

India and China Relations in the Context of Nuclear Weapons and Religious Fundamentalist Movement

Nishantha Hettiarachchi¹, and Upul Abeyrathne²

Abstract

This study is concerned with India and China relations and it explores the challenges and opportunities for cooperation in the context of changed world order and rising phenomenon of religious terrorist movement in global scale. The data for the present study is collected through secondary sources and they have been descriptively analyzed. The study has traced the evolution of India and China relations from the very beginning and has stressed that the very notion of state is alien to them and with the attempt at crafting states has resulted in boarder issues between the two states. It also highlighted the contending boarder issue areas. In addition to the above, the study also has identified suspicion of involvement in internal affairs of India by Chinese political and military establishments. Further, the hegemonic aspiration in the South Asian Region by the two states also works as an impediment for cooperation. It is concluded that the future direction of relationship between the two Asiatic giants, India and China will be characterized by competition. The most important field for competition between China and India is in the field of Boarder issues and power rivalry for hegemonic position in South Asian Region.

Key Words: India, China Nuclear Weapon, Religious Fundamentalist, Boarder issues, Hegemony, South Asia

1.1. Introduction

This study is about India and China relations in the context of Nuclear Weapons and Religious Fundamentalist movement at global scale. Indo-Chinese relations have undergone dramatic changes for the past few decades. There many and varied studies on the nature and content of Indo-Chinese Relations conducted by Indian, Chinese and other scholars of the world. They have widely focused on contending boarder issues relationship they maintain with the other world powers such as Strategic Triangle, competition over natural resources strategic moves by each other and their relationship between smaller states of South Asia and the other countries of Asia (Chatterjee 2011:76-77). However, world order has been changed after the end of Cold War. Post cold war period has opened new opportunities as well as posed new challenges ahead of already existing World Powers and emerging powers in the world China and India have already shown the potential of becoming superpowers in the years to come (Clarke 2011:1).

¹ . Senior Lecturer, Department of Political Science, University of Sri Jayawardenepura, Sri Lanka and Ph. D. Candidate, at University of Ruhuna, Matara, Sri Lanka

² . Senior Lecturer in Political Science, University of Ruhuna, Matara, Sri Lanka

The specificity of the two emerging powers is the big domestic market and further economic growth potential even in times of serious crises in the International Market (Malik 2004: 38). Meanwhile, the two states have made it clear that the two countries are eager to seek international pride as big actors in the changing world order (Gojree 2013:48). China and India are already in possession of nuclear weapons. Both Countries have declared that they would not be the first user of nuclear weapons. China has declared it would not use nuclear power against neighboring countries (White 2005:131-132). However, China has not declared it would not use nuclear weapon within its domestic territory. The main conflicting situation of foreign policy making arises between the two states in the context of boarder issue of the two states.' There are two main disputed boarders between India and China, i.e. Aksai Chin administered by China but claimed by India as part of the Ladakh District of Jammu and Kashmir and The McMahan line which is considered the legal national boundary by India but not recognized by China. Meanwhile, China and India have to face the challenge posed by increasing threat of rising religious fundamentalism lead by Islamic Terrorist Groups such Xinjiang Province. The rising expectation of greater role in the Indian Ocean for energy and international pride has been working as an obstacle to cooperation to face the common threat and economic cooperation as rising economic giants in the international market³. The present study aimed at exploring the nature of treats and opportunities for the two states in the international arena and challenges for cooperation in many fields.

The information for the present study is gathered from the secondary sources and they have been descriptively analyzed.

The study is composed of four main sections. The first sections deals with historical recollection of information regarding relationship between the two states. The second sections deals with the contending issues of India and China relations. The third section of the study focuses the nature and content of threats and challenges common to the both states. The final section of the study attempts to summarize the findings and point the way out of the problems and obstacles in the greater cooperation between India and China.

