

SINO – US Relations: A Case of Hybrid War

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Abstract: *US National Security Strategy, 2017, mentioned China as a revisionist state, an economic competitor and a challenger. US NSC China declared to compete with China under the guided principles of realism. US actions and strategies make an interesting argument to validate that USA has fallen in the Thucydides Trap, not because China has pushed the US, but because fear has engulfed her and has adopted an appropriate form of war. This article explores the approaches adopted by USA in her Hybrid War against China. It discusses the surge in attacks on China political Center of Gravity. It analyses the created chaos in Hongkong and the engineered clash of Muslim and Chinese civilisations. It observes how Corona Pandemic has been used to malign China and uncovers that US allies have been buoyed up to contain China. Before rendering conclusions, the article examines how the friends of china are being targeted.*

Key Words: USA, China, Hybrid Warfare, Muslims, Pakistan

Introduction

In US's National Security Strategy, 2017, China is mentioned as a revisionist state, an economic competitor and a challenger which will erode US's security and prosperity. The US placed her ahead of Russia, DPRK, Iran and even international terrorists¹. The US Nuclear Posture Review, 2018, prioritizes the modernization of the nuclear triad, including the development of capabilities designed to deter Beijing from conducting attacks. US is deploying hypersonic platforms, enhancing investments in cyber and space capabilities, and developing lethal fires: with a clear intention to counter Beijing's technological pursuits. On 26 May 2020, United States National Security Council issued a document namely "Strategic Approach to the People's Republic of China".

The United States has declared that she intends to compete with China under the guided principles of "realism": this is a very dangerous call. It is well understood that believing in realism

means believing in the selfishness of states in an anarchic international system where the balance of power is maintained through an arms race and settlement of issues is through war. Realists opine that interstate relations are based on might rather than right. Thucydides, the father of political "realism" talks of a trap. It reflects a hazardous period in international history when an established power is challenged by a rising power. Thucydides wrote "What made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta. On examination the statement can be divided in to two parts. Firstly, the growth of a rising power; this would always induce competition but may not necessarily trigger a war. The second part pertains to fear which is caused in the older. This is a phenomenon fraught with danger and compels the fading power to act in a manner that initiates war. US actions and strategies make an interesting argument to validate that USA has fallen in the Thucydides Trap, not because China has pushed

the United States, but because fear has engulfed her. Though her systems are very well placed, USA knows she is being outpaced. The fear of being a Melos in the Milean dialogue haunts her; USA will not pin her fate on hope, being a great nation, she will fight at all costs and have already adopted an appropriate form of war: The Hybrid War. And since long, the US has been openly waging it against China. More recently, the intensity of this Hybrid War has increased exponentially. The likely chances are that the surge may lead to a military showdown either with the US or her allies.

On the other side, China is lucky to have competent leadership that has steered her far without a war. China is a peace-loving country and on all fora stresses upon the importance of the same. Her thrust is upon relegating differences and promoting economic development. In fact, China exhibits great strategic patience in dealing with very serious issues and desires for a peaceful rise and cooperation with the rest of the developing world. However, the path ahead is in much more “interesting times” with international system evolving more rapidly than it could ever be perceived. Though, China envisions a modern military apparatus by 2035 and a world class military system by 2048, these are the milestones laid out without catering in the challenges posed by the opposing international system.

“China and the US are shifting from an all-around competition to a full-scale confrontation, with little room for compromise and maneuvering”

(Wang Jisi)

Approaches of US Hybrid War against China

Attacking China’s Political Center of Gravity

Communist Party of China (CPC) is the most important element in all the Chinese state systems. The stronger and credible the CPC, the stronger and coherent will be the Peoples Republic of China and vice versa. China’s unique political system spearheaded by the CPC’s leadership is undoubtedly her “Centre of

Gravity”. The process of selecting its members, their grooming, political work and sincerity to the cause is at the heart of everything that happens in China. In a matter of few decades CPC has transformed the country in to the world’s 2nd largest economy with a vision of global peace, development and shared future for entire humanity. The party led by Mr. Xi Jinping has remained committed to realizing the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation, and has accepted the responsibility of attaining its “Two Centenary Goals”.

