



CHINA & USA IN INDIAN OCEAN REGION - A FRACTIONAL COLLISION COURSE

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ABSTRACT

Thucydides Trap, in case of USA & China collision highway, true or otherwise in an enactment of Belt Road Initiative (BRI), South China Sea clash of interests and Blue versus Red , and Pakistan in a 'Golden Chair' dilemma led to a known fact of interacting as well as overarching clash of interests in global world in general and Asia in particular. However, China has become one of the world's major powers despite all odds of clash of interests against her strategic, geographic and social or economic competitors evidently displayed after the universal Pandemic of Covid. The fast-paced economic development of China was the narrative foreign policy imbued with economic progress across the globe, with benefits for all humanity. In the same context, China has launched Belt and Road Initiative, in response to the USA's Pivot Asia policy. On the contrary, changing foreign policy roles and their performances have led to conflicting signals, raising concerns about China's future role in international politics. This paper argues that, though China's rise may be projected as benign by China itself, however China under Xi Jinping will be an "Economic Giant" aiming to remodel the global order. Visualizing the discourse of its economic over-arching progress, is it really a collision course that has shaped Belt Road Initiative (BRI), South China Sea's militarization/weaponization in Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and alliances of Blue versus Red or a mature Economic Cooperation in a globalized world, really seems far away from clash of interests as displayed during and after Pandemic Crisis. Recent visit of Speaker of USA Representatives, Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan, is a test case in strategic dilemma for IOR that proved fractional to crisis.

Key Words: Thucydides Trap, USA & China clash of interests, China's Foreign Policy, BRI, Pivot Asia Policy, Blue versus Red Alliances, Economic Cooperative Global World, IOR

Introduction

1. The enormous growth of world population and the subsequent rising food, energy and other social needs leading to human security; both in developing and developed countries, call for an increase in trade, exploitation of new avenues of economy, and development of soft power along with its soft image. China similarly continues to expand economically, it is bound to invite varied



responses from other world powers. The continuous response of China to shape and renovate its interstate relationship including her foreign policy to become more vigorous, pragmatic and flexible. China is becoming more active at the global level in politics besides, the role in existing international institutions, China has created expanded dimensions in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and BRICS Development Bank to expand its areas of influencing the world politics. Moreover, the overarching initiation of "Belt and Road Initiative or One Belt One Road (BRI or OBOR)" to enhance economic outreach, connectivity and cooperation in global development. While exercising sophisticated foreign policy as a leading proponent of soft power, China is still learning to achieve the status of great power in the ever-changing world.

2. Not only has the so-called "end of history" in the West brought to a growing public, policy, and market economy in China, but it has also moved China closer to the Western world. It appears that the issue of debate in today's globe is the question of how far Chinese ideas would go in a "world without the West." This is the first time in over three hundred years that China's foreign policy has been altered, and it clearly poses a danger from the perspective of a non-Western international organisation. Now, the validity of the Thucydides Trap may become apparent as debates over whether or not China will follow established (Western) practises of international behaviour and take on a conflictual stance, or whether it will present an alternative version of its own for the global governance, leading to conflictual discourse. In either case, the Thucydides Trap may come into play. (Albert 1972)

3. On the contrary, the world view of foreign policy of China divulges two possible problematic issues, each indicating a win-win situation instead of collision course if understood in right perspective by the west. Conflict over global political structures has allegedly been "the big game" played by Western players. The difficult scenario posed by a "rising China" may be taken into account, and current Western technology and innovation may be used to oppose it. Instead of a conflicted view of a direct collision, this will become a competitive push toward the cutting edge of what's now cool. As Beijing's economic and political influence grows, it shows that a non-Western player is as capable and eager to perform on the global stage. Second, situation besides in temporal domain, lays in cognitive domain where West should never consider China's rise is dominance of Western Liberal order. Instead the existing policy of one land and two policies is indicative of room for tolerance in Chinese foreign policy as well as outlook. This would be to consider China's growth as a reflection of West where people of China would themselves inclined towards western democratic norms both mentally after a substantial period of time. Thus using similar frameworks for interpretations and policy options. (Chen, 2019)

4. The research paper is divided into three parts whereas first part dealing the foreign policy of China and its historical perspective. In second portion the economic growth vis-à-vis USA Alliances in Asia Pacific or Indian Ocean Region (IOR) has been discussed, and lastly analysis and conclusions have been narrated.



