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China and Russia stand rattled and fret on their inability to dent United States global predominance in 2019 as reflected in my earlier writings, the United States short of war, has “aggressively unleashed its new economic arsenal to assert its power” as the latest issue of *The Economist* so puts it.

Analytically, the United States seems to be paying back to China and Russia for their military brinkmanship on their respective peripheries by “poker style brinkmanship” applied effectively by economic strategies as opposed to military strategies, and that to, to effect. Analytically, China and Russia have no matching economic weapons to hurl at United States new brand of power games at the global level.

Nor can China and Russia marshal other major powers like Japan and India also under US trade pressures from United States to side with them to counter US economic warfare moves. This simply arises from pragmatic calculations by Japan and India that in longer term perspectives and their respective national security interests it would be more prudent to not let denouement overtake their strategic partnerships with the United States.

The above strategic reality checks of Japan and India emerges from their assessments that comparatively their strategic convergences tilt heavily in favour of the United States, rather than with China or Russia. China and Russia blew their steam of pent up frustrations where Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Putin made strident declarations at St Petersburg in Russia on the occasion of celebrations of 70th Anniversary of establishment of Russia-China diplomatic relations and also the Economic Summit where the Chinese President was the Guest Of Honour.

Notably, despite the strident declarations made by Chinese and Russian Presidents highly publicised in the media and not being repeated therefore, no contours of economic countermoves by them to dent US global dominance in all domains were forthcoming. In fact, the Chinese President parting response was that Trade Wars unleashed by United States could be resolved by “dialogue and consultations”.

Analytically, in an overall assessment, it can be asserted that both China and Russia feel disempowered by US President Trump’s new strategy of economic warfare – a domain where the United States enjoyed comparative asymmetric advantages over China and Russia. Russia is nowhere near the United States in economic strength.

Assessments widely accepted also indicate that China also with its trillion dollar economy is still far from United States levels of economic strength. Notably, in global currency trading deals, 88% is reported to be in US dollars. This underwrites US economic dominance along with dominance of global financial institutions like the IMF.

The stark deduction from the above is that neither China nor Russian singly or in unison as China-Russia Strategic Nexus are in a position to effectively offer economic counterslaughts against the United States new armoury of economic warfare weapons.

China and Russia could in a weak defence at St Petersburg could only stress on a rules-based international order under the over-arching umbrella of the United Nations. The United States has never cared for the United Nations and similarly both China and Russia are more in breach of UN conventions than in honouring them as recent developments on Russia’s Western peripheries indicate and the sordid record of China’s unprovoked aggression in the South China Sea against its weaker neighbours like Vietnam and the Philippines.

China and Russia fret in deep frustration at US President Trump’s assertive economic warfare power games because in 2019 the United States has put China and Russia on notice firmly that the United States can no longer be trifled with or taken for granted. This particularly applies more to China as China had run wildly in the Indo Pacific Asia in the last decade and a half when the United States stood strategically distracted by its being stuck in the Iraq and Afghanistan quagmires.

China during this time in the Indo Pacific strategic vacuum so caused by the United States built up unchecked a blue-water Navy and indulged in aggression in South China Sea and East China Sea.

The questions that need to be analysed are many in terms of China and Russia responses to United States unleashing its arsenal of economic weapons, but two questions would suffice to be answered in this context. Could China persist to continue on the same path of misreading United States policies earlier centred on ‘Risk Aversion’ strategies? Could Russia side with China to raise the costs for the United States in the politico-military domains?

China would be grievously misreading American intentions currently in play. The United States is now in the process of retrieving lost ground

in the South China Sea by not checkmating China earlier. While one does not foresee the United States undertaking military actions against Chinese islands/artificial fortified islands in South China Sea one does foresee the United States intensifying its challenges to China's claimed sovereignty over South China Sea by sizeable increase of FNOIPS patrols by US Navy ships, US Air Force flights along with those of allies like Japan.

In tandem, the United States is actively engaged in assisting and motivating Japan and India towards sizeable military buildup of their Armed Forces. All this is geared towards providing counterweights against China.

Russia is being subjected to US sanctions imposed after Crimea annexation and no let-up is in sight. The United States continues to besiege Russian backed Syrian President---long target of US regime change moves. United States is also besieging Iran which has close links with China and Russia. One can expect further intensifications in coming months.

While my past assessments showed that Russia would not be an active participant in any Chinese military adventurism against the United States but in past weeks visuals of Russian Navy ships buzzing US Navy ships in South China Sea signals a change in Russian postures even though optical and transient for time being. But the potential for military challenges in support of China by Russia cannot be ruled out with changed challenges posed to them by the United States.

Analytically, one could assert that with every riposte by China and Russia in terms of military moves to unsettle the United States to divert from its strategy of economic warfare to gain its national security interests, the United States could use its economic warfare armoury that much more intensified, regardless of the tangential impact on world markets and globalisation efforts.

Concluding, it needs to be emphasised that China and Russia though rattled and fretful of not being able to fling economic ripostes in kind against the United States, are unlikely to submit tamely to American demands to fall in line with US national security interests. Economic warfare now emerges as a potent weapon underwriting military strategies. China and Russia will have to factor-in this in their US policy formulations. Notably the global economic forecasts are more negative for China and Russia and that is a force multiplier for the US economic warfare arsenal against China and Russia. United States dominance in Indo Pacific Asia will continue therefore despite any limited challenges posed by China and Russia.

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