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Covid-19: China's Move & Crumbling Existing World Order

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ABSTRACT

Recent outbreak of covid19, its alarming level of spread & severity from the very origin of China in Wuhan, China's response to control pandemic and its initial inactions, need some in depth analysis of situation from the very initial stage.

Also, complex Geopolitical situation all across globe, competitive advantage one over other & changing scenarios seemingly threatened existing world order. This Geopolitical period is perhaps the most troubled since final decade of 20th century, which created more uncertainty for futuristic new World. One can predict adverse potential social impact, political impact, economic impact, through sober reflection & cost benefit analysis. It is de facto truth that world certainly going to change by whatever, parameters or dimensions one may take into consideration. Changing course of Polarization, Globalisation, Multilateralism will add more weight in situation. Social order has already been changing . Economic order will take time as it requires more Economic stability , Non volatility & Investor friendly Environment. Furthermore, alteration will occur as emerging signals are concerned . Capitalist USA-Socialistic China, Democratic USA-Communist China, their sphere of independence vis a vis interdependence, both are notable players in this 21st century. Fierce trade rivalry between them, major disagreements in context of present geopolitical events will have serious implication in International system. Both have capabilities, to change existing world order and create new one based on their parameters, their self interest and their priorities. Fear factor is that this will have serious ramifications on developed and developing Countries. Consequently, China's rising footholds in world is cause of concern. Its diplomatic outreach to consolidate its control is something astonishing. My research paper will serve the purpose, to understand this geopolitical event (covid19) in multidimensional way and highlights the possibilities of changed World Order with ongoing Diplomacy.

Key terms - Foreign Policy, Diplomacy, Geopolitics, Petropolitics, Multilateralism.

World has witnessed super power rivalry in 20th century where, bipolar world turn to unipolar due to disintegration of very Soviet Union. America has emerged as superpower in world,

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taking very leadership role. Post 20th century, Globalisation, Liberalisation, Privatisation changed shape and structure of world. Rise of China is momentous one. Unprecedented growth and development of China has reduced Asia's dependence on West to some extent and World seems to be moving from unipolarity to multipolarity. China emerged as a manufacturing Superpower not only in Asia but across globe. While moving upward in its growth trajectory, China initially started asserting dominance in the region & succeeded to become Asian Superpower. His Belt & Road initiative not only exposes its ambitious aim to become Global superpower but also attempts to pursue other that, he is capable to lead world in more responsible way with all round integration. These all evidences reflect China's attempt for ubiquitous presence in the world.

China's response to pandemic and its inactions like suppressing reporting to world, suppressing whistleblower, gag order to Dr. Wenliang, cancellation of licence to US mediaman from ground reporting of situation, infers that there are certainly loopholes and it could be self manufactured crisis². Taking on all these 'Larry Clayman' founder of 'Judicial Watch & Freedom Watch' A Conservative Lawyer filed \$20 trillion dollar lawsuit against China for creation and release of covid19³. Also questions were raised on role of WHO as an Institution who itself stated on Jan 14, 2020, that there is no any human to human transmission of virus as discovered by Chinese authorities. Additionally, WHO appointed Zimbabwean murderer 'Robert Mugabe' as a goodwill ambassador & declared that stigma existing about virus is more dangerous than virus itself⁴. Questions were raised on events that are coming up one by one, certainly one will have doubt, what China intends to pursue from this agenda? Is it to restructure global order or altering polarity, or to revert its belief in 'Tian Xia' under the leadership of Chinese president 'Xi Jinping' or intends to make Sino centric world order? Many experts voiced their concern for China's intention of global recession too. One must take into consideration context of US in this regard. since President Trump emergence in 2016, US has witnessed unprecedented changes in its stance & shift from old age foreign policy, his withdrawal from Paris climate deal, oppose to UNHRC, reduction in UN funding, opposition of START treaty, trade differences with EU, termination with WHO, his xenophobic ambition &

² Scott N. Romaniuk and Tobias Burgers, Can China's Covid19 Statistics be trusted? THE DIPLOMAT (March 26, 2020), <http://thediplomat.com/2020/03/can-chinas-covid-19-statistics-be-trusted>.

³ Elizabeth Dye, Nutbag Lawyer Larry Klayman Files \$20 Trillion Suit Against China For Corona Virus 'Bioweapon', ABOVE THE LAW (March 19, 2020, 12:45PM), [http://abovethelaw.com/2020/03/nutbag-larry-klayman-files-\\$20trillion-suit-against-china-for-coronavirus-bioweapon](http://abovethelaw.com/2020/03/nutbag-larry-klayman-files-$20trillion-suit-against-china-for-coronavirus-bioweapon).