Targeting CPC’s leadership as part of Hybrid War has continued unabated since a while. It has gained extra ordinary momentum ever since Mr. Xi Jinping has taken control. In an effort to disregard and dent the credibility of CPC, China in absentia is convicted to be governed by a dictatorial regime oblivious of universal values and democracy. It is accused of usurping the rights of people and deny minority / religious rights. The Chinese leadership is demonized and the condition of people is negatively reported. USA portrays herself and her allies as the harbingers of peace, the champions of human rights and shows more concern about the people of the state subjected to attack than their own leadership. In reality, USA feels threatened by the fact that the governance system of China is functioning better than USA and other developed western countries. USA leads the ideological competition, fearing and sensing the problems of capitalism and imminent victory of “socialism with Chinese characteristics” has unnerved their intelligentsia. The bunch half-truths shown to the world through a mala-fide prism is a part of Hybrid Warfare unleashed against China.

Media Offensive - The Psychological Domain

USA has mastered the art and science of perception management through excellent strategic communication. For every country there are two types of approaches that she adopts, one is the global perspective about the country and the second is the influence on the mental and behavioral response of the people of that country.

USA would support, project and sponsor the persons and organizations that finds fault with Chinese systems and does criticism on her. They would give Nobel peace prize to a pro-democracy Chinese activist and put Falun Gong as a suppressed party on front page whenever there is an international congregation in USA cities. The inner front of Chinese people is attacked so astutely that while USA is forging a military alliance against China in the Asia-Pacific and targeting her economic interests, 43% of Chinese population keep USA in high esteem as a friendly nation.

One of the important tools that are used against any state are the cultivated 5th Columnists. They are cropped in every cadre and level of the society particularly the intelligentsia, think tanks and policy makers. Primarily used against their own state for passing information, pursuing USA's interests and establishing her superiority.

Allegedly, USA under the garb of promoting and defending journalists pay millions of dollars through organizations like International Media Support. The objective is to advance her influence. She buys air time on local media channels. The application of media warfare for shaping personal perceptions, with an objective of enforcing US domination, superiority and invincibility has been on since long. It also squarely aims at spoiling the worldwide image of China especially in the BRI regions. Most of the local/ regional media houses copy the Western narrative of the news in the absence of Chinese broadcasts.

Hongkong

What is happening in Hong Kong is a textbook case of a “color revolution,” behind which the United States government has provided support through organizational and planning assistance – all of which is self-evident. The “color revolution” in Hong Kong reaffirms an undeniable fact: The United States is fully engaged in a “hybrid war” against China.

News about protests in Hong Kong dominated headlines in the western media since a

few months. These were branded as part of a pro-democracy movement. So much was the external interference that the restlessness could be regarded as a direct threat to national security of China. A law was needed to deal with terrorism and separatism. It has to be kept in view that, the required laws could not be materialized despite more than twenty years of delay due to the sabotage and obstruction by anti-china external forces and their local stooges. It was Hong Kong's delays in implementing its own security law that compelled the central leadership to take action.

Great Britain, the erstwhile colonial master remains at the vanguard in the recent Hongkong specific anti-China tirade. Avowal of Britain's Prime Minister Mr. Boris Johnson to give sanctuary to Hong kongers leaving China and Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab's threat of reconsidering the law while there is time are direct and gross interference in internal affairs of a sovereign country. It only shows a cold war mentality and colonial mindset. Now, Britain is forging an alliance against China comprising Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Canada. Mr. Raab said, “I raised it on the Five Eyes call yesterday” while referring to contingency plans in case the new security law creates an exodus of Hong Kongers striving to leave China. These countries subsequently condemned China for the Law.

To be factual, the law guards against, any separatism, subversion, terrorism and behaviors that harm national security. Can any state across the globe refute such laws in their own territories of jurisdiction? The Britain's interference as per their claim emanates from the 1984 agreement, however, the Sino-British agreement “does not contain a single word or clause that gives the UK any responsibility for Hong Kong after its handover”.