1.2. Evolution of India and China Relations

India and China heir to the common legacy of colonialist legacy of some form since the starting of Western Colonialists' Power game to gain new colonies for imperial purposes (Panikkar 1953:2-3). They also had a rich tradition of cultural intermingling through Buddhism and economic transactions across the boarders presently known as India and China. In fact, the very notion of state was unfamiliar to the inhabitants of both countries for their forms of governing were different in many respects before the colonial presence in those societies. However, the notion of state has got firmly rooted in those societies as a result of the colonial encounters and presence for long time (Arif 2013:131-132). The building and crafting of state according to Western Norms of State is the starting form of conflicting situation between the two countries in the present era. At the initial phase of two nation states or state nations i.e. from 1947-1957, the relationship between the two states has been very warm and friendly. India gained political independence from the colonial yoke in 1947 and China became independent in 1949. During this period both States have concerned much in galvanizing the newly gain political independence and they have shared many things in common such as taking off the economic and social development etc and protecting the political independence in the context of ideologically polarized world politics between United States of America and Soviet Union. China and Soviet Union were the two big communist countries in that context. In fact, India was the first non-communist country to recognize the China and it has established diplomatic mission on 1st

³ Recently Nuclear Submarine with warship of China harbored in Colombo Port and India has seriously question the intention and has shown the potential of developing to strained situation between Sri Lanka and India. (See: 'Chinese Subs. Detected south of SL-report' ,Daily mirror, November 23, 2014 (w.w.w.dailymirror.lk)

April 1950 marking a watershed in the history of relations between the two nation states (Hongyu 1995:550-551). The ideological differences and disputed territory between China and Russia lead strained relationship between the two big communist countries in the world. This situation and Chinese intervention in Tibet Affairs resulted in new form of strained relations between India and China for the first time mainly due to non-recognition of official boundary carved during colonial days by China. It marks the starting point of boarder dispute between the two countries.

The period after 1957 up to Vajpayee's visit to China in 2003 can be termed a period of strained relations for both camps have been very eager to make strategic coalition for political, military and economic reasons with United States of America (USA) and the USSR. China has built strategic relations with USA with the purpose of containing growing power of Soviet Union while India is leaning towards Russia to contain China and Pakistan for varied reasons.

End of cold war marked new opportunities for cooperation in many fields including the most vital activity of economic cooperation ahead of or for both countries. The softening of ideological differences in world scale is responsible for this new development. India and China have thought of resolving some contending boarder issues in this context such as accepting Tibet as part of China by India and recognition of Sikkim as part of India by China. However, Chinese political elite have not shown signs of giving and doing away with communist ideology in the sphere of governing though it follows a more open economic development policy. Both China and India have already shown the potential of emerging economic powers of the new world order as well as military powers (Krik 2012:73-74). In fact growing economic prowess paved the way to imagine status of superpower from great powers in the world order (Clad 2004:269-270). The very same economic prosperity has resulted in seeking new leading role in the sphere of international relation by the two countries. The aspire to seek international pride has resulted in new form of conflict between the two countries that prevent them cooperating in international politics together with some form of old rivalries. Following is a discussion of those old and new contending issues between India and China

1.3. Contending Issues between India and China

The boarder issue is one of the major contending issues of India and China relations from the very starting of conflict between the two countries. However, the two states have shown their willingness to resolve boarder issues and were successful in the case of recognizing of Tibet as part of China and Sikkim as part of India by both Countries. However, claim for Arunachal Pradesh of India as part of traditional China by Chinese Political Authorities and Claimed by India as part of its traditional territory of Aksai Chin area controlled by China remains one of unresolved boarder issues (Jain 2004:255-256). Despite high level boarder talks between the two countries, conflict resolution based on it seems distant .China periodically issues public reminders of its claim to the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. The borders are generally peaceful and hence not likely to lead to hostilities at once and one can predict the possibility of erupting to violent clashes based one recent experiences⁴.

