

CHINA-PAKISTAN STRATEGIC NEXUS AND 'SECURITY DILEMMA': INDIA'S RESPONSE

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ABSTRACT

The concept of security is now become a relative terms in international system. The realist notion of military security has been the core area in the concept of security, but non-security aspects have been incorporated as a part of security discourse since late 1980s. Within this security discourse in international relations, the notion of security dilemma is embedded. The concept of security and its dilemmas are differs from states to states but it is a common factor for all states and India is not an exception. This article attempts to analyze the primary determinants of India's security dilemma in South Asia are China and Pakistan and their nexus. China (from 1962 Sino-India war) and Pakistan (from independence) are itself a major threat to India's security and now their nexus is adding to the level of threat. This article also analyze that the India's response to minimize the security dilemmas.

KEYWORDS: *India, China, Pakistan, Security, Security Dilemma, Nexus*

INTRODUCTION

The notion of Security remains a contested terrain in the domain of International Relations. Security of the states in the international system is a relative term since the security of a state is contingent upon the level of security/ insecurity of its counterparts. The traditional dimension of security is the military dimension, although other non-traditional security aspects have been incorporated as a part of the security discourse since the 1980s. In the theoretical field of International Relations, the Realist notion of military security has been the core area of the theoretical discourse on security. With the inception of global terrorism since the events of 9 / 11, nuclearization as a means to the end of attaining the highest level of security has been challenged by the offensive realists who argue that since states do not have a perfect conception of the end of security, they need to be power maximizers-this is the 'tragedy' of the big/great powers. Within this security discourse in International Relations, the notion of 'Security Dilemma' also embedded- which the means if one state seeks to increase its security have the unintended effect of decreasing the security of another state, which, in turn, makes a similar response having a similar effect leading to a cycle of competitive moves that could in the worst case result in conflict. This dynamic produces a dilemma among states whether or not to develop capabilities to increase their security, since it could paradoxically have the opposite effect.

The term was coined by the German scholar John H. Herz in his 1951 book Political Realism and Political Idealism. At the same time, British historian Herbert Butterfield described the same situation in his History and Human Relations, but referred to it as the "absolute predicament and irreducible dilemma". In John Herz's words, the security dilemma is "A structural notion in

which the self-help attempts of states to look after their security needs tend, regardless of intention, to lead to rising insecurity for others as each interprets its own measures as defensive and measures of others as potentially threatening".

In the backdrop of the South Asian region, the anarchic nature of international order, confrontationist policy of Pakistan towards India, nuclear capabilities of Pakistan and China, military collaboration between China and Pakistan are the main factors determining India's perception of military threats to its external security. The rise of India and China, the two largest countries in Asia is more apparent. Ever since the Sino-Indian war of 1962, China has cultivated close commercial and military relations with India's neighbours and rival Pakistan and long-drawn conflict over several issues, which are the causes of India's security dilemma in the South Asian region. Therefore, the Kashmir issue has been a determinant of the level of Indo-Pak relations since the partition and still evades an amicable solution; and this congenital animosity between these two frontline states has shaped the politico-economic dynamics of the South-Asian region. As a result, the security imperative has been a predominant aspect in Indo-Pakistan ties, especially since the 1990s, and still date continuing with Pathankot, Uri, Nagrota and Pulwama.

The China –Pakistan nexus in early 1960s was fostered by their common enmity with India. Since the 1960s, China has contributed significantly to the build-up of Pakistan's conventional, missile and nuclear programmed and has expanded the economic and political relations with its neighbor. China wants to keep India off-balance domestically, economically and externally and Pakistan has the aggressive nature towards India from the days of Partition. This collaboration plays a major threat to India's security from various perspectives such as:

The strategic engagement of China and Pakistan was specially based on a mutual convergence of their politico-security interests and most importantly to thwart India's rise as an emerging power in South Asian region. At the beginning of late 50s when heightened border disputes between India and China culminated in the 1962 border War and after the war when India suffered a humiliating debacle, at this moment Pakistan seized the opportunity to forge close strategic ties with China. It is because Pakistan believes that the Chinese provide the ideal role model as a strategic counterweight to offset India's military superiority in this region. India's defeat in this war, also convinced Pakistan of the vulnerability of Indian war machine and thereby raised its hopes of coercing India into granting concessions on Kashmir (Sarkar, 2014, p: 151). On 2nd March, 1963, Pakistan signed a boundary settlement agreement with China and illegally transferred 5,180 sq km of territory to China from Pak occupied Kashmir (Dhai Chin and Aksai Chin) without involving India into this negotiations. In 1978, the two counties inaugurated the Karakoram Highway linking the Xinjiang province of China with Havelin, 90km north of Islamabad, passing through Abottabad, Gilgit and the Hunza valley- this highway acts as a major security threat to India (Sarkar, 2014, p: 151).

