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Abstract

This research paper is aimed at evaluating prevailing global scenario and the dynamics of shift of power from the West to the East. Efforts have been made to analyze the economic, political, and security trends to understand important aspects of the power transition process. Currently, there is an enough literature available, which proves the existing consensus among many experts that China is playing a central role in the process of shift of power from the West to the East. Therefore, while explaining this transition process, it is pertinent to focus on the leading role of China and its possible implications. So, this study further highlights the rising power of China covering an overall picture of China, particularly its economic development process, the political and cultural aspects, and the military modernization. Efforts have been made to give an analytical view that how the rise in economic power is gradually transforming itself into political, diplomatic, and military strength of China. Besides; this research effort also focuses on how China is adjusting its foreign policy posture in the regional and global affairs, which culminates or aims at adjusting itself to globalization process.

Key Words: Power Shift, Global Order, West, East, Rise, China.

Introduction

Nothing is constant in this universe except change. Over a certain period of time, everything undergoes a change, which could be a source of either decay or evolution. This process could be cyclical as well. Some political scientists opine that evolution of power takes place in a cyclical pattern and transforms the scenarios at regional and international levels (Tammen, 2000) accordingly. Often; the power of a state, relative to others, follows a curve of rise and decline with unique properties, having specific consequence for security and peace at regional and global levels. State's cycle of power and role is the expression of relative change particularly in the structure of the international political system. The history is witness to the fact that due to one reason or the other, the international system regularly reshuffles the deck in demoting and promoting powers, fragmenting some and empowering others, and so on. Such shifts not only bring changes in the pattern of behavior in inter-state relations but sometimes affect the basic power structure of the world. History of international relations reveals about the existence of multi-polar, bi-polar, and uni-polar systems in the world at certain period of times. After the demise of the former Soviet Union in 1991, the world witnessed uni-polar system with the emergence of the United States (US). But, the recent trends in the world have started reshaping. Some new centers of power have emerged in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. But; in geo-strategic terms, this transition is led by Asian nations including China, Japan, the ASEAN, Koreas, India, and some others. For many Asian nations, especially China, the last two

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decades have been a period of evolution and rise. With its emerging economic, political, and military strengths, China is undergoing a process of readjustment in the global system with the relative decline in the US power.

The Dynamics of Power Shift in 21st Century and Diffusion of State Power from West to the Rest

Analysis of the prevailing broader scenario reveals that two major shifts in the structure of power are taking place in the 21st century. One is shift of power among states, from the West to the East. The other is power diffusion, which is a shift of power away from states to non-state actors in both, East or West. This process of changes is likely to dominate the 21st century. The history has its own course. In 17thcentury, Asia had more than half of the world's population and simultaneously having more than half of the world's product. But in 18thcentury, Asia with more than half of the world's population could have only 20 percent of the world's material product. However, the current indicators suggest that in the 21st century, Asia is catching up to the normal proportions. It is expected that at some point in this century, Asia will be half of the world's population with half of the world's material product. This is one of the major aspects of shift of power among states, from West to East.(Toffler, 1991)The study of social, political, economic, and security issues suggests that some major changes are taking place in various parts of the world, which would have gradual but long term implications on the global politics. Some of these major changes include the unprecedented growth of middle classes in China, India, and Pakistan and rapid growth in economic activities in the developing countries, demographic changes, and the daunting ecological constraints. Analysts, focusing on the global environment, identify these changes as mega trends, which are gradually shaping the inter-state and intra-state patterns of governance and relations in the world. (Steffen, 2011)

The global economic scenario suggests that currently a diffusion of state power from "West" to the "Rest" is in progress. It is assessed that by 2030, China will pass the US as the world's largest economy, while other economies will continue to grow. Goldman Sachs predicts that the so-called "Next Eleven" including Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Korea, Turkey, and Vietnam will overtake the collective global power of twenty-seven members of the EU by 2030. In past, the world has experienced power transitions in which only one or two countries have been rising at the same bracket of time like the US and the former USSR during 1960s and 1970s, shaking the international system. Emboldened rising powers, like China, India, Brazil, South Africa, and Pakistan have varyingly been demanding that multilateral institutions like the UN Security Council and the IMF be transformed to reflect their preferences and weight. (Gelb, 2009) Thus, in the changing scenario, the current global leader, i.e. the US requires adjusting its new status. The emerging geopolitical settings could generate a

complicated multilateral cooperation. Any sort of collective action through multilateral for as would require policies driven by the spirit of adjustment and accommodation.

