

India Faces the Grave Threat of Destabilization

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Introduction

India faces the threat of destabilization by external aggression and internal subversion. External aggression can be from China and/or Pakistan, her two contiguous hostile neighbours. Aggressive and intimidating, the two in tango are implicitly conniving at her implosion. The internal threat emanates from intensified intra-societal conflicts and disorder. The two are interactive to a large extent.

External hostility

China believes that the size of population, landmass, and natural resources, as well as proximity to the strategic waterways of the Indian Ocean, make India her potential Asian rival. She is upset by the prospect that with a growing economy, India could outstrip her economically, militarily and politically to reduce her to second place in the hierarchy of powerful and influential states of the Asian continent. China would want to remain at the top.

Pakistan's anti-India attitude is something like fossilized hatred stemming from the undeniable commonality of the history and culture of the Indian sub-continent of pre-partition years. What Pakistan abhors is not India but the historical and cultural background of her Indian connection. It has ultimately taken the shape of a dispute over Kashmir. As the only Muslim country in the world possessing nuclear capability, Pakistan expects the entire Muslim world in general and the OIC, in particular, to give credence to her stand on the dispute which she projects as an issue of the Islamic community (*ummah*).

These postulations apart, both China and Pakistan, with real power in the hands of their armies and not the people, consider the vibrant Indian parliamentary democracy as the Achilles heel.

China's stance

Physical threat from the two external sources is real and not hypothetical. In the words of a western analyst, China's strategy towards India has three elements viz. encirclement, envelopment and entanglement. 'Encirclement' is a kind of "strengthened Chinese strategic presence in Tibet, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar and in the Indian Ocean Island States." 'Envelopment' is essentially "integrating all of India's neighbours into the

Chinese economy.” ‘Entanglement’ is “exploiting India’s domestic contradictions and multiple security concerns.” The ‘entanglement’ part of the strategy can threaten India’s internal security the most. However, unlike Pakistan, the involvement of China in meddling in India’s internal security matters is not simply a case of “sub-conventional warfare” as is often said. It is a more nuanced and complex involvement both in direct and indirect manifestations.

Despite the Panchsheel Agreement of 1954, China crossed over to grab the Indian Territory in Arunachal Pradesh which led to a border war between the two countries in 1962. Earlier, India had not only conceded Tibet’s illegal occupation by the PLA but had also turned down an informal proposal of the US to offer the Kuomintang seat in the Security Council to India. China was pursuing an aggressive policy with intending to force India to agree to the nullification of the McMahon Line drawn by the British Indian colonial power.

Hence, today we see Beijing laying claim to some territories on our side of the McMahon Line in the Himalayan foothills like Arunachal, Doklam, Galwan, Pangong tsu etc. China continues with her illegal occupation of Indian territories in Aksaichin and Shaksgam Valley in Hunza. These policy measures facilitated China in laying a railway line from Xinjiang to Lhasa in Tibet.

China has been encroaching upon the Indian Territory in Eastern Ladakh. Sino-Indian military standoff along the Eastern Ladakh is in place for more than a year. China has been indulging in intermittent sword-rattling and has set up a huge military and airbase close to the international border with India in the Ladakh region. The two armies are standing with an eyeball to eyeball stance along the Line of Actual Control in the Eastern Ladakh region.

Under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project Pakistan has handed over to big Chinese Companies mega power, road and infrastructure development projects in the disputable region of Gilgit-Baltistan. Thousands of Chinese PLA personnel, feigning as skilled labourers, are engaged in building defence structures to strengthen the Pakistan army’s illegal hold on the region. Reports say that China has installed long-range missiles in hidden caves along the Karakorum Highway targeting Indian towns and strategic installations. India has been lodging protests. China is likely to establish a strong missile base for Pakistan in the Gilgit region wherefrom any part of India can be hit.

In the India Pacific region, China has thrown a ring of deep-water seaports around India; in Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Seychelles, Pakistan, Maldives, and Djibouti in the Horn

of Africa, she has a strong naval or military presence. The Chinese navy has been aggressively crisscrossing the waters of India-Pacific and the South China Sea right up to shores of Australia and Japan.

Sino-Pak collusion

In their Indian policy, China and Pakistan have stuck to the Maoist axiom that “enemy’s enemy is a friend.” It explains their collusion. In 1960 they had set up a Coordination Bureau to coordinate the training, arming and funding of insurgency movements in the North-Eastern region of India. Such was the impact of Mao’s ideology on the Naxalite movement in India that Charu Mazumdar, the pioneering leader of that movement, famously remarked: “China’s Chairman is our Chairman and China’s path is our path”.

President Bill Clinton visited India in March 2000. Committing themselves to “new beginnings”, the two countries identified democracy as a key element to “create a closer and qualitatively new mutual relationship. This was a subtle expression of threat perception.

