

Balance of Power and US Rebalancing Strategy in Asia.

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ABSTRACT

The Obama doctrine largely suggested a new US strategy to strengthen its long-term role in the Asia-Pacific almost in all dimensions: security, political, diplomatic, and economic. But of all these efforts, the most prominent is the US military rebalancing towards the Asia-Pacific. The "rebalancing strategy" or "Pivot" is one of the major foreign strategies ever launched by the Obama administration. India is one of the potential major partners that the US requires in order to successfully implement the proposals in the strategic guidance document. India seems responsive to the US 'pivot' strategy which converges with its "Look east" policy. It was long before the US 'pivot' strategy's announcement that India initiated and vigorously pursued its "Look east" policy. The research reveals that the U.S. perceives the China as a threat, stating that China's emergence as a regional power will have the potential to affect America's economy and security, and that the growth of China's military power must be accompanied by greater clarity of its strategic intentions in order to avoid causing friction in the region. It seems that the U.S. engagement in the region has economic, security and political goals. At a time of U.S. austerity, Asia could serve as a source of economic recovery. Growth of export to and investments in the region are seen as measures to reduce unemployment in the U.S. Moreover, the Asian emerging markets are potential source of much needed capital for the United State. American presence to the Asia –Pacific and Chinese response to the Pivot seems to be little aggressive in the region. I look at how these actors are going to play in Asia –Pacific region for achieve their own National Interest.

Introduction

According to a US strategist, the military aspect of the US strategic rebalancing is to include two interconnected efforts: geographical rebalancing and capability rebalancing. Agreements are being made with countries like Japan, Australia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam to host the maximum US presence allowable without aggravating local sensitivities about basing. With regard to capability rebalancing, the US is trying to rebalance its investments in military technologies and force structure to best address Asia-Pacific military realities. This essentially calls for a shifting from its current counterinsurgency focus on land in Afghanistan to seaborne crisis response in the Pacific. To this end, the US is said to deploy 60% of its naval assets in the Asia-Pacific¹. Efforts will also be made to create a set of new military capabilities in the nuclear, conventional (air and sea power), missile defense, and cyberspace fields. Meanwhile, the Pentagon has produced the so-called Air-Sea Battle combat concept as a new operational doctrine in its preparation to fight a war with a regional power specifically like China.

The purpose of this strategic balancing is clearly to reestablish US dominance in the Asia-Pacific. To achieve this goal, Washington seems to need a target, which is China, to justify the legitimacy of its increased involvement in East Asia. “Watch out for China” has become a catch phrase, a central theme of the US new strategy. Thus, the process of the implementation of this new strategy in the past two years has been noticeably linked up with the US ‘frenzied efforts to demonize China, sowing discords between China and its neighbors, inflaming China’s territorial and maritime disputes with these countries, and encouraging the disputant countries to take a unified and more defiant stance against China. All this seems meant to issue a signal to the region that the US is here to stay as an eventual security guarantor, and is ready to support any country that may happen to be “bullied” by China.

Since the decline of British maritime power in the Pacific at the end of the 19th Century, the underlying geostrategic objective for the United States in Asia and the Pacific has been to maintain a balance of power that prevents the rise of any hegemonic state from within the region that could threaten U.S. interests by seeking to obstruct American access or dominate the

maritime domain. From that perspective, the most significant problem for the United States in Asia today is China's rising power, influence, and expectations of regional pre-eminence. This is not a problem that lends itself either to containment strategies such as the ones used in the Cold War or to the use of a condominium comparable to Britain's response to the rise of American power at the end of the 19th Century. China's defense spending is projected to be on par with the United States at some point over the next 15-20 years. Depending on the focus of these budgets, and coupled with its aggressive pursuit of territorial claims and anti-access/area denial (A2AD) capabilities in areas such as the East Philippines, and South China seas, China will be in a position to pose a significant potential military threat to the United States and allies and partners. Yet at the same time, the United States and China have established broad economic interdependence, and Chinese leader preoccupied with domestic problems have consistently rejected internal pressures to challenge U.S. interests in the region overtly. Indeed, the United States has economic and strategic stakes in China's continued development, particularly since a major reversal of Chinese economic growth would present far more significant risks to U.S. economic and security interests.