Weakening of Europe as Global Power

Though some European nations have been the most powerful actors in regional and global context for last three centuries, but due to mutual rivalries they could not unite the whole Europe as an entity in the global power settings. In the post-cold war period, West European nations emerged as a united power at the global stage by initiating the process of economic integration of the continent and formulating common foreign and defence policies of the member nations under an umbrella of the EU. This scenario generated impressions that in near future, the world is going to be a multi-polar system and the EU could pose challenge to the US hegemony in Europe. However, there were some impediments due to disagreements on certain procedural methods among the EU members. Under the EU mechanism, the leadership has been attempting to solve the problems emanating out of the legacy of ethno-lingual nationalism in some member countries with economic disparities and grievances. But the process seems to be faced with serious hurdles due to lack of system's compatibility and the mutual biases. The ability of leaders to make deals within EU system depends on their authority and legitimacy. In many EU countries like Germany, Greece, and France, there is a lack of understanding between common man and the ruling parties on the issue of making Europe a single politico-economic entity. Among some member countries, the issues like economic disparities, migration, and promoting the ethno-lingual identity pose serious hurdles in integrating the EU. It is assessed that Europe is likely to spend its more energies on resolving these issues of the next generation. Whether it can do so or not remains to be seen. In order to resolve the current challenges being faced by EU in promoting the sustained economic discipline, the EU leadership has taken some concrete steps. But it seems that painful structural reforms will have to be endured for many years. In 2012, the Euro crisis surfaced as a chronic disease that is likely to remain there for years to come. Now the EU economies, i.e. Greece sought bailout packages from China. Also, the Brexit episode has nearly derailed the process of EU integration. Hence, instead of emerging as a unified force affecting and molding the rest of the world including Asia, the European nations themselves are thinking on the question how divided EU member states will be able to maintain their individual role at global level.(Cox, 2009)

Changing Status of US as Global Power

Since 2007, the decline of the US is one of the hot topics catching headlines in media around the world. The economic downslide of the US is a major concern for both liberal and conservative schools in and outside of the US. Besides, the US failures in

stabilizing Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Yemen are adding to the views that the US policies are not helpful to maintain stability in dangerous parts of the world. The bilateral tensions in South Asia and Korean Peninsula and sovereignty issues in parts of Eastern Europe also indicate that the US has no capacity to resolve the issue threatening regional and global peace. The 2008 global financial crisis resulted in negative impact on perceptions of the US as a global power and its relationships in Asia. Experts on Asia raise the question whether US would continue to be a leader bringing economic and security solutions to the Asian continent or it is causing imperial malaise to the regional countries.(Cartalucci, 2015) In Asia, now the US finds a different set of problems. Current policy of the US "pivot" or "rebalancing" in Asia is an attempt to have military presence in the Asia Pacific. But, there is a strong opposition to this role, based on the argument, that the Asia Pacific region is remarkably peaceful except controlled tension between China and its neighbors over sovereignty of some islands. Compared to the Asia Pacific situation, South Asia region due to Afghanistan and Kashmir issues and the Middle East scenario due to heightened sectarian tensions require more focused attention by the US on strategic and security matters.