Another contending issue revolves around suspicious. India is suspicious of Chinese involvement in internal affairs of India such as Naxalite Movement and Separatism in North and East Provinces of India. In fact, the spilt of communist ideology of international communist movement has marked its impact on the communist movement of India during 1960s. The Communist movements in India face its first major spilt in 1964, when the Communist Party of India (CPI) born in the 1920's, splintered into CPI and Communist Party of India (Marxist (CPM)). It signified the influence of the ideological rift between dominant communist blocks

4. China developed new infra-structure near Arunachal Pradesh. This state is the strategically-important both state (see "China opens new highway near Arunachal Pradesh", *The Hindu*, November 1, 2013 / "China to construct new railway line near Arunachal Pradesh" , *The Times of India*, October 31, 2014)

of Soviet Russia and China. The pro-Chinese members of the CPI formed a new party CPM (Basu 1999:189). The CPM took off from a pro-Chinese and anti-CPI and anti-Soviet Union posture.

India have suspected of Chinese support for separatists in the form ideological and other logistic support with the intension of interrupting Indian hegemony and strategic gains out of such internal disturbances . The death of Mao and decline of Maoism in Chinese official political ideology has resulted easing and softening of this strained situation. Further, India has constantly fingered at China on Naxalite and violent political movements which has got strong bases among peasants and socially suppressed social categories of Indian society. One can observe the presence of isolated Naxalite groups even to date and India is not fingering at China as usual in 1960s and 1970s (Mehra 2000:235-236).

There is another contending issue between the two countries that has got some internal policy implication that emerged out of possession of Nuclear weapons by the two countries as well as by natural enemy and ally of the two countries, i.e. by Pakistan. Pakistan became a natural enemy of India due to historical and religious background of India and Pakistan (Judd 2010:138). Pakistan became a natural ally of China as well as United States of America during cold war period (Malik 2001:73-90). After the Cold war help of China is being sought by Small States of South Asia to contain India in an unprecedented scale. This is because many smaller countries have been resisting to India's big brother approach towards them from the very beginning. Some have identify this as a colonial legacy of foreign policy makers of India. Sri Lanka deviated from India when it when into war with China in 1962 by taking part with other third world countries to facilitate talks instead of dancing to the tune of India. The tendency of India to dictate small states have worked to suspect of Indian intention in many international forum by smaller countries of South Asia

India and China are the nuclear weapon capable state in the world. China exploded its first weapon in 1964, and India did so in 1974 (Pupp 1988:397). Between those dates Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) went into effect, under it terms, China is recognized as one of the world's five weapon states and India was excluded from such status. (Kegley 2005:463). China has a stockpile of around 240 warheads, with perhaps 178 of them deployed (Norris and Kristensen 2008:42-44). India, in contrast, around 60-80 nuclear warheads (Norris and Kristensen 2008:38). China's modernization of its nuclear deterrent includes the development of a small number of submarines capable of carrying ballistic missiles (Tkacik 2014:173-174). In recent years it has been deploying more modern inter-continental range ballistic missiles which is capable of threatening USA and shorter range missiles which is perceived by India as threatening its sovereignty (Zhao 2011:195-222). India modernization of its nuclear deterrent includes short-range Prithvi missiles which threaten Pakistan and medium – range variant of the Agni missiles is threatening China (Dhanda 2010:266-267). The Declared policy of China is that it would not be the first user of nuclear weapons in case of a war between its neighbours. However, it has not declared that it would not resort to nuclear weapons on its own territories. This is threatening India particularly as there are boarder which claimed by China as its tradition territories (Guang 2005:399-422). The Chinese support to Pakistan in its effort of Modernizing Army and weaponry is perceived by India as an aggressive act by China over India.

