



Centre for Joint Warfare Studies

Kashmir House, Rajaji Marg, New Delhi-110 001

Tel. Nos: 011-23792446, 23006535, 23006538/9, **Fax:** 011-23792444

Website: <http://cenjows.gov.in>, **e-mail:** cenjows@cenjows.gov.in

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DECODING THE DRAGON STRIKE



The Chinese Dragon in recent times, has created turbulence and raised several concerns, both at the global and regional level. This has resulted in several commentaries by defence analyst and strategic community. Recently, I penned two articles - *“The Clash of Strategic Culture and Managing Future Conflict Situations”* and *“Dragon’s Fang and Strategic Underpinnings”*. While I was overwhelmed by the positive response, one

commentator asked me to pen, India's tactical response to the Chinese forays across the Line of Actual Control (LAC). My immediate response was, one, we need to understand the conceptual mismatch, while we focus on tactical responses, Chinese focus on strategic outcomes and two, we have capable commanders and troops on ground to effectively deal with the tactical situation. It only reinforced my perception that greater strategic understanding is necessitated for dealing with the dragon. This in no way undermines the imperative of a resolute response to Chinese "salami cutting" on the LAC, which is equally critical, both for strategic messaging and making sanctity of LAC inviolable. This article thus focuses on the psyche and strategic intent of the dragon, behind the causative factors of its antagonistic behaviour. It also defines the global and regional course to deal with a belligerent Dragon.

Dragon and Mythology

The dragon is a mythological powerful and benevolent symbol of the Chinese culture. Chinese dragon traditionally symbolises potent and auspicious powers. It was said that thousands of years ago, Yandi (a legendary tribal leader) was born by his mother's telepathy with a mighty dragon. With the help of the dragon, and allied with Huangdi (a legendary tribal leader), they opened the prelude to Chinese civilization; so Yandi and Huangdi were considered to be ancestors of the Chinese people. Emperors in ancient China were thus identified as the sons of dragons. They traditionally symbolise potent and auspicious powers, and good luck. During the days of Imperial China, the Emperor used the dragon as a symbol of his imperial strength and power. It is believed to be able to appear in a variety of shapes and is often depicted as human, indicative of its ultimate evolution. It is thought to reign in all directions and planes, indicating its ambition. The Chinese dragon has attributes belonging to nine other creatures: eyes like a shrimp, antlers like a deer, a big mouth like a bull, a nose like a dog, whiskers like a catfish, a lion's

mane, a long tail like a snake, scales like a fish, and claws like a hawk. Do these relate to its guile, revisionist, fierce and intimidating behavior of bellicose China of today? Do these attributes also define the dragon's intent and focus? Indeed the dragon's DNA is here to stay, and redefine the world equilibrium. The Chinese Dragon has indeed transformed from a mythological benevolent symbol of ancient times, to a belligerent prodigy in the present times. One thing seems clear in this volatile world of "Dragon Play". There are no choices, where the strong preyed on the weak. The strong are respected, only when you truly display your strength. Indeed "Enter the Chinese Dragon", of the 21st Century! The challenge remains - How do we contain, curtail, tame or manage this Dragon?

Interestingly, dragons are also found in Indian mythology. The tale of Lord Indra slaying Vritra a dragon with scaly skin and tentacles finds mention in both the Rig Veda and Puranic literature. Vritra had taken control of all the water in the world by blocking the path of rivers, leading to a drought. Indra battled him for 360 days and ultimately killed him using a weapon devised from sea foam at twilight. A "Good Prevails over Evil", fable. Are the lessons for taming the Dragon, from Indian mythology relevant today?

Dragon's Strategic Culture

Dragon's behaviour is a manifestation of its strategic culture. The culture of China is one of the world's oldest and most complex cultures. Chinese history, as documented in ancient writings, dates back some 3,300 years. China thus perceives itself not as a nation- state but rather a "state of civilization." Chinese strategic culture and history has several distinctive characters and varied narratives ranging from "Middle Kingdom" mentality, weight of the past narrative of "Century of Humiliation" and Confucianism. In defining China as the Middle Kingdom

as early as the Song Dynasty, Shi Jie (1005-45), drew upon cosmology reasoning saying “heaven is above, earth is below, and that in between heaven and earth is called China”. The weight of the past shaping the strategic culture is also embedded in the narrative of the “Century of Humiliation” defined by defeat, unfair treaties, loss of territory and humiliations at the hands of western powers, before People’s Republic of China was established in 1949. Chinese nationalism in its basic form thus encompasses the pride of being Chinese, the collective memory of the humiliations of the past, and the aspiration for a return to world supremacy.