China has proved to be Pakistan's most reliable supplier of weapon systems, including nuclear technology and its requisite delivery systems that are long range missiles. During Indo-Pak war of 1965 and 1971, China strongly deplored India as the aggressor and threatened military intervention on the side of Pakistan (Sarkar, 2014, p: 152). For the war of 1971 (birth of Bangladesh) and India's first nuclear test on 18th May 1974, Pakistan signed an agreement with China on September 1974, through which Chinese finally conceded to longstanding Pakistani request for helping it acquire nuclear weapons capabilities and build the requisite delivery systems. China has been the capacity builder and the stalwart behind Pakistan's nuclearization agenda vis-à-vis India. It has been alleged that Chinese scientists have worked in Pakistan's Chasma nuclear power plant, 40 kms from Lahore, thereby boosting Pakistan's nuclear arsenal that work as a deterrent

against India's nuclearization program. Besides China has transferred strategic missiles such as M11 and TOPOL to Pakistan that have been rechristened as HATLF, GHOURI, and SHAHEEN. This may well act as nuclear projectiles.

In 1986, Pakistan concluded a comprehensive nuclear cooperation agreement with China and also received Uranium, a key element to boost the production of fission weapons. Recently, China has announced that it was going to sell two new nuclear reactors to Pakistan.

Since the early 2000s, China has been investing in Gwadar Port and has improved the connection with its western provinces via Karakorum Highway which called China- Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). It is one of the largest Chinese foreign investments in the context of Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The economic and political consequences of the CPEC extend far beyond Pakistan. The most important thing is that the CPEC runs through Kashmir over which India and Pakistan have already fought three out of four wars since the independence in 1947 and still now it is the very sensitive area between the two.

On the other side, in 2005, after India –American agreement on Civilian Nuclear cooperation, China reached a similar bilateral agreement with Pakistan, but was able to circumvent the consent of NSG. (Wagner, 2018, p:124). In 2016, China prevented India from being admitted to NSG and blocked the UN sanctions against Masood Azhar, the founder of JeM, who is responsible for a series of attacks in India, e.g. the failed attack on the Parliament in 2001 and the attacks in Pathankot and Uri in 2016 and recently Pulwama. Recently in June 2019, China has virtually declared that it will again strive to thwart India's entry into the NSG.

India's Role in Minimizing the Security Dilemma

Narendra Modi's election as India's prime minister in May 2014 has generated speculation that a new 'Modi's doctrine' is emerging in Indian foreign policy. (Balakrishnan, 2014: p23) Indian foreign policy under Modi is witnessing a proactive turn infused by a strong leadership. The new government has redefined India's foreign policy priorities, and the level of external engagement has also gone up. Modi's foreign policy has been characterized by great energy, a desire to break the mold of the past and a penchant for risk-taking. (Muni 2014: p6) The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government led by Narendra Modi completed three years in office in May 2017. He launched his 'tenure as prime minister with a flurry of overseas visit to large and small powers alike' (Basrur, 2017:p 7). As of August 2017, in his thirty-one foreign trips to six continents, he has visited more than forty-nine states, including eight states twice and five times the USA. To rejuvenate India's foreign engagement, the new government has taken several initiatives such as the Act East policy and Neighbourhood First policy. These initiatives have raised the hope that Indian foreign policy will witness significant changes. To tap the dynamics of Indian foreign policy under Modi's prime ministership, numerous scholars have studied the different dimensions of the Indian foreign policy. However, their opinion is divided. Some have talked about the substantial change and described him as a rescuer of Indian foreign policy, while others do not see any major shift. Rajesh Basrur has found that 'foreign policy under Modi picks up from where his predecessors left off and is characterized by essential continuity' (Chandra 2017:p99). Ian Hall virtually concurs with this view and argues that despite bringing a proactive turn in Indian foreign policy, 'Modi has not made major modifications to the aims and methods of Indian foreign policy' (Hall 2017:p 127). In contrast, another group represented by C. Raja Mohan sees the changes as 'so seminal as to mark the beginning of the "Third Republic"' in Indian foreign policy (C Raja Mohan 2015: p23). Kanti Bajpai (2015) has found a 'new zeal' and rebooting of Indian foreign policy under the new regime (Bajpai 2017: p23).

