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## Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2021: Annual Report to Congress (United States of America)



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### Introduction

As strategic competition intensifies between the United States (US) and the People's Republic of China (PRC), Washington must discern Beijing's intentions and motivations correctly. Beijing's national security strategy and its subsequent aims and objectives need to be properly understood to make policies to counter Beijing's actions successfully. The report, titled "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2021: Annual Report to Congress", released on 03 November 2021, lucidly outlines Beijing's national security strategy to achieve the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation". To realise this objective, China is pursuing different economic, social, and security strategies, which aligns to achieve its grand strategic vision. The report carries implications not only for the world at large but

### Key Points

- China's grand strategy is to achieve 'the great rejuvenation of Chinese nation' by 2049.
- China's development has a disproportionate spillover effect on India's security. India's calculus with Beijing is complicated due to unresolved boundary disputes and Beijing's raw power. India needs to tread through this 'Geopolitically unstable environment' carefully.
- If Beijing's threat increases beyond the bearable threshold, India needs to align its interest closer to Washington. Until then, maintaining strategic ambiguity and remaining uncertain without choosing sides will be in India's interest.
- Indian Military must also exploit the enormous returns that emerging technologies promise to deliver. Incorporation of AI, quantum computing, cyber capabilities into the military and finding military applications of dual-use technologies have the capacity to tilt the balance in one's favour.



specifically for India. Thus, what follows are the brief pointers on the implications of China's national strategy for India and for the world.

## **Preview**

The report seeks to achieve different objectives. *First*, it reviews and summarises the DoD report on 'Military and Security Developments' involving the People's Republic of China (PRC). *Second*, the report analyses China's rise and its impact on the world and India in particular. *Third*, the report also puts forth some policy recommendations to manage the consequences of China's rise, especially from India's perspective. It also concludes by prescribing a more assertive role that countries should undertake to 'balance' China. The management of rivalry is key to ensuring stability in which middle powers like India will play a significant role in the future.

## **Summary of the DoD Report**

### ***China's National Strategy***

PRC's national strategy aims to achieve "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation" by 2049. This is the 'end' Beijing intends to pursue by aligning all other strategies— security, economic, social—towards that goal. Beijing wants a "favourable" international environment for its growth and prosperity. Policymakers in Beijing perceive US as a 'declining power' relative to its position. China's "rejuvenation" will be complete only when it achieves "full reunification" of Macau and Hong Kong. The Communist Party of China (CPC) views the current international order as "constraining" its ambitions and is "incompatible with its sovereignty, security and developmental interest".

### ***Foreign Policy***

China wants to "restore" its pre-eminence that existed before the disintegration of the Qing dynasty in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. CPC believes that, the global trend is shifting towards a "multipolar" world. Such a view coincides with India's preferences and perceptions of the 'balance of power' in the world. PRC believes in maintaining "collective security architecture" and views the US alliance system and partnerships as antithetical to its world vision. It opposes US' architecture since it perceives Washington as the "principal instigator" of global instability. Accordingly, the US drives



"international strategic competition". The two also collides because of the belief in different systems with clashing values.

### ***Nuclear Policy***

China adheres to 'no first use' policy, but the doctrine has recently evolved to include "launch on warning" mode. It means any incoming missiles directed against the Chinese mainland will trigger the use of a nuclear weapon by Beijing. Such an approach is risky and can start an "accidental" nuclear war. Detecting incoming missiles needs a command and control system with radars and satellites which can provide essential information. China follows a "limited deterrent" posture, but how much is 'enough' for Beijing is difficult to estimate. Its nuclear inventory will increase to 1000 warheads by 2030. Beijing also maintains nuclear triad capability with the induction of H-6N nuclear capable bombers in October 2019. The People's Liberation Army Rocket Force (PLARF) maintains strategic land based nuclear forces and wants to augment its "strategic deterrence" capabilities. PRC is "investing" and "expanding" its nuclear delivery platforms to support the significant expansion in its nuclear forces.

### ***Military-Civil Fusion (MCF)***

Military-Civil Fusion in China aims to integrate civilian and defence establishments to achieve Beijing's ultimate goal of "national rejuvenation". The motive is to streamline economic and social development in the civil domain, mainly innovations, technologies in private sectors, with national security strategy. Dual-use technologies, innovations in private sectors incorporated within defence systems will fasten the "intelligentisation" in military hardware. The plan aims to fast-track military adoption of civilian innovations and increase the military applications of advanced technologies built by private entities.

