

Five Eyes Alliance and its role in India-Canada Standoff

Relevance: Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations

Why in news?

- Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations (in Canadian Parliament) of potential Indian government involvement in the killing of separatist Khalistani leader Harmeet Singh Nijjar in Canada have strained relations between the two countries.
- US Ambassador to Canada David Cohen has said in an interview that it was “shared intelligence among Five Eyes partners” that helped “lead” Canada to the claims that PM Trudeau made about killing of Nijjar.

What is Five Eyes Alliance?

- The Five Eyes Alliance is an intelligence-sharing partnership consisting of the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.
- It was established to share a wide range of intelligence information among these countries, united by common language, rule of law, robust human rights, and shared national interests.
- The alliance traces its origins to World War II when the UK and the US decided to share intelligence after successfully breaking German and Japanese codes.
- The alliance evolved from the Britain-USA (BRUSA) agreement to the UK-USA (UKUSA) agreement in 1946, with Canada joining in 1949 and New Zealand and Australia in 1956.

Functioning of alliance

- The Five Eyes countries cooperate on intelligence gathering and security matters, driven by common interests and mutual trust.
- Despite their closeness, these countries do not always have uniform foreign policies, as seen in New Zealand's friendly approach to China.

Impact on relations with India

- The US, UK, and Australia have close ties with India, but they also have significant Indian populations and have witnessed pro-Khalistan activities.
- Due to historical ties, outright support for either India or Canada is unlikely by other members of Five eyes alliance.
- Moreover, these countries, particularly the US, could play a mediating role between India and Canada once they have clear intelligence and information on the matter.

Delimitation and Women's Reservation

Relevance: Prelims & Mains Paper II; Polity

Why in news?

- The **Women's Reservation Bill**, providing 33% quota to women in Lok Sabha and state Assemblies, recently passed in Parliament. However, its **implementation is now tied to the delimitation exercise**, sparking controversy and opposition.

Meaning of Delimitation

- Delimitation is a **Constitutional mandate**, to be **carried out after every Census**, to **readjust the number of seats and their boundaries on the basis of latest population data**.

- But the number of seats for the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies has remained **frozen for the last 50 years**, because of **opposition from political parties from the South**.

And there is no inclination among them to allow delimitation even now, mainly because any such exercise would result in Lok Sabha seats in north Indian states increasing much more sharply, as the population rise here has been greater.

Government's Objectives

1. Reservation in a Larger Pie: The fear of male politicians losing their seats has historically hindered the implementation of women's reservation. Delimitation could alleviate this concern. For instance, if the Lok Sabha's strength increases to 770 due to delimitation, it would reserve 257 seats for women, leaving 513 for men to contest. This would simplify **accommodating the interests of male leaders for political parties**.

2. Pressuring Opposition: The government seeks to compel Opposition parties, particularly those from southern India, to cooperate with the delimitation exercise. Delimitation, a Constitutional mandate, has been stalled for decades due to opposition from southern parties who fear it would disproportionately benefit northern states, particularly the BJP.

Opposition's Response

- The Opposition argues that **connecting women reservation and delimitation is unnecessary** and could undermine the representation of southern states.
- It's worth noting that in previous discussions of the Women's Reservation Bill, there was no such link.

BJP's Advantage

- The **BJP stands to gain** the most from delimitation as it has consolidated its presence in north India. The party's influence in national politics could strengthen further through delimitation.

China-Philippines South China Sea Dispute: Key Points



Relevance: Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations

Why in news?

- Tensions between China and the Philippines over territorial control in the South China Sea have escalated in recent years.

