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By Dr Subhash Kapila

Geopolitical developments of China's exponential military rise in the last two decades endangering Indo Pacific Security can be attributed to the earlier evolution of the US-India Strategic Partnership and the enunciation of Indo Pacific Security vision in the US National security Document early this year.

Reflected in my writings and presentations in international seminars in the past decade was the strategic reality that China's aggressive military brinkmanship as visible in the South China Sea and East China Sea led to the "strategic polarisation" in the Indo Pacific. Consequently, China had provoked a fear in Asian capitals that the China Threat was real and which led to even the Asian fence-sitters pivoting towards the United States.

It was pointed out that what US diplomacy could not achieve in Asian capitals earlier was presented to the United States on a platter as a consequence of China's unabashed military aggression instincts—Asia's coalescing pivot to the United States.

Contextually what emerges in 2018 is a marked global focus on the US vision of Indo Pacific Security and so also logically on the US-India Strategic Partnership which arguably is not only one of the pillars of US Security in Asia alongside Japan but also the sheet-anchor of any future evolution of US-led Indo Pacific Security architecture.

The United States has recognised this geopolitical reality when just prior to the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore last week, the United States predesignated its major US Pacific Command as the Indo Pacific Command.

Notably, India's Prime Minister Modi in his keynote address at this event in a very subtle play of words without naming China left no one in doubt that Indo Pacific Security especially in the maritime domains was under serious threat by China's maritime ambitions to dominate not only the Western Pacific but also the Indian Ocean.

Also to be noted is that on the side-lines of Shanri-la Dialogue 2018 US Defense Secretary General Mattis had a closed door meeting with Indian PM Narendra Modi. Remarkable also was the fact that while PM Modi only made veiled references to China, the US Defense Secretary was forthright on the subject.

Indian PM Narendra Modi's recent thrust on 'Reset of Relations' with China and Russia via the Informal Summits at Wuhan with the Chinese President and the Russian President at Sochi, in my opinion, cannot be construed as India moving away from the US-India Strategic Partnership or any discordant notes on the Indo Pacific Security issues.

Similarly, I would like to believe that India joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation dominated by China cannot be construed as an Indian trend of moving away from the US Strategic Partnership or a vision of keeping the Indo Pacific region as stable and secure against all possible threats.

Within the Indian strategic community and foreign policy analysts also there is some debate that India's current moves are aimed at India asserting its strategic autonomy and also as a consequence of recent trade frictions of US policies. It is natural that in every vibrant relationship between nations, it should be expected as natural that at times friction and differences could occur. These need to be resolved by dialogue

Concluding, the following observations need merited consideration:

- The United States and India need to recognise that what is at stake in the US-India Strategic Partnership and a joint endeavour to ensure Indo Pacific security is not the value of these two major geopolitical achievements. The nuances could vary at some moment of time but the optics should not be lost by both United States and India that what they have evolved over the last two decades is of substantial geopolitical value for both nations.
- Flowing from the above is another truth and that is that the US-India Strategic Partnership has enjoyed bipartisan political support both within the United States and India, too.
- The United States and India need each other, both geopolitically and strategically, as inescapable imperatives to manage the evolving threats and challenges in the Indo Pacific.

- It needs to be stressed that the United States in the pursuance of “America First” strategies should target such strategies at its adversaries and not against the pillars of US Asian security architecture. “America First” may be a good precept for US domestic politics but is counter-productive when sustaining United States strategic relations with like-minded Asian nations.

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