
CHINA'S EXPANSIONISM AND INDIA'S SECURITY DILEMMA

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Abstract

After the implementation of economic reforms, China emerged as the world's largest exporter and the biggest source of foreign investment for third world countries. After became strong economically and militarily, China is now rising as an expansionist and aggressive power. This paper examines the Chinese ferocity in the regional as well as global level that has exacerbated the tensions among many nations. It also deals with the Chinese economic design intended at global primacy through 'OBOR'. China's projection of power in Asia is a serious concern to India. This paper also examines the Indian policies towards the Chinese grand strategy.

Keywords: *Expansionism, Ferocity, Aggressive, State Owned Enterprises (SOE), Curtail*

Chinese President Xi Jinping explained his grand plan for global trade : One Belt One Road (OBOR) in front of 29 foreign leaders May 2017. Through OBOR, China is for the first time staking claim to global leadership. China, with the growing economy is stepping up as the new leader of world economic order as President Xi Jinping accelerates China's efforts to trade with world. China is laying out an economic design aimed at global supremacy, the One Belt One Road is just the part of it.

The foreign policy of Mao Zedong was driven by his ideology and personal thought. His relations with the Soviet Union leaders was anxious, even hostile. Deng Xiaoping was supreme realist who recognized China's existing political, military and economic weakness. China derived huge benefits by encouraged private enterprise and derived immense benefits from US led Western investments and technology under the Deng. During his administration, economic reforms were started in 1979, China's GDP was less than 20% that of Japan and half of the United Kingdom. Today China's has a per capita income of around \$7000. Now its economy is larger than of Japanese economy and could overtake the US economy in 2030s. Today, China is the world's largest exporter, with 14% share, China is trading with more than 100 countries and emerged as the biggest source of foreign investment for third world countries. As China's state investment driven model runs out of steam, it needs new markets. The European connectivity is of immense importance as high end products need a rich market. A lot of work has already done. This is estimated that approximately 2000 trains will run between a dozen of Chinese cities and 20 European destinations on newly built lines and tunnels very soon. The chief goal of the OBOR is to integrate with the rich European economy with that of China. On short run, China wanted to emerge as a leading regional power as it has already increased its presence in its neighborhood and in the Asia-Pacific region. After the connectivity, Beijing would move towards to tighten its hold globally. To protect its economic interests it would improve its military capabilities to push for global preeminence.

It is persistently using its economic clout to build infrastructure, industrial and urban hubs across the world. Xi Jinping became the uncrowned king of China. He is not only dominating the Communist Party of China but also the military of China. The constitution of the China was amended to enable him to continue in office indefinitely. Xi has dealt with opposition cruelly, acting against powerful party leaders who could pose a challenge to him by enforcing several measures to ensure party discipline. He has also taken measures to control the corruption. He has promoted trusted cronies to important positions of influence in disciplining party colleagues, especially on charges of corruption. There is no personal freedoms. Every aspect of life is tightly monitored and controlled.¹

China has emerged as a strong and stable power not only in Asia but also on the globe. Xi has been aggressive in championing China's greater role globally. Under the policy of 'go out', State Owned Enterprises (SOE) are operating mines all over the world, building railways in Africa, constructing dams from Argentina to Myanmar and building ports at very crucial littoral Indo-Pacific region to protect its overseas interests.

China's Expansionism and Indian Security Concerns:

China is increasing its dominance in the Indian Ocean. Beijing claims control over nearly all of the strategically significant South China Sea, an important shipping route which is tremendously important for China. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, over \$5.3 trillion worth of shipping passes through South China Sea each year, \$1.2 trillion of this belongs to the United States of America.² South China Sea not only an important sea route but also contains abundant resources. The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) estimates that there are 11 billion barrels of oil in the region, and 190 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in the South China Sea. The region is an important zone in the world for fishing. In fact, 12 percent of the global catch comes from the South China Sea. Fishing is a crucial industry for China, which is the largest producer and exporter of fish products in the world with nearly \$20 billion in exports in 2013.³

China has built artificial islands in South China Sea. China's "peaceful rise" is allied chiefly with economic growth, But in reality the geopolitics and economics can't be so neatly alienated. China is building military and logistical bases on these islands. Anxiety in the region have increased as China and other claimant parties have become more aggressive in their territorial claim over parts of the disputed waters. Chinese naval drills in disputed South China Sea have further increased tensions in the region. Chinese military justified that these are the regular planned military exercises and are not aimed at any particular nation. China conducted these drills after the Philippines navy ran its ship on the area that is claimed by China in the South China Sea.⁴

China has made it clear that it will use force in pursuit of its territorial and geo political interests. In July 2016, an arbitral tribunal constituted under Annex VII of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, ruled against the China's maritime claims in Philippines v. China. China has not respected rulings of the international tribunal on its maritime boundaries. It has stated that the decision regarding the boundaries should be made through bilateral dialogue.⁵ This has set the stage for Beijing to disregard the provisions of international law in dealing with its maritime boundary claims on South Korea, Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia, Japan, Taiwan and Indonesia. China is using economic aid as an influence and divided ASEAN states, thus obstructing the possibility of a collective