⁴ Helen Branswell, Robert Mugabe is appointed a WHO goodwill ambassador, stunning criticism, STAT (Oct 20, 2017)

<http://www.statnews.com/2017/10/20/robert-mugabe-who-appointment/>

role in Afganistan, has left China to present her as ‘More capable & Responsible’ world leader⁵. It might that, move could be through using Biowarfare tactics, as there are much evidences available, where vast stockpile of these Viruses, Bacteria, Fungi, which are genetically modified & multiplied in laboratories and were being used as a bio-weapons by countries like Britain & France.

If China wants to succeed, in its goal he needs to impressed world with his Sino centric agenda. Pandemic offers excellent opportunity to pursue that aim.

In 2018, President Trump revealed ‘National Security Strategy’ where he used term ‘Indo Pacific’ shifting old stance on Asia Pacific, giving room to India to play important role in region with Free & open Indo Pacific, premised on rule based order, based on shared democratic values. This has certainly threatened china’s ambition of ‘Hegemonic Power’ in the region, due to rising position of India. So he started asserting dominance in the region, by adopting more activism. As it is well known “Well begun, is half done”. South East Asia is more prone to this challenge propped up by China. For instance, China’s rise in Indian Ocean challenges india’s primacy as a dominant Naval Power in this part of world. Gradually, China’s other project like China-Pakistan Economic Corridor & Maritime Silk route as a part of BRI. Exposes its desired objectives, that want to seek in the region. Nepal provides perfect destination to China to security interest in the region. Recently, reports have came up where it is stated that ,China is making hectic efforts to protect Nepal Communist party (NCP) led government amid heightened intra party row within NCP⁶. This shows, how china is using Nepal as a strategic tool for gaining advantage over India. As both China and current government in Nepal have some coherence in their ideologies. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that, The Nepal Overseas Chinese Business Association (NOCBA) has distributed books on china’s response to covid19, stressing that the book can be a good lesson for other countries⁷. On the other hand, same Nepal criticized India by calling Indian Virus is more dangerous than Chinese Virus and accused India of their cases covid19. Moving forward, China based Maldivian island ‘Feyelhu Finolhu’ has undergone massive facelift. India should take due caution from becoming it as Chinese military base. As it has potential threat to India’s status quo in the region, who exercise its influence by maintaining friendly relation with its neighbor. So far, China has succeeded in

⁵ Lisa Friedman, Trump serves notice to quit paris climate agreement, The New York Times (Nov 4, 2019), <http://nytimes.com/2019/11/04/climate/trump-paris-agreement-climate>.

⁶ China interferes in Nepal to save communist party government, ET Bureau (may 2, 2020), <http://www.economictimes.com/news/internationalworld-news/china-interferes-in-nepal-to-save-communist-party-government>.

⁷ Books on China’s response to Covid19 distributed in Nepal, china.org.cn (may 24, 2020), <http://www.china.org.cn/arts/2020-05/24/content76082927>.

gaining control of ‘Hambantota Port’ in Sri-Lanka through its “Debt Trap Diplomacy”⁸. This way, China is creating ring around India, which is named “String of Pearls”, by peddling influence the region and adopting specific required smart strategies.

China is also actively making strategic choices in South East Asia by actively building its presence in south china sea⁹. In March, China launched two new research stations on the Chinese-built artificial islands at ‘Fiercy Cross Reef’ and ‘Subi Reef’. China has also been active in Malaysian water. The Malaysian coast guard confirmed the presence of the ‘Haiyang Dizhi8’, A Chinese survey ship. Similarly, in latest development, Vietnam has protested moves of china, said that establishment of the so called ‘Sansha City’ and related activities violated Vietnam’s sovereignty. Beijing’s move also violates the declaration on ‘Conduct Of Parties’ in the South China Sea (DOC) that was agreed to by China and ASEAN member states in 2002. Even in Jan, Indonesia reacted forcefully to the presence of Chinese fishing vessel in the Exclusive Economic zone, Philippines whose outpost on ‘Thitu Island’ has been under constant pressure from Chinese fishing coast guard vessels since Dec18. These all sums up China’s bullying tactics for assuming greater Hegemonic role, peeling away US partners in the regions. China’s claims on ‘Spratly Islands’ in south china sea , the so called “Nine Dash Line” seems china is pushing hard to gain control over this strategically & geographically important region¹⁰ China’s activism in western Pacific countries and claims over ‘Senkaku Island’ in the East China sea reveal its stakes to become Maritime Power. Australia too not left behind, sans china’s touch. China has imposed anti dumping actions against Australian barley import and trade sanctions on Australian beef¹¹. Many analyst suggested that this sanction could be politically motivated, in response to independent enquiry into the origin of Corona Virus and Australia’s ban on Huawei from a build out their 5G network¹². Recently, Chinese daily ‘GlobalTimes’ reported China can punish Australia by switching to other suppliers, such as.Brazil, as far as Chinese imports are concerned. Trade friction between two added new low