Literature Review

5. Thucydides Trap and its conceptual framework by Graham Allison was itself a big motive to write this research where a place of Foreign Policy of China & CPEC or Pakistan as a gap to be bridged in USA and China are at mature economic revolution particularly after Covid Pandemic and not on a collision course. The optimistic view that USA and China are not on head-on collision is a million dollars question because the latter is a founding and foremost democracy that was involved in war, whereas the former is more so a partial / hybrid democracy with strict policies and equal share in waging wars. Moreover, emergence of People's Republic of China (PRC) as a contesting global power started with Chairman Mao Zedong's efforts of transformation of China into a modernized and industrialized State during Cold War inter period. By 1978, China has gaining sustained economic growth rate of 9-10%. This economic growth continued as powerhouse even under President, Xi Jinping. (Chase, Cortez, Keith, Liisa, Scott, Timothy, Bonny, Lyle, and Andrew, 2015)

6. Elizabeth believes that Western configurations of global political culture have shaped Chinese growth and the way Chinese people view their place in the world, and that efforts to "rethink China" and its global position are futile (s). Similarly, Yufan views China's foreign policy as a fascinating intersection of historical memory, current conditions, and future expectations for both aggressive and defensive strategies. Cold War end saw a rapid economic growth brought China at the center stage of world politics. (Division, US Census Bureau Foreign Trade)

7. The rise of China was focused by Yufan particularly over the foreign policy, but her interests are not aimed at tarnishing international peace. Similarly, Indian Ocean Region (IOR) has become a major power rivalry and global geopolitics of international great power actors. IOR is an important geostrategic corridor connecting energy-rich Middle Eastern countries to potential rivals like China, the United States, and India. Since India adds still another layer of complexity to the already volatile regional and marine environment in the IOR, this competition has enormous strategic consequences for Pakistan. This is likely to exacerbate existing lines of conflict and, therefore, have repercussions on economy in general and maritime trade in particular. On the contrary, two hostile nuclear powers are at the centre of the region and likely to have gigantic effect on region in general and India & Pakistan in particular, both in terms of risks and opportunities. (China's Foreign Policy')

Parameters of the Study

8. The research paper is restricted to China's foreign policy and USA China clash of interests effecting regional and global partners with particular emphasis on IOR, and how China is countering these challenges.



Research Questions

9. The research will endeavor to explore critical aspects related to global situation in coming decades particularly post Corona Pandemic World in the context of USA/China rivalry in IOR vis-à-vis Indian inclination towards the former contender: -

- a. What factors influenced the foreign Policy of China over the years to deal with emerging challenges of global economic world particularly with a competition by USA?
- b. Possible facets of Chinese Policy in IOR to deal with crisis vis-à-vis Pakistan's role in it.

Research Methodology

10. The qualitative research method is employed in this research while heavily relying on secondary sources.

Collision Course and China's Foreign Policy vis-a-vis US Interests in the Region

10. Theory of Allison famously known as Thucydides Trap of collision between emerging power and existing power as inevitable phenomenon in coming decades or near future seemingly fitting over USA & China with lot of conviction in one school of thought. Whereas, Peoples Republic of China's foreign relations have progressed in the past seven decades, with a profound effect of the leadership of the time and are characterized by pragmatism. The conduct of foreign relations by PRC has undergone some of the key inflexion points, and main influences of Chinese policies and relationships had some distinctive feature particularly after post-Mao's successful revolution in 1949. Let the research focus on the profound dynamics of Chinese Foreign Policy cardinals in previously to counter her contenders/competitors and enemies as well. (Heng, 2017)

11. "New China" was a test case for recognition as a sovereign member of the UN and international community during the Cold War. This was despite "New China's" untapped pro-communist economic potential. Since then, China's foreign policy has been linked as "The Initial Phase of Isolation of Sleeping Giant Challenging Her Competitors" This was said about China's rivalry. In 1949, just a few Soviet bloc states extended diplomatic recognition to the U.S. Chairman Mao liked to give numerical rankings to China's "friends" and "enemies," even though Beijing had diplomatic ties with just 35 nations in the 1950s and 1960s. In light of this, China signed the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance in 1953, after Stalin's death. In 1953, the US and USSR began the Cold War.

