

## China's natural Allies -Pakistan and North Korea in Economic Distress

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Pakistan and North Korea long maintained by me as China's only 'Natural Allies' are in an acute economic distress. China may have built-up Pakistan and North Korea as nuclear weapons states with missiles arsenal, however seemingly, has not contributed anything to buttress their economic strengths and resilience leaving them open to stray away from China's orbit.

Perceptionally, Pakistan seems locked into a concubinage strategic relationship with China and North Korea in a strategic bondage with China. Both Pakistan and North Korea have thrived on their dubious disruptive reputation encouraged by the Chinese supplied nuclear weapons and missiles arsenal. However, their 'disruptive card' overplayed for decades and which facilitated US permissiveness of their disruptive propensities does not scare the United States any longer.

Trajectories that China adopted in the emergence of Pakistan and North Korea as 'Rogue Nuclear States' provides a useful insight into China's strategy of building up 'Regional Spoiler States'. Pakistan was to be the 'Regional Spoiler State' in the Indian Subcontinent and as a Chinese proxy state to checkmate India. North Korea was intended to be the Chinese 'Regional Spoiler State' in East Asia to checkmate Japan and South Korea and to make them waver as staunch United States allies.

Reviewing the situation in 2018 and the end results that China has achieved in the pursuance of the above strategy, what emerges clearly is that China's intended aims have not materialised. Despite checkmating by China and China's use of Pakistan for the same dubious purpose, India stands unimpeded in its ascendancy on the power ladder of the global strategic calculus. Of course, India's power-rise trajectory would have been that much faster had Pakistan had not acted as a Chinese proxy.

Similarly, China's buildup of North Korea as a rogue nuclear state has only served to strengthen the alliance linkages of Japan and South Korea with the United States. China's disruptive strategies in this region have added to the conviction in Japan and South Korea that the United States remains the unquestioned sheet anchor of their respective security.

In the end game in 2018 what is abundantly clear is that while China in the preceding period prior to 2018 has built up China's Comprehensive National Power to levels that encourage China to question the Asia Pacific predominance of the United States, the regrettable end- result for Pakistan and North Korea's strategic bondage to China has been that both Pakistan and North Korea in 2018 have ended up as 'Economically Failed States'.

China with its trillions of US dollars reserves sought it not fit or prudent to contribute handsomely to the economic uplift of its only two 'Natural Allies' of Pakistan and North Korea. They may be nuclear weapons states but to what end? Both Pakistan and North Korea in 2018 stand economically emasculated. Both of these China's 'Natural Allies' are in varying states of denouement with their Chinese patrons.

Obviously, China has limited itself to make use of Pakistan and North Korea for its own narrow strategic ends without even the semblance of investing in the economic future and economic sustainability of its 'Iron Brothers'. If China has not done so it clearly indicates that China views Pakistan and North Korea's strategic utility for the future to be limited.

Pakistan today is going around with a begging bowl to the International Monetary Fund for bail-out loans whereas North Korea seems engaged with the United States for normalisation of ties to facilitate inflow of foreign capital and economic aid.

In both cases, Pakistan and North Korea would be forced to compromise their strategic relationships or dilute their Chinese relationship to some conceivable degree so as to convince the United States to even consider the very thought of bailing them out economically with its tremendous economic leverages and hold over international financial institutions.

Alternatives do not exist for Pakistan or North Korea as with China's 'Colonial Stranglehold' over their foreign policy formulations for the simple reason that China so far has not exhibited any trends or inclinations for economic bailout of Pakistan and North Korea. Both Pakistan and North Korea foreclosed their options the day they inveigled themselves into China's strategic orbit.

North Korea is already under sanctions and Pakistan may also be possibly subjected to the same by the United States or the United Nations if it continues to defy US pressures to modulate and delink its policies from China's apron strings and desist from providing safe-havens within Pakistan for Islamic Jihadi terrorist groups.

There is yet another serious complicating factor for Pakistan and North Korea and that arises from China's worsening relations with the United States. In end-2018 China seems to be on a collision course with the United States not only in matters of trade wars but also the

United States hardening its military postures in the South China Sea confrontation---a region where the United States to a point was permissive of Chinese military challenges to the United States precept of the 'Freedom of the High Seas'.

Pakistan and North Korea are therefore placed in a strategically piquant situation where China as their strategic patron and bestower of nuclear weapons and missiles delivery vehicles for nuclear weapons to Pakistan and North Korea is not inclined to bail them out economically whereas with no other alternative Pakistan and North Korea would have to look at the United States for the same and which in 2018 is in a serious conflictual mode with the United States.