Another contending but important issue is the struggle for hegemony in the South Asia and Asia by the two emerging powers. India regards South Asia as of her natural filed of hegemony. On the one hand all most all the states in South Asia share many things in common. The same shared culture and demography has constrained friendly relations. The political demography of Sri Lanka is a classic case in point. Both Sinhalese and Tamils of Sri Lanka trace their descent to India and yet it has become a problem of India's internal politics for South India has got a Tamil population that can toppled National Government of India over issues that involves Tamils of Sri Lanka. The domestic political influence has prevented India following a coherent foreign policy over small state of Sri Lanka and has pushed towards China by India

itself. This China is making use of those opportunities to implement its economic and military policy over the South Asia and Indian Ocean. India is having constrained relations with almost all of the small states of South Asia.

The economic prosperity of China is witnessing and Chinese Dream Policy of the new political leadership is more and more nationalistic and is in search of greatness once it has enjoyed in ancient time. The political leadership of Xi Jinping is characterized by Mao's Nationalism and liberal economic policies followed by his predecessor (Yu 2012:297-298). India perceives the new foreign policy characterized by " 'String of Pearls' Strategy on relations with Indian Ocean Nations" This policy envision greater and greater relations with Indian Ocean Nations. It expects to enhance geo-political influences by Establishing naval bases, enhancing diplomatic ties, accessing energy resources and further modernizing its military throughout littoral South Asian Nations of Indian Ocean (Ali 2013:18). It is in its way of realizing it through agreements, investment and trade in South Asian Regions Small States (Zweig and Jianhai 2005:25-38). The containing small states within India's fold are in fact a challenge in the changed political order of international politics.

1.4. Common Challenges

The end of cold war and so called globalised world order also has witnessed proliferation of identity based conflicts throughout the globe. According to some theorists, this unprecedented scale of ethnic and religious and sometimes sect based identity conflicts have to do with eraser of agonistic political space (Mouffe , 1995:106) . China and India is not an exception in this regard. Both countries have been witnessing the resurgence of identity based conflicts that were previously suppressed or kept under carpet by class based political movements. The so called politics that goes beyond traditional political categories such as caste and class and compelling forces to think life and death politics in a risk society has been proven unattainable in the near future. At present, the entire world is witnessing proliferation of religion based and religious fundamentalist terrorist movements throughout the globe. Particularly, Islamic terrorist groups and their split over sect based doctrines have jeopardized the ways of living and social harmony cutting across the national boundaries. It also has eroded the sovereignty of traditional nation states. India and China's case is very serious in this context for both countries have got Muslim minorities with their fold⁵. On the other hand, the neighboring Pakistan is under the increasing influence of religious fundamentalist terrorist groups and their sect wise influence. The possession of nuclear weapons by Pakistan and revealed possibility of taking control over that nuclear stockpile of Pakistan by them pose a real challenge to the both countries.

Another significant challenge is the tapping of growth potential available in the two countries for mutual economic development and prosperity of the two nations. The economic predictions have revealed the possibility of further and further economic expansion of both the countries in the context of huge domestic market. This domestic market factor has facilitated sustainability of market economy even under international economic crises of global scale. This points out to the possibility of the two countries becoming economic giants if greater and greater cooperation is sought. However, the competition possible in their search of hegemony in the Indian Ocean and particular in South Asia works has a barrier to economic and political cooperation.

1.5. Summery and Conclusion

The objective of present study has been to explore the content and nature of India China relations in a change world order context characterized by end of ideological conflict and rising fundamentalist terrorist movements throughout the globe. In the first part of the study, the evolution of relations has been discussed

from the very start to the present. Based on the above historical recollection of information, conflict for hegemony in the South Asian Region by the two countries has been analyzed in the next section of the study. Later on the common challenges faced by two countries has been discussed.

The study shows that there are areas that need to be taken into by policy makers of the both countries. The religious fundamentalism is a common danger for both of the countries and cooperation to defeat fundamentalism is a must at this juncture and it is pre-requisite for economic prosperity of both countries. The future direction of relationship between the two Asiatic giants, India and China will be characterized by competition. The most important field for competition between China and India is in the field of Boarder issues and power rivalry for hegemonic position in South Asian Region.

