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Are Rising China's Visions of International Order Doomed to Inviting Conflicts with Regional Countries?

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ABSTRACT

This essay aims at analysing whether rising China's visions of international order doomed to inviting conflicts with regional countries. This essay discusses the relationship of China with its neighbours, China's economic growth, China's security policy, China's vision on international order to get a clear view of China's need from the outside world. This essay also critically analyses the Chinese vision of new world order based on Tianxia will be the best as it will suit the interest of all nations. Chinese vision of new world order will not doom to invite regional conflicts as it holds for the common interest under a single institution with a view from everyone. As China takes a multilateral approach towards a multipolar trend its view of great power, sharing the greater responsibility to set up a peaceful and harmonious world will become a complete and perfect world order. On the other hand USA's relationship with its neighbours, complex interdependency will not make China to respond in its selfish interest to go on for a conflict.

Keywords: *China, International order, Tianxia, Regional Conflicts, USA, Harmonious World, Complete and Perfect World Order.*

I. INTRODUCTION

China is an emerging global power of 21st century. The growth and influence are visible in a variety of international relation areas like economy, security, culture and environment which on the other hand raises a suspicion, that what kind of power China may become after its full-fledged growth as an international power. Whether it will use its power in a peaceful development or it will go for war with the neighbouring countries and USA to declare its dominance over the world order.

This essay discusses the rising China's vision of international order whether its doomed to invite conflicts with regional countries or it will become a pacific power among the Asia Pacific region leading to regional stability in that region. Hence for convenience, this essay has been divided in to five parts like China and its neighbours, China's economic growth, China's security policy,

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China's vision of international order, Critical analysis and finally this essay ends with a conclusion that rising vision of international order is not doomed to invite conflicts with its neighbouring countries.

II. CHINA AND ITS NEIGHBOURS

China's relationship with its neighbours was not smooth. China had rivals which had stopped it from becoming a super power. The geopolitical location is not favourable for China as it was ruled by colonial imperial powers for several centuries. The economic and military rise of China though shows favorable signs to exercise the chance to expand and to impose authority over world nation states, is blocked by its relationship with neighbours.

In brief we shall discuss the relationship of China and its neighbours. The main issue is one with Taiwan. Taiwan has all components of a state like territory, people, government but what it lacks is international recognition. Hence Taiwan though independent cannot declare it as a de jure state. China claims Taiwan as part of China and Taiwan's attempt to declare it independent will make China to use force on it. The future compromise between these states will undermine their national interest; hence no solution could be brought. But the differences in political sphere have not affected the trade ties between these two countries leading to economic integration for self-development. (Mufuna, 2010, pp. 48-50)²

Next comes that of border disputes between China and India in territories of Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh. Still both the countries share a good economic tie, show cooperation in multilateral fields like trade and environment, energy security and have a same vision towards a multipolar world order. The relationship of China with Pakistan and Bangladesh undermines India's growth (Kernic, 2009, pp. 109-110)³.

The relationship with Korea and China is something typical as they are mutually benefiting but cannot openly augment their relationship as it is not good for them. Korea has acted as security door for China by protecting it from Japan's attack on the other hand China has given aid and military support to Korea to fight external aggressions. The relationship was good until Korea was divided as South Korea and North Korea. Later North Korea was supported by China economically and militarily. China found economic benefits from South Korea and started to maintain cordial relationship with it which on the other hand led North Korea to develop nuclear weapons. Later South Korea and China signed a Strategic Co-operative Partnership discussing various issues and one among that was disabling the North Korean nuclear issue. North Korea

²Mufuna, S. K. (2010). *China and its neighbours*. New Delhi: Pentagon press p-48-50.

³Kernic, G. H. (2009). *China- The Rising Power*. New York: Peter Lang p-109-110.

understands that China does not expect its regime change as expected by USA. On the other hand China also feels unsafe as it feels Japan, South Korea and even Taiwan may develop their own strategic deterrents. Hence China feels that North Korea's nuclear card game would help it stabilizing its position in Asia (Mufuna, 2010, pp. 88-106)⁴.

China and Japan's relationship since past had been rough as China was under the colony of imperialist Japan. The bilateral relationships between Japan and China during 1949 to 1972 were normalized. The relationship started straining since 1982 when Chinese people went on to protest for screening the Japanese history text book attempting to whitewash its imperialist past. The second incident that led to further break down of relationship was the visit to Yasukuni Shrine in 1985 by the then Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone's Yasuhiro's. Further to this there also exist territorial disputes over Senkaku islands which lie in the East China Sea. Despite of these political issues the trade relationship that exists between Japan and China shows higher coordination (Kernic, 2009, pp. 87-108)⁵.