The strategy adopted by the "Iron brothers" as they call themselves, is to destabilize India’s democracy through overt or covert machinations. Democracy is the most obnoxious word for military-run regimes anywhere in the world.

Months before the partition of India on 15 August 1947, the top brass of the British Indian civil and military establishment had been in cahoots with the bigoted stalwarts of the Indian Muslim League and the J&K Muslim Conference combine, which had jointly hatched a secret conspiracy of mobilizing thousands of armed tribesmen of the North-West Frontier Province (now in Pakistan) to lead Kashmir incursion and grab the state by perfidy and force of arms.

With its northern territories touching on the then southern border of Post-Soviet Central Asia, Kashmir had strategic importance for the capitalist bloc. However, their designs seemed to be defeated when, at the request of the ruler of the state, India sent in forces that threw back the invaders. Pakistan's fourth attempt --- a proxy war since 1989 and code-named Topac --- is as elusive as any of the previous ones though tactically very different and almost coming to the brink not once but twice during recent decades. The new tactics in the words of General Zia, the late President of Pakistan, is to “bleed India by a thousand cuts”. Attacks like those in Mumbai in 2008, Pathankot Air Base in 2016 or the Pulwama suicide attack of 2019 are examples of low-intensity war.

It will be reminded that Al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden was hiding in a palatial building at a few kilometres distance from the Pakistan Army Headquarters in Rawalpindi where he was shot dead by the marines. Three terrorist organizations based in Pakistan have been designated by the UN and the US along with some of their leaders. Terrorist organizations like *Sipah-e-Sahaba* and *Lashkar-e-Jhanghvi* have publicly pronounced the decimation of the Pakistan Shia community and the blasphemy offenders as their targets. Two terrorist organizations name Lashkar-e-Tayyaba and Jaish-e-Muhammad have publicly announced that the separation of Kashmir from India through sheer force of arms is the foremost objective of their organizations. Pakistan has incepted scores of terrorist training camps where the youth are trained and brainwashed for operation in the Indian part of Kashmir.

Internal threat

The real threat of destabilization comes from within the country and its people. Indian society is a conglomerate of many religions, ethnicities, languages, dialects, cultures and political ideologies. With an improvement in economic standards coupled with unfortunate misuse by sections of irresponsible political entities of democratic freedoms, we have witnessed a sudden upsurge in a demand for recognition of these identities ---- religious in particular. It has become easy for India's external detractors to manipulate the homegrown dissident elements. Unbridled aspirations for political power --- dynastic in some cases --- have created the vote bank syndrome, which grossly subverts the rule of law. The unprincipled opposition has roped in all anti-government elements and political entities with the only purpose of pulling down the democratically elected government and let loose chaos and disruption in the country. Among their cohorts are those who advocated "fragment India into pieces" at a rally in the prestigious Jawaharlal University in New Delhi. They have no qualms of conscience in hobnobbing with the known external enemies of India. They have infiltrated into organs of the state and sections of bureaucracy and subversion is not a forbidden game for them. They have adopted the soft strategy of covert subversion and money power to somehow derail the government at the Centre. Thus violators of democratic norms, perpetrators of communal disharmony, promoters of violence and hatred all have come together to break India.

Impact

The consequences of the implosion of India, if brought about by joint efforts and machination of external and internal elements, would mean a frontal blow to the political philosophy called democracy. India, the bastion of democracy in Asia, will get fragmented into several states physically and ideologically. It will create a void for China's totalitarianism to fill. The entire world order will be affected, leave aside the island states in the Indo-Pacific and the Asian heartland states. A new world run by totalitarian order will appear with far-reaching economic and social implications in which capitalist socialism will be the arbitrating force. Freedom of speech, movement and association and human and civil rights all of the human beings have secured after great struggle will get smashed.

Countering destabilization

Major democracies in the world understand that any threat to destabilize democratic India means jeopardizing the very concept of democracy and a free world. That is why four strong democracies of the world, namely the US, Australia, Japan and India, called Quad-4, have come together to face the threat from the totalitarian Asian dragon and its "iron brother". Quad-4 countries will also address other urgent challenges threatening humanity like Covid-19, Global Warming, Narcotics proliferation, terrorism and free trade zones etc.

India is an active partner in the Indo-Pacific security arrangement. She enjoys a unique position in the security of the Indian Ocean Region and cooperates with the Indo-Pacific region navies in conducting naval exercises to ensure the free movement of ships along the trading channels. India has undertaken a massive programme of building strategic infrastructure, road connectivity and boosting its defence capabilities. At the same time, India is bringing about reformation in the functionality of all the four organs of the state to provide efficient governance and equitable distribution of wealth. These measures are bound to neutralize the internal subversion and threats to her stability and integrity.