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Japan Visit by US President Trump May 2019- Vexatious Geopolitical Overhang Analysed.–

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US President Trump's ongoing visit to Japan (May 25-28 2019) takes place when Japan singularly stands out contextually as US bulwark against vexatious geopolitical overhang of challenges posed to US by China, North Korea and South Korea which raises questions whether United States can afford ruffling Japan on trade issues particularly.

In May 2019, China shows no sign of blinking in ongoing US-China Trade War, North Korea possibly under China's influence has reverted to an obstructive mode on North Korea denuclearisation despite US President Trumps' political outreach and South Korea despite being a staunch US Ally persists in its misperceived reconciliation approaches to North Korea sometimes at cross-purposes with US policy thrusts.

Retrospective analysis of preceding events in Western Pacific would indicate that Japanese PM Abe Shinzo's policy stances on China and North Korea were far more realistic than the line taken by the US President. Japan analytically seemed to be a reluctant spectator of US President Trump's overtures to North Korean President bordering on appeasement of the Chinese nuclear proxy satellite. US President Trump imparted political legitimacy to the Head of State of a 'Rogue Nuclear State' like Pakistan---both of them nuclear proxies of China.

Reasonably, hopes can be entertained that with good personal chemistry existing between US President Trump and Japanese PM Abe Shinzo, both United States and Japan would be able to send out strong political messages to China and North Korea on shared strategic convergences and joint security endeavours.

North Korea figures high on Japan's military threat perceptions and Japan expectedly could not have taken well on President Trump's overtures to North Korean President for a Summit. The United States should be more mindful of Japan's sensitivities on this score.

Japan with long years of diplomatic dignity and adherence to diplomatic norms seems to be welcoming US President Trump's visit to Tokyo oblivious to US initiatives on China and North Korea misfiring. Japan with diplomatic quiet dignity intact should make US President Trump realise that it is in US interests not to pressurise Japan and even India on trade issues and place and typecast them in the same category as China.

US Presidents of whichever political dispensation should learn from the policies of late US General MacArthur's post-1945 policies but for whose strategic and political vision Japan today would not have continued as a staunch and enduring ally of the United States

With the above very relevant point made in terms of guiding principles that United States should adopt always towards Japan, one can now move forward to what US approaches that President Trump should be adopting during his current visit to Japan. This would also have a bearing on Japan-US relations when President Trump visits Tokyo again in June 2019 for the G-20 Meet which will be chaired by Japan.

The US President's two main points of focus during his current visit to Japan would logically be on trade and security issues dominating US narratives both in terms of US foreign policy and US domestic politics with onset of US presidential elections campaign season soon due to commence would be uppermost in President Trump's mind.

On both issues of trade and security Japan for decades has bent backwards to be accommodative of United States demands, at times over-demanding. With 2019 emerging as a vexatious geopolitical challenge for the United States in Western Pacific and daresay in the entire Indo Pacific Region, it would be politically and strategically advisable for US President Trump to be sensitive to Japan's sensitivities and expectations on these aspects.

On trade issues, US President would be well advised not to be too vocal in criticism of Japan. The US President should be well aware that that Japan has always responded by offsetting US pressures on trade issues by placing sizeable purchases of high-value weaponry and military equipment.

It is being speculated that during current visit of resident Trump it can be expected that Japan would be placing a sizeable order for US made F-35 vertical take-off Fighter Planes for its two Helicopter Carriers. In fact President Trump is scheduled to visit one of the Japanese Navy Helicopter Carriers in this connection.

On nitty-gritty trade frictions with Japan, the US President should leave them to be resolved by trade negotiators' of both countries without the US President getting vocal about it and spoiling the atmospherics both in his current visit to Japan and the G20 Meet visit in June 2019.

Security issues is a vital area where both US President Trump and Japanese PM Abe should be speeding more time in deliberations and during this visit send out strong political messages on US-Japan strategic convergences and joint efforts to maintain security and stability in Western Pacific and Indo Pacific Region as a whole.

In the above context, the optical messaging should incorporate unambiguous decorations by US President Trump that Japan is the vital pillar of US security architecture in Indo Pacific region and the custodian of US national security interests in this part of the world. Further, that consequently flowing from this would be a US truism that Japan's security interests would never be allowed to be subsumed by any US policy approaches and outreaches to China and North Korea.

Japan and United States relations should be perceived as devoid of trade issues irritants as such irritants give handle to China, North Korea and even South Korea to adopt unfriendly postures towards Japan. The onus of solidifying and maintenance of the US-Japan Mutual Security Treaty and its incorporated security commitments lies more on shoulders of United States than on Japan.

Concluding, it needs to be reiterated that the cardinal principle of US policy establishment and of US Presidents, irrespective of political dispensations, that needs to be followed always is that Japan is an inescapable and crucially vital pillar of US security architecture in Western Pacific and in the wider Indo Pacific security template. It is hoped that the personal chemistry that exists between US President Trump and Japanese PM Abe Shinzo would be at the forefront during the current visit of President Trump to Tokyo.

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