India has emerged over the past decade as an important strategic partner for the United States. The rise of Indian power is significantly less complicating for U.S. foreign policy strategy than the Chinese case, because India is a liberal democracy that has generally come to view U.S. power as beneficial for its own future influence in the international system. In addition, the United States has an interest in encouraging India to become a net exporter of security in the Indian Ocean region, which is an increasingly important maritime sphere to U.S. interests in terms of free flow of commerce and energy as well as strategic depth with respect to the chokepoints at the Straits of Hormuz and the Straits of Malacca /South China Sea. Indian participation in the emerging architecture in East Asia and expanding security cooperation with Japan, Australia and ASEAN also serve U.S. interests. Frosty U.S. -India relations during the Cold War and in the wake of India's 1998 nuclear test began to melt with then-President Bill Clinton's 2000 visit to India and then were fundamentally transformed with the Bush administration's new strategic framework, which included unprecedented agreements on civil

nuclear and defense cooperation². While domestic political complications, Indian disappointment with U.S. policy in Afghanistan, and Indian insistence on “strategic autonomy” have all kept the transformation of the U.S.-India relationship at a more incremental pace since then, there is broad consensus within Washington and Delhi that each depends on the other to sustain favorable strategic equilibrium as Chinese power rises.

“New Silk Road” and South Asia

The economic framework of cooperation in the region under the leadership of USA has been conceptualized in the New Silk Road initiative. Hillary Clinton chaired a meeting of foreign ministers of Silk Road countries in on September 22 in New York. Since then the New Silk Road has been the flavor of the season. USA unveiled its vision of regional economic integration through this New Silk Road initiative in the Istanbul Conference. This Conference on the future of Afghanistan, stressed on this vision, where Kabul should be at the crossroad of global commerce rather than global terrorism.³ UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon would be addressing another similar international conference later this month in Kazakh capital Almaty. Trade has a great power to transcend all barriers. Even though present political boundaries are there for just a century or so the exchange of goods and ideas on the Silk Road had been there for millennia. Yet there is hardly any region in the globe more complicated than this at present. At stake are mineral and hydrocarbon resources of Central Asia and Afghanistan.⁴

There are very few exit points and every major power has a different vision about regional economic cooperation. Russia already has a network of gas pipelines from Central Asian Republics. China also has pipelines running from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. In 2009, in a major development, China advanced \$25 billion long term credit line to Russia for Russian Eastern Siberia-Pacific pipeline. Chinese version of the new Silk Road is Karakoram Highway (that is the southern route of the traditional Silk Road, through PoK) on

²Denmark M. Abraham, “Regional Perspectives on U.S. Strategic Rebalancing” *Journal of Asia policy* January (2013), <http://www.nbr.org/publications/element.aspx?id=641>.

³World Bank, HealthStats Database, : <http://go.worldbank.org/KZHE1CQFA0>.

⁴“Historic Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement Signed,” USAID, February 15, 2013,

⁴ Ibid.,

onehand and Af-Pak corridor terminating at Gwadar port in Pakistan, being built with the Chinese help. Pakistan would also like to stop with this version of the new Silk Road.⁵ Washington visualizes something far grander in scope. It already has military bases and increasing hydrocarbon interest in Central Asian republics. They want access to the mineral wealth of the region and linked the economic exploitation of natural resources in the region with long term stability in Afghanistan and Central Asia. USA would also like to have additional land entry routes into Afghanistan through Central Asia, even though they are at present far costlier than the Pakistan route. But recent tensions with Pakistan and continuous attacks on US convoys in Pakistan have prompted them to look for alternative routes. In this juncture it seems to be US trying to regain losing power in Afghanistan using this approach.

Implications for India

This paper is focusing on the new approach of foreign policy to the United States on Asia Pacific as well as the South Asia. The geographical shifts that shaped the expanded US-India relationship changed the way both related to East Asia. India's look East policy expressed New Delhi's intention to expand its foot print in East Asia, after decades of thin relations with China and relative neglect of the rest of the region. India's economic opening to the global economy made its Asian orientation a tangible reality India has signed three free trade agreements, all with East Asian partners; Japan, Korea, and ASEAN. Participation in several ASEAN centered institutions underscored the political dimension of India's Asia wide ties.

Meanwhile, the United States has declared that India is a 'linchpin' of the new Asian strategy and is urging Delhi to take a larger leadership role in Asia. Many countries of East and Southeast Asia want India to do more in providing security to the smaller states and promoting a stable regional balance of power. Beijing, meanwhile, would like to prevent Delhi from aligning with Washington and is teasing India with the promise of a stronger partnership. Is Delhi ready to join Asia's new power play?

