

SEVEN TO ELEVEN : ON INDIA AND G-7

India deserves its place on the global stage, but on G-11, it must be clear about its aims

Dismissing the current configuration of the “Group of Seven” or G-7 of the world’s most developed nations as “outdated”, U.S. President Donald Trump announced over the weekend that he would like to expand it to a G-11, by adding India, Russia, South Korea and Australia. He followed that up with invitations to their leaders, including Prime Minister Modi, to attend the G-7 summit in the U.S. later this year. The news was welcomed by Mr. Modi, who commended Mr. Trump for his “creative and far-sighted” decision to expand the format of the grouping to keep up with the new realities of the “post-COVID world”. Australia and South Korea have also welcomed the invitation, while Russia, that lost its membership of the grouping in 2014 over its annexation of Crimea, said President Putin would attend “if treated as an equal”. Notable by its absence in the proposed grouping is China, which had earlier, along with India, Brazil, Mexico and South Africa, been invited regularly to G-8 summits as an outreach by the developed world to the five emerging economies (called the G-8+5). U.S.-China tensions, particularly over coronavirus issues, clearly played a part in Mr. Trump’s decision to leave Chinese President Xi Jinping off his summit guest list. A White House spokesperson even explained that the G-11 would be a way for the U.S. to bring together its “traditional allies to talk about how to deal with the future of China”. Predictably, Beijing has lashed out at the G-11 idea, as one that would be “doomed to fail”.

The proposed G-11 grouping would recognise India’s place amongst the world’s richest nations, and acknowledge its global voice. However, the government must weigh the benefits proposed along with some of the factors that are still unclear. As host, Mr. Trump can invite any country as a G-7 special invitee, but changing its composition will require the approval of the other members. Already, there are some concerns over Russia, which could derail the entire G-11 plan, making any concrete decision by New Delhi on the issue premature. It is unclear when the summit will actually be held, given the November polls in the U.S., although Mr. Trump has indicated that he could hold it close to the UN General Assembly session in September. Despite its border tensions with Beijing, India must also consider its objectives in attending a grouping that appears aimed at fuelling a new Cold War between the U.S. and China. Finally, an evaluation of the G-7’s effectiveness as a multilateral forum thus far is needed, given deep member differences on issues including climate change, security contributions, Iran, etc. In France, last year, the grouping was unable to issue a joint communiqué due to these differences — a first in its 45-year-old history.

Meanings of Difficult Words :

- ❖ **G-7 or Group of Seven** (noun) – a multilateral forum made up of the world’s seven largest so-called developed countries: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. They meet annually to discuss and exchange ideas on a broad range of issues, including global economy, security and energy.
- ❖ **dismiss** (verb) – disapprove, reject/refuse, say no to, rule out.
- ❖ **configuration** (noun) – arrangement, composition, disposition, ordering/positioning/ formatting (of different parts/elements).
- ❖ **outdated** (adjective) – out of date, old-fashioned, outmoded, obsolete.
- ❖ **summit** (noun) – meeting, conference.
- ❖ **commend** (verb) – praise, applaud, admire, congratulate.
- ❖ **far-sighted** (adjective) – forward-looking, visionary, proactive, fore-thoughtful.
- ❖ **keep up with** (phrasal verb) – match, equal, compete/vie with.
- ❖ **annexation** (noun) – seizure, occupation, takeover, appropriation (of territory).