### ***China's OBOR Initiative***

Beijing's flagship 'One Belt One Road' (OBOR) initiative, launched in 2013, renamed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), aims to expand "PRC's overseas development" and its "security interests". It also seeks the "economic integration" of countries with the PRC. It further aims at increasing its "overseas military footprint" to ensure the fulfilment of those interests. Through its flagship BRI



project, Beijing aims to cooperate actively and continue carrying out "highquality development" in developing countries that needs capital and largescale investment. Besides economic leverage, BRI will also boost Beijing's strategic partnerships, increase its strategic partners, and aims to "reform" the existing world order. The initiative, internally, also helps in reviving the state-owned enterprises, which are seeking to invest the "excess capacity" elsewhere.

### ***Intelligentisation of PLA***

PRC aims to 'mechanise' and 'informatise' its forces to upgrade and improve the battlefield systems and integrate them into "system of systems" formations. It means every system vis. command and control, weapon systems, detection systems, will be connected and work in sync. Such integration will process information faster and will be used to achieve informational dominance over the adversary. After this integration, PRC wants its defence programs to "field intelligentised capabilities", defined as "expanded use of AI and other advanced technologies at every level of warfare".

PLA strategists decided to field the next generation operational concepts like "attrition warfare" infused with disruptive technologies like AI. It involves using "intelligent swarms" and "unmanned aerial, surface, and underwater vehicles". Empirically, China has Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) like HALE, which could perform landing and take-off actions without human control or supervision. Similarly, China Electronics and Technology Group Corporation demonstrated that 200 fixed wing UAVs could destroy an aircraft carrier.<sup>1</sup>

### ***China's Anti-Access/Area Denial Capabilities***

China is fielding anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities to "deter" and "dissuade" any "third-party intervention" in the region. It has the requisite capabilities to make it costly for Americans to undertake any such operations. But A2/AD capabilities can work successfully for Beijing in the perimeter of the first island chain. PLA could field such weapons around the second island chain, thereby increasing its reach further into the Pacific and throughout the world.



### ***China-Russia Relations***

Cosy relation is developing between China and Russia. The strategic partnership, cooperation in the energy sector, military acquisition and dependencies, military exercises with more intensity, diplomatic exchanges— all points to the developing warmth between the two countries.

### ***Relations with Taiwan***

Beijing views Taiwan as an integral part of the Chinese mainland. It wants to "contain Taiwan's independence" at all costs. China aims to complete its "modernisation" of the military from mechanisation to intelligentisation by 2027, essentially to prepare for any contingencies developing in the Taiwan Strait. Beijing's Eastern Theatre Command is also "oriented" towards Taiwan. If required, China can coerce Taiwan, launch amphibious operations, initiate air attacks, and "invade" Taipei. Nonetheless, this would invite "international intervention". But the prospects of forceful reunification are unnecessarily costly and carry the fear of escalating the crisis at strait into a full-blown war with Washington.

### ***Special Section: India-China Border Clash***

The section talked about the India-China border standoff (Galwan). It started as "incursions" and developed into a military "standoff" when skirmishes resulted in the loss of 20 Indian soldiers. The two sides prevented any significant escalation to conflict by engaging in dialogue, negotiations among military commanders of both sides. The report also claims that Beijing has built "a large 100 home civilian village" inside the disputed territory. PRC blamed India for the crisis as infrastructure activities have shifted the local balance of power in New Delhi's favour.