⁵ Ibid.,

Delhi, like the rest of Asian capitals, has been surprised by the rapid turn of events and is utterly unprepared to cope with the strategic consequences of China's rise and America's response to it⁶. Willing to believe that the rise of China will most likely be peaceful or betting that small nations can socialize a rising giant, Asia is scrambling to cope with the evolving dynamic between Beijing and Washington. The United States, which encouraged its Asian allies to accept Communist China as a legitimate power after the rapprochement with Beijing in the early 1970s and facilitated its economic growth, now confronts a compelling rival on Asia's horizon. India, which was deeply uncomfortable with the western and Asian embrace of China in the past, now finds itself in a very different quandary as relations between China and America begin to deteriorate.

A reason for the sense of strategic surprise in Asia and America at China's rise has been the severe and prolonged nature of the global financial crisis. The economic slowdown in the West since 2008 and continued high growth rates in China have accelerated what would have been a slower but inevitable shift in the Asian balance of power in China's favor⁷. While some current linear projections of China overtaking the U.S. as the world's largest economy by the end of this decade might not necessarily turn out right, the nature and direction of the Asian power shift is undeniable. So long as China hangs together as a purposeful state, its aggregate military weight and strategic impact on Asia will dramatically rise in the coming years despite its low per capita income and what that number implies about the unstable nature of its domestic politics.

As a result the U.S. had the luxury of focusing on non-proliferation, terrorism, failed states, nation-building, promoting democracy, and the so-called non-traditional security threats in the last two decades. The U.S. military, with a sense of unchallengeable superiority, began to devote energies to such tasks as counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency, and counter-proliferation. The objective here is not to run down the importance of these issues; it is to highlight the point that this agenda was premised on the absence of a threat from another great power. America's

⁶C Teresita, "India and America, battling together in Asia" *The Hindu*, March 27, 2013, Tamil Nadu Edition, Chennai.

⁷Ibid,

exhaustion from the two wars in the Middle East and the rise of China, however, might be bringing the recent episode to a close.

At this juncture it is not unreasonable to assume that China is well on its way to becoming a great global power. Whether it is the material sources of power that are accruing to China or the unambiguous political will in Beijing to exercise power, it now has the upper hand in defining the evolution of the Asian balance of power. China does not have to match America's military strengths to alter the Asian balance of power. Beijing knows that with sufficient capabilities and an asymmetric strategy it can significantly limit Washington's ability to dominate its land and maritime peripheries. China's rise is likely to strain the nature of great power relations in Asia, stress the existing security arrangements, compel a modernization of military forces and doctrines, and undermine the current regional institutions. The following section outlines a few broad scenarios that help frame the debate on the nature of China's rise and its regional implications. This section looks specifically at India's new policy challenges in dealing with a rising China and collaborating with the United States in structuring a stable Asian balance of power. The US overtures are significant but they put India in a delicate and difficult situation. There is no doubt that India needs US technological and military hardware support for both capacities building and developing the indigenous military industrial complex. But at the same time, it has to factor in the larger geostrategic consequences of such an embrace. Within India, there are two schools on the future course of Indo-US relations. There are those, both within the policy establishment as well as elites, who believe that in the prevailing geostrategic environment building a strong politico-military relationship with the US is an imperative. Growing engagement with the US in diverse domains, in their view, is to India's advantage. They argue that there is already growing strategic congruence between the two countries on a host of issues including freedom of the seas, China's rise and the future course of its strategic behavior, growing Chinese assertiveness, its claims in the South China Sea, Afghanistan-Pakistan, etc. They also see in close defense cooperation an opportunity to leapfrog the technology gap, particularly in critical areas such as space, information technology and cyber domains. In their view, India needs to leverage its relationship with the US to its geopolitical

advantage, with a caveat that the build-up of relationship must be on shared mutual values and common interests, without compromising on the country's core national interests.

But there are others who remain skeptical of US intentions and caution against India allowing itself to become a pawn in the US's China containment strategy. They look upon US attempts to enlist India in its new balancing strategy as essentially aimed at serving the US' own interests. In their view, an open endorsement of the US strategy would harm India's relations with China. This school, while endorsing a strong bilateral relationship, would like India to follow an independent course in concert with its concept of strategic autonomy. Thinking within this circle is that the "balancing factors" that existed earlier are no longer available, with Russia, the European Union and the United States losing their prominence in the world economy. A close US-China economic relationship and concepts like G2 continue to irk the thinking of this group. These circles opine that to expect America to stand up in India's fight if it is at the receiving end will be erroneous. India therefore should not, even, expect a third country's support. They are keen to charter a self interest driven course and build the bilateral relationship on broader congruence of interests and shared values, without fully countenancing American perceptions and regional policy.

