held-in-new-delhi-46835.html)

Hoa, Nguyen Thi, and Pham Thao Nguyen. "The Reception and Implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative in Vietnam." *Strategic Analysis*, 45, no. 2 (2021): 128–143.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2021.1893507>.

IDSA. "India-Vietnam Defence Partnership Gaining Ground." June 26, 2023, <https://idsa.in/issuebrief/india-vietnam-defence-partnership-t-ao-260623>.

Indian Defence Review. "L&T Bags Major Order from Vietnam Border Guard for High Speed Patrol ...". September (2016). <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/news/lt-bags-major-order-from-vietnam-border-guard-for-high-speed-patrol-vessels/>.

- Jennings, Ralph. "Vietnam Is Chasing India to Escape the Grip of China." *Forbes Magazine*, last accessed February 21, 2023.
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/ralphjennings/2017/07/10/vietnam-is-chasing-india-in-a-new-gambit-to-resist-china/?sh=5d1affd5f591>.
- Jones, David Martin, and Nicole Jenne. "Hedging and Grand Strategy in Southeast Asian Foreign Policy." *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 22 (2021): 205–35.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/irap/lcab003>.
- Kuik, Cheng-Chwee. "Getting Hedging Right: A Small-State Perspective." *China International Strategy Review* 3, no. 2 (2021): 300–315.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s42533-021-00089-5>.
- Kuik, Cheng-Chwee. "Hedging Strategy: Concept, Behavior, and Implications for China-ASEAN Relations." *East Asian Affairs*, 01, no. 2 (2021).
<https://doi.org/10.1142/s2737557921500121>.
- Le, Lena, and Khac Nam Hoang. "Forging Strategic Partnership in the Indo–Pacific Region: Vietnam’s Diplomatic Direction." *Political Science*, 73, no. 3 (2021): 270–89.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00323187.2021.1957955>.
- Li, Mingjiang. "The Belt and Road Initiative: Geo-Economics and Indo-Pacific Security Competition." *International Affairs* 96,

no. 1 (January 1, 2020): 169–87.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiz240>.

Malhotra, Aditi. “Indo-Vietnam Relations: An Answer to Sino-Pak Partnership?” *Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India*, 8, no.1, (2012): 71–92. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09733159.2012.690292>.

Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: W.W. Norton (2014)

Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

“India-Vietnam Relations.” 2017.

https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Bilateral_Relations_Website__Sept_17_.pdf.

Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. “Joint Declaration on the Framework of Comprehensive Cooperation between the Republic of India and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam as They Enter the 21st Century.” May 1, 2003.

https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateraldocuments.htm?dtl/37132/L69_Ministerial_Joint_Press_Statement.

Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. “Joint Statement between India and Vietnam during the Visit of Prime ...” September 2016.

<https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/27362/J>

China factor in India-Vietnam Defense and Security Relations

161

oint+Statement+between+India+and+Vietnam+during+the+
visit+of+Prime+Minister+to+Vietnam.

Ministry of External Affairs. “External Affairs Minister Participates in a Panel Discussion at the Raisina Dialogue 2021- “Crimson Tide, Blue Geometries: New Partnerships for the Indo-Pacific.” Accessed April 1, 2024.
<https://www.mea.gov.in/interviews.htm?dtl/33806>.

Ministry of External Affairs. “India-Vietnam Joint Statement during State Visit of President to Vietnam.” Accessed February 6, 2023.
[https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateraldocuments.htm?dtl/30615/in
diavietnam+joint+statement+during+state+visit+of+presiden
t+to+vietnam](https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateraldocuments.htm?dtl/30615/in+diavietnam+joint+statement+during+state+visit+of+president+to+vietnam).

Mishra, Rahul. Vietnam’s Regional Security Perceptions and Priorities: Role of India. *India Quarterly*, 77, no. 2 (2021): 200–218.

Ngo, Di Lan, and Truong-Minh Vu. “Vietnam’s Hedging Strategy against China since Normalization.” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 35, no. 3 (2013): 333–68.

Pant, Harsh V. “India and Vietnam: A Truly Strategic Partnership.” Orfonline.Org. Observer Research Foundation. Last accessed March 6, 2023.

<https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/india-and-vietnam-a-truly-strategic-partnership>.

Peri, Dinakar. "India to Train Vietnam's Sukhoi Fighter Pilots."

The Hindu. December 5, (2016).

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/India-to-train-Vietnam%E2%80%99s-Sukhoi-fighter-pilots/article16765719.ece>.

Press Information Bureau. Ministry of Defence, Government of India. "Talks between Defence Ministers of India and Vietnam." November 27, 2020.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1676523>.