ASEAN response to its maritime territorial expansionism. Japan, Vietnam and Indonesia are the only countries to challenge untenable Chinese claims.⁶

Recently United States Congresswoman Vicky Hartzler has said that China has expanded itself not only in the Indo-Pacific region, but across the globe. China is actively present in Africa, Europe, Latin America etc. She described China is one of the central challenges to the national security. Ms Hartzler also said that China is very focused and doing multiple lanes of efforts to enhance its power. Other Congressman Seth Wilbur Moulton has also very much concerned over the Chinese commitment to meet US capability in artificial intelligence by 2020 and then cross the US economy by 2030.⁷

China is increasing strategic relationship with Myanmar, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. China is being militarily strong in this region. China has legitimate interest in protecting its trading and energy lifelines as most of its trade is being shipped through the Indian Ocean region. Chinese submarines have been seen close to the Indian territorial waters frequently. It has created apprehension among Indian authorities about the possibility of Beijing's approach to build naval stations to enhance the power in the region, as it is doing in the South China Sea. China's rising military presence in the Asia-Pacific region is directed by an evident aspiration to impose a new regional design based on the recognition of the primacy of Chinese interests. Chinese military is acquiring the advance technology to modernise its navy. It is getting new and more sophisticated frigates, submarines, destroyers and aircraft carriers. The security of its SLOCs is of immense importance for Beijing because its major oil imports transits from the Strait of Malacca and Straits of Hormuz in Southeast Asia.⁸

China's growth in the Asia-Pacific region is a cause of serious concern to India's security. China has justified that its presence in the region only to secure its commercial interests, but the projection of power by China represents something else. The rising presence of Chinese forces in the Indian Ocean is the commencement of its hostile sway in the region and could worsen the level of confrontation between China and India. China has opened its first military facility overseas by building a naval facility in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa near the Gulf of Aden. China is investing in the neighbour countries of India which are also littoral countries and are willing to provide strategic and operational support to Chinese vessels such as the ports of Gwadar in Pakistan, Hambantota in Sri Lanka, Chittagong in Bangladesh and Kyaukpyu in Myanmar. This situation could pose a big threat to Indian security. Nepal is also interested to engage with China in OBOR project. China is now increasingly proactive in interfering in electoral processes in South Asia. It is supporting anti-Indian leaders of its choice in Sri Lanka, Maldives and Nepal. China is also taking interest in the affairs of Afghanistan. China had sent its first consignment of weapons in July 2016 to Afghanistan. In recent times, there have been reports that the troops of both countries have carried out coordinated patrolling. China has also facilitated talks with the Taliban. It was also a part of the Russia-China-Pakistan trilateral discussions on Afghanistan in 2016 and is ready to invest in the state⁹. China has given loan to Sri Lanka with an interest rate of 6.3%, while the World Bank gives soft loan on the interest rate on 0.25-3%. India is giving soft loan to its neighbouring countries with the interest rate of 1%. It is difficult for Sri Lanka to pay the debt and agreed to change its debt into equity. Pakistan is heading towards the similar crises. China's promise for CPEC has now crossed \$ 50 billion, this may turn Pakistan into a client state of China.¹⁰ A leaked Draft Master Plan, published by Pakistan's Dawn newspaper, underlines the level to which China is exporting its

development model to Pakistan. Besides building roads and dams, Chinese firms would acquire agricultural land to build tourism and cultural venture.¹¹ China is increasing Pakistan's maritime capabilities with latest technology. Indian authorities are concerned over Chinese existence through the expansion of strategic settlements in the region that could be engaged to militarise the region and can engulf India in the time of resentment.

Nothing can be done to stop China or any other country to invest in the region. India's response must be deepened and broadened to deal in the region. India has to keep engaging with its neighbouring states to lessen the power of China as India offered Bangladesh a defence loan. India has offered an interest rate as low as 1% and even lower in some cases to its neighbouring countries.¹² Currently, India is massively investing in the expansion of its naval forces by providing latest technology and equipments.

Chinese power in Indo-Pacific region has to be neutralized by active strategic and economic cooperation with other powers. Four countries, India, Australia, United States and Japan formed an alliance to contain China. United States has changed the term Asia Pacific to Indo-Pacific and wants India to play an important role in the region to counter China. Quad, a group of four likeminded democracies was formally announced when these nations met on November 11, 2017 in Manila. Obviously the group will have a China centric security agenda. This alliance has the potential to change the region's security landscape. General Joseph Dunford, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff told members of the House Armed Services Committee that Pentagon has developed a campaign plan against China to curtail its expansionist design across the globe.

ENDNOTES

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