

Geopolitics of COVID-19

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Abstract— Geopolitics simply means it is a foreign policy circles to legitimize state action. Now world geopolitics is standing on a pendulum during COVID -19 pandemic. The power of global leadership is totally vacuum. Now the world is divided into two powers such as – (1) Soft powers (China) and (2) Hard power (U.S.A). During COVID 19 pandemic, China hit the core of Globalization system. If globalization system will be derails then China will control the global leadership. Because in present time, the USA is the leader of globalization system. Now in present decades China continuously Aid the weak countries. In present situation of world trade scenario China is the manufacturing hub throughout the world. But in Chines dream the main throne is India's foreign policy, power and trade market. So China is always involving a military conflict against India. On the other hand USA is involving a military conflict against China to keep the control of global leadership in own hand. So in present geopolitical scenario of the world there is huge possibility of shifting power from Western world to the Eastern world.

Keywords: Global leadership, Globalization, Geopolitical conflict, Paradigm shift

I. INTRODUCTION

Geopolitics is highly concerned with political geography. The term geopolitics simply means – “a long established area of geographical enquiry which considers space to be important in understanding the constitution of international relations.” It is a foreign policy circles to legitimize state action. The term geopolitics was first used by Rudolph Kjellen in 1899 in developing Ratzel's Organic vein of state. In political geography this approach is widely used by Karl Hausofer. During Second World War this approach is widely used in political geography. Geopolitics is a spatial science of every state. But this spatial science is disrupted time now. Geopolitics is standing on a pendulum due to COVID -19 Pandemic. COVID-19 is a Zoonotic noval corona virus. It infected human respiratory system and when it reached in chronic position it causes several death. The noval corona virus was first traced in Wuhan, in China, in December 2019; after that it spread whole world gradually. WHO officially declared it is a Pandemic on March 11, 2020. Countries experiencing the greatest number of cases include China, Iran, Italy and Republic of Korea. Worldwide death due to COVID -19 is 909,483 person and the rate is 3.8. This deadly virus is not only infected human health, it also affected human way of life and political stand point of every nation. This pandemic situation is disrupted the world economy.

II. VACUUM OF GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

Depending on the magnitude of its impact, corona virus could quickly become a geopolitical event. Due to economic, social and health impact it has an event like corona virus can accelerate history and it has all the potential to change the global order. In view of this Lenin's words are particularly

relevant: - “There are decades where nothing happens and there are weeks decades happen.” We are living through some of those weeks.

COVID -19 crisis, we are not at the beginning of its end, but at the end of its beginning. Struggling to control the peaks of infection, the number of people affected and the number of deaths. Dusk has not yet fallen.

The new geopolitical realignment has not yet begun. The tide is going out, but it still has not gone out completely. In fact, we will have to deal with three consecutive waves of problems (1) Health problems (2) Socio-economic problems (3) Accumulation and power management problems.

Geopolitical thought will come letter, but in contrast, (geo) political action must be commenced before the tide goes out completely. However, this window of fluidity will not last long. Soon, a new order will emerge and solidify. Whoever governs in 2021 will not have the opportunity to change matters, only to manage the new situation. Therefore the mistakes or the wise decisions that are made now will have important consequence in the years to come.

Despite the efforts of the WHO to the coordinator a global response, most countries did not adopt their response to the criteria of the multilateral organizations. This makes it possible to check who is performing better or worse.

Without a doubt, an assessment will be made of the performance of each country in political, institutional, economic, organizational and health terms and this will be insparable from an evaluation of the level of leadership.

It is a crucial time, we will be able to see which countries have been fragile and have come off badly as a result of the crisis which have been robust or resilient, able to absorb the shock and recovered; and finally, which countries have not only responded well to the circumstance, but have also emerged strong than before. For example, we can be sure that the crisis will have grave consequence for emerging countries. They are beginning to look like the principle losers from this crisis. The out flow of capital from these economics in barely two months has been more than four times greater than when the global financial crisis broke out in 2008. An unprecedented number of emerging countries more than 90 have already asked the IMF for financial assistance. This geopolitical evaluation of countries is also applied to their respective leaders.

Now the world have faced two powers (1) Soft Power (China) and (2) Hard Power (USA). They had already been competing in a number of fields: Technology, Political geo-strategy, Influence in Asia, The military field and Security. Now COVID -19 pandemic add the scientific/ medical field and competition for global leadership. The geopolitical acceleration could, paradoxically lead to a greater deceleration of globalization. Now it has been a lack of International leadership.

