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BRICS Declaration and Indian Media

Dr Ahmad Rashid Malik



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A three-day BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) Summit of five big emerging economies was held in the south-eastern Chinese city of Xiamen, in Fujian Province on 3-5 September, marking the completion of the first ten years of its

inception. Through outreach programme, leaders from Mexico, Egypt, Tajikistan, Guinea, and Thailand were invited to sit at a roundtable with BRICS representatives to make the bloc “BRICS Plus” to further strengthen the South-South cooperation.

The Xiamen declaration raised concerns for Pakistan, though the wording of declaration did not specifically name Pakistan. The 43-page declaration adopted on 4 September stated that “we, in this regard, express concern on the security situation in the region and violence caused by the Taliban, ISIL/Daesh, Al-Qaeda and its affiliates including Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, the Haqqani network, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad, TTP and Hizbut-Tahrir.” (The BRICS Xiamen Declaration, Clause No 48, page 21).

The Xiamen declaration identifies some terrorist organisations that are allegedly based in Pakistan as some foreign sources are concerned and these organisations are: Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad, and the Haqqani network that are considered fatal for peace in the region, calling New Delhi’s major diplomatic victory against Pakistan in years in Summits where China plays the key role.

India has been accusing Pakistan of harbouring terrorism for years in South Asia. The United States also joined the lines of India when it recently accused Pakistan of harnessing terrorism in Afghanistan. China, on the other hand, always defends Pakistan’s cause against terrorism.

With BRICS condemnation, the situation has become disquieting for Islamabad, which always categorically denies all such accusations for long. As stated above, the 43-page declaration did not single out the name of Pakistan or terrorist organizations working from Pakistan’s soil. The reference was made by interpreters themselves. The declaration is a common and a collective wisdom of BRICS and not specifically that of China. The declaration has not accused Pakistan for breeding terrorism. China’s stand is the same old one.

China has not changed at all, even at BRICS; remembering that China played out its role by blocking a UNSC resolution when it wanted to include the name of Masood Azhar in its terrorist listing. China had blocked the US move to designate him as a global terrorist at UN on 7 February this year. The move is still on the hold until 2 November. Earlier, China also put a hold on a move to declare his assets freeze and to put a travel ban on him under the Resolution 1267 sanctions. Moreover, Jaish-e-Mohammad is already a blacklisted organization according to the UNSC. The mentioning of it in the BRICS declaration is not something new, but it was just the reiteration of this fact.

Instead of reading pieces from different statements and media outlets without totality, especially as flooded by Indian outlets, one needs to read the full text of the BRICS Xiamen declaration. It fully serves Pakistan’s interests and its efforts on war against terrorism. There is no such “diplomatic success” of India at BRICS against Pakistan: it was just an India media trick, misleading the situation, and misrepresenting of the facts in order to create a sense of cleft between Pakistan and China.

Beijing has long been defending Pakistan on all regional fora and on the UN Security Council and appreciating its contribution toward war against terrorism in the past 16 years. The Xiamen declaration does not depart from Beijing's earlier commitments and stances made to Islamabad in its defense on all fora without any iota of doubt.

Strangely, Pakistan strenuously reacted to BRICS declaration. Federal Defense Minister Khurram Dastagir Khan and Foreign Office Spokesman Nafess Zakaria gave their versions, criticising and rejecting BRICS declaration. Pakistan reminded of terrorists groups such as Daesh, East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Jamatul Ahrar, operating from the soil of Afghanistan and often they attack Pakistan.

Experts even went on to state that before Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif undertakes visits to Beijing and Moscow, he must revisit BRICS declaration. He was supposed to undertake visits to these capitals after Pakistan was jolted by Donald Trump's statement a few weeks ago accusing Pakistan of harbouring terrorists and militants who attack American forces inside Afghanistan. This seems to be a swift overreaction without reading the full text of the Xiamen declaration. The uproar was absurd and pointless.

A few days ago, China defended Pakistan when Trump made statement against Pakistan. In the past, BRICS remained reluctant naming terrorist organisations based in Pakistan but again this time they did not name Pakistan.

A day earlier than the BRICS moot, China warned India not to accuse Pakistan in BRICS deliberations. This was enough assurance from China. In short, BRICS Xiamen summit also promoted Pakistan's goals and causes and any negative propaganda should be put aside.

The writer is Director of the China-Pakistan Study Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad. He writes on East Asian affairs.

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