### ***Impact on the World***

#### ***Perspectives on China's Revisionism***

Discerning China's intentions will ensure policy choices that are optimal and real. "Revisionist" intentions highlight 'dissatisfaction' with dominant rules, principles, and values espoused by the liberal international order. Authoritarian regimes, crackdown on human rights, and its communist ideology directly conflicts the liberal democratic values espoused across the world. However,



China's dissatisfaction stems from issue-specific orders<sup>2</sup> wherein the military domain has witnessed a 'surging' China with defence expenditure showing exponential growth since the 1990s.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, Beijing has become more assertive in the South China Sea dispute. Although, there is disagreement on the degree of Chinese assertiveness in various domains, from India's perspective, Beijing is showing its revisionist intentions by unilaterally encroaching in the Northern Borders and engaging in confrontation with Indian Army in the Galwan Valley. But Alastair Johnston has mentioned that the "narrative" on China's "new assertiveness" is misplaced and does not explain its alignment on significant decisions with the international community, especially its voting congruence with the US in the United Nations General Assembly and Integrated Crisis Early Warning System.<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, 'recalcitrant' Chinese behaviour results from its growing power relative to other states in the international system. Beijing's dissatisfaction emanates less from its ideological ground and more from its ambitions. All great powers have the propensity to disregard international rules and norms. For instance, as alluded by Graham Allison<sup>5</sup>, P5 States have regularly violated international rules and norms as and when their national interest was at stake.

A case in point is the US. US is not a signatory to UNCLOS but wants other countries to obey the rules. It does freedom of navigation exercises to uphold the UNCLOS principles, but nobody authorises Washington to enforce those rules. Likewise, Beijing also ignored the judgement given by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) with respect to its claims of sovereignty encompassing the space within its 9-dash line. Such claims were legally squashed by the international bench while upholding the merit of the Philippines case. Thus, it appears that the rising powers are destined to challenge the international rules and norms if their national interests are compromised.

### ***Perceptions of US Decline vis-à-vis China***

There is a perception among the Chinese policymakers of a relative decline of the United States. Such a perception has given them space to put forth their alternative to the liberal international order. However, Michael Beckley<sup>6</sup>, Stephen Brooks<sup>7</sup>, and William Wohlforth asserted that US' pre-eminence would continue in the foreseeable future, given the qualitative edge that Washington enjoys vis-à-vis Beijing. Washington commands the control of global commons. It has technological superiority and can add value to the higher-end spectrum of products in the



global supply chains. China has manufacturing capabilities, but the US has an edge over innovativeness and value addition.

Moreover, Chinese society is likely to see a marked shift in its demographic dividend. In the coming years, the productive population will become less effective, if not a liability, as social security nets must be expanded to provide them with services. The burden on the state may prevent Beijing's adventurism abroad, forcing it to focus on maintaining internal stability and security.

### ***Liberal International Order: PRC's Dissatisfaction and Reasons thereof***

PRC also believes that the current international order "constrains" its ambitions and compromises its "security". But is it the case, or is it just what America believes? Liberal international order elicited enormous benefits to China, and its growth is ascribed to the liberal order, as it provided market for Chinese products. The size of the Chinese economy quadrupled when it integrated with the international system. Engagement with the international order allowed foreign trade, investments, and markets, pulling China out of poverty and fuelling its military growth. China remains profoundly intertwined and integrated, and any decoupling will be disastrous for Beijing and the world. Decoupling involves systematically trimming the interdependencies that one has created with the other in the economic domain.

Such practices hinder leveraging comparative advantages between the states, serving the nationalistic interest, not consumers' interest. The Covid-19 pandemic further aggravated the worsening backlash against liberalisation and globalisation since interdependencies are considered to be liabilities, not assets. Although "system maker" is a "privilege taker"<sup>8</sup>, it urges China to challenge the liberal international order. Beijing knows that 'isolationism' and 'decoupling' are not suitable for its economy. Further, sustaining and nurturing an international order espoused by Beijing does not have enough buyers. 'Values, rules, and authoritarian' character, as depicted in Beijing's Tianxia<sup>9</sup> model, unsettles most states. Unlike the liberal international order, the Tianxia<sup>10</sup> framework is conceptualised on hierarchical relations between states, wherein China occupies the central position. Such an order where equality of states' are diminished and freedom is curbed, the capacity to build such a system and sell it to other states





seems uneconomical. Hence, the notion of alternative international order 'lies in theory but not in practicality'.

### ***Artificial Intelligence and China's Technological Incorporation***

PLA's emphasis on intelligentisation suggests that AI machine learning and other technologies will be utilised to achieve the strategic and tactical end in the battlefield. This development will change the nature of warfare. Intelligent machines will achieve cognition, additional to humans. They will be delegated more decision-making power to achieve faster, quick, and reliable judgements.