Press Information Bureau. Ministry of Defence, Government of India. "13th India-Vietnam Defence Security Dialogue." January 12, 2021.

<https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1687915#:~:text=13th%20India%20Vietnam%20Defence%20Security%20Dialogue&text=Defence%20Secretary%20Dr%20Ajay%20Kumar,Vietnam%20on%2012%20January%202021>.

Press Information Bureau. Ministry of Defence, Government of India. "Talks between Defence Ministers of India and Vietnam." November 27, 2020.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1676523>.

- Raghavan, Srinath. "The Security Dilemma and India–China Relations." *Asian Security*, 15, no. 1 (2018): 60–72.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14799855.2019.1539818>.
- Sangtam, Apila. "Vietnam's Strategic Engagement in the South China Sea." *Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India* 17, no.1 (2021): 41–57.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09733159.2021.1939868>.
- Sharma, Ritu. "Jet Set No Go: Plan to Train Vietnam Sukhoi Pilots Grounded." *The New Indian Express*. November 20, (2016).
<http://www.newindianexpress.com/thesundaystandard/2016/nov/19/jet-set-no-go-plan-to-train-vietnam-sukhoi-pilots-grounded-1540496.html>.
- Shira, Dezan. "Vietnam's NA Chairman Visit to India Underlines Increasing Trade, Relations." *Vietnam Briefings*. December 22, (2021).
- Singh, Sudhir Kumar. "Ho Chi Minh and Vietnam's Struggle for freedom." *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 70 (2009) 795–801. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44147726>.
- SIPRI for the Media. "World Military Spending Rises to Almost \$2 Trillion in 2020." Last accessed January 26, 2023.
<https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2021/world-military-spending-rises-almost-2-trillion-2020>.

- Solanki, Viraj. "India–Vietnam Defence and Security Cooperation." *India Quarterly: A Journal of International Affairs* 7, no. 2 (2021).
<https://doi.org/10.1177/09749284211004982>.
- Syed, Baqir Sajjad. "Budget 2021-22: Defence Allocation Goes up by 6.2PC." DAWN.COM. June 12, (2021).
[#">https://www.dawn.com/news/1628903.#](https://www.dawn.com/news/1628903)
- Tan, Heidi. *Việt Nam: From Myth to Modernity*. Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawaii Press (2013).
- Tan, S. S. "Faced with the Dragon: Perils and Prospects in Singapore's Ambivalent Relationship with China." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 5, no. 3 (2012): 245–65. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cjip/pos012>.
- Telbami, S. "Kenneth Waltz, Neorealism, and Foreign Policy." *Security Studies*, 11, no.3 (2002): 158–70.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/714005344>.
- Thanh Hai, Do. "Vietnam and China: Ideological Bedfellows, Strange Dreamers." *Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies*, 10, no. 2 (2021): 162–82.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/24761028.2021.1932018>.
- The Hindu Business Line. "India, Vietnam agree to amplify defence cooperation." June 19, 2023.

China factor in India-Vietnam Defense and Security Relations

165

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/indiavietnam-agree-to-amplify-defence-cooperation/article66986141.ece>.

Tian, Yew Lun. "China Plans 7.1% Defence Spending Rise This Year, Outpacing GDP Target." Reuters. Accessed March 1, 2023.

<https://www.reuters.com/markets/asia/china-defence-spending-rise-outpace-gdp-target-this-year-2022-03-05/>.

Tran, Thi Bich, and Yoichiro Sato. "Vietnam's post- Cold War Hedging Strategy: A Changing Mix of Realist and Liberal Ingredients." *Asian Politics & Policy*, 10, no.1 (2018): 73–99. <https://doi.org/10.1111/aspp.12368>.

Vickers, George R. "The Vietnam Antiwar Movement in Perspective." *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, 21, no. 2-4 (2019): 100–111. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.1989.10404459>.

VietNam News. "VN's Trade with India Sees Strong Growth." August 27, (2018). <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/464534/vns-trade-with-india-sees-strong-growth.html>.

Vijay, Sakhuja. "ASEAN-India Cooperation in Handling Corona Pandemic." Commentary. AIC Commentary. ASEAN-India Centre at RIS: Research and Information System for Developing Countries, May 2020.

<https://aseanindiacentre.org.in/sites/default/files/202109/AIC%20Commentary%20No.5%20May%202020%20%281%29.pdf>.

Vo, Xuan Vinh. "India in Vietnam's Foreign Policy." *Strategic Analysis*, 44, no.1 (2019): 31–44.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2020.1699997>.