Modi's diplomatic activities, offer a clear picture of India's priorities and strategic objectives to minimize the security dilemma in the presence of East Asia Dragon. They are essentially five-fold:

- Prioritizing an integrated neighbourhood- "Neighbourhood First."
- Leveraging international partnerships to promote India's domestic development.
- Enshuring a stable and multipolar balance of power in the Indo-Pacific; "Act East."
- Pursuing a maritime policy in the Indian Ocean with a stronger" maritime doctrine".
- Promoting the notion of inter-regional and intercontinental cooperation for greater global governance.
- Engaging with major powers while promoting India's national interests.

"Neighbourhood First" Policy

It is the key behind India's Indo-Pacific position at present. Since assuming office in 2014, Modi has given special importance to the neighbouring countries. However, India's recent problem with Nepal, the current Maldives crisis and the enduring problematic relations with Pakistan and China may not offer a positive indicator to Modi's "neighbourhood first" approach. Critics may therefore see the approach sceptically. The central tenet of this policy is to establish better strategic connections with neighbours, from connectivity to information technology linkages. This was aptly reiterated in Modi's speech in Nepal in 2014, where he positioned India's relationship with neighbours, including Nepal, under the "HIT" mantra—Highways, Info-ways and Trans-ways (Panda & Basu 2018: p 16). Likewise, the "Neighbourhood First" approach enhances India's outreach in Myanmar and Bangladesh under a multimodal linkage. Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport project, which was agreed to be developed between India and Myanmar in 2008, is a fine example of how India is intensifying on neighbourhood connectivity (Panda & Basu 2018: p 17).

"Act East" Policy

This policy constitutes the core of India's Indo-Pacific vision, which comprises today a range of institutional, economic, political and security engagements. Contacts with ASEAN-centred multilateral mechanisms have become the main drivers of India's engagement with the East, where India is strongly connected with the East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plan (ADMM+). (Panda & Basu 2018, p: 17).

Beside This, India Has Taken Some Other Steps to Ensure Her Security these are

India is going to prepare an Asia-Africa Growth Corridor collaborates with Japan to monitoring China's OBOR initiative. In 23rd may 2017, the vision document of AAGC establish under the joint venture of India- Japan government in AFDB's Gujarat conference. It is a Seabased Economic Connectivity Corridor; its main concern is to establish economic growth and investment in Africa. It will connect the entire region extending from South Asia, South –East Asia to Africa, primarily through the sea rout (maritime connectivity). AAGC will cover the Jamnagar port in Gujrat with Gulf of Eden Djibuti port, Mombasa and Zanzibar in Africa with Mumbai port and Kolkata port with Sittwe port. India also collaborates with Africa and Latin America multilaterally through IBSA (India-Brazil-South Africa) and BRICS and BASIC (Brazil-South Africa-India-China), (Panda & Basu 2018: p 18).

The term “Indo-Pacific” has grown in usage across diplomatic and security circles in the United States, Australia, India and Japan in recent years, shorthand for a broader and democratic led region in place of “Asia-Pacific”, which some people have said places China too firmly at the centre. India is part of the strategic ‘QUAD’ with USA, Japan, Australia as its allies.

India is virtually following a policy of strategic ‘conengagement’ against China-confronting her on some issues as well as engaging her on some other issues simultaneously. The BRICS, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, G20, alignment in the WTO are cases of engagement whereas, AAGC, Act East policy, strategic partnership with the USA, engagement with Japan, QUAD, military cooperation with Russia (India has signed an agreement recently to purchase S-500 missiles from Russia) are on the other side of the cart.

India has upped the strategic and diplomatic ‘ante’ against Pakistan in global diplomatic circles while attempting to brand it as a ‘terrorism-sponsoring state’, a state with a overtly active ‘terror industry’. It has used her military clout against Pakistan in the form of Surgical Strike 1.0 and 2.0 respectively, showcasing the fact that a new era has dawned in the realm of India’s so far somewhat ‘reluctant’ foreign policy and it will not take things lying down in a ‘dovish’ manner. This ‘Hawkish’ turn in Modi’s foreign policy has been a strategic ‘game-changer’ that can lead India’s key adversaries to view her seriously in strategic circles. Besides this overtures, India is using her newfound ‘Modified’ foreign policy ‘thrust’ in forging strategic multilateral alliances across the globe and even using multilateral forums like the United Nations, BRICS, G20, SCO etc in building somewhat of a strategic counterweight against the Sino-Pakistan alliance, which has been one of the greatest determinants of her ‘security dilemma’. These in fact, represent some of the key attempts on behalf of India to thwart strategic threats and virtually contain, dampen and thereby minimise her security dilemma.

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