Bill Gates first criticized the action of WHO. Their work is slowing the spread of covid 19 and if that work is stopped no other organization can replace them. The world needs the WHO now more than ever. The political and

diplomatic leadership of US in the present crisis has catastrophically failed. Though during SARS and MARS epidemic US president Barak Obama was played a global leader. In this situation China has tried to assume the role of world leader instead U S A. China is a leader to produced N-95 Surgical mask on the other hand U S A is a global leader to produced ventilator. China may not be gaining more global leadership, but the US is rapidly losing global leadership. The vacuum in global leadership is particularly worrying at a time when urgent matters are piling up on the list of the world's problems. The absence of global leaders feeds the decline of multilateralism. The COVID 19 pandemic destroy international co-operation between the western allies and also between the U S and China, resulting in a more anarchic world where everyone is against everyone. Now world where have gone disengagement to de-globalization. China have tried to destroy the system of globalization. The impact of the pandemic has exposed the high degree dependence on global supply chains. In this pandemic situation, world have faced transition from co-operation to a greater geo-economic rivalry. In this situation western world is gradually submerged and the rise of Eurasia (not only China) and the progressive decline of the west. In Eurasia for power are face to face rivalry as China, India, Japan and Russia.

III. GEOPOLITICS OF CHINA

As countries begin to reopen during the COVID 19 pandemic, strategic analysts are debating its impact on the future of geopolitics. Some contend that the pandemic could reshape the global order, accelerating China's rise to international leadership while hastening the decline of the United States. Others argue that predictions of China's emergence as the world's dominant power are over blown, with some even contending that the pandemic could trigger the downfall of the current leadership. Still others predict that the pandemic will accelerate exiting trends such as China's ascending, the wining of US leadership and the intensification of Sino-U.S rivalry that narrow the strategic options of regional states and could trigger strategic adjustment that favor China.

South East Asia has become a critical locus of competition as Sino-U.S rivalry has escalated under president Xi Jinping and Donald Trump. Abandoning Deng Xiaoping's – "hide your strength and bide your time." dictum, Xi has asserted Chines interest more force fully. China has claimed over 90% of the South China Sea and built and militarized artificial islands that enable it to project power deep into South East Asia. Xi's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (B.R.I) aims to expand overland and maritime infrastructure, recreating "Silk roads" that will orient international economic activity towards China and Beijing is advocating a Chinese model of centralized authoritarian governance as superior to the American model for promoting economic and social development among developing countries.

U.S – China trade war disrupted global supply Chains that are critically important to South-East Asia trade dependent economics. Countries like Vietnam that have been targets of China's maritime aggression welcomed the administration's stronger stance against China. But no South East Asian country welcomed the ratcheting up of Sino-US competition, the heightened pressure to choose sides and the

attendant narrowing of their strategic options. According to the survey by the ASEAN center, approximately 80% of South East Asian elites view China as the region most important economic actor, compared to only 8% for the United States.

IV. US – CHINA RIVALRY

President Donald Trump and senior US officials have alleged that the virus might have been leaked from a laboratory in Wuhan in China. Beijing denies this. China's Center for Disease Control and Prevention initially said the virus had come from a wild animal market in Wuhan. On the other hand Chinese ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the US army had brought the virus to Wuhan in October 2019. Because US to release the health information of military athletes who visited Wuhan in October.

This tussle to control the narrative surrounding COVID 19 has taken place within the context of border geopolitical competition, which continues unabated despite the global medical and economic crisis. In the South China Sea, Chinese activities have intensified, though these initially went unnoticed beneath the heavy shroud of bad news on the corona virus. China sent warship and fighter jets to the Taiwan Strait; Chinese fishing and coastguard vessels encroached on Indonesia and Vietnam's exclusive economic zone; on 3rd April, a Chinese ship hit and sunk a Vietnamese fishing boat; this events creates a tension of South-China Sea. On the other hand not to be beaten, the United States, too, has stepped up its presence in the South China Sea. In April alone, the guided-missile destroyer USS Barry twice sailed through the Taiwan Strait. In late April US and Australian Navy's have performed a joint venture in South-China Sea.

US responses have not been limited to the South-China Sea on 23rd April, for instance US representative Mac Thornberry ranking member on the House Armed Services committee, introduced the Indo-Pacific Deterrence Initiative bill, a US 6 billion initiative – "to strengthen the United States commitment to the security of the Indo-Pacific region and to increase military readiness to defend the homeland and underwrite United States national interests."

Map 1 PLA air force crossing of the Taiwan Strait median line in March 2019



Source- Taiwan, Ministry of National Defense

V. GEOPOLITICS OF SOUTH ASIA

On July 27, the foreign ministers of China, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nepal held a COVID 19 combat conference via

video link. The webinar proposed by China and positively responded by other three countries, was China's first with some south Asian neighbors focusing on COVID 19 fight.