Would the United States stoop to economically bailout Pakistan and North Korea with their 'Chinese Satellites' labels without extracting a significant geopolitical or strategic price as 'quid pro quo'? It seems unlikely when viewed against the current backdrop of worsening China's confrontational postures against the United States.

For far too long both Pakistan and North Korea have blackmailed the international community that the alternative for not bailing them out economically by the United States would be 'State-Failures and Anarchy' of nuclear weapons states dubbed as rogue states in regions of vital interests for US security besides regional turbulence.

Significantly, more than the United States it is China in 2018 that should be more concerned of two 'Failed Nuclear Weapons States' of Pakistan and North Korea created by China tottering towards economic bankruptcy on China's doorsteps. This especially applies more to Pakistan which borders Sinkiang an extremely turbulent region on China's Western peripheries.

It is China that has over decades underwritten emergence of Pakistan and North Korea as 'Rogue Nuclear States' and shielded them from international indictments as 'rogue Terrorist States' also. China has hardly behaved as a responsible stakeholder in regional and global affairs. The main national signature of these two Chinese colonial entities has been the furtherance of Chinese disruptive strategies on China's behalf.

In 2018, therefore, a unique opportunity presents itself to the United States to "Denuclearise" the two 'Rogue Nuclear Weapons States' of Pakistan and North Korea to ensure the security and stability of the larger Indo Pacific Region to which President Trump and the United States is committed to. It is a global imperative for the United States to do so. Pakistan and North Korea have over the decades not contributed towards US security interests in any substantial manner and therefore there are no mitigating factors for sparing them.

With such a sordid backdrop some important lessons emerge for not only China and its 'Natural Allies' but also for the United States as still the sole Superpower on the world stage and with vital stakes in not only the security and stability of Indo Pacific Region but also at the global level.

Pakistan gave up its most strategically strong relationship with the United States and which with American munificence stayed economically buoyant for a number of decades. This went on even when Pakistan was being promiscuous by parallel flirting with China. In 2018, Pakistan with its Chinese satellite label has ended up on the wrong side of the United States and also at odds with its two neighbours, that is, India and Afghanistan. Pakistan in 2018 stands diplomatically isolated all because of its over-reliance on its 'Iron Brother' China.

North Korea built up as a nuclear weapons and missiles state was used for decades by China as blackmail leverage against the United States and Japan. In 2018 North Korea is in economic distress as China has not pumped in equivalent amounts of economic inputs and aid for its economic development. In 2018, North Korea seems ripe to be plucked away from China's grip by the United States.

The main deduction that then surfaces is that both Pakistan and North Korea stand economically bankrupt with China not willing to hold their hand economically. Also, both Pakistan and North Korea stand diplomatically isolated because of their labels as China's satellites. Pakistan and North Korea must be really mulling over whether their strategic embrace of China has paid them any economic dividends?

China has many difficult questions to answer on its strategy of setting-up 'Regional Spoiler States' with WMD armouries in critical regions of Indo Pacific Asia. Have Pakistan and China proved to be long range strategic assets for China? Will Pakistan and North Korea stand by China in the event of China's military conflict with the United States and which is not unthinkable? Have Pakistan and North Korea been able to checkmate India and Japan on China's behalf?

When the negative answers to the above questions are added to the 2018 image of China entrapping economically weak states into 'debt-traps' through inducements of joining China's OBOR we have a picture of a huge dent in China's overall global and regional image.

The United States also has a lot to answer in being permissive on letting China develop Pakistan and China as menacing rogue nuclear weapons states. In its overall zeal in the geopolitical game against Russia the United States wilfully looked the other way as China merrily built up Pakistan and North Korea as nuclear weapons states. All these years prior to 2018, the United States fell a victim and got entrapped by China playing the 'China Card' with no strategic dividends so accruing. In 2018, the China-Russia Strategic Nexus stands crystallised to United States disadvantage and something which USA was trying to pre-empt by humouring China.

In Conclusion, what needs to be highlighted is that whether China's 'Natural Allies' like Pakistan and North Korea despite submitting to the 'Colonial Hold' of China on their policy making or the newly China-entrapped nations in its OBOR projects have all ended up in economic distress and in China's debt-traps. This should be a major lesson for all other nations so being wooed by China. The United States should be left to draw its own bitter lessons on its policy wisdom of being permissive in past decades on China building-up Pakistan and North Korea as WMD states with their propensity for disruptive actions as China's proxies.

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