Instigating a Muslim - Chinese Clash of Civilizations

Work has already started on shaping the environment for a Sino-Muslim conflict. Two themes, each for different audience are propagated. To the Muslims, China is painted as

an anti-Muslim state out to destroy their community; among the Han Chinese, Islam is equated with terrorism and an anti-Muslim euphoria is being created. The western media gives extra ordinary coverage to such news and mostly blows small incidents out of proportion. It can always be asked that while the Western Media remain mum on atrocities, terrorism acts and hate crimes against Muslims in their own countries, how all of a sudden, they develop such love for the Chinese Muslims?

False stories and propaganda are well underway. The local Muslim community in Xinjiang is being portrayed as subjects of abysmal poverty, acute injustice and grave oppression. The same is also propagated through the earlier mentioned USA's paper "Strategic approach to China". In one of the cases the Radio Free Asia (a United States funded organization) alleged in a report that China was forcing Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang to hand over their Qurans and prayer mats under the threat of punishment. They also quoted United States and Indian supported "World Uighur Congress". Finally, the entire story was totally false. There is also a propaganda that Chinese are attempting to change the Quran. The entire story was fabricated to gain sympathy of terrorist organizations, woo in terrorists and alienate friendly Muslims in BRI regions. China has put plans on ground to alleviate poverty and incur development in Xinjiang Autonomous Region. A total of 480,900 jobs were created in 2019 alone, an annual increase of 1.07 %. Xinjiang's employment too has been stable. The registered urban unemployment rate dropped to 3.14 % by the end of 2019. These steps are going to have great implications, yet, no one heard these outside China.

On the other hand, there is a sharp rise of Islamophobic narratives in the Chinese cyberspace. Main Islamophobic actors are constructing "victims and villains" narrative in the Chinese cyberspace to effectively 'other' Muslims in China. By implying that non-Han Muslim Chinese are under fundamentalist influences, they are graded politically rebellious and Islamophobia is argued as legal. This is designed

to bring destabilization to ethnic relationship between Muslim minorities and the Han majority.

After claiming victory against Daesh in the Middle East, the USA, in her National Security Strategy has relegated the threat of terrorism below China and Russia to the third level. Though, Al-Baghdadi (Daesh Leader) has been reportedly killed, no one saw the other combatants dead, her systems destroyed and truly annihilated. Therefore, this cannot be the end; the mutation and diverting threat has to be watched very carefully. Over 10,000 terrorists of Daesh having lost space in Iraq and Syria have moved to Afghanistan. The Afghan Government and the Americans sit idle on detecting IS (Daesh) reservists. Re-enforcing the belief that they are having a tacit support of USA. Afghanistan would thus become a base of operations for fresh offensive on Interior Lines against China, Iran, Central Asian Republics and a renewed offensive against Pakistan.

Daesh terrorists are obsessed with Xinjian as part of idealized Khurasan. They want this space as a spring board for the ultimate victory against apostasy and the world control: the ideological narrative. The entire enemies of BRI in general and CPEC in particular would render the direly needed support and fillip. Inhospitable terrain, confluence of international borders and lawlessness makes Badakhshan as the most likely launch-pad through the Wakhan Corridor. Whenever needed the terrorists from ETIM duly reinforced by Daesh will be injected with an aim to put Western China on fire. Separatism and terrorism combined, right on the two main arteries of BRI. The question is not whether these proxies will or not; the question is when will they be unleashed? It has been observed that Daesh is already exerting itself and proving itself as a pole in the power distribution structure of Afghanistan. Its activities have surged with greater lethality. In the Nangrahar province of Afghanistan, which happens to be a stronghold of Daesh since long and is a part of so-called Islamic State's Khurasan Province, a suicide bomber killed 32 mourners at a funeral for a police commander. On 3rd August 2020, the Jalalabad Jail break was attempted by Daesh leaving 29

Afghan National army soldiers dead and fleeing of over 100 inmates. More recently, Killing of Hazaras in Pakistan shows that their reach and influence is increasing.