About Dispute

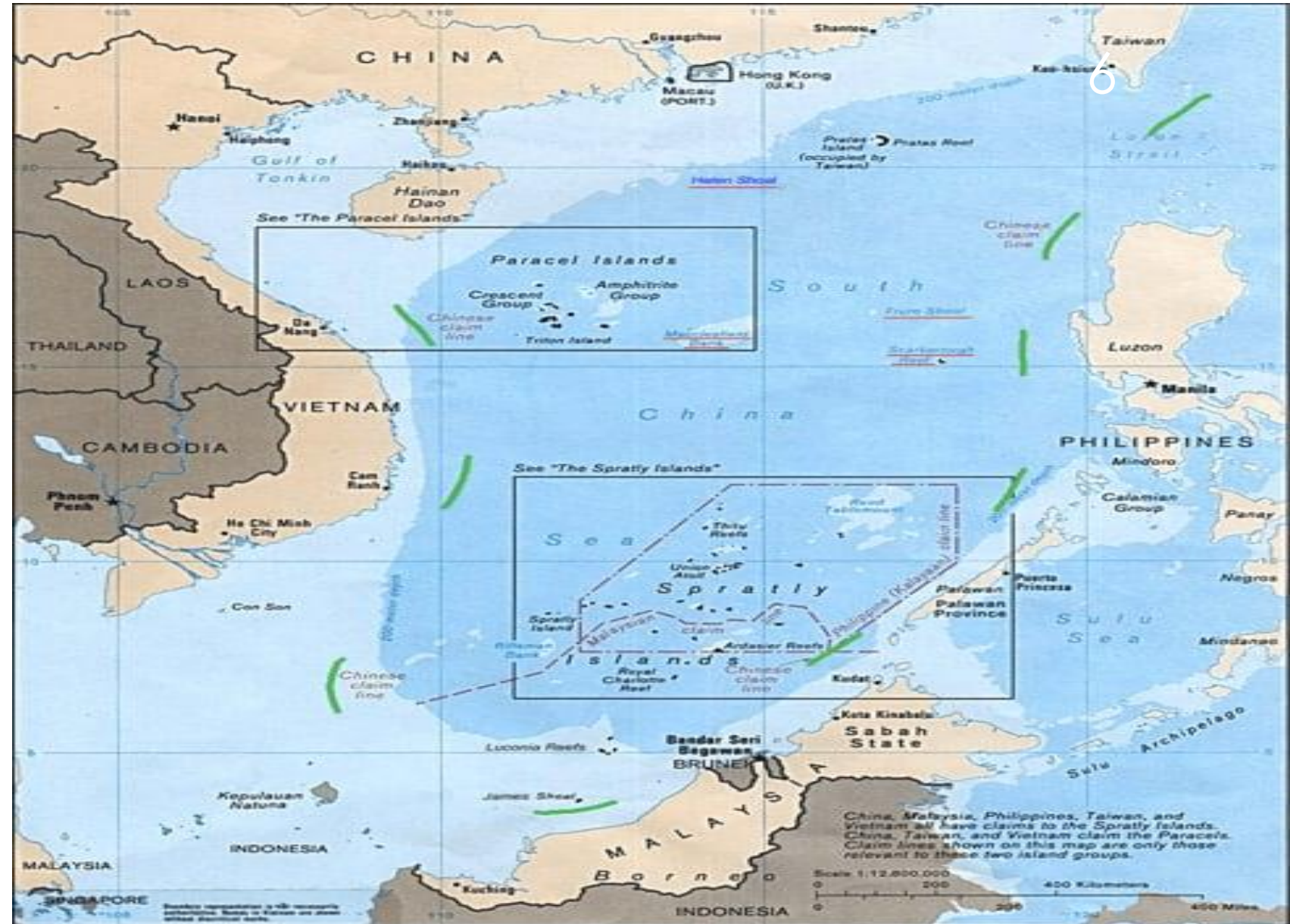
- **Location:** The South China Sea is surrounded by Brunei, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam.
- **Historical Disagreements:** Territorial disputes in the South China Sea date back centuries, but recent tensions have risen due to China's growing global power.
- **China's Claims:** China asserts sovereignty over 90% of the sea through its "nine-dash line," despite widespread international contestation.
- **Expansion and Militarization:** China has physically expanded islands and built military facilities, especially in the Paracel and Spratly Islands.
- **US Involvement:** The United States has increased military presence and provided support to countries opposing China's claims.