Though PLA's progress is rapid, using AI has repercussions on the battlefield. Using autonomous systems will deliver faster decision-making, but errors, misidentifications will become common. Debates over whether humans will be replaced in the Observe, Orient, Decide, Act loop (OODA Loop) to achieve speedier decision-making capability are contentious. Humans need to take control; if not, escalation and erosion of deterrence will increase the chance of wars. For India, time has come to consider the incorporation of AI and other disruptive technologies into its doctrine. System integration, while remaining most daunting, should be prioritised. New Delhi should also focus on building such AI enabled weaponry but with caution. Humans and machine must be combined to offset each other's vulnerabilities rather than replace one another.

### ***Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) Capabilities in US-China Tactical Posture***

China's use of A2/AD capabilities can challenge Washington's pre-eminence in the Indo-Pacific region. Anti-access means destroying basing facilities so that access is denied. Beijing can destroy Guam or bases in allied territories like in Japan and South Korea. They can achieve this through bombers and long range vectors. The question that arises is what will be its repercussions? To offset this, Washington uses mobile basing options offered by carrier strike groups, including aircraft carriers, surface combatants, etc.<sup>11</sup> But these combatants are increasingly vulnerable to China's DF-21, DF-26 Anti-Ship Ballistic Missiles. They can destroy aircraft carriers and surface combatants. However, missile defence systems in individual combatants could help, but penetrating will be successful if the frequency and volume of missiles launched are considerable. Likewise, China can also field dummy AI quadcopters (swarming





capabilities) to confuse defence systems on aircraft carriers. Area denial capabilities include capabilities that can thwart the freedom of manoeuvre of the US combatants. It can be achieved by underwater systems, drones, G-RAMMs, artillery, mines, etc.

PRC also has capabilities to do operations beyond the second Island chain. Beijing's infrastructural development on the small islets in the SCS, which it claims as its own, will multiply the operational range of the missiles and capabilities. China has installed radars, airstrips, mobile launchers on these islands.<sup>12</sup> However, denying US access to the South China Sea is still tricky for Beijing. The US has revised its doctrine according to the vulnerabilities it could face in its possible skirmish with China. Similarly, any confrontation in the South China Sea is disastrous for Beijing as most of its imports and exports travel via the Malacca Strait. Beijing's attempt to engage in disruptions can compel Washington and its allies to impose economic costs on Beijing by leveraging the Malacca dilemma.

### ***China-Taiwan Relations***

Beijing's relation with Taiwan is complex and enduring. As argued by Gautam Bambawale, Xi desires Taiwan's integration into mainland China, as Mao and Deng did for Xinjiang, Tibet; Macau, Hong Kong, respectively.<sup>13</sup> However, Xi's campaign to forcefully coerce and invade Taiwan is tactically unfeasible. In their works, Ian Easton and Michael Beckley<sup>14</sup> highlighted that Taiwan could use denial capabilities to thwart any Chinese assault. Taiwan is equipped with the best early warning systems in the world. Local military power balance is skewed heavily towards China; nonetheless, missile launchers, aircrafts, submarines can be used by Taipei to forestall Chinese efforts significantly. Moreover, it could stop Beijing's aggression easily until the arrival of Washington's help.

The complexity of economic interest and the legacy issue has made the strategic equation pretty complicated. Steven Goldstein rightly called Taiwan's interaction with Beijing as "pseudo-engagement", wherein Taipei is essentially prolonging the eruption of conflict between the two by economically intertwining Beijing.<sup>15</sup> Likewise, Robert Stutter argues, "Gulliver's strategy" – the web of economic interdependencies – limits aggressive Chinese postures towards Taiwan, as investments by the latter generate returns in the former. The business community is also reluctant to break ties because of economic interests. Thus, the Chinese campaign to invade

Taiwan and the web of economic linkages may be enough to dissuade Beijing from taking any irresponsible action.

### ***Washington's Approach to Russia-China Bonhomie***

It will be in the interest of Washington to complicate the relation between Russia and China. The growing warmth in the relationship is due to the ever-increasing tussle with Washington regarding different strategic issues. Washington expanded NATO membership and willingly offered membership to Georgia and Ukraine, pushing Russia to secure its interest by aligning with Beijing. Washington needs to create a 'wedge' between both the powers by mollifying its predation towards Russia, which remains its secondary challenger.<sup>16</sup> Since the primary challenger is China, Washington must retrench or tone down its expansion in Eastern Europe and direct those resources into the Indo-Pacific to deter Beijing's expansionism, which is also beneficial for New Delhi. Such success will prevent China from taking unwarranted risks, as Moscow's support can encourage it to take dangerous ventures.