Hence the relationship with China and its neighbours though shows some or other kind of issue that affects their national interest. The fear of destruction due to war and complex interdependency due to trade has patched these states from stepping against each other. The states also remain pacified due to cost benefit calculus that will arise due to war.

III. CHINA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH

Chinese economy was brutally shattered as it had long been under the rule of colonialism and imperialism. It was with the advent of People's Republic of China in 1949 Mao declared that the Chinese people had finally 'stood up'. The new government was piled with task to reconstruct its economy to eradicate poverty.

China had many hurdle in its way to build its economy and reach the zenith of power. The first hurdle was in form of USA's seditious activities causing long term blockades and embargo on China. An example for such a seditious activity was Korean and Vietnam War indirectly to contain China. USA-Japan alliance also stood as a wall to China's development.

Later in 1955 in Bandung conference China made an agreement with India to set aside their ideological differences and pursue peace with following the five principles of peaceful coexistence as proposed by Zhou Enlai. China's foreign policy is based on five principles of peaceful coexistence, like mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit

⁴Mufuna, S. K. (2010). *China and its neighbours*. New Delhi: Pentagon press p-88-106.

⁵Kernic, G. H. (2009). *China- The Rising Power*. New York: Peter Lang 87-108.

and peaceful co-existence. Chinese economic reforms were based in line with its foreign policy. To have a thorough understanding of economic rise in China, I have briefed down the reforms taken by government (**Kernic, 2009, pp. 110-111**)⁶.

China followed a communist pattern of society similarly to that of Soviet Union's centrally planned economy, only difference was China followed agrarian pattern while USSR concentrated on industrial development. As there was no incentive to private persons centrally planned economy did not lead to fast economic growth. Hence in order to increase the economic growth Mao Zedong brought in a policy called "Great Leap forward" in 1960's. On demise of Mao, Deng Xiaoping began to reform the economy and he moved towards a market economy based approach under one party rule. The first step towards the market based approach was privatizing agriculture land to increase productivity, promoting foreign direct investment, creation of Special Economic Zones, finally to modernize inefficient State owned enterprises. Economic liberalisation in China is the sole reason for China to achieve an annual GDP of 9.5% in 2011. China is the world's second largest trading power behind the USA. This growth of Chinese economy is basically because they employ cheap labour with good infrastructure resulting in high productivity supported by favourable government policy and undervalued exchange rates leading to manufacture at low cost. As products of Chinese goods are cheap people in USA, Europe prefers it and hence China has been blamed for huge trade surplus. China was also blamed of producing large quantities of counterfeited goods. Still China has expanded its business and has risen economically and pulled its majority of population out of poverty.

China's trade amongst the world countries has increased which has made China to seek for entering in to free trade areas and security pacts especially amongst its Asia-Pacific neighbours. This shows that China's involvement in improving its trade relation with the concept of mutual benefit.

IV. CHINA'S SECURITY POLICY

Economically risen China has few security concerns which induce them to increase their expenditure in strengthening their military force. The major security concerns are the theatre missile defence, USA's arms supply to Taiwan. The main goal in increasing the expenses in modernizing the weapon is to ensure national security in order to resist any kind of aggression, defend national sovereignty by ensuring territorial integrity guaranteeing the maritime rights and interest. The reason the Chinese government gives to increase Chinese military expenditure

⁶Kernic, G. H. (2009). *China- The Rising Power*. New York: Peter Lang 110-111.

is to protect and promote political, economic and cultural rights, on the other hand to ensure security and to improve national strength (Kernic, 2009, pp. 21-24)⁷.

The bombing of Chinese embassy in Belgrade 1999 became the main reason to ensure the modernisation of its military. In a decade or so China will be the sole competitor before USA's military might. The fear increased when China tested its highly sophisticated direct ascent kinetic kill vehicle which was considered to be very dangerous because evidences showed that its use has attempted to blind a USA's reconnaissance satellite in 2006, it was considered by USA that PLA has tested kinetic kill vehicle with the intention to deactivate US military assets in space in any conflict. Joan Johnson- Freese from the Department of National Security Studies at the Naval War College estimates that China spends \$ 1.4 billion to \$ 2.2 billion annually on space defence technology (Smith, 2006, p. 4)⁸. The deployment Of Dong Feng 31, a more advanced Dong Feng 31A missiles, China's successfully tested human space flight and finally China's plans to conduct research on short term manned and long term unmanned orbiting space laboratories has increased the doubt in minds of USA and neighbouring countries that China's rising military power will not be peaceful on the other hand dreadful.

V. CHINA'S VISION OF INTERNATIONAL ORDER

The Bipolarity that arose after World War II with an ideological confrontation between USA and USSR ended in 1980 with the collapse of USSR. Meanwhile USA and USSR piled arms which were capable to eliminate human race from earth. Though they started to destroy the arms there remained the technology to create arms which made the other countries to remain submissive before them. Though Arms race maintained a long term peaceful coexistence the end of cold war showed the dominance of USA and establishment of unipolar world.