In October, 2019, the U.S. blacklisted Chinese technology firms and Party officials alleging that they were involved in human rights violations against Muslims in Xinjiang. It looks hypocritical when seen in the light of “The New York Times” revelation quoting Mr. Bolton’s book that Mr. Trump had told Chinese President Xi Jinping to continue building the (so called) internment camps used to detain Muslims – “which Trump thought was exactly the right thing to do”. At the same time USA completely ignores the hostilities, human rights abuses and grave persecution that Indian forces commit against Muslims in Kashmir in particular and the rest of India in general. It is only a manifestation to establish that China is against Muslims and USA and India are not.

The Taiwan Question.

On the Taiwan question, the US maintains that she will keep enduring, strong relations with Taiwan and continue to assist Taiwan’s military against China. In 2019, the United States approved more than \$10 billion of arms sales to Taiwan. The US State Department approved a deal to sell 18 MK-48 Mod 6 Advanced Technology Heavy Weight Torpedoes to Taiwan in May 2020 costing \$180m. In a seventh such deal in the year, US also approved a \$620m upgrade package for Patriot surface-to-air missiles. It is evident that the US administration is arming and strengthening Taiwan to cater for all dimensional threats. Voices are growing in USA to be more proactive on Taiwan. Despite the fact that US administration was contemplating quitting the WHO, it exerted Taiwan to be invited to World Health Assembly. Mr. Trump approved Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative (TAIPEI) Act. It expresses US’s unfettered support for Taiwan in strengthening its relationships with other countries. It reads “The United States should use every tool to support Taiwan’s standing on the

international stage”. Senior political Leadership of United States including Secretary of State Mr. Pompeo were scheduled to appear in the Copenhagen Democracy Summit. The US also tried to ensure the presence of Tsai Ing-wen and Hong Kong activist Joshua Wong. However, due to Corona Pandemic the summit could not be held ideally and was conducted virtually. The leaders addressed through video link; Ms. Tsai was one of the speakers on 19 June. Interestingly, Tsai’s photo featured at a prominent place next to Mr. Pompeo. This was all by design to undermine True Chinese leadership. To further irritate China, the US secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar visited Taiwan. This was the highest-level visit by an American cabinet official since 1979. The sole objective was to entice China.

Using CORONA Pandemic

With the world still reeling under the Covid-19 pandemic, Beijing’s critics under the leadership of United States have upped the ante in accusing China. It has driven the prevailing tense relations to the brink of a full-fledged confrontation. Mr. Trump has vowed to “take whatever actions that are necessary” in quest of compensations and holding China liable for the Covid-19 spread. Mike Pompeo and Mark Esper, have been his bulwarks in this verbal assault. Esper has termed China as a growing threat to world order and urged other states to join United States for “high intensity conflict against China”.

Mr. Trump’s allegation that China was responsible for the spread of Corona in USA, are refuted by certain facts. Pakistan is a next-door neighbor of China, over 28000 Pakistani students study in China, beside them a very large number of businessmen, traders and other officials work on mega projects. Not a single case of patients impacted by Covid-19 in Pakistan were transmitted from China. In fact, China was the first to offer help and assisted Pakistan by sending medical teams and loads of equipment.

China has earned worldwide respect and recognition in tackling Coronavirus. China gathered resources from across the country and

adopted strict, comprehensive and enduring measures to address the epidemic. The epidemic's outbreak was indeed challenging to China and the world, but the Chinese government under the leadership of President Xi Jinping and the people have been victorious. Undoubtedly, China has emerged as a global leader in fighting COVID 19 Pandemic.

World Health Organization and more than 160 states and international organizations have appreciated China's response, openness and transparency. Specially to be appreciated is the support China provided to other states when it was direly needed and the USA had buckled under pressure. Only to Africa, China has significantly assisted over 50 Countries by providing medical supplies, medical experts and 46 resident medical teams. Even Japan has voiced her concern over politicizing the pandemic and has vowed to work in tandem with China to prevent infections.