As a state it reflects inward-looking cloaked defensive behaviour focused on nationalism, externally it professes revisionist doctrine of foreign policy, militarily it focuses on power for strategic coercion, economically it professes neo-imperialistic policies with global supply chain dependencies and strategically it aims at being the next Super Power. Thus, contemporary China’s reflects defensive, revisionist and aggressive expansionist designs all at the same time while professing peaceful rise. China’s aggressive behaviour thus reflects its ancient strategic culture and multiple historic narratives, affecting its foreign policy and outlook today. In short, it reflects coercion as a strategic tool against those who violate China’s authority and hierarchical order in the region. This also explains the Dragon’s outlook to Sino-Indian border disputes, besides its incremental expansionist policy in South China Sea.

Dragon’s Strategic Outlook

China’s Strategic outlook of the rejuvenation of the “Great Chinese Nation”, is characterised by a complex psyche of self-grandiose, punctuated by a victimhood insecurity and strategic trust deficit with the existing world order. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) seems

to envision a new world order, in which China enjoys supremacy in a space that would be free from overwhelming western influence and foundational on a China-Centric Asia. The goals of the CCP, as described in Jonathan Ward's "China's Vision of Victory", may well be ambitious, but envisions a future in which China ascends to the top of every major industry and technology, in which most of the world markets are linked together with China as the economic and strategic center, and in which China's military might can secure China's overseas interests. China had chosen "economic aggression" and "military assertiveness", when engaging with the world and "debt diplomacy" to spread its influence. The key critical drivers for its goal of becoming the world's dominant power and restoring the power status held before its "Century of Humiliation," are thus driven by sustained dominant economic growth, strategic technology dominance; particularly robotics, space, cyber and next generation information technology and military modernization, which ultimately provides a military muscle coupled with nationalism . The "Chinese Dream", is based on two dual goals and concept of Middle Kingdom. Firstly, by 2025 be a preeminent regional power; secondly, by 2050 be a global power. Xi Jinping's "China Dream," speaks frequently of "preparing to fight and win wars," and thus indicates focus on building military and economic power, as the primary tool for this dream. China today is pursuing Xi's "China dream," building a new Asian order from the bottom up in terms of the One Belt, One Road initiative, pipelines, roads, railways, fiber-optic cables, and infrastructure projects such as ports throughout the Eurasian land mass and the littoral of the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific.

Dragon's Military Strategy

Militarily China follows a strategy of "Active Defence" and has evolved a "Integrated War Zone Campaign (WZC)" doctrine structured to fight "Limited Wars under conditions of Informalisation", based on both

force and technology superiority. The basic tenets of “Active Defence” strategy are embedded in the Two Ocean Maritime Power, Anti Access & Anti Denial (counter intervention), Unrestricted Warfare (Cyber, EW, 4GW) and Assured Nuclear Deterrence theory. This doctrine aims at securing politico-military objectives without having to fight a pitched battle against the enemy. Deception, concealment and surprise often accompany China’s use of force, with Chinese leaders repeatedly claiming that military preemption was a defensive measure. The latest incursions at multiple points along the line of actual control with India are reflective of this strategy. China’s national military strategy thus seeks to achieve three sets of national military objectives: Protect the Party and Safeguard Stability; Defend Sovereignty and Defeat Aggression; and Modernize the Military (Force Modernization and Optimum Force Structuring). Militarily the Dragon seeks power asymmetry on land for its advantage, reasonable equity in the air and credible advantage to favour its designs in the sea. This has facilitated the Chinese to switch from “Soft Power Strategies” to use of “Hard Power Strategies”, since 2009 evident both in the South China Sea and the Himalayan land borders. In the context of China, the associated term “Salami Slicing” increasingly relates to its strategy of territorial expansion in the South China Sea and the Himalayan regions. China first stakes claim on a large tract of territory and keeps repeating its claim at all platforms and on all possible occasions. It launches a propaganda disputing the claim of the other party to such an extent that the territory in question is recognised as a dispute between China and the other country. In resolving the dispute, China uses its military and diplomatic might to gain a part of it. This manifestation is embedded in the three warfare strategy of China, based on media warfare, psychological warfare and legal warfare.

