

Fleeting moments: The emerging power

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After the Russian forces crossed River Oxus in February 1989, having lost 15,000 men in a decade-long occupation of Afghanistan, Russia was not to remain the same. The US-led coalition forces fought in Afghanistan for almost a similar duration before they decided to draw back.

While the Russians accepted their defeat gracefully, the US and its allies decided to fight a rear guard action before withdrawing. It's just a matter of time before the remaining US military elements slink back.

During the Russian incursion in Afghanistan, Pakistan wholeheartedly supported the Afghan people in their struggle to rid their country of foreign invaders. Nobody at the time could imagine that about two and half decades later, the Pakistan army chief would inspect the guard of honour presented by the Russian troops in Kremlin and lay a wreath on the grave of an unknown soldier (Gen Raheel Sharif's visit June 2015). It was heartening to see rivals of the past warming up to establish a close relationship.

China and Pakistan have traditionally been close allies. What is significant is how Russia decided to warm up to China and forge a close relationship to the extent of carrying out joint military exercises together. Military manoeuvres by the armed forces of the two countries in the Sea of Japan were a clear signal to the world that the Sino-Russian alliance was to stay. It bodes well for many countries in the region, previously those coerced by the lone superpower to follow its dictates, to realign themselves to suit their needs.

President Vladimir Putin, whom the Forbes magazine in 2013 and 2014 rated as the most powerful person in the world, has recently decided to support the beleaguered Syrian government with troops and armaments. Clearly, geopolitics is shaping up into a bipolar world. In any case, the US is a dwindling power pushed under heavy debt with China and Japan. It couldn't possibly wage new wars with borrowed money.

However, there was a time when India acquired military equipment from Russia and Pakistan from the US. Times have changed. India is looking west for its military needs and we are looking east for the same reason. The Russian defence minister visited Pakistan in November 2014 to sign a defence pact between the two countries. An earlier visit by Russian defence minister, Andrei Grechko, had taken place half a century ago in 1965.

It is reassuring to observe that Pakistan is prominently mentioned for its role in the emergence of a new superpower of the east. If China and Russia occupy a pole each of a triangle, Pakistan seems to occupy the third pole. A country that the US used for promoting its global agenda and for fighting a war on terror of its own making is suddenly catapulted to form an alliance with eastern giants, Russia and China. This speaks for the sagacity of the leaderships of the three countries.

It is important to know about the public perception regarding US and China. While the first is considered a predatory world power that occupies weaker countries to control their energy resources and to establish its global hegemony, the second is seen to genuinely promote their economic interests.

China's investment to develop the railways network in Iran and to explore natural resources in Africa is huge. It does this with the understanding of the host countries and not by power of the muscle, which the US employs. Obviously using power breeds violence. Martin Luther King in his time called the US the main perpetrator of violence in the world.

Iraq was neither involved in terrorism nor did it pose any threat to the US and Europe. The imperial power ravaged the country with its formidable military power, resulting in loss of more than million and half innocent Iraqis. Similarly, Moammar Gaddafi didn't pose any direct threat to US interests. Gaddafi was toppled, mercilessly butchered, and his body humiliated.

Above all, ask the Iraqi and Libyan people if they were happy under Saddam and Gaddafi or if they are happy now under the 'democratic freedoms' headed by western stooges.

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