### **Impact on India**

#### ***India's Foreign Policy Posture***

From India's perspective, any competition near its border, will have 'repercussions' for its security. China's aggressive actions on continental and maritime domains, as experienced during the last decade, have been responsible for destabilising the regional system. India's preference for a 'multipolar world' also lies in recognising multiple powers in the world system to ensure stability and peace worldwide and in the region. India needs a careful plan of action to navigate through the current form of competition and confrontational attitude. This includes maintaining its "strategic ambiguity"<sup>17</sup> with a 'tilt' towards the US. By not aligning fully with the US, New Delhi will keep its options open for strategic manoeuvring, which seems restricted in alliances. At the same time, India's tilt towards the US will also convey to Beijing that India is available for partnerships to counter and "contain" China if Beijing's aggression becomes more frequent and volatile.



### ***Interpretation of United States' Perspective on India's Disputes***

Washington's 'reading' of China's strategy suggests that India's dispute with China is of secondary interest to Beijing, not primary. It does not list the dispute resolution with India in Northern Borders as fulfilling its "rejuvenation". Likewise, China's primary interest lies in the Indo-Pacific region along the first and second island chain, most notably in oceans, not continents. The objective may not be to "get" territory via military means, but maintain its territorial integrity and simultaneously keeping New Delhi on its toes and signal to India that it has to forgo Washington's efforts to "contain" China. It would be correct to differ with the assessment of the report regarding Beijing's reading of India. India must take a serious note of the massive infrastructure development, modernisation and reorganisation of the military structures, formation of the theatre commands, increase in training in high-altitude areas, build up taking place in Tibet, especially after the Doklam standoff in 2017, and changes taking place in the strategic geography. India must improve its ISR capabilities at priority to improve its operational preparedness.

Although, historical negotiations suggest a tendency to resolve the dispute by offering to swap the territories, but contemporary Chinese assertiveness resulted in hardening its stance against India's concerns. It may appear that aggression is observed not to acquire the territory by flexing muscles but as a response to changing geopolitical scenarios in the international system. If China perceives itself as a weak power or finds itself confronted with internal conflicts/dissensions due to slowing down of the economy, then it may tend to be more aggressive with India, which could lead to a conflict. Moreover, by showing hostility, it also wants to send a message to the world at large, that its weakness, nevertheless, will not be a constraint to engage in an assertive foreign policy posture. Aggressive posture will deter others even if Beijing is internally in chaos. India needs to take note of and be prepared accordingly.

### ***Perspectives on Nuclear Policy and Nuclear Posture***

For New Delhi, there should be 'no fear' from Beijing, with superpower ambitions, of an 'accidental nuclear war' but from Islamabad, which is China's 'all-weather friend'. Beijing may be willing to share nuclear technologies and materials with Pakistan to 'discourage' India's tough stance and let New Delhi engage with Islamabad to prevent it from focusing on China. Further, such propensity to proliferate nuclear assistance (materials and technologies) is much higher if



Beijing and Islamabad view India as a common threat. For China, India is not an immediate concern but a future one. Thus, it uses Pakistan to let India focus on Western borders while using the unresolved northern borders to upset New Delhi periodically. In short, China is 'passing the buck' to Pakistan with material support to 'balance' India regionally so that Beijing could prioritise its attention on Washington for the foreseeable future.

India must consider reviewing its nuclear doctrine periodically and 'update' it with the changing geopolitical tensions on the ground. New Delhi's nuclear policy could be country specific rather than a generalised statement of 'intent and capability'. It should send correct signals to Pakistan by showing its intent to review its policy, considering the rapid changes in the geopolitical landscape and threat profile in the future. Such 'uncertainty' will caution Pakistan to be more responsible in its rhetoric against India. Likewise, India must convey its capability and resolve to take appropriate actions. However, this aspect requires to be deliberated upon in detail to take action responsibly.