- ❖ **conspicuous/notable by one's absence** (phrase) – to emphasize the fact that an important person is missing from a place/situation (where you think he/she should be present).
- ❖ **outreach** (noun) – the level of reaching out/activity/effort; involvement.
- ❖ **coronavirus** (CoV) (noun) – a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases. common signs of infection include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death. (Courtesy: **WHO**)
- ❖ **play a part/role** (phrase) – contribute to, be instrumental in, be a factor in.
- ❖ **leave off** (phrasal verb) – omit, exclude, to not include (on a list).
- ❖ **ally** (noun) – associate, confederate, partner, supporter.
- ❖ **predictably** (adverb) – as expected, as anticipated.
- ❖ **lash out** (phrasal verb) – criticize, attack, censure verbally.
- ❖ **doom** (verb) – destine, fate; ill-fated, hapless, unlucky.
- ❖ **recognise** (verb) – officially consider someone/something (an organisation) as valid.
- ❖ **voice** (noun) – the right to express one's opinion/view.
- ❖ **weigh** (verb) – consider, contemplate, think about, reflect on.
- ❖ **invitee** (noun) – guest, visitor.
- ❖ **derail** (verb) – obstruct, interrupt, impede/thwart.
- ❖ **concrete** (adjective) – definite, specific, definitive; factual, actual/real.
- ❖ **premature** (adjective) – untimely, early, too soon/too early; ill-timed, hasty.
- ❖ **given** (preposition) – considering, taking into account, bearing in mind.
- ❖ **objective** (noun) – aim, intention, purpose.
- ❖ **fuel** (verb) – stimulate, encourage, intensify (an emotion).
- ❖ **Cold War** (noun) – a state of conflict between nations that does not involve direct military action but is pursued primarily through economic and political actions, propaganda, acts of espionage (spying) or proxy wars (war through a representative/agent).
- ❖ **evaluation** (noun) – assessment, analysis, appraisal.
- ❖ **multilateral** (adjective) – involving many different countries.
- ❖ **thus far** (phrase) – until now.
- ❖ **difference** (noun) – disagreement, difference of opinion, misunderstanding.
- ❖ **climate change** (noun) – a long-term change in the Earth's climate, or of a region on Earth (Courtesy: NASA).
- ❖ **communicé** (noun) – official communication, press release, bulletin.

SKYROCKETING TENSIONS: ON U.S.- CHINA TIES

U.S. and China must rebuild mutual trust to avoid a new kind of cold war

The U.S. government's decision to bar passenger planes from China from June 16 is but another instance of rising tensions between the two countries. A trade war which President Donald Trump launched in 2018 is yet to be resolved fully. In recent months, Mr. Trump and other officials in the administration had attacked China over its handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. The U.S. has also decided to end Hong Kong's special trade status in protest against Beijing's move to introduce a new national security law for the Special Administrative Region. Repeated targeting of China by Washington and Beijing's retaliatory moves make it look like the world's largest and second largest economies have entered into a new cold war. Administration officials say the decision on flights is in response to China's refusal to allow U.S. airlines to resume flights to the country. China had introduced restrictions on international flights in March, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and most of those curbs are still in place. Disputes such as this could be resolved through talks and

cooperation. China has already sent signals of de-escalation, allowing foreign airlines to resume flights on a limited scale starting June 8. Whether or not Mr. Trump has a rethink, the larger problem is the U.S.'s overall approach towards China, which has taken an increasingly hostile turn in the last four years.

From trade and technology to the pandemic and Hong Kong, the battle lines have been drawn — China, which the Pentagon called “a revisionist power” in 2018, is the main rival of Washington, a position which the Soviet Union held during the Cold War. Ties between China and the U.S. are still not as bad as they were between the Soviet Union and the U.S. Beijing and Washington are still economically and financially entangled. The world is not divided into two ideological blocs, as it had been during the Cold War. The possibility of a military confrontation is very low. But the era of cooperation, peaceful trade and pragmatism that had defined U.S.-China partnership since President Richard Nixon’s reset in the 1970s seems to have made way for an aggressive leadership contest and deepening mutual mistrust. And with Mr. Trump desperately looking for an enemy to blame for the misfortunes that fell on America in an election year that has been battered by the pandemic and the deepest economic downturn since the Great Depression, tensions with China are expected to skyrocket in the coming months. Washington wanted an enemy and it found it in China. Unless the leaders of both countries change their course and rebuild the lost mutual confidence, a new kind of cold war would be forced upon the world.

Meanings of Difficult Words :

