

COVID – 19 & THE NEW I.P.C India, Pakistan, China

DR. VINAY P. RAUT

Head – Department of Political Science, Vikas College of Arts, Science & Commerce, Kannamwar Nagar – 2, Vikhroli
(East), Mumbai – 400083, Maharashtra, India

Email ID: vinaypraut@yahoo.com, Mobile No. : 09322493434.

Abstract: This research paper highlights the geopolitical, socio-economical, and the key happenings in the three nuclear powers of Southeast Asia in amid COVID – 19 pandemic. After accessing numerous Online News, Print Articles, National & International Debates, and Interviews of Political Analyst I understand Southeast Asian Countries were no exceptions, 5 – 6 months span of the deadly pandemic bought the real faces, hidden agendas, socio-political, socio-economic positioning of Southeast Asian Countries before the world & the most lethal and controversial I.P.C – India, Pakistan, China deteriorating relations exposed.

Throughout my research on this grave situation, thoughts that crossed my mind were that even when Corona virus was ravaging the economic foundations of the world, still few countries accepted the doctrine of an eye for an eye on its borders. Was this obligatory or everyone was trying to be an opportunist taking advantage of the state to thumbs down each other, anti-globalization pomposity venom is now expanded.

The research briefly put across the historic moments taken place and the tense issues within Indian, China & Pakistan. The finishing part of the research put forward the upcoming situation as the United States withdraws from Afganistan and the West's influence in the region declines, this triangular strategic relationship will become more complicated nevertheless the two major powers India & China can define their parameters of a new regional order. India must view the region from a wider, long-term strategic perspective and avoid disputes with its neighbouring countries because such an initiative could lead to peaceful coexistence and conciliatory management of the region's problems and it would bring first signs of peaceful Southeast Asian ' Superpower ' on the rise.

Keywords: India, China, Pakistan, Southeast Asian, COVID – 19.

1. INTRODUCTION

Devastating COVID -19, humanity's biggest crisis since World War II, when almost every country has been affected, when millions and billions of people have been suffering from the impact of this global pandemic when this Corona virus has put the entire world on hold and the world economy at major risk when this pandemic – driven crisis is constantly changing and countries are desperate to flattening the curve of COVID – 19. New equations, change of foreign policies, hate speeches, cold war, word, and hand twisting moments in between many countries were visible on World Media and lot more was discussed, debated on almost all Social Media platforms. Southeast Asian Countries were no exceptions, 5 – 6 months span of the deadly pandemic bought the real faces, hidden agendas, socio-political, socio-economic positioning of Southeast Asian Countries before the world & the most lethal and controversial I.P.C – India, Pakistan, China deteriorating relations exposed.

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INDIA, emerged a staunch pro-West, pre-crisis India was leveraging its core strengths to carve dominance on the global stage, which helped India to show its arrogance on its LOC and LAC to China, Nepal & Pakistan. With China's conflict with America and seeing the Anti-China moment soaring all over the world, India initiated a Wallet War with China by going be 'Vocal about Local' drive gathering enormous response within and outside the nation. With the blame game intensifying of the Corona virus origin, India projected itself as an alternative of Global Supply Chain diversification by shoring up domestic manufacturing and services giving birth to the 'ATMANIRBHAR' campaign.

The pandemic period witnessed few historic moments, the first batch of five Rafale fighter jets of the Indian Air Force (IAF) took to skies from France and landed on Indian soil on 29th July 2020, the same the National Educational Policy 2020 of India was revealed. The federal government of India put to an end 400 years controversial issue of Ram Janmabhoomi by laying the temple foundation on the most debated date of 5th August which also marked the first anniversary of the abrogation of article 370 and conversion of the erstwhile state into two Union Territories – Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. India's biggest advantage is the demographic dividend with a young population of 600 million people. With 55% market share of the global services sourcing business, India is the most preferred offshoring destination in the world. With the third-largest start-up ecosystem in the world. India is a supreme entrepreneurial base, recognized as a country with a legacy of non-alignment all India needs to do is to capitalize on it. India's most boasted secularism, multicultural, and socially assorted demographic gives us a vision that can allow us to forge successful strategic and diplomatic partnerships across the world.