Territorial skirmishes are Beijing's best bet to dissuade India from 'entering' into the US security orbit. It has tactical advantages but not strategic ones. Beijing does not gain anything by going 'rogue' on the borders. The only point of contention is its 'nuclear transfer' to Pakistan, which New Delhi should be cautious about. More so, after the AUKUS deal, which intends to transfer nuclear powered submarines to Canberra. Beijing might misperceive Washington's attempt to equip Canberra with nuclear submarines as a means to proliferate nuclear assistance.<sup>18</sup> Such a step might encourage Beijing to do the same to behold Pakistan.

### ***Military-Civil Augmentation***

From India's perspective, Military-Civil Fusion could make PRC "a world-class military" by 2049. Such a powerful neighbour could coerce and pressurise India in the coming future. To offset such an effect, India should 'emulate' Beijing's strategy to integrate its defence establishment closely with the civilian sector at a much faster pace. Technological innovation in the civilian domain has the most comprehensive military application, but incorporating those innovations is hindered because of 'bureaucratic inadequacies, lesser incentives, and national security obligations'. Indian defence establishment must trust their civilian counterparts while the latter should keep national security obligations intact and should not breach the same. Moreover, 'gaming' could



provide a plausible course of action to integrate both civilian and military domains. It will educate policymakers on challenges pertaining to the integration.

### ***Assessment on Belt and Road Initiative***

With respect to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), it appears that it may be economically unsustainable to pursue China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and China-Myanmar Economic Corridor. Evidence highlights that China's strategy may not get the dividends that it had set out to achieve. Instead, it may push both Pakistan and Myanmar to financial instability due to the debt trap. India should learn from China and must not try to economically "overstretch". But at the same time, India needs to ramp up its economic engagement with the countries. It should focus on building recipient state capacity and undertake strategically important projects while at the same time ensuring fiscal prudence of the recipient's state treasury. Such an approach will earn populace support and goodwill, unlike China's tactic, whose projects face resistance and distrust from the public. One must understand that, if China makes a bid and wins, it is not zero-sum for India. But India should maintain its presence economically. Analysts argue that China could use its economic leverage to gain basing rights near the Indian coast. However, in a balanced analysis, no country should be willing to erode its sovereignty for financial credits.

### ***Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) Capabilities***

Like the way Beijing utilises A2/AD capabilities against Washington, New Delhi should also consider effective application of its A2/AD strategy at its Northern Border. India maintains long-range vectors but has not used them for deterrence.<sup>19</sup> Escalation by China in border areas should be counterbalanced by deploying missiles to strengthen deterrence. The two reports by Belfer Centre for International Affairs<sup>20</sup> and Centre for New American Security<sup>21</sup> highlights certain Indian advantages (like synergised employment of air assets) in the region, which can be exploited to secure strategic interests. On similar lines, 'wargaming exercises' involving all three wings and important elements of national power, should be done to construct myriad scenarios and plan for a possible course of action to navigate through the conflicting situation. Such an approach will help combine the forces that will assuage vulnerabilities in battlefield operations by relying on others' strengths.



India can learn from China in this scenario. India should also plan to progressively utilise its inventory of long range missiles — ballistic and cruise; cyber operations, and space capabilities, to deny Beijing an advantage in the Northern Borders. Since geography favours the Chinese on the land borders, India's best option is 'denial through operationalising' such capabilities. For instance, as commented in the Global Times recently, the Indian Government decided to deploy Brahmos missile at the border.<sup>22</sup> There is a need in the Indian defence establishment to integrate the three wings and construct 'joint doctrine' as done by the US like the Air-Sea Battle concept, to dissuade China from taking bold actions on the border.

### ***Economic Viewpoint***

From an international perspective, economic decoupling is harmful to Beijing and the world. But such measures are beneficial for India. Major investors chasing opportunities will be discouraged from investing in China. It opens an opportunity window for India to attract the capital, which is otherwise floating around. India should focus on creating economies of scale and make it attractive to investors by providing incentives to capitalise in the Indian market. Recently, this has happened with the start-up ecosystem, wherein large investors have invested in India instead of chasing Chinese companies. Decoupling will reduce dependencies on China but increase the dependencies on other states like India, Vietnam, Bangladesh, and African countries to manage the shortfall. New Delhi should leverage this global hiccup to its advantage and try to get beneficial deals by incentivising the business community.