12. Nikita Khrushchev retracted 1,400 Soviet advisors and suspended 200 industrial-technical projects after Mao's death. During the Korean War, the U.S. Seventh Fleet stationed in the Taiwan



Strait shut China off from the West. The People's Republic of China participated in the 1954 Geneva Conference and the 1955 Bandung Conference, which helped the US bridge the diplomatic gap between the two countries. China's "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" and armistice at the Geneva Conference prepared the ground for a non-alignment movement among East Asian states at the Bandung conference. Both happened in Switzerland. (John, 1969)

13. Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) was bringing strongly patriotic and notably anti-Western popular emotions in several African nations and a few states in Latin America in the 1960s, along with escalating tensions in the Sino-Soviet alliance. As a result of the Brezhnev Doctrine, which states that Moscow has the right to interfere in any communist state to prevent "counter-revolution," the Chinese leadership began to fear for their own survival. In addition, the March 1969 Ussuri River Conflict in the eastern section of the contested Sino-Soviet border sparked internal clashes among the two superpowers, setting each state on a divergent path. (Kejin, 2020)

14. China's ties with the West were lively throughout the 1970s, beginning with a 1970 visit to Canada and continuing with visits to the United States in 1971 and 1972. China entered a new phase of global politics with the deaths of Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong in 1976. This was accompanied by the formation of the legendary Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee and the installation of Deng Xiaoping as rheostat. Notable events in 1971 included China's admission to the United Nations and Pakistan's subsequent attempts to create diplomatic connections between China and the United States. After China took its seat in the United Nations on November 15, 1971, relations with the United States greatly aided in the country's efforts to forge new alliances with Western and Asian nations and pursue different foreign policy strategies. (Medeiros, 2009)

15. Tiananmen Incident on June 4, 1989, during the rule of Deng Xiaoping, ruined China's policy of optimistic spirit about reforms and opening bringing her image both domestically and externally at the lowest ebbs. Despite China opened foreign investment rapidly expanding her ties with international organizations, such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund headed in a very positive directions but with the collapse of Soviet Union in late millennium impacted Chinese leadership for the same domino effect fears. However, the policies of Deng Xiaoping particularly in enunciating the grand strategy of "Taoguang Yanghui" and second, "Southern Sojourn" which rebooted economic reforms. The overarching vision and policies took a new course decided by Chinese leadership and re-engaged with the western world. The economic market saw a new trend where China not only displayed excellent drive but foreign policy of the leadership was par excellence to pursue the aims/objectives of PRC besides shunning away communist ills.

16. The rise of China altered the balance of power throughout the world in a way similar to the effects of the rise of a strong Germany and the United States at the start of the twentieth century.



According to a forecast by Schreker, "by 2050 the international system will be a global multipolar one with disparities in national power continuing to diminish between rich and poor nations." In response to the US objective of limiting China, dubbed the US "Pivot or Rebalance Policy," IOR has become a point of conflict among new powers in the area. With a great extension of economic outreach through "Made in China" boom, a brainchild of President Xi Jinping gave new global policy of reaching her economy through another dimension of OBOR & BRI. Strategy of this economic outreach through OBOR certainly gives China not only enhanced position in the world other than SLOCs but will also enable China in handling with many of its internal issues that are crucial counter measure in Strait of Malacca and IOR, against the Grand Strategy of USA. Moreover, the Covid Pandemic despite its huge economic, social and political turmoil brought China into a colossal giant with tremendous potentials in the globe. (Mickey 2002)