PAKISTAN, a Country with a shrinking economy since early 2018 and with its fragile economy was been dragging towards stability, and the COVID – 19 crisis struck, the pandemic's economic fallout considerably derailed the nation's process. Islamic nation with poor health facilities, non-awareness of Corona virus within the population, the federal government, and their opposition not being on the same page created loads of confusion in decision making to curtail the infection resulting in soaring of cases in the nation. During the pandemic the nation had to face a terrorist attack on its Karachi Stock Exchange by Balochistan militants, inflation was to its peak with sky shot prices of Petrol, Wheat & Sugar in the city following a scam irruption created food shortage in the entire nation. Prime Minister Imran Khan Niazi took over the power in 2018 with Pakistan's GDP growth around 5.8% and now in 2020 it is in its historic low at minus 0.98% and is likely to decline further. International Monetary Fund (I.M.F) pressure, futile efforts to come out of the Grey List of F.A.T.F, and in mid of it vague foreign policies of the nation left it isolated. Pakistan's dearest friends China & Saudi Arabia not only turned their back but also hit Pakistan where it hurts the most. Saudi Arabia demanded early repayment of 3 billion dollar loan and has frozen Dollar 3.2 billion oil credit facility because of hate statements against the Indian government on Indian administered Kashmir and change of stand on O.I.C (The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation), to repay the 3 billion dollars, Imran Khan government had to borrow money from China.

Whereas China's flagship project a geopolitical game-changer in Pakistan ' China – Pakistan Economic Corridor (C.P.E.C) ' investment was stalled recently due to an unstable political climate in Pakistan, the incompetent and toothless federal government power is slowly being taken over by Pakistan Army. The growing role of the Pakistan Army and over the top appointment of Lt. General Asim Saleem Bajwa as Chairman of C.P.E.C Authority might be the concern of Dragon Nation or there are some corruption issues concerning C.P.E.C which will be a matter of bigger concern to China but at present, it doubts about lending and investing in poorly governed frontier markets in a nation like Pakistan. One-third of Pakistan's population lives below the poverty line, 2.45 million people now suffer from food insecurity, while 145 million people are living in poverty, the need of time demands immediate relief for this sinking nation.

CHINA, United States President held China responsible for the role it played in the outbreak of the Corona virus, along with America most of the countries have an unfavourable view of China today, which angered the Dragon. In the shadow of the pandemic, the Chinese government came under fire on several human rights issues such as the detention of Uighurs Muslims, mistreatment of Africans in the country, national security law in Hong Kong, and last but not the least which raised many eyebrows as the drastic responses to the corona virus. The biggest investment and dream project of China in Pakistan C.P.E.C: China – Pakistan Economic Corridor came under threat as Baloch & Sindhi groups have joined hands against Chinese investments in Pakistan.

China in the period of pandemic continued its rapid rate of space launches applauding its 22nd mission of 2020, China launched Gaofen 9 satellite on 6th August 2020. Speedy recovery from COVID – 19 pandemic, gearing up economy stability raised suspension and anger of many countries towards China. A war-like situation at Galwan Valley clash which

left 20 Indian soldiers dead, India increased its pressure on the South China Sea by dispatching one of its frontline warships, whereas American counterparts operating on the other edge of the South China Sea and mounting pressure on China from other ends. One blow of India on China's most sensitive region forced the Chinese government to soften its arrogance and that was deploying warships along the Indian Ocean region at Malacca Straits the only option for Chinese going towards other continents crossing the Indian Ocean region.

Research outcome underlines that the Three Nuclear Powers of Southeast Asia India, China, and Pakistan hold keys to the future of South Asia. As the United States withdraws from Afghanistan and the West's influence in the region declines, this triangular strategic relationship will become more complicated nevertheless the two major powers India & China can define their parameters of a new regional order. The disputed borders of India along with Pakistan and China remains the security concern for the nation, though both India and China haven't reached any comprehensive agreement despite 18 rounds of border meetings yet China shouldn't forget that this time it has to deal with a more resolute and unbendable Indian Government lead by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. India in the past has exposed clandestine strategic engagement between China and Pakistan, through the Dragon nation providing a great deal of assistance to Pakistan's nuclear weapon and missile programs, however, India preferring to ignore the Sino – Pak partnership went on to strengthen its strategic ties with the United States and many other Western countries. India has now adopted the strategy of limited engagement in dealing with China, may it be resolving border tensions or finalizing LAC, on one hand, India will engage China on the trade front but on the other hand, it will snub direct fights on larger regional security issues. With Pakistan, the present Modi Government prefers to a tendency to indefinitely postpone the issue of Kashmir but on the border front, it has a tenacious stand. India has engaged China on many bilateral issues, it failed to join forces with China and other neighbours in fighting terror, stabilizing Afghanistan, ISI threats, or for that matter bringing Iran into the mainstream, Modi Government failed to press upon regional security issues to table in its bilateral relationship with China. Lastly, India must view the region from a wider, long-term strategic perspective and avoid disputes with its neighbouring countries, because such an initiative could lead to peaceful coexistence and conciliatory management of the region's problems and it would bring first signs of peaceful Southeast Asian ' Superpower ' on the rise.

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