The other objective of the US being economic hegemony around the world is being challenged by many Asians especially in the Asia Pacific region, which allege it of playing a negative role during the 2007-08 financial crises in Asian economies. The former US President Obama, during his visit to Australia in 2011, announced that the US and Australia have agreed on military cooperation program to rotate 2500 US Marines Corps through Australian military bases in the Northern Territory.(Calmes, 2011) This is aimed at establishing a permanent US military presence in the Asia Pacific region. Many Asians including China consider this US move as an effort to maintain and increase its power stature in the region. Such a move also indicates the possibility that the US leadership is apprehensive of the weakening of its role in the Asia Pacific region. The major reason behind this apprehension seems to be the emergence of China. Some US policy makers consider rising India as a counter weight to China. Therefore, the US initiatives to appease India through civil nuclear deal and offering economic packages are being seen as moves in that direction. Unable to maintain its global reach, the US is becoming dependent on regional players like Australia and India to increase its influence in the region. But, the US strategy to increase interdependence with Australia, India, and Japan is likely to face many challenges. The ASEAN Secretary-General SurinPitsuwan once said: "The Japanese have been very supportive, the Chinese have been supportive, the Australians have been rather eager, and the Indians are also very interested in this, because in the end we are creating a new landscape".(Curran, 2012) The US exclusion from such regional block suggests that future of the US status as economic hegemon in the Asia Pacific is uncertain.

The Rise of Asia

The annals of history indicate that Asia has been the richest and the most advanced part of the world throughout centuries. For hundreds of years, Asian continent was the epicenter of urban communities and served as the mega-machine of civilizations. Asia as the fountain of religious thought, ground of mighty empires, and home to rich resources and technology has had fed the imagination and the desire of the rest of the world, especially Europe, for both knowledge and prosperity. However, for the past three centuries, the vast continent has mostly remained a backward place and even today in some of its parts human existence is struggling for survival. Most of the Europeans developed themselves during the last four centuries in science and technology and colonized the vast lands in Asia, Americas, and Africa. However, change is the essence of the nature. Therefore, the process of transition and transformation continue at certain stages. In latter half of the 20th century, some of the Asian nations, especially Japan, China, and Korea by developing a scientific view of the world also began transforming themselves. The gradual reformation and modernization process taking place in parts of Asia with varied pace has enabled Asians to compete or even challenge the Europe and the US in political, economic, socio-cultural, and military affairs. By making progress in science and technology, the Asians have now achieved some important elements of power to shape the future world.

In terms of population and natural resources, Asia has remained richer than the US and Europe. But, due to lack of advancement in technology, Asian nations remained backward in utilization of resources and retarded in economic and social spheres for centuries. However, the current scenario is different. During the last thirty years, several Asian countries have greatly expanded their economic growth and prosperity. Some of them have got continuous GDP growth even once in double digits by few ASEAN countries. The region is booming in free trade arrangements. The second and third largest global economies, i.e. China and Japan are in Asia. Besides; since last many years, some of the recognized best places in the world to do investments and business are in Asia. In the military field, China has the second-largest naval fleet in Pacific and in terms of numbers; China has the largest military in the world. India has the sixth largest navy in the world, while Pakistan is having seventh largest military strength in the world. Four declared nuclear power states namely China, India, Pakistan, and North Korea are in Asia. Space is the field of advanced research for Asians as well. Some Asian countries like China, Japan, Korea, Pakistan, India, and Singapore have their satellites in the space orbits for modern communication and weather information. In recent years, China has also begun launching its scientists into space, joining the US and the Russia as the only countries to have done so. Though Asians have been proud of their civilizations and continue seeking guidance and inspiration from their past history but some scholars also suggest that Asia's

ongoing rise since the latter half of the 20thcentury is mainly based on the mixture of values mostly developed by the West. (Mahbubani, 2008)

By adopting the values and policies such as free markets, the rule of law, diplomacy, interdependency, meritocracy, and scientific education in somewhat modified shapes various Asian countries including Pakistan, India, and China are unlocking their economic and diplomatic potentials. Leadership of China has exhibited remarkable capability in managing relations with neighbors, particularly Japan, Russia, India, and Pakistan. In order to promote cooperation and interdependency, Chinese leadership has been letting neighboring countries including from the ASEAN, Central Asia, and South Asia to share its economic prosperity. In this regard, China's help to the ASEAN countries particularly devaluing its currency during the 1990s Asian financial crisis is an outstanding example. Whereas; during that period, the attitude of several Western countries and the IMF remained nearly unhelpful. Nowadays, China is acting as an engine of growth for Asian countries. Leadership of several developing countries has time and again recognized that the assistance from China does not come with strings attached. Therefore, China has earned respect and is being acknowledged as leader of many developing nations around the world, especially in Asia. (Zakaria, 2015)