Supporting Proxy Military Conflicts against China

India: The New Frontrunner

India is emerging as a strong and dependable ally of the USA. Both the countries have arranged defense oriented strategic treaties (Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement) and can use each other's land, air and naval bases for rest, repair and supplies. This is purely a China and Pakistan specific treaty. The renaming of US Pacific Command to US Indo Pacific Command is an acknowledgement and underscores the growing importance of Indo - US association. Ever since Mr. Trump's visit to India and signing of strategic partnership, India has fully submitted to the Pentagon's "Indo-Pacific" strategy of empowering the South Asian state as a "counterweight" to China.

India has also taken charge of the governing body of the World Health Organization. India, Australia and the EU have backed a probe pertaining to the origin of Covid-19. While China has agreed to probe, it remains an anti-China and anti WHO conspiracy.

To appease USA, India has already put stricter measures on imports from neighbors. This is going to deprive the Chinese business companies of a level playing field on the economic front. All combined, undoubtedly, India is intensifying its United States supported Hybrid War against China. These are all signs of loyalty to her neo imperial master. Both share a single goal: "to contain China".

India has raised a Mountain Strike Corps, deployed and equipped with M-777 Howitzers along Chinese border. She has also deployed a third regiment of Brahmos Cruise Missiles against China. India has emerged as the world's 2nd largest defense buyer (14% of total world arms imports) and initiated 15 years Armed Forces Long Term Integrated Perspective Plan 2012-2027.

In this background, India chose to clash with China along the Line of Actual Control in Indian-Occupied Kashmir's Ladakh region and close to the "Donglang Plateau" where they had their standoff in 2017. This is a manifestation of how an intensified Hybrid War leads to a clash of conventional forces. While this was a low intensity case, as soon as India achieve her force goals, she would attempt a larger more intense incursion, warranting a full-fledged conventional response. India will also not lie low, after being beaten back on line of actual contact, she will change strategy for the time being and invigorate and start actively supporting the separatist's movements.

Japan and Australia

USA is reinforcing her alliance in the Pacific: the "Quad" comprising USA, Japan, India and Australia. India and USA conduct major Naval Exercises named MALABAR. Japan has joined in as a permanent member since 2015. In 2017, the exercises were conducted only 400 Kilometers away from the disputed Diyaou Islands. The exercise was entirely in the framework of helping Japan against Chinese naval offensive. In September 2015, India and Australia held bilateral naval exercises, known as AUSINDEX, in the Bay of Bengal. India and Australia have

signed mutual logistic support agreement to increase interoperability with bilateral relations raised to strategic level. Australia joined India, USA and Japan in Exercise MALABAR in November 2020 conducted in the Bay of Bengal. In all real terms, the “Quad” is a military alliance against China. The way events are tailored, alliances waged and issues created; the stage is being set for conflict. The Pacific therefore would be a theater that may see air – sea and air – land battle, albeit, below the perceived nuclear thresholds. Its outcome would establish the future of Pacific and the beginning of a new world order.

South China Sea

Under the garb of freedom of navigation, the United States vows to continue to operate in disputed areas in the South China Sea. The US declares to provide security assistance, capacity building and improving interoperability of allies and partners against China. These actions are bound to have repercussions and can trigger a skirmish that can grow into a large-scale engagement. According to Jaffe, the author of *Thucydides on the Outbreak of War: Character and Contest*, the most likely collision scenario, would be in the South China Sea “I still worry most about military close encounters associated with American freedom of navigation operations, which could rapidly escalate in unintended but dangerous directions, for example, in the direction of a serious naval conflict.”

Attacking China’s Friends

“China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is the pilot project of the Belt Road Initiative and the Chinese government wants to ensure its success.”

(Mr. Xi Jinping, 18 August 2016)

Amongst all BRI projects, CPEC is the most important. In comparison with other projects CPEC is the most advantageous too. Its failure would tantamount to the caving-in of all other Initiatives. Just like Britain leading Hybrid War

on the Hong Kong’s front, India is spearheading the South Asian front especially against CPEC. India has self-created security and economic concerns and therefore, has launched a multi-pronged offensive against CPEC. A Research and Analysis Wing office has been established in New Delhi investing 500 Million Dollars with the sole purpose of targeting CPEC using her consulates in Afghanistan.