⁸ Amish Raj Mulmi, chinas Indian ocean, himal south asian(may12,2020), <http://www.himalmag.com/chinas-indian-ocean-review-2020>

⁹ Maria Angela, Chinas South China moves raise concern, The ASEAN Post(may 1,2020), <http://www.theaseanpost.com/articles/chinas-south-china-sea-move-raise-concern>

¹⁰ Harrison Pretat, Chinas chance to demonstrate leadership in the south china sea, The Diplomat(may12,2020), <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/chinas-chance-to-demonstrate-leadership-in-south-china-sea>.

¹¹ Xunpeng Shi, Would China extend its boycott to Australian resources and energy?, Asia & the pacific policy society(may25,2020), <http://www.policyforum.net/would-china-extend-its-boycott-to-Australian-resources-and-energy>.

¹² Lidia Kelly, Australia demands coronavirus enquiry, adding to pressure on china, REUTERS(April19,2020,11:35), <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-australia/idUSKBN221058>.

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their already soured China Australia ties

Furthermore, extending his presence in Latin America in wake of covid 19, China is already bolstering its position by highlighting failure of United State & its allies, attempting to show supremacy of Chinese Communist system over western Democracy, as many are authoritarian regime in this part of world. So attempts have been made to sharpen the differences by forging new Shuttle Diplomacy, to show, Democracy proves to be unpopular. For instance, Haiti to Colombia, from Ecuador to Chile, people took to the streets against this Government, against corruption, & injustice. The temptation has been grown to draw on authoritarian mechanisms tested during pandemic as a means to solve social and political conflicts¹³.

China is also extending its presence in Middle Eastern countries, emphasizing trade cooperation during covid19 Pandemic. This is already war torn area. The countries in this region requires assistance in terms of Trade, Capital, & Finance.

China's relation with UAE has also expanded dramatically in recent years, with Beijing becoming UAE's largest trading partner \$53 billion USD trade. Similarly, china is also building its infrastructure in Syria, new building its infrastructure in Syria, new shipping port in Algeria. Previously, China agreed to invest \$18 billion USD in Egypt, including a 'Joint Trade Zone' along the Egyptian controlled Suez canal. This area also has its strategic significance for China. A large part of chinese trade with North Africa and Europe transits through this canal. The port of Dubai is focal key point of Chinese trade in this region. China's relation with turkey is also improved in recent years. Meanwhile, Turkish interest is also align with china's vision of 'Trans Eurasian Connectivity'. In 2019, china extended a \$1billion swap line to Turkey after US sanctions pushed the 'Lira' into freefall of previous manner¹⁴. Improvement of relation with china could be seen in context of Ankara's downing confidence in NATO allies. Paradigm shift has been observed in relation of both the countries after US navigated its interest from Ankara under the current US administration. China's rising economic might can be studied inter alia with its quest of forging new alliances using its smart manouvere. Petropolitics has major role to play in this dynamics. Saudi Arabia's crude shipment to china have doubled in span of a year.

¹³ Sandra Weiss, The authoritarian temptation, <http://www.ipsjournal.eu/region/latinamerica/article/show/the-authoritarian-temptation-4384>.

¹⁴ Kerim Karakaya & Asli Kandemir, Turkey Got a \$1 Billion Foreign Cash Boost From China in June, Bloomberg (Aug 9, 2019, 5:30 GMT), <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-08-09/turkey-got-1-billion-from-china-swap-in-june-boost-to-reserves>

These move comes amid President Trump announced to cut oil dependence from West Asian countries & gain self reliance in crude oil production. Chinese economic strategy is majorly focus on export oriented growth model rather than domestic market. One of the motto of contouring this strategy could be the Decoupling from United States and even from whole Western World. China already positioned itself a Manufacturing Power. China accelerated its mighty aim, After the bitter trade rivalry with US, what they called Economic Transformation. Pandemic added more weight & imparted opportunity to china for its economic expansion.

China –European Union co-operation has been enhanced in this tough time of public health crisis¹⁵. Much has been said about china's assistance to European countries like Italy, France, & Britain. European Union region matters to china as far as its Inbound and Outbound investments are concern. The healthcare and pharmaceutical sector saw the greatest increase in Q1 rising from 15% to 22%. In Belgium there is a 'Zeebrugge' key port for the Polar Silk Road, the China -Belgium technology centre. China's EXIM bank agreed to extend \$1.85 billion USD fund to 'Budapest Belgrade' railway. China has sought numourous partnership in pharmaceuticals, chemicals, & industrial area within Europe. UKs Brexit plan also made Britain to think on alternatives in its pursuit of trade diversification outside Europe. China provides perfect destination for that sake.