The check to USA's unipolar world came in way Bandung conference, which was aimed to eliminate colonialism completely and to express unity among third world nations. The second step was establishment of NAM which required the members to abide two conditions like "no first use" of nuclear weapons on nuclear states and non-use of nuclear weapons on non- nuclear states was further sought to limit super power domination and contention. Increasing number of independent states led UN to revive their economic coordination by formation of UNCTAD and G77 which resulted in wipe off bipolar structure of cold war. Further the demand for NIEO to bring international economic order to eradicate poverty and NPT to bring peace was

⁷Kernic, G. H. (2009). *China- The Rising Power*. New York: Peter Lang p-21-24.

⁸ Smith, M. (2006). *China's Space Program :An Overview*. CRS Report for Congress, , Washington D.C p-4.

considered to be a fight against hegemonism and imperialism (Clegg, 2009, pp. 41-50).⁹

China's relationship with its neighbours, China's economic rise and heavy investment in military results in doubt that China will be a threat to nations present in the region. Whereas it is seen that China's view of international order is different and it works for collective interest and not for individual interest. Chinese vision of new world order is really different from that of western imperialism because western imperialism is mostly based on the individual interest between the nation's leading to conflicts. Whereas Chinese vision of new world order is based on the concept of Tianxia which means "all under heaven". Tianxia is said to be a model that is very different from western imperialism because it is based on utopian model and not self-interest of the people. According to Zao the Tianxia has also three meaning based on Tianxia as "the world", secondly as "all the people", thirdly as the "world institution". Tianxia as "the world", Zao argues that world is big and a single nation state cannot bring harmony in the whole world. To develop a new world order it's very important to address each and every states issue, which cannot be done by a single nation, hence for better world order which is complete and perfect the world order should be all inclusive that is to see a problem from world's view rather than looking at it with national interest. Secondly the Tianxia meaning for all people mentions that world order should look in to welfare of all the people and not on the individual interest, which is not present in democracy. It is impossible to achieve the highest world order without addressing the collective interest of the people. Thirdly Tianxia represents the world institutions which insist for top down approach of world's ills. Through institutions it is easy to achieve the highest world order because institutions will act as a single master with collective views within the setup to deal with the issues. Hence Tianxia will easily solve the issues of world order by collective interest of the people by a single institution created by world states, which on the other hand will bring harmonious society holding responsibility of great power. Hence Chinese new world order based on Tianxia will bring in greatest benefit to all nations. This has been seen in China's step in patching with organisation and multilateral approach towards a multipolar world (A.Challahan, 2008, pp. 749-761)¹⁰.

China is one among third world nations which has suffered the humiliation of being colonized for centuries. Hence they became the observer of NAM and imbibed the UN's objective in its foreign policy that is not to go for war and revolution instead sort out any differences in a peaceful manner. They also wanted to go diverged from Leninist percepts so as to open their

⁹ Clegg, J. (2009). *China's Global Strategy: towards a multipolar world*. Norwich: Pluto press p-41-50.

¹⁰ A.Challahan, W. (2008, 10). Chinese vision of world order :post hegemonic or a new hegemony. *International Studies Review*, pp. 749-761.

market further to bring in economic coordination between states. In consolidation Chinese foreign policy was to ensure peaceful development with enhanced cooperation and coordination. China also adapted a dynamic strategy “theory of the three worlds” which strengthened the movement for the need of multipolarity. By this way though China gained reputation in UN and NAM, Deng cautioned China to maintain “keep a low profile”, and “bide its time, while building up strength”.

China from then has concentrated in developing its economy peacefully. China also believe that going to war though might prove a countries power but on the other hand leads to weaken its position economically and politically. China is also attempting to realize a harmonious world of lasting peace and common prosperity through building fair and efficient common security system through South-South cooperation. China also concentrates on making new diplomatic relations as a player in international relations by embedding harmonious world theory, three good neighbor policy, entering in to mutual cooperation regimes like Shanghai Cooperation Organistaion, ASEAN +1, ASEAN +3, Six-Party-Talks. China also signed NPT and started improving its relationship with Singapore, Indonesia, South Korea and Thailand. Adopting a more Asian-oriented foreign policy of good neighbourliness, China made major breakthrough in restoring and normalizing relations with its neighbours. National Security Concept was incorporated into China’s National Security Strategy in 2000 and formally launched at inauguration of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in 2001. NSC’s consolidated views as “four no’s” no hegemonism, no power politics, no arms race, no military alliances (**Clegg, 2009, pp. 103-121**)¹¹.