Rise of China

The importance of China has been acknowledged by the people throughout centuries but some in the world might have forgotten that China was the first country that gave humanity the four great inventions, i.e. the compass, gunpowder, paper-making, and printing.(Deng, 2011)The Chinese were capable of great innovations before as they are capable now. After decades of backwardness and isolation, China is again emerging as a strong, united, and assertive but a peaceful nation in the world. Its influence is being realized at regional level and its contributions for peace and development are being witnessed in all seven continents of the globe. Since the last decade of the 20th century, China has become a new workshop of the world.(Jie, 2011) Chinese are using more steel and cement and they have more miles of highspeed railway lines than any other country. Nearly 70 percent of the world's photocopiers, DVD players, and microwave ovens are being manufactured in China.(Hoovestal, 2013) It has surpassed the US as the largest exporter of information technology including computers, mobile phones, and digital cameras and so on. It is one of the largest manufactures of heavy machinery. Apart from being the greatest consumers of energy, Chinese are spending billions of US dollars on the creation of green technology and renewable sources of power. According to the IMF in 2011, China's GDP reached US\$ 5.36 trillion and in 2014 it was US\$ 10.3 trillion. It is expected to overtake the US GDP figure US\$ 14.79 trillion around 2030. China is the largest trading partner of the US. In 2010, China owned 27 percent of US\$ 3.5 trillion foreign-held public debt of the US. The prevailing trends suggest that China

and the US, alien politically and culturally, are locked together in an unprecedented and inextricable economic interdependence.(Government of China, 2016)

Since the last few decades, China with its emerging economic, political, and military strengths is undergoing a process of readjustment in the global system. The increase in power always adds the states' ability to materialize its national interests at both domestic and external domains. The success of political, economic, and military reforms aimed at realizing the vast potential of the country has encouraged the Chinese government to play a leadership role in the regional and global affairs. Internationally renowned scholar Fareed Zakaria in his article, "With an 'absent' United States, China marches on", published on July 2, 2015, remarked: "China is the largest trading partner of almost all Asian economies and Australia. Its increasing involvement in the region is considered as a win-win situation. Some countries might be looking to the US to deter China yet engage it; however, they do not want to upset the basic atmosphere of trade, commerce, and comity that has allowed many Asian countries to boom".(Zakaria, 2015) In November 2012, during one of his first public appearances after being named the head of the Communist Party, Xi Jinping claimed: "I believe the revival of the Chinese nation is the greatest dream of the people of China". This idea was further reinforced by President Hu Jintao's 18th Party Congress opening speech, the drafting of which was supervised by Xi Jinping. In that speech, Hu had called for China to become a maritime power and transform into a military power "commensurate with China's international standing".(Wong, 2012) China has apprehensions over the security of sea lanes due to territorial disputes among the neighboring countries in the South China Sea. In order to diversify the economic activities and trade routes, China has embarked upon to develop and modernize land as well as sea routes. This is a grand strategy being named as Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It is a combination of multiple projects aimed to develop six corridors connecting China with a vast number of cities and ports in Asia, Europe, and Africa. Besides, since 2011, China has adopted assertive foreign policy moves in the South China Sea. Chinese boats now routinely patrol in the disputed waters claimed by the Philippines, Japan, and Vietnam. Due to geographic and economic factors, China exercises considerable influence over the South Asian countries excluding India. China and Pakistan are strategic partners while for smaller South Asian countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Bhutan, China is a source of economic assistance and even military modernization.

Speedy Economic Growth of China

For many Asian nations, especially China, the last two decades of the 20thcentury have been a period of speedy evolution. While tracing the evolutionary process, one comes to know that in 1978, leader of China Deng Xiaoping initiated economic reforms aimed at realizing the vast potential of the country. Moving carefully by permitting free enterprise, Deng kept the Communist Party's grip on political power.