17. South Asian states including Pakistan perceive that OBOR is a reciprocal and mutually beneficial plan. China with the help of OBOR, plans to improve the infrastructures of the partner countries in the initiative and promotion in facilitation of trade and investment. As a consequence, it will improve the industrial competitiveness of partner countries. On the contrary, India is thinking other way round due to hegemonic designs and net security provider in the region, as desired by USA as well leading western powers to shift in foreign policies of both the contending states thereby creating rift in the region. The contemporary global strategic environment in new millennium is undergoing significant changes, whereby the United States of America is seeing a relative decline as global hegemon, its unipolar moment is on a gradual decline, and multi-polarity is on the rise. Chinese President Xi Jinping's doctrinal postulate of "No First use policy", is yet to be seen despite his determination of military built to fight with maximum combat capability. (Mishra, 2015)

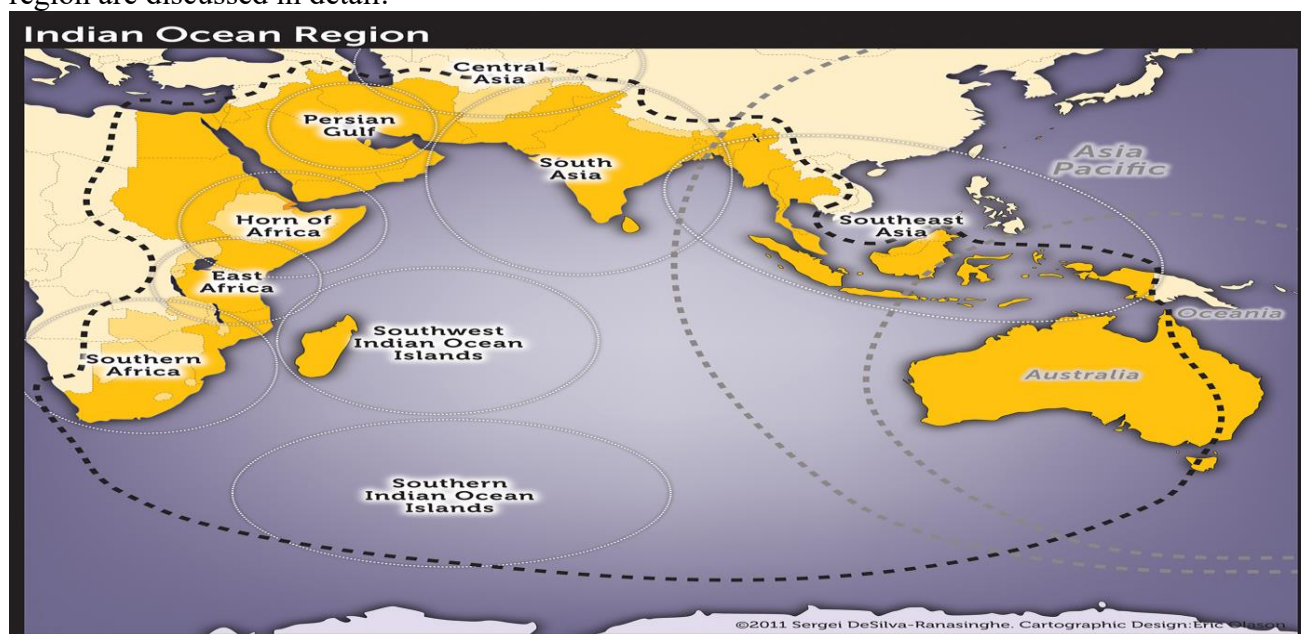
18. China's concern of American interests in the South China Sea has ratcheted up tensions and made the situation worse. After the discovery of huge oil resources in the late 1960s, it became plainly evident that this was the situation in the South China Sea over the Nansha Islands. The UN Convention on the Law of the Seas and EEZ/continental shelf realignment agreements in the South China Sea have encouraged other claimants to capture China's Nansha Islands. Recent advances in IOR would produce another US/China political and economic powerhouse, therefore the US has political and military interests to confine China inside its boundaries. These latest developments will create another US/China political and economic behemoth. Recent developments, such as the emergence of a new economic corridor due to OBOR and BRI, have ratcheted up tensions in the area. However, the foreign policy of China about famous one land and two policies, show resilience as well as maturity of the leadership focused over aims/objectives set forth for becoming economic giant in the millennium.

Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and China / USA Contestation

19. The Indian Ocean Range (IOR) is a geographical area including over 30 percent of the world's



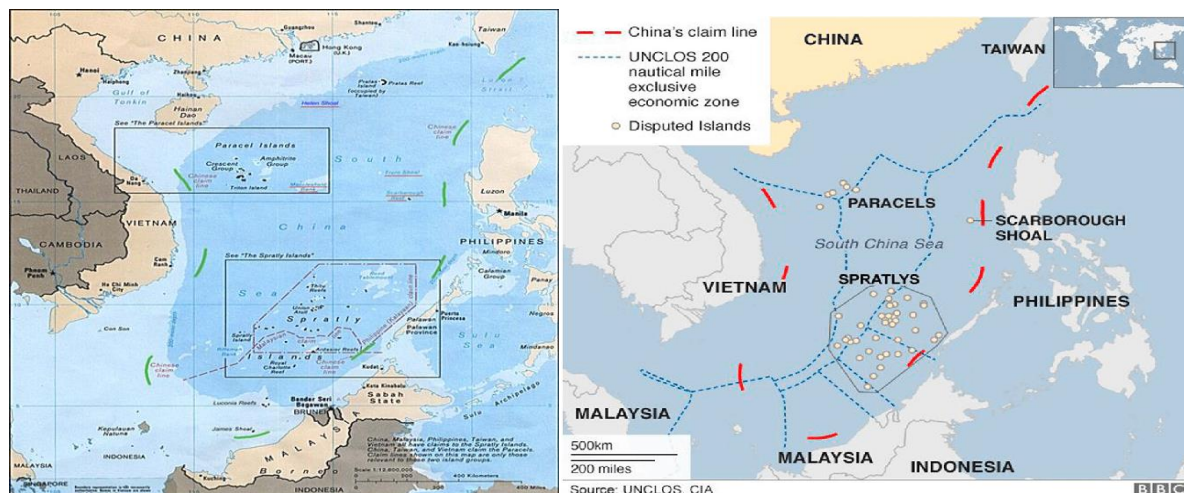
water SLOCs and extending from the northern Strait of Malacca and the western coast of Australia to the western Mozambique Channel. The southern Indian Ocean, which includes the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea, is a key seaway linking Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas. In addition, the Strait of Malacca serves as a naval choke point for China, which has a direct impact on her strength, and there has been a renewed interest in the sea lanes as a potential site for rivalry and collaboration. In contrast, the IOR is a highly securitized zone of Great Power rivalry that enables maritime commerce in the area, carries more than half of the world's sea-borne oil, and is home to twenty-three of the world's top 100 container ports. Following seriatim important factors of the region are discussed in detail:-



- a. **Indian Ocean Region (IOR).** IOR has long been considered the backwoods to major power rivalry and global geopolitics due to its natural geographic importance. Geographical importance added by the commercial and economic importance made its dominance inevitable for obvious reasons. IOR is key geostrategic space linking the energy-rich nations of the Middle East with economically vibrant Asia however, it increased intensifying rivalry between China after pact of QUAD, LEMOA and COMCASA. These rivalries have significant strategic implications for the United States, China and obviously India and Pakistan. (Purnendra 2006)
- b. **Geostrategic Importance of the IOR.** The IOR is a vital sea lane with three important choke points including Straits of Hormuz and Malacca, and Bab el-Mandeb. These choke



points are of immense strategic importance in terms of geographic and economic spheres, as huge volumes of trade pass through these making it first and foremost contesting reason.



20. Secondly, the claims, rivalry and geostrategic importance make it vulnerable to piracy, international disputes, political dissents, and accidents whereas bone of contentions are Nine Dash Lines, Paracels and Spartly Islands. Historically, the Indian Ocean Region has been an important but largely a depoliticized region. In recent years however, the region has gained more political importance and has become a space for strategic competition between certain major powers contentious for Geostrategic Importance. The salient of IOR are as under:-