Given the foregoing, India will find it difficult to fully endorse the US 'rebalancing strategy' given its likely impact on the balance of power in Asia. In his bilateral discussion with the US defense secretary, the Indian defense minister sought to caution his counterpart about hastening the process of strengthening the multilateral security architecture in Asia-Pacific, suggesting instead that it be allowed to develop at its own pace⁸. Against the above backdrop, India can be expected to adopt a cautious and calculated policy posture. The nature of the Indo-US bilateral relationship will be marked by an incremental build-up of trust as it transcends from what can be termed as 'cooperative aloofness' to 'close cooperation'. Indian moves and the nature of the Indian engagement will be dictated by how Indian policy elites perceive their role in the region and above all its impact on India's overall China policy. The issue that will drive India's policy

⁸ " Re balance to Asia, India's pivotal role in challenging time" APCO
<http://www.apcoworldwide.com/content/PDFs/rebalance-to-asia-102012.pdf>

options will essentially be the nature of engagement with China and the US as also the broader Asia-Pacific region.

The basic dilemma confronting India is how to promote its interests within the emerging order in Asia, marked as it is by the pre-eminence of Chinese power and growing US engagement and its pivot strategy. India's economic stagnation and the ability to leverage investments and trade could also be factors. The essential perspective of India's larger geostrategic focus will therefore be dictated by the nature of its engagements. Will India, as a swing state, be able to balance Chinese assertions with those of the American, while continuing to engage with both (with China enjoying unfettered hegemony in the Chinese sphere of influence)? Or will it bandwagon with Southeast and East Asian states like Japan and South Korea to balance Chinese power. The different pathways that India could follow over the next few decades to shape its policy options are: a) India's geopolitical, energy, economic and maritime interests force it into a security understanding with US allies and partners like Vietnam, Japan, South Korea and Australia. There is marked enhancement in its defense self reliance capabilities boosted by US technology transfers and military hardware support. India develops strong maritime capability and nuclear triad backed by significant space and cyber capacities with a large C4ISR footprint over region of its strategic interest. The Andaman and Nicobar islands transform into a strong 'iron choke' to counter the Chinese 'string of pearls'. India puts in place an effective anti-access and area denial strategy in the Indian Ocean as also along its land borders.

b) India attempts to balance Chinese assertion and US interests as a classic swing state. Towards this, on one hand, it boosts the economic relationship with China, while simultaneously developing close political and economic linkages with the US but without any overt security understanding. Some commentators are already highlighting that India is in an unique position of being wooed by both the US and China. To foster its regional economic interests, India also boosts its trade and economic relationship with ASEAN. It further buttresses these initiatives through close strategic relationships with Russia and Central Asia while taking effective steps to improve its bilateral relations in South Asia including improvement in India-Pakistan relations. It uses this period to build up its Comprehensive National Power while ensuring economic progress.

c) Sustained economic development and military modernization to build credible dissuasive capability. To buy time and foster regional peace and stability, India could reach a political and economic understanding with China through conciliatory gestures; e.g. on South China Sea, membership of SCO, undertaking joint development and infrastructure projects in South and South East Asia. In addition, India opens up a dialogue to address Chinese fears in the Indian Ocean Region. In short, India attempts to upgrade its bilateral arrangements with China and prevent falling into China's containment trap. In this can be seen an attempt to build a peaceful periphery without being a so-called 'swing' state.⁹

The important thing is few strategists in India and US have been using the term String of pearls to designate those areas where China is establishing its bases. These bases have been given the term 'pearls'. Each pearl in the string is a nexus of Chinese geopolitical influence or military presence, which stretches from Hainan Island to Gwadar. India's idea is china is trying to encircle india though this policy. Sttive in Myanmar, chittagon in Bangladesh, Hambanthota in Sri Lanka, Maowo in Maldives, Gwdawar in Pakistan. Those ports are giving space to china for economic development and the security enhancement. Due to that reason India is moving closer to US for their national interest.