The recent Chinese July 2019 Defence White Paper defines “China’s National Defence in the New Era”, portraying China’s military focus as “Just and Peaceful”. It describes China as trying to bring Asia together in

peaceful cooperation in an era perceived as bringing uncertainties and complexities in the region. It describes the modernization and expansion of Chinese military forces as being almost totally defensive. These statements are certainly shrouded in Sun Tzu theology “All warfare is based on Deception”, and their expansionist military behaviour. This leaves little doubt in the contradiction of what the Dragon preaches and what it’s practises . However, all these need to be taken with a pinch of salt so as to not overplay their capability as part of a well-orchestrated psychological warfare. It’s no great cerebral reality, that while the Dragon shrouds all its internal contradictions in a cloak, it becomes vocal in its military muscle projection.

Dragon in the Covid Era

The post Corona geopolitics has focused on China as the likely villain of the pandemic, both domestically and globally. Internally Chinese citizens are more than outraged and demanding increased accountability after the mysterious death of a coronavirus whistleblower Doctor Li Wenliang, the shuffle of appointments in the Ministry of Public Security and measures to crack down on activities that endanger the so-called political security of the country. China’s culpability of the origin and spread of this pandemic and subsequent aggressive overtone have resulted in economic distancing and global backlash. Many world economies are offering firms relocation subsidies as an incentive to shift production out of China. Certainly, the crisis has made the world aware to threats of China’s grip on global economies and supply chain, and the need to loosen that control. Further, the incremental expansionist policy and unlawful claims in the South China Sea, China’s policing the waters off the Japanese-controlled Senkaku Islands as also having established two new administrative districts in the South China Sea, besides sinking a Vietnamese fishing boat, are all under the world scanner. These have all created insecurities and given rise to irrational aggressive

behaviour. China has stepped up its incursions and other activities in the Himalayas, for strategic messaging of its coercive power aimed to cause embarrassment. China has also indulged in the pushing to enact a national security law in Hong Kong, that broadens their authority in the territory. President Trump in response has indicated pulling back special trade and financial privileges which would impact both Hong Kong and China, as Hong Kong serves as a bridge between Chinese economy and the rest of the world. In addition to display of dissent and economic reprisal against Australia, for initiating the idea of an international coronavirus inquiry, the Chinese government cut off key imports and exports to Australia. Such aggressive behaviour are not indicative of a mature global power and are bound to diminish its image and impede the rise of China on the global stage. In fact Chinese leadership views the current global crisis as an opportunity to grip power through spreading disinformation, exercising economic leverage, flexing military muscle, and hostile diplomacy. However, the reality is the Dragon has a daunting task of economic revival, managing domestic upheaval and addressing world resentment. Further, its GDP growth is likely to nose dive and with the debt to GDP ratio soaring high, the economic holocaust is real. China thus faces the economic challenges, global isolation, internal turmoil, damaging its image. Indeed a pandemic that originated in China and its hostile behaviour post its spread, may well have a back lash, weakening the nation and stymieing its illusive “Chinese Dream”.

Dragon’s Strike in the Himalayas

Dragons strategic security objectives in South Asia, aims to leverage keeping alive the boundary dispute to psychologically coerce India and Bhutan and seek concessions to promote China’s interests. It also periodically plays the card of upper riparian state to message water wars. Economically, it aims at ensuring energy supply and security of SLOCs and alternate bypassing routes like CPEC to mitigate Malacca dilemma.

It constantly endures to generate gravitational pull to wean away smaller South Asian States from traditional Indian sphere of influence. Adding fuel to fire, it builds Pakistan as a countervail to restrain India in South Asia Orbit.

China sees India as not only a regional competitor but a major geo strategic player in the Indo-Pacific and a global anchor meant to stymie its “Chinese Dream”. Amid war of words between Washington and Beijing over multiple issues, Republican Senator from Texas John Cornyn tweeted that “A wealthy, powerful and democratic India would help frustrate China’s hegemonic ambitions.” The recent US Ambassador’s visit to Arunachal Pradesh, United States Congressman Scott Perry’s introduction of a bill in the House of Representatives that would recognise the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) to be a “separate country” on May 19, 2020, Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of USA and President Trump’s offer to mediate in the Indo-China standoff, have all been viewed with suspicion and mistrust by China. This has been further aggravated by growing strategic convergence between India and the US and formulations such as ‘Quad’ and Indo-Pacific, seen by China as part of containment strategy. While India’s inclusive approach has been on multilateral cooperation and bilateral partnerships, China views India from the lenses of US enabled strategic competitor stymieing its global ascendancy.