### ***Russia-China Equation and the Indian Factor***

China's relations with Russia can complicate its strategic equation with New Delhi. Indian variable in the growing Russia-China strategic relation could be a source of distress for both powers. Growing ties with China will push Russia away from its traditional friend India. Likewise, such a step will propel India to shift its defence supplies away from Moscow and towards Washington. Russia needs to manage its relations with both powers, but upsetting New Delhi will also be disadvantageous to Moscow.

### ***Conclusion***

The report uncovers China's key objectives and intentions in the international system. By discerning those correctly, states in the international system can make policy choices with an



informed mind. It offers clarity in the opaque Chinese strategic discourse, which makes prescribing policies an easy task. Apparently, China's rise has repercussions for the strategic stability of the world and India in particular. Further, China's national security strategy aims to "rejuvenate China" and recover its past glory wrecked by imperialist powers. China resorts to different means to achieve the end wherein it seeks to displace the United States. The foreign policy envisages a multipolar world to de-emphasise the Western dominance, while the military-civil fusion aims to exploit the innovations in the civilian domain for usage in military applications. The nuclear policy and the "intelligentisation" of PLA endeavours to deter US responses in Taiwan contingency. Such policy choices and changes therein, are all in sync to achieve China's ultimate goal of "rejuvenation".

Additionally, the world is in a flux; thus, states like India need intelligent policies to navigate through the turbulence created by the Chinese power. Until and unless China gets its practices in line with the international community's expectations and shed its revisionist intentions, it will be a source of distress for the international community. Countries like the United States, India, and other middle powers must actively seek to balance Beijing and accommodate China's concern and ambitions to alleviate Beijing's aggression and not rile it to escalate further. Diplomatic practices must hit full throttle to socialise Beijing and to regress its malign motives. India needs to revise its strategy vis-à-vis Beijing. New Delhi needs to posture boldly through means of long-range vectors, review the nuclear policy, and up the ante in using the denial capabilities. However, it would require an additional budget to be allotted to forge ahead. India needs to make it costly for Beijing to engage, which will discourage it further, as the intensification of border conflict does not accrue significant strategic benefits. To further blunt China's rise, which the US explicitly considers a "challenge", Washington needs to enhance its commitment to the Indo-Pacific region. US and its allies – Australia and France – need to ramp up their engagement with the Indian Ocean region to earn India's trust. At last, the states need to work together in tandem to stop the revisionism of Beijing.

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup>Elsa B Kania, "Chinese Military Innovation in Artificial Intelligence", Centre for a New American Security, 01 June 2017. Available at [https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/June%207%20Hearing\\_Panel%201\\_Elsa%20Kania\\_Chinese%20Military%20Innovation%20in%20Artificial%20Intelligence.pdf](https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/June%207%20Hearing_Panel%201_Elsa%20Kania_Chinese%20Military%20Innovation%20in%20Artificial%20Intelligence.pdf).



