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Geopolitical realities in first decade of 21st Century pushed India from its longstanding Strategic Partnership with Russia towards United States when Russia entered into a strategic nexus with China. The 21st Century second decade perceptually witnesses the United States pushing India into a Russian tilt again by politically expedient reversing of US policy gears in South Asia.

Geopolitically, India in 2019, unlike the 20th Century or the 2004-14 Indian political dispensations in New Delhi, is no longer a 'hesitant power' weighed down with the 'Risk Aversion' syndrome. In the last five years India under PM Modi has grown in geopolitical stature and with demonstrated record of having the political will to use power to uphold India's sovereignty and 'National Honour'.

Russia and the United States more pointedly need to remember that in their policy formulations on India and its articulation both these mighty nations cannot afford to callously make or adopt politically blasphemous statements repugnant to Indian public opinion especially on Kashmir, like repeated assertions of US President Trump on Kashmir mediation.

Similarly, Russia too in peevish responses to India's growing strategic proximity to United States reflected its displeasure by making moves towards Pakistan including arms sales and joining the embryonic China-Pakistan Russia Trilateral---the subject of many of my past Papers. The fact that Russia has reverted back towards India is a sure sign that its reversing gears in South Asia did not work on India effectively.

The above carries a lesson for the United States and US President Trump too of not placing India in the same bracket as Pakistan or China or letting United States political expediencies in relation to Pakistan or China prevail over India's sensitivities.

India's relationships with the United States and Russia are strictly dependant on the respective state of their relationships with China. India's foreign policy dynamics are necessarily determined by the 'China Factor' and the relative importance given to China by the United States and Russia.

It is my considered assessment that both the United States and Russia for their own respective national security interests in a heavily churning geopolitical environment need India to stand with them as the global community enters the third decade of this Century.

The above emerges from a simple geopolitical truism that as the 21st Century unfolds, the global balance of power is seriously imbalanced and threatened by China's not-so-benign military rise.

China's military rise impacts both the United States and Russia as with multipolarity creeping in due to diffusion of global military power, in Asia, where the centre of gravity of global power has shifted, India by its Sub-continental size and other attendant power attributes emerges besides geographical contiguity with China nearly 4,000 km long, as the only reckonable existential counterweight to China.

At the turn of the Millennium, India was in the process of taking the first few steps to ascend the global geopolitical ladder. That may have been the reason as to why till the middle of his decade, both the United States and Russia in their policy formulations did not concede o India their outright recognition of India's power attributes.

The picture as 2020 approaches is significantly different in that India is now widely considered as an 'Emergent Power' with abundant economic and military power to emerge as a significant Major Power meriting respect and consideration for its national security interest and its strategic sensitivities.

A measure of the above recognition is the United States for some time in its strategic calculations giving prominence to India as the 'Pivotal Power' in its Indo Pacific Security concept and template. Similarly, Russia according prominence and honour to India and its Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the recent Far East Summit in Vladivostok needs to be considered as a similar recognition.

There is no doubt that the United States will continue to be the sole Superpower well into the 21st Century even as Russia as the erstwhile Superpower also tries hard to remain as United States contending Power in global and Indo Pacific affairs. Unlike many in the global strategic community, I am not willing to concede that China and not Russia will emerge as the contending Superpower to the United States.

China's strategic vulnerabilities both on its peripheries and in domestic politics and economics are getting visible which will detract from its national strengths to challenge United States Superpower status. And, then of course is the predominant factor of China's "global acceptability" in world capitals as a benign stakeholder in global stability.

Having laid out the context in fair detail, the next question is as to how does India play the triangular dynamics in play in the overall context of United States and Russia's continued contentious relations, their changed perceptions of India and the place of India in their respective power calculations, and overarching above all of the foregoing is as to how much space United States and Russia are willing to give India in relation to their China calculations?

In my view, taking contemporary geopolitical factors in play nearing 2020, India does not have to over-reach or over-extend its political capital in trying to influence the United States-India-Russia triangular dynamics in India's favour. Geopolitical forces themselves have gained tremendous momentum in India's favour by the policy attitudinal inclinations of both United States and Russia. All that India has to do is to keep this momentum in India's favour, afloat, both by PM Narendra Modi's personal diplomacy and the institutional diplomacy of India's Foreign Office.

Perceptions of United States and Russia in 2020 of India can be said to remain constant in that in the calculations of both Washington and Moscow for their respective national interests, India will outscore China when it comes to geopolitical calculations in the long-term perspective.

As far as the last consideration stated above as to how much political space United States and Russia are willing to give India in relation to their China-policy calculations are concerned the answer lies in the realm of predictive assessments and where policy analysts have to stick their necks out.

Going by past records of the United States and Russia in the first two decades of the 21st Century, it is evidently clear that both these nations--- one the reigning Superpower and the other as an erstwhile Superpower----tilted in favour of China at the expense of India. But as 2020 approaches, both the United States more markedly and Russia hesitatingly,, but understandably, have given indications that their infatuation with China is very nearly over.

But even that slight indication raises the final question as to whether the space vacated by China in the calculations of Washington and Moscow automatically gets fully filled by India? That would be highly unlikely as it goes against the grain of international relations in play. The responses of United States and Russia in this regard perforce have to be different, for if no other reasons than the factor of geographical contiguity.

The United States with no contiguous land border with China and separated by oceanic distances coupled with its Superpower military and economic predominance has more strategic bandwidth to afford giving far larger political space in favour of India at the expense of China. But the United States has the heavy baggage of Pakistan as legacy issue and currently in relation to Afghanistan. This holds it back from a full strategic embrace of India.

Russia while mindful of its long geographical contiguous borders with China has to weigh the state of United States obduracy in not resetting its relations with Russia, when it comes to its China-policy calculations. But then Russia and India have a rich legacy of decades of a vibrant Strategic Partnership except for the 2000s. They also share the problem of contentious borders and border conflict. Russia may have calculated all the costs involved in resurrecting and reviving its erstwhile Strategic Partnership with India.

The one significant factor that will increasingly come into play in 2020s is that both the United States and Russia are eyeing the \$150 billion arms purchase plan of India for its Armed Forces in the next decade. Under a pragmatic and realpolitik-imbued Indian Prime Minister like PM Modi, India will leverage its multi-billion dollars arms purchase with substantial geopolitical quid-pro-quo. This will be an interesting arena of United States-India-Russia triangular dynamics to watch as to how the United States and Russia play their cards. India is in a win-win position.

Concluding, in a highly complex triangular dynamics of United States-India-Russia relations with the unpredictable China Factor thrown-in and with Pakistan as a deadweight strung around United States neck----and both China and Pakistan as militarily provocative enemies of India----the challenges become Herculean for the United States and Russia to manage. Yet in the 2020s both United States and Russia will have to manage and find solutions to keep India on their side.

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