During the video conference, the four countries consolidated a consensus of solidarity against COVID 19 with a decisive decision to battle the virus and gradually promote cross-border trade with "fast-track channels" for personal and "green channels" for logistics. They also championed the WHO for its leading role to battle the raging pandemic. China made a special commitment to extend aid in public health sector of the other three countries, while promised to increase availability of the vaccines to them when the vaccines are readily available.

In addition to facilitating the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Trans-Himalayan Multidimensional Connectivity network, China also supports the extension of the CPEC to Afghanistan in order to strengthen the deeper connections between the four countries and the central Asian countries.

VI. WEEK COUNTRIES DEPENDS ON CHINA

Countries that are already inclined to rely heavily on China for infrastructure and other development needs are likely, after COVID 19, to depend even more on Beijing's largesse as the economic impact of the virus weighs on the region, even if countries manage to escape its worst health ramifications. Cambodia and Laos with their close ties to the Chinese economy, will certainly continue to rely on China. Other countries in the ASEAN might tilt in that direction too, even as they continue to seek good ties with the US and China and to hedge between them. The United States chaotic response to COVID 19 exposes deep structural issues and reinforces views in Asia that the country's power is declining relative to that of China. China is gradually increasing the power of percentage confidence among ASEAN countries than USA.

Country	Net Confidence (%) China			Net Confidence USA		
	2019	2020	Change	2019	2020	Change
Brunei	-11.2	-24.7	-13.5	44.4	40.1	4.3
Cambodia	-37.4	-15.3	22.1	0.00	19.1	-19.1
Indonesia	-41.8	-58.1	-16.3	39.2	40.5	-1.3
Laos	-30.9	-8.6	-22.3	44.9	17.3	-27.6
Malaysia	-20.8	-26.3	-5.5	45.8	35.0	-10.8

Source: the state of south-east Asia 2020 survey report, ASEAN Studies Centre

Table 1: Confidence among ASEAN countries

VII. INDIA CHINA CRISIS

The Current crisis is likely to accelerate the reorientation of Indian geopolitics and intersect with the breakdown of the US-China relationship that is reordering the regional and international system in multiple ways.

The deadly confrontation on June 15 followed a standoff between the two armies that began in early May and saw the death of 20 Indian's soldiers and an unspecified number (43) of men from the People's of Liberation Army. The clash came after the two sides had declared their interest in de-escalation and a road map to get there. Whatever might be the immediate reasons for the bloody encounter – the first in nearly four and a half decades – it has sparked an outrage in India and is compelling Delhi to reevaluate and reset its increasingly testy relationship with Beijing.

This is not the first crisis in recent years on the long and contested Sino-Indian frontier. The relative peace and tranquility on the border since the late 1980s have been punctured by three earlier crisis in 2013, 2014 and 2017. There are apparent reasons for these recurring crisis, including the undefined nature of the boundary and the deep disagreements on the ambiguous concept of a line of actual control.

Over the last two decades, China has modernized its military infrastructure on the frontier and has sought to constrain India which has been trying to catch up. Both the militaries operate much closer to the borders and frequently run into each other. But protocols designed to limit the friction have become increasingly inadequate amidst the growing securitization of the frontier.

There is a larger factor, however, shaping the boundary tensions. This is the dramatic transformation in relative power of China and India. The sense of rough parity between the two nations in the 1980s has now turned into a huge gap. China's current GDP is at USD15 trillion and is nearly five times that of India's at USD3 trillion. China's military expenditure of USD 261 is nearly four times larger than India's at USD71 billion.

Combined with political and military assertiveness, China has sought to deploy the power differential to redeem its long-standing territorial claims on the Himalayan frontier. Unlike similar situations in the South China Sea though, India has a stronger military muscle than Beijing's South-East Asian neighbors and Delhi has thrown its vast armies to defend its northern frontiers. Having a large face in being does not necessarily make it any easier for India to stare down Beijing to restore the status quo that existed prior to May.

Beyond the intensifying territorial dispute, India has had to cope with three additional challenges from China – a massive trade deficit, Beijing's growing political and economic influence in Delhi's South Asian and Indian ocean neighborhoods and blocking India's global aspirations for instance with regard to a permanent seat on the UN security council. As the severity of these challenges to India, Delhi has responded by a number of different strategic adjustments, such as

- 1) India has set up a robust political and economic relationship with United States.
- 2) Delhi has eager to develop strategic partnerships with other western powers, including France, Europe, Britain, Japan and Australia to compensate for the validity in US policies.
- 3) Russia remains an important part of India's great power relations, its deepening ties to Beijing and continuous confrontation with the west, have begun to introduced some strains in Delhi ties with Moscow.

- 4) Today, India is considering the emerging idea for an economic cooperation among like-minded countries as an alternative to Chinese domination of global supply chains.
- 5) While reaffirming India's long-standing equities in the "Global South", Delhi is looking beyond the Non-Aligned movement to participate in a range of global coalitions. Although India's new thinking on its role in constructing a stable global order.