The Indian dilemma is how to boost its relationship with the US that can provide an impetus to its economy and defense capability building without antagonizing China. From the emerging trends it is clear that China will initiate all moves to counter US attempts at reassertion in the Asia-Pacific. This process will include using its economic leverages with countries around its strategic periphery, assertive behavior in the South China Sea as was seen during the recent stand-off with the Philippines over fishing in the Scarborough shoal, the creation of a military district covering the entire South China Sea and deploying four "combat-ready" marine surveillance ships to enforce law and order in addition to seeking bids for exploration in the Vietnamese EEZ¹⁰. These are clear attempts at raising the ante, in view of the US reassertion and

⁹Sourabh Gupta, "The US pivot and India's look East" <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2012/06/20/the-us-pivot-and-india-s-look-east>.

¹⁰Mohan Raja, "China's rise, "America's pivot, and India's Asian ambiguity", http://www.india-seminar.com/2013/641/641c_raja_mohan.htm

the forthcoming leadership succession within China. Similar actions can also come be initiated in the Indian Ocean with respect to both Hambanthota in Sri Lanka and Seychelles or alternately raising the ante along the Line of Actual Control. China's footprints and close strategic relationships in South Asia are sources of concern for India. Thus, the challenge for India is how to leverage its policy of engaging China with that of close strategic cooperation with the US while maintain its strategic autonomy.

New Delhi has been a significant non-military actor in Afghanistan in recent years; the \$2 billion of aid it has provided Kabul makes it one of Afghanistan's largest bilateral donors. Last autumn Delhi signed a strategic partnership agreement with Kabul that commits India to an enhanced role in guaranteeing stability in Afghanistan once NATO departs. The US drawdown, Indians warn, should facilitate rather than undermine that stability. Chaos in southwest Asia, they add, will inevitably limit the attention Delhi can give to Asia farther east.¹¹

Indian defense hawks fear the US shift to Asia for a different reason. This influential group worries about India remaining a security free-rider .eg., relying on other powers for basic security rather than committing the resources necessary to guarantee Indian security and project power far from Indian shores. To the extent that a greater US role in the region encourages such shortsightedness in New Delhi, these analysts argue, the American emphasis on Asia simply Reinforces dangerous tendencies already present in India.

China's Response and Balance of Power

Observing both the U.S.'s strategy assumptions and activities in the Asia-Pacific region and China's reaction to this approach, it seems plausible that both countries have similar goals the U.S wants to preserve its superpower status, while China wants to regain it. On the one hand, the interests of both states could be called "the same in content but mutually unfavorable as the importance of Sino-American relations lies mainly in their conflicting interests rather than shared ones, and the conflict decides that the relationship is so significant."¹² On the other hand, China-

¹¹Ibid.,

¹²Muni,op-cit.,

U.S. relations could be depicted as different in content but mutually favorable, which means that they are convergent and closely interdependent. This trend is visible in the economic sphere China needs America as an export market, while the U.S. requires Chinese capital and strives to open the Chinese market for U.S. goods and investments.

Bearing in mind that these two trends, known also as “neither friends nor enemies,” constitute Sino-American relations, and that the Asia–Pacific region and South Asia has become a main area of rivalry between both states, it seems that in the short term we could observe an escalation of disputes and then a process of dispelling tensions. In this ups-and-downs process, other Asian states could play pivotal roles in balancing China and the United States. Asian countries could be beneficiaries of this rivalry, through using economic, political and military relations with China or the U.S. and competition between them, in a manner that best serves their interests. It seems that both Beijing and Washington strive to build a tight net of comprehensive bilateral and multilateral relations with Asian states, thus creating a space for them to choose between the offers of either China or the United States, taking into account their national objectives. But apart from this situation, e.g., “where two fights the third one wins,” Asian states could be also exploited and played by the PRC and the United States. In this sense, the Sino-American “tug-of-war” in the Asia–Pacific region could be a destabilizing factor¹³.