Three irritants seem instant catalyst to the Chinese recent escalatory aggressive posturing in the Himalayas. Firstly, abrogation of Article 370 and 35 A on 5 Aug 2019 by India, through which entire Ladakh became a union territory. Secondly, India recently revised its foreign investment policy to tighten investment rules for companies sharing a land border with India. Thirdly, India supposedly announced developing a land pool twice the size of Luxembourg to host companies leaving China. India was perceived as openly challenging China’s territorial integrity and

setting itself up as a commercial rival. This possibly triggered China to use its military power to strategically message its western neighbour, from making decisions contrary to its territorial and economic interests, or face embarrassment at politico-military level. China cannot also fathom India's rise at the global stage, with lead roles like Chairperson of BRICS 2021, hosting G20 in 2022 and being nominated non-permanent member of UN Security Council for two years 2021-22 and leadership role in WHO for the next two years. India's proposal on "Global Electric Grid" project, based on "One Sun, One World, One Grid" and anticipatory participation in the US led, "Blue Dot Network", is perceived as counters to China's Belt and Road Initiative, albeit in field of renewable energy and infrastructure development respectively. China also perceives a USA-India rejuvenated relationship, especially last year's military pact "Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement" as aimed to curtail the Dragon. These strategic insecurities perceived as threatening its rise triggered the dragon to spit venom by its aggressive overtones as part of its strategic messaging, only to counter a firm and resolute Indian response in the Himalayas. However, the latest Himalayan shrewdly timed incursions have escalated the Dragons misadventure to a new level. This is indicative of Chinese intentions and merits a review of the policy framework by India in dealing with the Dragon.

Whether China will succeed in its quest to become a regional hegemon and a world pre-eminent power is debatable. Chinese leadership views the current global pandemic crisis as an opportunity to grip power through spreading disinformation, exercising economic leverage, flexing military muscle, and hostile diplomacy. However, the reality is China has a daunting task of economic revival, managing domestic upheaval and facing world isolation cum decoupling. With an aging population and significant amounts of debt, China's economy is also in severe strain. China thus faces the economic challenges, global isolation, internal turmoil, damaging its image and illusive ambitions of becoming the next

super power. The latest Himalayan misadventure has thus only put another nail on its coffin.

The Dragon must also realise India is no walkover today, politically, diplomatically, economically or militarily. India with its military might is at number four in the world, just after China who is number three in the GFP (Global Firepower Index) 2020. GFP ranking is based on each nation's potential war-making capability across land, sea, and air fought by conventional means. The results incorporate values related to manpower, equipment, natural resources, finances, and geography represented by 50+ individual factors used in formulating the finalized GFP ranks, which provide an interesting glimpse into an increasingly volatile global landscape where war seems all but an inevitability. Besides, India definitely has an edge in battle hardened leadership, motivated soldier and excellent high altitude training, which are war winning intangibles. Even Huang Guozhi, a senior editor in China, recognizes India as the world's largest and experiences country with plateau and mountain troops. Thus, the present reality is that neither nations have the capability to achieve their politico military aims through conflict. So the Dragon must take cognisance of what their revered Sun Tzu said in the historic Art of War - "He who wishes to fight must first count the cost". India must take cognizance of Dragons intent, capabilities and unpredictability's, to review its foreign and defence policy. Certainly, the "Wuhan or Mamallapuram Bonhomie" or "1993 to 2013 Arrangements", for border peace and professed tranquility have not worked, and only seem to be buying time for yet another Dragon Strike.

Dealing with the Dragon

China's rise over the past two decades has sought to alter the landscape of global politics and created volatility. The Dragon seeks to challenge the rule based international system with its growing economic, military,

and geopolitical influence. China's rise and assertive international posturing with regard to territorial disputes both on land and at sea, needs to be addressed at two levels; global level and regional level. Both based on collaborative and mutually inclusive arrangements. The global effort will thus have to be led by USA at global level and India at the regional level, to prevent competition spiraling into conflict .