These arrangements helped the Communist Party leadership to maintain political stability and exercise effective monitoring over the economic opening and reforms program. This policy facilitated China to achieve annual growth rates of nearly 10 percent over the next three decades. The speed of growth rate of China has surprised many experts on economic affairs. The growing size of its GDP gradually made China an important member of industrialized economies. In 2003, China's GDP by exchange rate measures totaled US\$ 1.159 trillion and ranked sixth in the world, behind the France (US\$ 1.31 0 trillion), Britain (US\$ 1.424 billion), Germany US\$ 1.846 billion), Japan (US\$ 4.141 billion), and the US (US\$ 10,065 billion).(Miller, 2005) Surprisingly in 2011, China reached to the rank of the second largest economy in terms of its GDP.(Monahan, 2011) In 2003, in the list of exporters, China ranked ninth, supplying 3.5 percent of the world's exports, lower than the share of even Canada, whereas the US accounted for 14.7 percent and the EU 16.8 percent of the world's export volume. Since 2011, China has emerged as the second largest exporter in the world.¹ In 2015, the nominal GDP of China was nearly US\$ 11 trillion; second largest in the world, while it's GPD per capita was around US\$ 8,100. In 2015, the nominal GDP of the US was nearly US\$ 17500 trillion; the largest in the world, while it's GPD per capita was around US\$ 48,000.²

China's integration into the world economy is leading to unprecedented global prosperity. Millions of consumers are fulfilling their needs of basic commodities and enjoying comforts from less expensive imports from China. The increased global competition is driving big investments and employments for a large number of people in many parts of the world. It is a success story for which both China and the WTO can be proud of.³ The Chinese incremental capital output ratio improved significantly leading to widespread prosperity. There is no example of such a great economic change in any other period of history. Since 1980, millions of people have been lifted out of poverty and became able to establish themselves at a level of modest prosperity and even move up further.

¹"China Review", World Bank, April 6, 2016,

http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/china/overview (accessed June 4, 2017).

²"Economic Report", http://www.stats.gov.cn/english/PressRelease/ (accessed March 2, 2018) and also see; "China GDP", *Global Economies*,

http://www.tradingeconomics.com/china/gdp (accessed March 2, 2018).

³Herbert Oberhänsli, "International Trade Forum", *Trade Forum*, December 1, 2011, http://www.tradeforum.org/article/The-shape-of-globalization-Chinas-remarkable-role/ (accessed January 15, 2017).

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Grand Strategy and National Leadership

Traditionally, leadership in China has been formulating long-term policies and plans encompassing multiple aspects like economic, political, and security. Such long term policies often suggest mobilizing maximum quantity of resources; hence, it reaches to the level of a grand strategy. The BRI is the recent manifestation of the grand strategy. China's "grand strategies" had been in place since centuries. In the 13th century, Marco Polo was astonished by the advancements made by China under an umbrella of strategic interests.(Harris, 2008)The grand strategy of China revolves around the following objectives:

- a. Having stronger defense.
- b. Running the state through Confucius ideology.
- c. Focus on meritocracy in government functioning.
- d. Fighting corruption both at the top lower levels.
- e. Letting the world know about country's advancement and civilization.
- f. Regulate the rivers and focus on public works.
- g. Plan 10, 20, and 50 years ahead and practically work on the plan.

Such a strategic approach requires consistency and coordination with unwavering will of the leadership and the trust of the public. For over 2,000 years, the majority of Chinese people have been accustomed to cooperating with one another and following a strong, competent, and central leadership.⁴The economic data indicates that China has consistently been achieving its five-year goals because of the fact that everyone in China has a role in setting and achieving them. (Kite, 2011) The defense industry, apart from seeking profits, is encouraged to develop new weapons. Chinese remain less concerned regarding Western political standards. It is generally observed that the common Chinese are not worried whether their country is being labeled as democratic or authoritarian or anything else. History reveals that China has always played the long game. Zhou Enlaihad once commented when asked about Western democracy: "It's too soon to tell". For the Chinese, 200 years is not enough time to test a new political system when theirs worked so well for 2000.(H. & J, 2012)Presently, a generation of young leaders is in the process to reach at the senior level in the "Communist Party" of China. It seems that there's going to be a big turnover in the party leadership in near future. About 70 percent party leadership positions will turn over as many leaders at the higher levels are retiring. Analysts

⁴Michael D. Swaine and Ashley J. Tellis, "Interpreting China's Grand Strategy: Past, Present, and Future", *RAND Corporation*, March 28, 2000, 135-164. Also see; P. Kennedy, "Grand Strategies in War and Peace", 1991 and B.H. Liddell-Hart, "Fundamentals of Strategy and Grand Strategy", *Strategy*, 1967, 322.



believe China is entering a watershed point. The new young leadership is going to engage in much deeper levels of reform, to achieve adequate growth rates aimed to enhancing domestic and social stability. Therefore, they would be required to focus on policies dealing with internal migration and setting up new economic zones to adjust the growing young population. Besides; the access to markets for importing raw material and exporting manufactured products would be main areas of challenges for the future leadership of China.