References

- Ali, Maleehah Iman (2013). The Implications of China's 'String of Pearls Strategy' on relations with Indian Ocean Nations. (Online) Available: [http// commons.In.edu.hk /](http://commons.In.edu.hk/)
- Arif, Sheikh Mohd (2013). A History of Sino-Indian Relations: From Conflict to Cooperation. *International Journal of Political Science and Development*, 1(4), 129-137.
- Basu, Jyoti (1999). *Memories: A Political Autobiography*. Calcutta, National Book Agency.
- Chatterjee, Ananya (2011). India-China-United States: The Post-Cold War Evolution of a Strategic Triangle. *Political Perspectives*, 5(3), 74-95.
- Clad, James (2004). "Convergent Chinese and Indian Perspectives on the Global Order" in Frankel Francine & Harding Harry (eds.), *The India China Relationship: Rivalry and Engagement*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press.
- Clarke, Ryan (2011). *Sino-Indian Strategic Relations: Assessing the Risk of Great Power Rivalry in Asia*, Eai Working Paper No.157.
- Dhanda, Suresh (2010). Nuclear Weapon Programme of India and Pakistan: A Comparative Assessment. *South Asian Survey*, 17(2), 255-281.
- Gojree, Mehraj Uddin (2013). India and China: Prospects for Challenges. *International Research Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(8), 48-54.
- Guang, Lei (2005). From National Identity to National Security: China's Changing Responses towards India in 1962 and 1968. *Pacific Review*, 17(3), 399-422.
- Hongyu, Wang (1995). *Sino-Indian Relations: Present and Future*. 35(6), 546-551.
- Jain, B.M. (2004). India- China Relations: Issues and emerging trends. *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, 253-269.

Judd, Dennis (2010). *The Lion and Tiger: The rise and fall of British Raj, 1600=1947*. New York, Oxford University Press.

Kegly, Charls W (2005). *World Politics: Trends and transformation*. (10th ed.). U.S.A., Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Krik,Jason A (2012). China, India and the Great Power Politics. *Asian Security*, 8(1), 73-74.

Malik, Mohan (2001). South Asia in China's Foreign Relations: Peace, Security and Global Change. *Pacific Review*, 13(1), 73-90.

Malik ,Mohan (2004). "India- China Relations: Giant Stri, Cooperate and Compete" in Limaye, Satu P (eds.). *Asia's Bilateral Relations* (pp.37-44). Aucklnd, Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies.

Mehra, Ajay k (2000). Naxalism and Peasant Movement in India in K.M.De Silva & Others (eds.). *Conflict and Violence in South Asia: Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka* (pp 235-271). Kandy, International Centre for Ethnic Studis.

Mouffe, Chanthal (2005). *On the Politics*. London, Routledge.

Norris, Robert S & kristensen, Hans M (2008a). Chinese nuclear forces, 2008. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 64(3), 42-44.

Norris, Robert S & kristensen, Hans M (2008b). Indian nuclear forces, 2008. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 64(5), 38-40.

Panikkar, K.M. (1953). *Asia and Western Dominance*.Messrs, George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

Papp, Daniel S (1988). *Contemporary International Relations: Framework for Understanding*. New York, Macmillan.

Tkacik, Michael (2014). Chinese Nuclear Weapons Enhancement: Implications for Chinese Employment Policy. *Defense Studies*, 14(2), 161-191.

White, Tanya Ogilvie (2005). The Limits of International Society: Understanding China's Response to Nuclear Breakout and Third Party Non- Compliance. *Asian Security*, 1(2), 129-156.

Yu, P.H. (2012). What Kind of Leader Will Xi- Jinping Be? *American Foreign Policy Interests*,34, 295-301.

Zhao, Tong (2011). Conventional Counterforce Strike: An Option for Damage Limitation in Conflict with

Nuclear Armed Adversaries. *Science & Global Security*, 19(3), 195-222.

Zweig, David & Jianhai, Bi (2005). China Global Hunt for Energy.*Foreign Affairs*, 84(5), 25-38.