The most likely scenario for the near future is the slow but certain build-up of the Sino-U.S. rivalry in the region. China’s assertiveness in the region and the U.S. response to it, in the form of military and diplomatic rebalancing of Asia, might have set the stage for a prolonged geopolitical contest in the region. It is a rivalry few in the region have wished for or can manage. The tension between the Chinese search for greater freedom of action in its Asian periphery on the one hand, and the American forward military presence and its long standing alliances on the other, is real and will have great bearing on Asia’s international relations for a long time to come. The search for a regional balance of power will be different from the Cold War experience in Asia. Unlike the Soviet Union, which was isolated from the economic flows in the region,

¹³Mohan, op-cit.,

China is at the very heart of Asia's economic dynamism and is by no means amenable to a strategy of containment by other powers.¹⁴

On the other hand, China's power naturally complicates the credibility of traditional U.S. alliances in the region. The current debate in Australia, one of the most loyal allies of the United States and a major economic partner for China, on how to cope with the Sino-American rivalry, is indicative of a larger trend. Japan and the Philippines fear that the United States might not stand by them when their territorial conflicts with Beijing turn into shooting matches. Meanwhile, the ASEAN, which has seen itself as the driver of regional institution building, is finding it hard to stay united amidst the assertion of Chinese power.

The new divisions across the region are further reinforced by the deepening schisms within the political elites of all major countries on how best to deal with China's assertiveness and how far their nations must go in working with Washington to constrain Beijing. These new dilemmas are clearly visible in India's own policy response to the changing balance between China and the United States. In Delhi they acquire greater complexity given India's own aspirations to play a larger role in Asia and its celebrated tradition of non-alignment.

On the face of it, the U.S. pivot to Asia is an extraordinary strategic opportunity for India. The unfolding Sino-U.S. rivalry has the potential to end India's prolonged isolation from Asian geopolitics and offer Delhi a chance to insert itself as an indispensable element of the new regional balance of power. That India has long sought to balance Chinese power is not in doubt. India's expanding security cooperation with the United States and its allies in the last few years and the attempts to raise its independent profile in East Asia points a clear Indian intent to balance China. Yet, at the very moment the U.S. moved to an explicit balancing strategy and is urging India to take the leadership role in Asia, India is sending ambiguous signals. Delhi has neither endorsed the U.S. pivot to Asia nor criticized it.

Nothing illustrates India's urgent need to balance China and the problem of doing so better than the expanding strategic gap between Beijing and Delhi in favour of the former. At the turn of the 1990s, China and India were roughly equal in terms of aggregate economic size and per capita

¹⁴Cohen P. Stephan, *Emerging Power India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 145

income. By the turn of the second decade of the 21st century, China looms nearly four times larger. China, which has become the second largest economy of the world, also spends nearly four times as much on defense as India. This huge gap is unlikely to close any time soon. Even if India produces its best historic economic performance of nine per cent annual growth rate seen for a few years in the mid 2000s it will stay behind China for a long time. Since 2010, the Indian economy has visibly slowed down to less than six per cent, and Delhi is perilously close to a macroeconomic crisis amidst the widening trade deficit, falling rupee, high inflation and mounting burden of wide-ranging subsidies. The conditions for reducing the gap in the foreseeable future a significant slowdown of the Chinese economy and a rapid acceleration of India's growth rates may not present themselves easily.

India, of course, has the option of accepting the widening power differential with China, eschew rivalry, and tailor its policies towards greater accommodation. Such a course would seem largely unthinkable for Delhi. Given its own self-image as a natural leader of the developing world, India will find it hard to settle for a secondary place in a Sino-centric Asian order and an international system where Beijing plays a larger role in setting and enforcing rules. This could, however, change if Beijing could tempt India with a reasonable settlement on the boundary, addresses its concerns on Pakistan and cuts some space for the pursuit of India's own ambitions in Asia. If China is not ready to accommodate India's geopolitical interests, Delhi has no alternative but to balance China. Balancing a larger power is usually done in two ways – internal and external. Internal balancing involves the full mobilization of domestic economic and military resources to maintain a measure of strategic parity if not strict equality. The other is an external balancing of strong power through alliances and partnerships.

On all the three counts, India faces a challenging period ahead. Internal balancing requires an extraordinary political will and executive capability in rapidly building comprehensive national power. India's chaotic internal politics naturally leads to much skepticism about purposeful actions to balance China. Despite the visible expansion of Chinese strategic capabilities across the spectrum from transforming the border infrastructure to cyber warfare capabilities Delhi's response has been slow, inconsistent and unimpressive. Whether it is the construction of border

roads or modernizing the Indian military, whether it is upgrading its human resource potential or investing in advanced research and development, Delhi has not shown the purposefulness of Beijing.