VIII. GLOBALIZATION VS COVID-19

Now the question arises that globalization will face strong criticism. The corona virus has demonstrated that unwanted incidents occurring in distant places can have a direct impact on our lives. The risk of global supply chains and instant financial transactions are so acute. The free movement of people across the globe seems to be the most important reason why the virus has fast spread to countries beyond China. Stagnation in the Chinese economy has produced negative economic outcomes in other countries, including particularly those which are disproportionately dependent on China-centric global supply chains.

The war on COVID 19 has also shown that nation-state are still the most legitimate entities to provide the most effective remedies to the virus plague. Boosting different economic sectors by injecting great sums of money, adopting strict lockdowns locking people in their homes, asking them to respect the social distancing, treating them in well-equipped hospitals and tracing the physical movements of those who are infected by the virus could not have been handled by any authority but states. The crisis and the necessary public health response are causing the largest and fastest decline in international flows in modern history. Current forecasts, while inevitably rough at this stage, call for a 13-32% decline in merchandise trade, a 30-40% reduction in FDI and a 44-80% drop in international airline passengers in 2020.

The years ahead will likely see the geopolitical rivalry between the US and China intensify. This power competition will likely transpire within a post-liberal international order in which neither the US will continue to act as the chief provider of global public goods nor China will continue to act as the chief provider of global public goods nor China will acquiesce in the role of norm-taker.

IX. GEOPOLITICAL PARADIGM SHIFT

How can we envision a geopolitical paradigm shift? For the sake of caution, let us confine ourselves to discussing only three possible scenarios –

A. *Return to the Past:* -

We have overcome the crisis, at a much higher cost than during SARS (2003) but without leaving much more of a mark. A certain inertia on the part of the international community prevails, it returns to its usual quarrels even with marginal changes to certain policies in the field of global health. Given what we already know about the crisis intensity, this is not the most likely scenario. In the other two, we consider a paradigm shift.

B. *China's Rise is confirmed*

In this hypothesis, the current pandemic marks the consecration of the new power dynamics that we have seen set in motion in recent years. It may even, in the words of Dominique Moisi constitute an "accelerator". Westerners are finding it much more difficult than Asians to overcome difficulties arising from the health crisis. The torch of initiative and leadership would be passed for good to China, firstly in the field of "global issues" – of which health is part, alongside development or climatic change – but also, of course, economically, technologically (5g), and even one day military.

C. *A Western Burst of Action*

The election of Mr. Biden to the White House is not impossible. In Democratic camp, some find minds consider COVID 19 as a wake-up beyond the 2008 crisis or Ebola crisis. The comparison that comes to mind is the 9/11 attacks which triggered a paradigm shift in American politics. From then on, all external action and partly internal if you think of the Department of Homeland Security was redirected towards counter terrorism. This very reorientation had led to the fatal mistake of the invasion of Iraq and to a disproportionate extension of the United States military commitments across the world. Obama had tried to break away, in part from the post- 9/11 paradigm, at least from its dimension of "military over extension." Trump tries to go even further while keeping the rhetoric of counter terrorism alive and without having been able to imagine an alternative paradigm that is not form of "belligerent isolationism".

X. CONCLUSION

After Cold war, USA dominated the world. But now two powers have emerged in the world, such as – (1) Hard Power (USA) and (2) Soft Power (China). In the 18th to 19th centuries, China adopted the same idea as the U K, which brought the whole world under its control through world trade. Since the era of globalization in 1990, China has become the largest manufacturing hub in Asia. At present nuclear war is impossible, so China has taken advantage of the corona situation to spread its trade policy all over the world. China is asserting its sovereignty over third world countries by providing financial and infrastructure assistance. China has hit the globalization system with COVID – 19. China has not discussed or cooperation with UNO on how COVID-19 was intercepted in just one city. The USA also played a key role during the SARS and MARS epidemics. But China has silenced the WHO during the Corona pandemic, so the relationship between China and WHO seems doubtful. All countries in the world, even the USA, have reduced their defense allocations and stop all military action. But China has increased its defense spending and kept its troops ready for battle.

However, India is the main obstacle to China's expansionist policy. So China is ready to go to war with India. Along with Nepal, China has created border problems with India. The G-7 and G-20 summit were not held in China for India. India's "Vocal for Local" policy has hit China's world trade hard. Also the amount of COVID-19 recovery in India is showing a new direction to the world. On the other hand

the United States is once again increasing its defenses in the South China Sea to retain power. The United States is signing a defense agreement with ASEAN, downplaying its importance to NATO. India will play a pivotal role in the power struggle between China and The United States. However, it is uncertain which way Russia will go.

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