- ❖ **skyrocket** (verb) – rise, increase, escalate, mount; mushroom, snowball.
- ❖ **tie** (noun) – bond, association, relationship.
- ❖ **mutual trust** (noun) – it refers to the confidence that each party will fulfill its obligations and behave as expected.
- ❖ **cold war** (noun) – a state of conflict between nations that does not involve direct military action but is pursued primarily through economic and political actions, propaganda, acts of espionage (spying) or proxy wars (war through a representative/agent).
- ❖ **bar** (verb) – block, ban, forbid/prohibit.
- ❖ **instance** (noun) – example, case in point.
- ❖ **trade war/dispute** (noun) – a condition in which a country increase tariffs on foreign goods and impose quota restrictions to restrict other countries’ trade.
- ❖ **pandemic** (noun) – the worldwide spread of a new disease; The illness spreads around the world and typically affects a large number of people across a wide area.
- ❖ **special trade status** (Hong Kong) (noun) – The special status that Washington grants Hong Kong acknowledged this difference. Under the United States-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992, Hong Kong is treated differently by U.S. law when it comes to financial transactions, immigration and trade. Under the special status, the U.S. dollar can be freely exchanged with the Hong Kong dollar, which makes the city a particularly attractive place for American companies to do business. Hong Kong gets preferential treatment on trade, meaning little to no tariffs or other costs. Americans enjoy visa-free travel, making it easy for business executives to come and go.
- ❖ **National Security Bill** (for Hong Kong) (noun) – a draft by the Chinese Legislature under which it will write a new national security law for Hong Kong that would prohibit “acts of political secession (separation from a federation), subversion (overthrow/undermining government), sedition (illegal rebellion against government) that seriously threaten national security and foreign intervention”.
- ❖ **retaliatory** (adjective) – revenging, vengeful, avenging.
- ❖ **resume** (verb) – restart, recommence, begin again.

- ❖ **in the wake of** (phrase) – as a result of some event, especially an unpleasant one; aftermath, as a consequence of.
- ❖ **curb** (noun) – restraint, control/check, restriction, limitation.
- ❖ **in place** (phrase) – operational, in position.
- ❖ **de-escalation** (noun) – reduction, lessening, decrease (the intensity of a potentially violent situation).
- ❖ **rethink** (noun) – reconsideration, review, reassessment, re-evaluation.
- ❖ **hostile** (noun) – aggressive, confrontational, unfriendly, belligerent; opposed, inimical, ill-disposed.
- ❖ **Pentagon** (noun) – the headquarters building of the United States Department of Defense, near Washington, DC. Pentagon is a metonym of “the United States Department of Defense”. (Metonym is used as an alternative for something else with which it is closely related/associated).
- ❖ **revisionist** (adjective) – unorthodox, nonconformist, revolutionary, freethinking.
- ❖ **Revisionism** (noun) – a country’s/state’s dissatisfaction with the international order. Instead of acting to preserve the international order, a revisionist or ‘revolutionary’ country/state has a strong will to change the norms accepted by status quo nations. ‘Revisionist states seek to undermine the established order for the purpose of increasing their power and prestige in the system.
- ❖ **The Cold War** (noun) – The Cold War was a state of political and military tension after World War II between powers in the Western (Capitalist) Bloc and powers in the Eastern (Soviet) Bloc.
- ❖ **ideological** (adjective) – relating to a system of ideas.
- ❖ **bloc** (noun) – alliance, association, union.
- ❖ **possibility** (noun) – chance, probability.
- ❖ **confrontation** (noun) – conflict, fight, face-off.
- ❖ **pragmatism** (noun) – expediency, realism, taking advantage/common sense.
- ❖ **reset** (noun) – re-establishment of diplomatic relations.
- ❖ **make way** (phrase) – clear the way, allow through, move aside, make room.
- ❖ **aggressive** (adjective) – hostile, belligerent, bellicose, combative, hawkish, warlike.
- ❖ **deepen** (verb) – increase, intensify, heighten, exacerbate, aggravate, worsen.
- ❖ **mistrust** (noun) – distrust, doubt, misgivings, suspicion.
- ❖ **desperately** (adverb) – seriously/urgently, pressingly, intensely.
- ❖ **look for** (phrasal verb) – search for, try to find, seek.
- ❖ **misfortune** (noun) – problem, difficulty, trouble.
- ❖ **fall on** (phrasal verb) – (of a burden) be borne by, incurred by; to suffer/sustain/experience something (difficulties and problems).
- ❖ **batter** (verb) – damage, spoil, impair/ruin; smash, hit/strike repeatedly.
- ❖ **downturn** (noun) – decline, setback, blow/upset (in economic activity).
- ❖ **Great Depression** (noun) – a worldwide economic depression that started in 1929 and lasted until the late 1930s (almost for 10 years until about 1939). Although it originated in the United States, the Great Depression caused drastic declines in output, severe unemployment, and acute deflation in almost every country of the world.
- ❖ **unless** (conjunction) – expect that.
- ❖ **course** (noun) – plan of action, course of action, strategy, approach; direction/way of doing something.