On the question of external balancing, India has made some interesting moves in laying the foundations for strategic partnerships with the United States, Japan, Indonesia, Vietnam and others who are all alarmed to different degrees by the rise of China. Yet, India finds itself hesitant to follow through the logic of external balancing. Self-doubt, fears about losing strategic autonomy, apprehensions about being a junior partner and domestic political concerns have significantly limited Delhi's capacity for strategic cooperation with powers bigger than itself. If the ghosts of non-alignment impede India's partnerships with the U.S., an ingrained reluctance to offend Beijing has constrained what India can offer smaller powers like Vietnam seeking to balance China.

It is not that India is alien to balance of power strategies. After all, its *de facto* alliance with the Soviet Union during the 1970s was a classic balancing act against Sino-U.S. rapprochement. Delhi's problem today is not as much about the high principles of strategic autonomy or non-alignment but of finding the political skill to navigate the current regional turbulence, strengthen the partnership with the United States without courting a premature conflict with China and elevate India's standing in the Asian balance of power. China's emergence as a major economic partner for India adds a further wrinkle to the strategy of external balancing. India is the last one in Asia to recognize the benefits of deepening economic integration with China. As in Asia and the United States, finding harmony between economic and strategic imperatives in dealing with China is already a big headache for Indian policy makers.

Though United States had its presence in this region from past six decades it is now looking to strengthen its hold in the region. United States intends to shift sixty per cent of its military forces to the Asia Pacific by 2020. The US aims to reinforce its traditional alliance with Australia, Japan, South Korea and Thailand. Apart from this, it is looking forward to build new strategic partnership with countries such as India, Indonesia, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia and

Myanmar. Following this it is aiming to establish a multilateral strategic architecture in this region, which will promote democracy, human rights and freedom of navigation in Indo-Pacific region.

Conclusion

Mentioning the reasons for this rebalancing according to the Muni it is a “smart face saving posture from the unwinnable wars” in Afghanistan and Iraq. Secondly, the US wants to avoid the prospects of a ‘clash of civilization’ with the Muslim and Arab world. Thirdly the US seeks to reassert its leadership in Asia and the world especially in the wake of a rising China. The US is aiming to promote its economic interests by creating and protecting jobs through the sales of weapons to Asian countries by popularizing ‘China’s threat perceptions’. ¹⁵

India is positioned in a very critical strategic position in the region along vital sea lanes of communication. Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia are situated to its North West, Indian Ocean to its South and Straits of Malacca to its South East. Along with this India has strong military strength with a huge market for job creation and growth. The United States has clearly understood that “Assertive China and emerging Asia” cannot be dealt with “without befriending India”. Despite the ups and downs of India’s polity, it has remained a democracy for the past sixty five years. He concluded by discussing the prospects for India in the region and how it has to respond to American rebalancing in the region. Through its Look East policy, India can enhance its strategic profile. United States coming closer to India is a welcome sign. It would help India to build its capability, clout, reach in the region and be in a better bargaining position and power.

Trust deficit in bilateral relations continued over the issue of Kashmir, PL480, a funding programmed of US food for overseas aid to India, Indo-Sino War of 1962-63 and Indo-Pak War of 1971. To some extent India is also skeptical about US rebalancing its position in the view of its economic woes. This has led to a spill over dilemma for India in dealing with China, which he

¹⁵Muni, op-cit.,

termed as “Dollars verses Defense”. India has some fears that US may try to encroach upon its strategic turf in immediate neighborhoods especially in relation to Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

In conclusion, as far as my research of the Asian pivot, how it will shape the Asia Pacific and events which will be crucial for its success. It includes, India pursuing a robust ‘Look East Policy’, China’s attitude and assertiveness, Pakistan’s political stability, Border issues and most concerning is Post July, 2014 in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of American troops. Finally India’s own pace of military growth, modernization and political stability will have a pivotal role to play.

Finally, the idea of an asymmetric strategy towards China has barely begun to figure in India’s strategic discourse. If US is going to enhance the military balancing over the Asia with the help of India of course China will react with the so called String of pearls. Using small nations like Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan china would be trying her best for balance of power over the South Asian region against India. Delhi has seen the Pakistan Army implement the asymmetric strategy of cross-border terrorism during the last two and a half decades as a way to neutralize India’s superior capabilities. India is witnessing China’s similar approach to weaken the United States in the Indo-Pacific region. Despite the demonstrated virtues of an asymmetric strategy in dealing with a stronger power, India will take a long time in developing one, if at all. Unfortunately near future Asia would be the battle field for them.

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