At the global level the focus must be encouraging China's integration into the rules-based global order, while hedging against Dragons behavior that might undermine it. Chinese leadership however, remains increasingly suspicious and awry of Western powers threatening to subvert the Chinese people, undermine political unity and its global status. China's foreign minister says the Trump administration has fabricated too many lies about the Asian powerhouse. Chinese State Councilor Wang Yi said that relations between China and the US were at risk of deteriorating to the point of a "New Cold War" becoming a reality. The global effort must be to bridge this trust deficit with China and work on global commons like environment, culture, trade as the starter block. Towards this end, building for a free and open Indo-Pacific sustainable architecture addressing concerns all of nations is essential. In addition both multilateral arrangements like ASEAN and QUAD dialogue along with bilateral arrangements of US particularly with India and Taiwan must be mutually strengthened for both security concerns and economic arrangements. Eventually, a China must emerge to liberalise, to re-engage in economic reform, and to pursue a norms-based approach to its relations with China that applies international legal precedents and international agreements. Another sphere is the inclusive remodeling of international organisations like UN, IMF, WHO for a more equitable power distribution and review the present veto system, which is a concern. On the diplomatic, informational, and military front, the global cooperation requires a long-term approach which is not perceived antagonist but seeking world equilibrium. On May 20, 2020, the White House issued

what history may record as one of the most important foreign policy and defence reports since 9/11: “The United States Strategic Approach to the People’s Republic of China.” This report recognises the long-term strategic competition between the two countries and professes to engage with China in a respectful yet clear-eyed manner, challenging Beijing to uphold its commitments. It professes USA competitive approach to the PRC has two objectives: first, to improve the resiliency of our institutions, alliances, and partnerships to prevail against the challenges the PRC presents; and second, to compel Beijing to cease or reduce actions harmful to the United States’ vital, national interests and those of our allies and partners. At the same time, the Department of State issued a detailed progress report on the implementation of our whole-of-government strategy for the Indo-Pacific region: “A Free and Open Indo-Pacific: Advancing a Shared Vision”. These along with the post COVID world order, presents both opportunities and risks for global peace and prosperity in managing the rise of China. The Dragon only respects strength and so the global strategic message is clear. Its belligerence and aggressive overtones threatening peace and development will not be acceptable.

At the regional level in general and Sino-India context in particular, dealing with China has always remained one of India’s biggest foreign policy challenges. China’s emergence as one of the pre-eminent powers in the international system has immense consequences for India because of a host of factors, like geographical proximity; historical memories; the unresolved border dispute; the presence of Dalai Lama in India; the Tibet question; Chinese military modernisation; uncertainties regarding Chinese intentions; its relation with India’s neighbours, especially Pakistan; the potential expansion of China’s maritime power into the Indian Ocean; growing economic inter-dependence between the two countries; its string of pearls strategy, sharing of river waters; issuance of stapled visas to Indian citizens of J&K; denial of visas to

Indian residents of Arunachal Pradesh, and the potential for resource competition in West Asia, Latin America and Africa. Clearly it is obvious that the present policy mechanisms in dealing with the Dragon are not paving the path of professed peace. Thus it merits a review.

Nevertheless, it must be clear that China needs India more than India needs China, particularly in the next decade or so. India's youthful population and growth, indicate the accumulation of world's largest middle class and its economic trajectory. The challenge lies in managing China both in peace and war, which requires collaborative military, economic, informational, diplomatic and political levers. The underlying fact is that the dragon like it's all season friend Pakistan, can never be trusted and is prone to backstabbing, like the recent Himalayan transgressions in Covid times. China's periodic forays in peacetime to undermine India, will thus continue in the future too, but will have to be countered by matching strength and resolve, and denied any psychological gains with credible military deterrence, agile diplomacy and astute political decisiveness. India must thus make any such misadventure cost prohibitive for China and a source of humiliation in the comity of nations. This would be an important aspect of strategic messaging and desired end state in itself for India. In tune with Joseph Nye's conception of 'Smart Power', India needs to combine its resources into a successful strategy through the intelligent integration and networking of diplomacy, defence, development and other tools of hard and soft power. India therefore must improve both its 'Comprehensive National Power' and 'Comprehensive National Capacity'

India must also endeavour to improve its regional and global linkages and dependencies based on multilateral alignments foundational on common regional and global concerns. It can ill afford to lose its dwindling 'Strategic Space' in the neighbourhood. Chinese growing influence and investments in immediate neighbourhood will in turn adversely impact

upon the security calculus. India also needs to leverage Dragon's contradictions / weakness to its advantage in an active but measured approach with respect to destabilising the present relations. These include its debt diplomacy, atrocities in Xinjiang province, human rights violations, socio economic disparity with Han dominated mainland and under privileged hinterland, greying population, playing Tibet and Taiwan card, CPEC vulnerabilities and now the Wuhan virus.