According to PEW research, the Chinese no longer view Pakistanis as friends whereas India and United States are seen as friends. There can hardly be truth when seen in retrospect and analyzing the ground realities. Very cunningly, Pakistani’s are being convinced that their affection is not being reciprocated and the Chinese are being told that the Pakistani’s are not worth their friendship.

To ensure US and Indian hegemony, pressure is exerted on Pakistan to help it to contain China. The tools being employed are political disturbance, economic troubles, widespread propaganda and cyber-attacks. The objective is to sabotage Pakistan’s path to development and penalize it for its cooperation with her “Iron Brother”. In the name of support, print and electronic media are manipulated to damage Pakistan’s reputation.

Economy is Pakistan’s soft belly and her biggest vulnerability. Despite the huge losses in men and material in war against terrorism, Pakistan has been left high and dry by United States. Governance issues and poor management has also rendered an opportunity to place Pakistan on FATF’s grey-list. These are the tools to coerce Pakistan. Furthermore, United States keep influencing IMF to maim Pakistani economy.

While threats to Pakistan have been explained above as an example, the list of other friends of China under attacks is also long. Russia is coerced by manipulating the oil market, Iran has been economically hit and politically isolated. The color revolution in Venezuela has seriously under mined the viability of Venezuelan systems.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Strategic Communication

Chinese strategic communication is satisfactory as far as home audience are concerned in educating people about their development and socialist democracy. However, China has not been able to save the people from media offensive and propaganda. When it comes to international audience especially in the BRI regions, the information drive lacks in outreach and methodology. This wanting projection of soft power and inability to rightly introduce Chinese leadership and systems outside China are exploited by the west through their media. Awareness amongst populace about western and US tactics, themes and media offensive; projecting and recognizing own leadership, cleansing educational institutions and exposing 5th Columnists are some other areas. The effort has to be sustained for impact.

The Taiwan Question

United States would continue to tempt China on Taiwan Question. The objective will be to give political setback to Chinese leadership and test Peoples Liberation Army. Taiwan is a major question other than navigation operations in South China Seas that can trigger a serious conventional conflict.

China's Security Paradigm

United States does not act alone; she acts in alliances; this multiplies her capability and range. China would need a complex security strategy to meet the manifold challenges emanating from numerous US led alliances. With BRI, China's stakes or national interests have gone higher and far beyond its own borders. The Chinese military system, deployments and capabilities have to match the expanse of these interests. The paradigm has to enable economic prong to be protected by military muscle, and both reinforced by soft power projection. This in no way means undermining hosts or aggression against any other state; it is a compulsory protective maneuver. Thus, China will have to cater for the security of these interests in collaboration with host

countries against possible threats. Therefore, China's security calculus will have to cater for multiple layers of security arrangements. The outer layer endeavors to generate security for entire international community. The second layer, mainly for peace and stability in Asia/ BRI regions and security of friends. Friends of China are one of its main lines of defense against US Hybrid War. China shall be more proactive and timely reach out to her friendly states subjected to Hybrid War and under threat of US coercion in political, economic and information domains. In this connection, the key to success of BRI especially CPEC, lies in their timely if not early commissioning. As the advantages of the initiative starts benefitting all parties, much of the negative symptoms would lose grounds for existence. The advantages of sharing and "win win" may outgrow the need for animosity. Finally, the inner core territorial security, through an arrangement with Russia and Pakistan if threatened by an alliance.

Avoiding Clash with Muslim Civilization

Ironically, the proxy value of Islam will continue to prompt young men to fall victims to propaganda. The West must not be allowed to induce hate between Muslim and Chinese civilizations. If the western objective of putting Chinese and Muslims on the collision course is defeated, threats of extremism and terrorism to China will largely reduce. It is extremely important for the states confronting the threat of so-called Jihadists and terrorism to understand and comprehend the correct perspective of war as prescribed in the Muslim's Holy Book. Unless this is done, the counter war narrative will always fall short of expectations and Muslims would continue to be considered as terrorists.