- <sup>2</sup> Alastair Iain Johnston, "China in a World of Orders: Rethinking Compliance and Challenge in Beijing's International Relations", *International Security*, 01 October 2019, Available at <https://direct.mit.edu/isec/article-abstract/44/2/9/12242/China-in-a-World-of-Orders-Rethinking-Compliance?redirectedFrom=fulltext>.
- <sup>3</sup> Yves-Heng Lim, "How dissatisfied is China? A power transition perspective", *Journal of Contemporary China*, 02 December 2021. Available at <https://researchers.mq.edu.au/en/publications/how-dissatisfied-is-china-a-power-transition-theory-perspective>.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> Graham Allison, "Of Course China, Like all Great Powers, Will Ignore the International Legal Verdict", *The Diplomat*, 11 July 2016. Available at <https://thediplomat.com/2016/07/of-course-china-like-all-great-powers-will-ignore-an-international-legal-verdict/>.
- <sup>6</sup> Michael Beckley, "China's Century? Why America's Edge Will Endure", *International Security*, 01 January 2012. Available at <https://direct.mit.edu/isec/article-abstract/36/3/41/12036/China-s-Century-Why-America-s-Edge-Will-Endure?redirectedFrom=fulltext>.
- <sup>7</sup> Stephen Brooks and William Wohlforth, "The Rise and Fall of Great Powers in the Twenty first Century", *International Security*, 01 January 2016. Available at <https://direct.mit.edu/isec/article/40/3/7/12119/The-Rise-and-Fall-of-the-Great-Powers-in-the>.
- <sup>8</sup> Michael Mastanduno, "U.S. Power and the International Political Economy", *World Politics*, January 2009. Available at [https://www.jstor.org/stable/40060223?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/40060223?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents).
- <sup>9</sup> Tianxia model incorporates aspects of China's tributary system wherein China is considered to be the central part while all other countries are related to it. The conceptualisation of relation is hierarchal not equal. The basis for hierarchy of relations is not inferior or superior, but is conceptualised as relation between father and son. Sovereignty and equality may seem antithetical to western state theories, but not according to Chinese philosophy.
- <sup>10</sup> G John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno, "International Relations Theory and Asia-Pacific", Columbia University Press, 2003. ISBN 0231125917.
- <sup>11</sup> Andrew Krepinovich and Barry Watts, "Meeting the Anti-Access and Area Denial Challenge", *Centre for Strategic and Budgetary Assessment*, 02 December 2021. <https://csbaonline.org/research/publications/a2ad-anti-access-area-denial/>.
- <sup>12</sup> Shahryar Pasandideh, "Do China's New Islands allow it to militarily dominate the South China Sea", *Asian Security*, 04 June 2020. Available at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14799855.2020.1749598?journalCode=fasi20>.
- <sup>13</sup> Gautum Bambawale, "Will History Say Xi Huzoor?", *Times of India*, 12 November 2021. Available at <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/toi-edit-page/will-history-say-xi-huzoor-his-consolidation-of-power-doesnt-mean-chinas-supreme-leader-will-have-it-easy/>.
- <sup>14</sup> Michael Beckley, "The Emerging Military Balance in East Asia: How China's Neighbours Can Check Chinese Naval Expansion", *International Security*, 01 November 2017. Available at <https://direct.mit.edu/isec/article/42/2/78/12177/The-Emerging-Military-Balance-in-East-Asia-How>.



<sup>15</sup> Alastair Iain Johnston *et al.*, “Engaging China: the management of an emerging power”, Routledge, 1999. ISBN 9780415208413.

<sup>16</sup> Timothy W Crawford, “How to distance Russia from China”, *The Washington Quarterly*, 22 September 2021. Available at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0163660X.2021.1970903>.

<sup>17</sup> Strategic ambiguity is used in the context of Washington’s relation vis-à-vis Taiwan which is heavily influenced by China factor. The same can be extrapolated in Indian case, wherein uncertainty is deliberately maintained and consciously followed. Ambiguity is not the result of decision-making paralysis, but is a measured policy choice as forecasting future is difficult due to information deficiency. In this, engagement with all the states is maintained without commitment to other states or their strategic preferences. This enhances the probability of getting benefits from all the states as convergence of interest make cooperative work possible, thus boosting gains. If interests are not in congruence, New Delhi can simply opt out and can maintain a low-key posture.

<sup>18</sup> Manpreet Sethi, “AUKUS from India’s Perspective”, *Asia Pacific Leadership Network*, 29 September 2021. Available at <https://apl.n.network/analysis/commentaries/aukus-from-an-indian-perspective>.

<sup>19</sup> Zorawar Daulet Singh, *Powershift: India China Relations in Multipolar World*, Macmillan, 2020. ISBN 9389109736.

<sup>20</sup> Frank O Donnell and Alex Bollfrass, “The Strategic Postures of China and India: A Visual Guide”, *Belfer Centre for Science and International Affairs*, March 2020. Available at [https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/india-china postures/China%20India%20Postures.pdf](https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/india-china%20postures/China%20India%20Postures.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> Daniel Kliman, Iskander Rehman, Kristine Lee and Joshua Fitt, “Imbalance of Power: India’s Military Choices in the Era of Strategic Competition with China”, *Center for New American Security*, 23 October 2019. Available at <https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/imbalance-of-power>.

<sup>22</sup> Zhang Changyue, “India’s plan to deploy BrahMos missile escalates border tension, but of no actual threat: observers”, *Global Times*, 14 November 2021. Available at <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202111/1238935.shtml>.

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