On the strategic front, global powers have tended to pitch India as a countervailing force against China which results in creating thaw in the relationship. It is essential for India to develop interest driven collaborative bilateral partnership linkages with US and multilateral SE Asia and East Asia arrangements, while soft balancing through management of differences with China. Therefore India need to intelligently balance this strategic calculus. As US and China become great power rivals, the direction in which India tilts will determine the course of geo politics in Eurasia. India's response must perforce center around its key role in the Indo-Pacific. India, therefore, needs to develop stronger partnerships with the region's middle powers, while also inducing its strategic partners in the "Quad" to adopt a broader security perspective which includes India's concerns in the Indian Ocean. The India-U.S. strategic partnership to that extent, must be a key component of India's Indo-Pacific vision, both mutually reinforcing and ensuring regional stability across the Indo-Pacific.

However, the Indo -China pendulum will have to be managed from competition to cooperation without a flare up to confrontation. The theme must be partners rather than rivals, for mutually beneficial future. Therefore, even as India continues to engage with China to promote better understanding on border management, trade, climate change, global governance and a host of other issues of mutual interest, it needs to put in place a reviewed robust strategy to defend its territorial

integrity and its interests in the region and the world. Simultaneously India must pursue pragmatic self-interest-based cooperation on global issues. This entails deepening high-level engagement with the Chinese leadership in order to build trust and building institutionalizes mechanisms for structured, purposeful, and agenda-driven dialogue as opposed to convening informal summits. India and China must also converge on areas where interests coincide, such as in pushing trade, economic relations, transnational terrorism and climate change. People to people engagement is another area of perception management and bridging trust deficit. It must be endeavoured irrespective of the ongoing dynamics, that both countries focus their energies on resolution of border dispute by clear demarcation and delineation beyond the present fragile arrangements. Indeed Indo China relationship must be built on respect and trust for mutual benefit, yet must cater for the adverse winds not casting a cloud of strategic surprise.

Militarily China respects strength and any future warming of relations should in no way must undermine the importance of India's military modernization and improvement of border infrastructure. The dragon talking peace and back stabbing has been historically proven and reinforced by the latest Himalayan strike. The lesson is Dragon cannot be trusted. While Himalayas remain strategically important, India must never undermine the strategic leverage of Indian ocean in its credible deterrence calculus. Our deterrence has to be based on the three key factors of Capability, Credibility and Communication. Capability implying possessing sufficient military forces able to carry out plausible military retaliatory threats while ensuring own territorial integrity. Credibility defined by the declared political intent, decisive capability and demonstrative political will to protect interests. The deterrer should be committed to use force beyond any doubt, but more importantly the aggressor must believe beyond any doubt that deterrent threats will actually be carried out. Communication clearly relaying to a potential aggressor the capability

and intent to carry out deterrent threats. Communication should include adversary actions considered unacceptable, the response to any of those unacceptable actions, and the will to carry out the deterrent threat. We have displayed these against Pakistan but not sufficiently against China. Our future challenge will remain how to manage China and for this we need greater focus on our defence capability building. This must not get adversely impacted by receding defence budgetary allocation or pandemic diversion . The wise must never forget that the Dragon's pendulum could swing in quick time, from cooperation to competition to confrontation and conflict, as in the past. Indeed, the art of managing the Dragon will be to tame it without fighting, and if forced to fight, deny its politico military objectives, which will be an embarrassment for the Dragon and a notion of victory for India.

Conclusion

The Dragon in its new belligerent prodigy is here to stay. The effort must to manage China's rise, as preventing or containing it is not an option. The key issue remains a pragmatic review of India's China policy both from foreign and defence policy perspective. There is adequate space for all nations to grow in a peaceful manner. Yet compromising military might to stymie any evil intentions, will be at the cost of national security. The immediate need is to establish world equilibrium, prevent territorial expansionism and economic exploitation as an objective by China. These objectives must be addressed both at multilateral and bilateral levels. Thus, contradictions, hegemony and potential confrontations must be solved through a formula of symbiotic realism. This remains a challenge both at the global and regional level.

End Notes

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