China is also adopting other tactics for elevating its presence in world for e.g. A new report revealed how Beijing is using infrastructure building to expand its surveillance network on the African continent. For instance, China has constructed nearly 200 Government building, gifted batches of computers to African Government and built Secure Communication Network that gives Beijing an opportunity to unprecedented surveillance on the continent, what's being called as 'Beijing's Spymaster dream'¹⁶.

Another major development came to forefront in this regard is. that in late April, china become the first major economy to conduct a real world test of National Digital Currency. china meanwhile, will used its digital Yuan to reinforce its capacity in Africa, the Middle east, and Southeast Asia might be having intention to erase US influenced US dollar from the world & to place alternative Yuan based ecosystem

¹⁵ China EU economic cooperation increasing amid COVID-19,Global Times,(May19,2020),<https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1188851.shtml>

¹⁶ Robbie Grammer, chinas building projects in Africa are a spymasters dream,Foreign Policy(may 21, 2020,11:36AM),<http://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/21/china-infrastructure-project-Africa-surveillance-spymasters-dream>.

TACIT POLICY OF SHOWCASE

In other way round, efforts have been made to show outstanding leadership of china, how they successfully handled Pandemic by controlling, containing, implementing mitigation strategies on ground. Also, attempts to show,

- 1) How Xi is a good Emperor who is decisive enough to right action on right time, Who don't have habit of shirking responsibility unlike America who is playing blame game & petty politics in this hour of crisis, just to hide its own failures in containment of Pandemic. Furthermore, efforts to show
- 2) How Chinese people trust its leader & institutions which have capacity of handling any situation with the proactive response. Leadership of china is well matured who takes no opportunism (which itself contradiction).
- 3) China believes in free movement of goods, believes in Globalization, Multilateralism having no damn to protectionism. Unlike America, who is self centered. World economies should look towards china as a Responsible Power, Great Power, Cyber power & indeed A Superpower.

On the other hand border skirmishes with india, win of liberal parties in Taiwan, protest in Hong Kong raised fear factor and created trust deficit for china, which resulted in enactment of National Security Law in Hong Kong. Additionally US administrations continuous vocality upon Chinese Virus erased Credibility of China and created trust deficit among nations to some extent, which later, resulted in Chinese leadership...President Xi's warning 'Prepare for war' to People's Liberation Army. Many factors coupled in drawing this warning, as there is famous Chinese saying on 'Art Of War', Appear weak when you are strong, and strong when you are weak' which fits perfectly correct in current scenarios we are observing.

CONCLUSION

It is bitter truth that world is witnessing unprecedented change in current time. There is exactly lack of global leadership due to vacuum created by US & China is using this opportunity, to bring together forces which could protect core interest of Chinese nation & to realize Chinese vision. Current US administration Mr. President Trump who himself has self centered goals and have more Protectionist tendencies, nothing to do with neighbouring countries or any other countries welfare, has shown irresponsible behavior many a times. Withdrawing entry from many Multilateral & Bilateral institutions for instance, Trans Pacific Partnership, Iran Nuclear Deal, United Nation Human Rights Council, and terminating relationship with WHO, Proving

‘curse in disguise’ to Multilateralism. Though, attempts were being made by citing Arbitration & Mediation offer in India-China border dispute, reinventing Quad++ arrangement, holding accountability and transparency as far as China is concern.

Nonetheless, this will draw very little benefit to world & US as prevailing circumstances is getting worse. China has gone far ahead in exercising its suzerainty over the world. US has to play consistently cooperative role with all other nations, if wants to sustain existing world order. Because, aftermath of covid19 there is obvious uncertainty looms. The only predictability can be done in this unpredictable situation is itself unpredictability. Developing countries like India have to be prepared for, to face, more China Centric World Order. For that, they must use their soft power tools likewise, India is using Yoga, Ayurveda, etc to make world believe that Democracy is the way forward. One must engage with all countries on various Multilateral, Bilateral platforms using soft power policy. PM Modi had very active on this line, by immediately calling SAARC meeting to discuss the situation together, as same suit followed by other G20 & G7 Nations.

India should play responsible player in this power dynamics without sticking into Modus Operandi adopted by China. Also india’s lockdown should prove ‘Blessing in Disguise’ strengthen whole World reliance on Rule of Law & shared Democratic values. Post covid 19 orientation of world, be it Unipolar, Bipolar or Multipolar, if its Unipolar, then unipolarity to whom? The question whose answer remains in dark & uncertain! One always look for Responsible player as a Superpower who is ‘Path Creater not Path Breaker’.