Significance of South China Sea

- **Resource-Rich:** Abundant oil, natural gas, and rich fishing grounds are found in the sea.
- **Critical Trade Route:** It serves as a vital trade route, facilitating over 21% of global trade valued at \$3.37 trillion.
- **Strategic Importance:** The sea's location has strategic importance for regional power dynamics.

The "Nine-Dash Line"

- **Definition:** China's territorial claim is marked by the "nine-dash line" on maps, stretching up to 2,000 km from the Chinese mainland.
- **Basis:** China justifies its claim with "historical maritime rights" but hasn't specified coordinates or adhered to UN maritime treaty limits.
- **Contested Claims:** Countries like the Philippines and Vietnam dispute China's historical evidence.



Map of the South China Sea, with "nine-dash line" highlighted in green

Resolution Challenges

- **International Tribunal:** In 2016, an international tribunal rejected China's claims, but China disregarded the ruling.
- **Risk of Global Conflict:** Failure to resolve disputes through diplomacy could escalate tensions and undermine international maritime laws.

Conclusion

- The South China Sea dispute, centered on territorial control and China's claims, poses significant challenges to regional stability and international law. Resolution remains elusive, raising concerns about potential global conflict and its far-reaching consequences.

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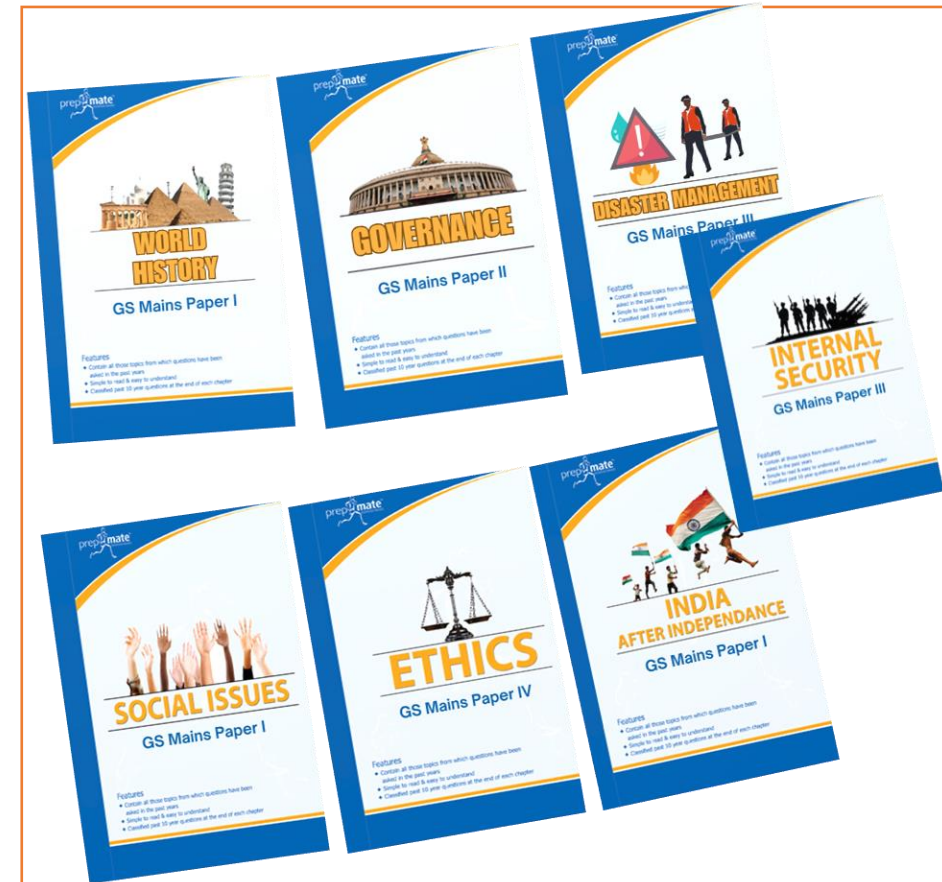
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