- a. Geostrategic importance further coupled because of shift from geo-politics to geo-economics.
- b. The economic boom in Asia; especially China as giant power.
- c. The unprecedented military upsurge of India as an ally to USA to counter China.
- d. The increasingly insecure global leadership role of the US.
- e. The competition for control of maritime chokepoints i.e. the straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, Malacca, and Hormuz.
- f. The involvement of regional competition of two nuclear powers of China and India due to various geostrategic pacts by USA thereby destabilising balance of power in the region.
- g. Lastly, this region houses trading routes that carries entire global energy lifeline. Recent Ukraine and Russian conflict is evident of this facet which would determine as huge crisis of coming winters. This leads to following option of adopting avenue of OBOR/BRI as under:-
- h. South Asia has witnessed the launching of the lateral economic influx through BRI and CPEC to increase its economic ingress, which reflects an economic transformation in China's economic policy.



21. Competition in IOR region has been transforming into the rivalry between China and USA in following dimensions:

- a. Militarization
- b. Economic contests
- c. Arms race
- d. Maritime Security

22. The strategic rivalry between China, the US, and their allies including Pakistan, India, Russia, Australia and others representing a militarization of IOR that is already economically unstable regional and maritime environment. Eighty percent of the population of Asian region may be affected due to existing contentious conflicting situation having repercussions on maritime trade. With two potentially nuclear-armed rivals—India and Pakistan on one side and China, India, and the United States on the other—in the centre of the Indian Ocean region (IOR), the region is experiencing a multiplicative effect. As a result, the region's nuclear flashpoint has risen dramatically. Second, the "Economic Contests" phenomenon has brought erratic behaviour to the Indian Ocean region. This phenomenon involves three major powers, India, China, and the United States, accounting for nearly half of the global economy, competing for influence and so-called hegemony in the Indian Ocean arena. (Shambaugh, 2020)

23. China's response to these tense developments is the maritime "Silk Road," an element of the Belt and Road Initiative (OBOR or BRI), while the United States has responded by forming an alliance with the Indo-Pacific and the Asia-Pivot strategy, with India as a key partner. The closeness of Pakistan, however, as one of the primary commerce lanes in IOR and BRI and as the owner of the golden chair, sparked a massive arms race. China and the United States are on the brink of conflict due to the tense "Arms Race under Security Concerns" rivalry that emerged in the twenty-first century. This competition stems from the intertwined geopolitical and geoeconomic forces that have led to the current situation. USA & China rivalry leading to arms race has seen South Asia through a more competitive prism seeing the other's role as unhelpful, if not harmful. (Taylor, 2006)

24. Lastly, the security concerns imbedded in maritime security leads to the fragile conditions of volatile geostrategic region accentuated by recent pandemic and economic crisis demand careful analysis. The Indo-Pacific region is the site of "a geopolitical confrontation between free and repressive views of global order," according to the former Trump administration's National Security Strategy from December 2017. But Biden called the struggle between the United States and China "the competition of the future." In addition, he voiced his worries about "increasing challenges" from Beijing and risks to US interests in the Indo-Pacific. He continued by saying that the Chinese threat requires a concerted effort from all levels of government, bipartisan support in Congress, and solid alliances and partnerships. The way he intends to manage ties with China is



with firmness. He stressed the need for a multilateral stance against China, as opposed to a single-sided one. The new administration of Vice President Joe Biden in the United States is building partnerships to bolster his power. The United States is "deepening relations with Taiwan, a leading democracy and essential economic and security partner," as stated by Sung Kim, the acting director of the State Department's office of East Asian and Pacific affairs. Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Xinjiang are considered "internal matters" by China. However, the mature behaviour of cooperation amongst the two nations and resumption of dialogue despite one land and two policies of China is refraining a much collision discourse. (Weissmann, 2015)