The Hong Kong Issue

China shall endeavor to bring the situation in Hong Kong under immediate control, procrastination would not help but give an opportunity to the opponents of China to malign her. In the words of Sun Zi:

"..., we have not yet seen a clever operation that was prolonged."

India

Troubles with India has already stirred in Ladakh Line of Actual Contact. This is not the end but the beginning of hostilities that is going to augment the imminent engagement in the Pacific with the “Quad”.

Character and Timeline of War

Purpose of war precedes the character; the future war will be waged out of fear and for material gains: an ultimate phase of today’s Hybrid War. Hence, we can say that the war in effects has already started; it will keep transforming and escalating as the time passes.

Information and Economic Domains

China is already under attack in the psychological and cognitive domains since a while. The media tools of Hybrid Warfare are aimed at undermining the Chinese Center of Gravity: the leadership of CPC. Globally the leadership will be subjected to character assassination and locally by drawing a wedge between the state institutions and the people. This is not just going to continue but increase in ferocity and scope. To add, Chinese economic initiatives in BRI countries are being targeted, using tools of Hybrid War with an objective of retarding progress. The economic downturn of these economic partners may compel them to default on loans creating a very serious situation.

Terrorism and Separatism

The clash of Chinese and Muslim civilizations is being engineered with a dual aim. Firstly, to trigger a wave of terrorism and separatism in Western China. Though the offensive has already started, it is likely to get great impetus soon after US withdrawal from Afghanistan, Daesh elements would reinforce ETIM and start playing havoc in Western China and BRI regions. This would necessitate a conventional response by the Chinese military in synch with other elements of national power. Secondly, to make the Chinese unpopular in Muslim lands and Muslims unwelcome in China. This would seriously damage the vision of a shared future and harmony

for human kind. Taking advantage of trouble in Xinjiang, with Indian support, separatism in Tibet may also be reinvigorated creating binary stretch on Chinese forces.

Conventional Showdown

In connivance with Ms. Tsai, United States would attempt to acknowledge Taiwan as a state before China develops the required wherewithal to militarily absorb it if required. China will be able to develop this capability by achieving the “Modern National Defense - 2035” goal. However, seeing the unnerved actions and open US hostility coupled with India and her other allies’ situation, the visualized time line can be calculated around next general elections in Taiwan. This will also give an undue advantage to Ms. Tsai. China in order to protect Chinese sovereignty and territorial integrity maybe required to employ non peaceful means involving land, air and naval forces. Simultaneously, the PLA would be put to test on the Sino-India border against Indian Army, giving rise to naval tensions in the Indian Ocean Region. Finally, in the South China Sea, all components of PLA will have to be employed against the Quad alliance. While rest all engagements are expected to be well below nuclear thresholds, the Taiwan question may raise the nuclear ante.

Shaped Environment

All these would be designed to happen under shaped international environment, manipulated international laws and limited war conducted below perceived nuclear thresholds.

Parting Remarks

There is an elementary paradox in the US China relations

China trades service goods, successful trade warrants peace and that is what China wants to achieve. The success of BRI would mean a nonviolent planet, civilizations living in harmony and much less or no war. Whereas, USA dominates entire world’s weapon and ammunition market with a share of over 36 percent. Her R and D is designed to achieve a

clear edge in cut-throat technology. Her foreign policy is predominantly driven by the powerful weapons industry. She needs conflict to continue selling her largest produce: the munitions of death and war. These two opposing factors are very difficult to reconcile.

The USA closed China's Houston consulate citing unbelievable reasons

In response, China has ordered the closure of the US consulate in Chengdu for meddling in her internal affairs. It is also naïve to contemplate that Sino-US relations are going to normalize after the democrats' electoral victory and Mr. Joe Biden

taking to the Oval Office in Washington DC, the white supremacist mindset that has prevailed in the US is getting pronounced with each passing day. It has to be remembered that the democrats too toed the line of China bashing during their election campaign. The indicators are not positive and there is a definite need for remaining prepared. For the Chinese, the words of their President Xi Jinping have to be acted upon:

“we must get ready for the worst-case scenarios” in light of unprecedented external adversity and challenges”

China's President Xi Jinping, April 8, 2020.

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