Military Power of China and its Modernization Process

China's concerted program of military modernization has attracted global attention. Since 1989, defense allocations in China's public state budget have risen at doubledigit rates reaching US\$ 131.6 billion in 2014, which is 12 percent increase in the previous year of 2013. Various reports indicate that in 2015, the Chinese government's official defense budget figure was US\$ 146 billion. (Bitzinger, 2017) In 2007, China launched the program developing a new generation of strategic and tactical missiles. China's military modernization programs focus on the following priorities:

a. Acquiring green-water or close to shore naval and air support capabilities to defend the coastal provinces of China, the geographical backbone of its industrial economy.

b. Establishing credible military capabilities to win conflicts quickly and decisively on long land borders, where China still has several unresolved disputes, like the one with India where a bloody war took place in 1962.

c. Maintaining credible capabilities to defend China in arguably the most heavily militarized region of the world. In China's immediate neighborhood, there are several potential rival powers, i.e. Japan, Russia, India, and the ASEAN bloc, together with an engaged US. The region has 5 of 7 declared nuclear states, and the countries like South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan, which can rapidly develop nuclear weapons.

d. Developing credible military power to compel resolution of the Taiwan question either politically or by outright military force and materialize China's claims in the South China Sea (the Spratly) on terms acceptable to Beijing.

e. Preserving the credibility of China's second-strike deterrent against a strategic first strike.

f. Developing modem counter-terrorism capabilities to ward-off terrorist threats from extremists and separatists groups from Xinjiang and other bordering areas.

Most of China's military modernization programs are intelligible and addressed at the above-mentioned priorities. To meet its aims with respect to Taiwan, for example,

China is seeking to develop enhanced submarine capabilities to blockade the island and buying advanced Su-27 fighters from Russia to establish control of skies over the Taiwan Strait. Presently, China neither has a long-range bomber force nor demonstrated a capacity to deploy a ballistic missile submarine. Thus, there is no clear effort by China to build a strategic force of a scale of the US or formerly Soviet Union military forces.

Conclusion

Since the last decade of the twentieth century, China's influence is growing in many parts of the world. It has emerged as a leader in trade, aid, investment, and development in economic and security spheres. In parts of the world, China now poses challenge to the US influence including in South Asia. Chinese companies are making huge investments and even have purchased major shares in worldwide giant companies. Their main focus is to maximize oil and gas supplies for Chinese industries and access to the markets for importing raw materials and exporting industrial products in all the six continents. Once unsure whether to join the G-8 of industrialized nations, Chinese officials are now even talking of a "G-2", Group of 2, China and America, ruling the world. In the past, Chinese officials preferring to quietly buy the US dollars are currently suggesting that the world needs to be less reliant on the US dollar. The South Asian countries once looked to the US and the former Soviet Union for support on strategic and economic interests are now looking towards China for stability, investment, and development as well. China has heavily invested in numerous mega infrastructure development and industrial projects in the region. It is the major trade partner of all the regional countries and enjoys considerable say, sometimes even decisive role, in the political and security matters of the region. The ongoing rise of China suggests that in the next two decades, it will overtake the US and become the world's largest economy. However, to achieve that status, China requires peace and security in its neighborhood, especially South Asia. China and the South Asian countries share some common security threats like extremism, terrorism, disputes over borders, distribution of resources, and the external interference. These threats, if not dealt in a peaceful manner and well in time, would potentially destabilize South Asia having spillover effects on China. The prevailing geostrategic environment suggests that a workable mechanism to deal with these challenges could be promoting cooperative security in South Asia with due encouragements by major powers and involvement of China.

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