Analysis and Conclusions

25. The analysis of this study is focused over three dominant orders including Political, Economics and Geo-military power potentials entrancingly leading to rivalries and clash of interests. The political aspects are displayed through the foreign policy of a state as its best reflection. An analysis of Chinese foreign policy since its imperial period revealed that Chinese strategic culture is benign. It has avoided the use of force to expand its influence over other states. As a result, China today has broader acceptance in the community of nations. The developments in Chinese foreign policy focused more muscle attainment in both economic and military cum technological advancements and less increased conflicting engagements under President Xi. China similarly under Xi Jinping will not be a status quo power accepting the world as it is, however it is also unlikely that China may become a revisionist power. The current trajectory of China's foreign policy is seemed to be aiming beyond merely being dissatisfied to be described as a responsible reformer striving for achievements. Henceforth, the displayed mature political behavior of both the contenders i.e. USA & China is quite encouraging particularly by the later. However, IOR is the primary site of a major power competition between China and USA where the extra-ordinary inclination of the later towards India may lead to destabilized region that has a history of emotionally/politically charged conflicts with Pakistan. (Xi Jinping's Marathon Speech)

26. China's political interests engrossed in economic spheres by threatened SLOCs are expanding beyond its region of influence. China's national security is mostly safeguarded by protecting its economic interests in Asia and at a global level. To protect its economic interests in and out of Asia, China is dependent on its foreign policy as a tool to safeguard its national interests for the well-being of its nation. China wants to build a moderate and prosperous society to establish a stable, affluent, socialist, civilized, modern and harmonious country in coming years. Indian and Pacific Oceans in the next two decades due to its strong military and economic competition leads Beijing, Washington and New Delhi to be at best cooperation and at worst competition with the involvement of Pakistan in mediatory role avoiding acute confrontation not considering an option. Following are major conclusions and take-away from political aspects of USA & China avoidance of collision course:-

- a. Rising collaboration amongst Russia, China and Iran, China and Pakistan, USA & India should not become as source of concern all individual or allies of any group.



- b. Himalayan QUAD and counter QUAD where China, Nepal, Pakistan, and Afghanistan are emerging as a counterweight to the QUAD shouldn't be challenging militarily as in case of former alliance.
- c. Realization of US Suez Moment and the rational of post pandemic politics, requires a thoughtful political re-appraisal particularly after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan and the subsequent humiliation has opened a new debate of USA to formulate a win-win situation instead of competitors contending situation lead and to win-lose dilemma.
- d. Twenty-first century regionalism is complex and dangerous requiring both China and USA to avoid nuclear powers dangerous arms race and its display in IOR.
- e. A crisscross of geopolitics and geo-economics has a position to strike a balance.
- f. Lastly and the most importantly both the states should never break the dialogue ties at all costs otherwise fatal course of collision is inevitable.

26. Second facet of the analysis revolves around economics order where China is an expanding economy that has invited its competition with United States particularly in IOR. However, foreign policy of China does not reflect that it encourages a confrontation with the United States instead it leads economic relations with many countries in Asia, Central Asia, Middle East, Africa, Europe, and Latin America. China has successfully used a powerful instrument of friendship with many countries in the abovementioned regions. China is a very significant development partner with many countries including Pakistan. In trade, investment and defense cooperation, China is the top contributor for Pakistan. China is now going ahead with economic initiatives in the region and is aggressively pursuing CPEC the flagship project of its bigger Belt and Road Initiative. This BRI strategy has opened the opportunity for many countries to join economic initiatives launched by China as a counter-strategy to US Asia Rebalance policy. Many regional partners are now undertaking bilateral cooperative ventures with China, leveraging its influence on the later, to connect their infrastructures with China. Under the auspices of China containment, the USA has launched several geopolitical offensives, including the Asia rebalance strategy. A watchful China came out with a masterpiece of geopolitical strategy under the banner of BRI. The US and some of its Western allies and India made every effort possible to undermine this grand scheme with allegations like China are trying to grab the power; China is trying to entangle countries with debt trap; BRI is not transparent so and so forth. The opponents of BRI advised other states not to join BRI. However, the larger world did not listen to the US propaganda; instead 125 countries and 29 international organizations today have signed a cooperation agreement under BRI. Each of these aspects may be summarized as following:-

- a. USA and China should continue avoiding conflicting situations rather assist by their economic rise and the rapid associated growth besides, seaborne trade through Indian Ocean. Inconvenience in this model would likely be detrimental to the China & United States' and the world's economy besides creating security concerns.