China’s vision as world order is peaceful coexistence with world development led by United Nations by resolving the disputes in peaceful manner through dialogue and negotiations. China also requires UN to reorganise the existing international economic and financial organisations in order to promote mutual prosperity and development of all nation states. China also wants UN to make arrangement to deal with both non-traditional and traditional security issues. Finally China wants UN to bring some strong rules towards nation to nuclear disarmament and restrain nuclear states from going for arm’s race. China’s view of international order emanates with the concept of peaceful development and they have established it through taking multipolar trend by multilateral means (**Clegg, 2009, pp. 57-69**)¹².

VI. CRITICAL ANALYSIS

¹¹ Clegg, J. (2009). *China’s Global Strategy: towards a multipolar world*. Norwich: Pluto press p-103-121.

¹²Clegg, J. (2009). *China’s Global Strategy: towards a multipolar world*. Norwich: Pluto press p57-69.

The stability of Asian region depends on powerful states like USA, Russia, China and middle powers like Japan, South Korea, and North Korea. The peaceful development of Asian region is unavoidably interconnected with the peaceful development of each of these countries. Hence it is impossible to isolate China and try to build a global architecture. China is the focal point and it is rightly claimed that China is the “great power” because of its size, population, civilization, history, economic growth. Many assume that development of China would lead to instability over Asian region and will seek to expand and contain its neighbouring countries that were in past its rivals due its increased expense on military.

My argument is that China’s vision of international order is not doomed to invite conflicts with regional countries because of following reasons like neighbouring countries having alliance with USA, complex interdependency, and traditional aspects.

Though China is rising militarily it will not go against its neighbours and USA, because its military power is very small compared to USA’s military power. On the other hand China is not a jackal state to protect what it has and gain more but it is being developing in to a lion state to protect what it has and daring to take risk in acquiring more. The very next reason why China will not go for war is due to its location in between allies of USA, on the other hand the conflict with its neighbours will prove self-destructive. The possession of nuclear weapons by neighbouring countries also proves dangerous for China to go for conflicts (**Lanteigne, 2009, pp. 29-35**)¹³.

World states are complexly interconnected by the web of globalisation. Trade has led the nation states to enjoy the better standard of living by having comparative advantage over the goods of other country. This has created a greater economic coordination among the nation states developing cooperation between them. Though there are few political tensions among nation states, liberalisation of market has improved trade which has completely eliminated the chance to go for war because the nation states are aware that war will shatter their shared economic interest. This is another reason why China’s rise will not lead to regional conflicts on the other hand will be peaceful because its foreign policies have been embedded with principles of mutual benefit with peaceful coexistence. We have also seen the multilateral approach of joining many international organisations and entering in to agreements by China is to upgrade its economic coordination with its neighbouring states in order to bring stability in the region and hence its vision of international order will not bring in regional conflicts.

To assert that China’s development will be peaceful because of their socialist pattern of society

¹³Lanteigne, M. (2010). *Chinese Foreign Policy- An Introduction*. Newyork: Routledge p-29-35.

has limited their individual interest and enhanced collective interest whereas wests are prone to war because they concentrate on individual interest which on the other hand leads to expansionism ending in hegemonism. Hence concentration on collective interest of the society will not lead China to expand and aspire for hegemony. Another reason why there was more war in west compared to that in China was because of their low tolerance level. Chinese people are also romanticized of their tradition and culture which has pacifism in its every move which on the other hand will not lead China to take an aggressive path to take a road of expansionism or hegemonism. Hence development model of China will be based on its tradition and culture, socialist pattern of society and increased tolerance level which will make China to take a path of peace rather than taking a path of expansion and ending in hegemonism (**Xiaoming, 2010, pp. 60-73**)¹⁴.

Finally China's new vision of international order seen from its activities to consider UN to act as a single institution to deal with different kind of problems faced by nations states to bring in solution under the responsibility of great powers will be the best international order that will bring harmonious world because there will be no damage to sovereignty of the state and states will be happy and feel reliable to be dealt with an institution that does not deal with its self-interest.

VII. CONCLUSION

Chinese vision of new world order based on Tianxia will be the best that suit the interest of all nations. Chinese vision of new world order will not doom to regional conflicts as it holds for the common interest under a single institution with a view from everyone. As China takes a multilateral approach towards a multipolar trend its view of great power sharing the greater responsibility to set up a peaceful and harmonious world will become a complete and perfect world order. On the other hand USA's relationship with its neighbours, complex interdependency will not make China to respond in its selfish interest to go on for a conflict.

¹⁴ Xiaoming, W. (2010, May 2). Reflections on China's road of peaceful development and its significance for world history. *Social Sciences in China*, XXXI, pp. 60-73.

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