- b. China's economic vulnerability in IOR would definitely lead to strategic vulnerability creating extreme consequences that would be inappropriate for the world in general and IOR in particular.
- c. China's BRI can be viewed as an attempt by China to minimize its economic vulnerabilities by spreading its trade and energy routes through infrastructure investments where USA may also invest for win-win situation.
- d. China's BRI, similarly with mediating role of USA, may bring India in investing for positive gains resultantly decreasing tensions with India.
- e. Both China's economic investment and its military presence have increased sharply over the past decade in the Indian Ocean Region. With the most important infrastructure projects of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China is working on a direct access to the Indian Ocean through the territory of its close ally Pakistan which shouldn't be a concern for India as the economic connectivity would bring prosperity in the region.
- f. Lastly and the most important is the avoidance of maritime blockade or misadventure in IOR otherwise the fractional collision course would transform into exact collision pathway to disaster.

27. Finally, we will examine the dynamic geo-military strategic situation in the Indian Ocean. Misperceptions of security threats have led to a rapid expansion of strategic disputed rivalry among countries in IOR during the last several years. These changes are seen as complicated and multipolar, but practically all of these nations, led by China, have shown signs of mature behaviour. Although the United States remains the region's preeminent military force, it will increasingly have to navigate a much more nuanced setting, playing a similarly mature and leading role in defusing the current tensions that threaten to make this area a nuclear flashpoint. France, Pakistan, and India stepped up as primary security suppliers in the IOR area while the United States focused on its responsibilities in the Pacific, Afghanistan, and the Middle East. China probably won't be able to threaten U.S. hegemony in the Indian Ocean for a while. However, it will be ready to fill any perceived power voids or seize strategic openings. The salient of convergences and the divergences are as under:-

- a. China feels encircled by USA's strategic moves in the region while securing the sea lanes. Understanding and effectively managing this evolving security dynamic may be crucial to preserving regional stability.
- b. America shouldn't create strong ties with India, Australia and ASEAN countries to counter the China in transforming it into a volatile militarized zone rather the economic ties would help the region in elevating enormous poverty elimination particularly in India and Pakistan.
- c. India and China treat each other with a degree of mistrust. Despite the various issues, China is currently India's biggest trade partner. Therefore, their relationship is not an overtly competitive one. Their growing military strengths as well as economic interdependence keep the countries from getting into open conflict. The most interesting part of this relationship is the power dynamic between the countries. While



China is incredibly important when it comes to Indian policy making and military planning, there is a dis-balance on the Chinese end. India is a factor in Chinese decision making, but to a smaller extent. China's primary focus is on the United States' presence in Asia. (Yiyi 2015)

- d. The advantageous position that Pakistan has inside the geoeconomic and geostrategic conflict matrix of the area. Pakistan is the location where the "tri-polar great game" being played out between Beijing, Washington, and New Delhi is being carried out. There is strategic competition taking place, but not on the battlefield; rather, it is taking place in sectors such as global governance, technology, and economics.
- e. Finally, the misadventures against each other would lead to disaster that should be resolved through dialogue of statesmanship instead of using military tool of brinkmanship.

Conclusion

28. China and USA are considered at the collision course provided continued on the backwoods to major power rivalry and global geopolitics of contentious conflicts/alliances of pre world wars dilemma. Present day rivalry has significant strategic implications for whole world in general, region and Pakistan with the involvement of India in particular. This is likely to exacerbate existing lines of conflict and, therefore, have repercussions on economy as well as political/social orders where hostile nuclear powers are at the centre of the region i.e. India and Pakistan. However, history reveals that relationship between a rising power and relatively declining power has always generated conflicts and wars. With China's containment policy in the US and initiation of OBOR/BRI by China, the tacit rivalry between the two countries has no longer remained that tacit. Instead, the fault lines are now manifested in trade, technology and geostrategic spheres, where shared economic interests take precedence over everything else. Indeed, both the great powers have displayed maturity which seems to the order of day to a path to peace and stability of the world. Under this geostrategic environment, Pakistan has to navigate these uncertain waters very carefully to manage relations with both the countries while avoiding to take clear side towards any of the power. All states in IOR may formulate a win-win situation to provide a breathing space for each other while pursuing their strategic interests with a room of dialogue open amongst this contending arena.



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