

Changing Leadership and Great Power Equations in the International Politics

India's Role and Response



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Introduction

- + International Politics have been going through a very important transition.
- + Leadership has changed across the globe.
- + Inter-state equations have also been in transition for some time.
- + India, like any other country, has to comprehend and articulate its foreign policy amidst these changes.

New Leadership Explained

New Leadership: Major Trends

- + Period of relative peace (hot peace).
- + Period of economic and social prosperity
- + Period of discontent
- + Resulted in rise of aggressive leaders across the globe.
- + Problem of success of liberal order

Period of Relative Peace (hot peace)

- + In the Cold War period, there were relatively few state wars- Korean War, Vietnam War, Iran-Iraq War, Indo-China War.
- + In the Post-Cold War period, inter-state wars have got further reduced.
- + Most of the conflict have been intra-state, most of the time, one party at least has been non-state actor.
- + There have also been few 'failed states' or 'rogue states' who have been cause of concern. But these states have been largely dealt by the international community through institutions such as the UN.
- + Emergence of unipolar world also meant that intra-state conflicts, non-state actors and rogue states have been dealt by international community ostensibly through global institutions' but allegedly the role of the US in using this institutions for its own national interests have been more obvious in this period.

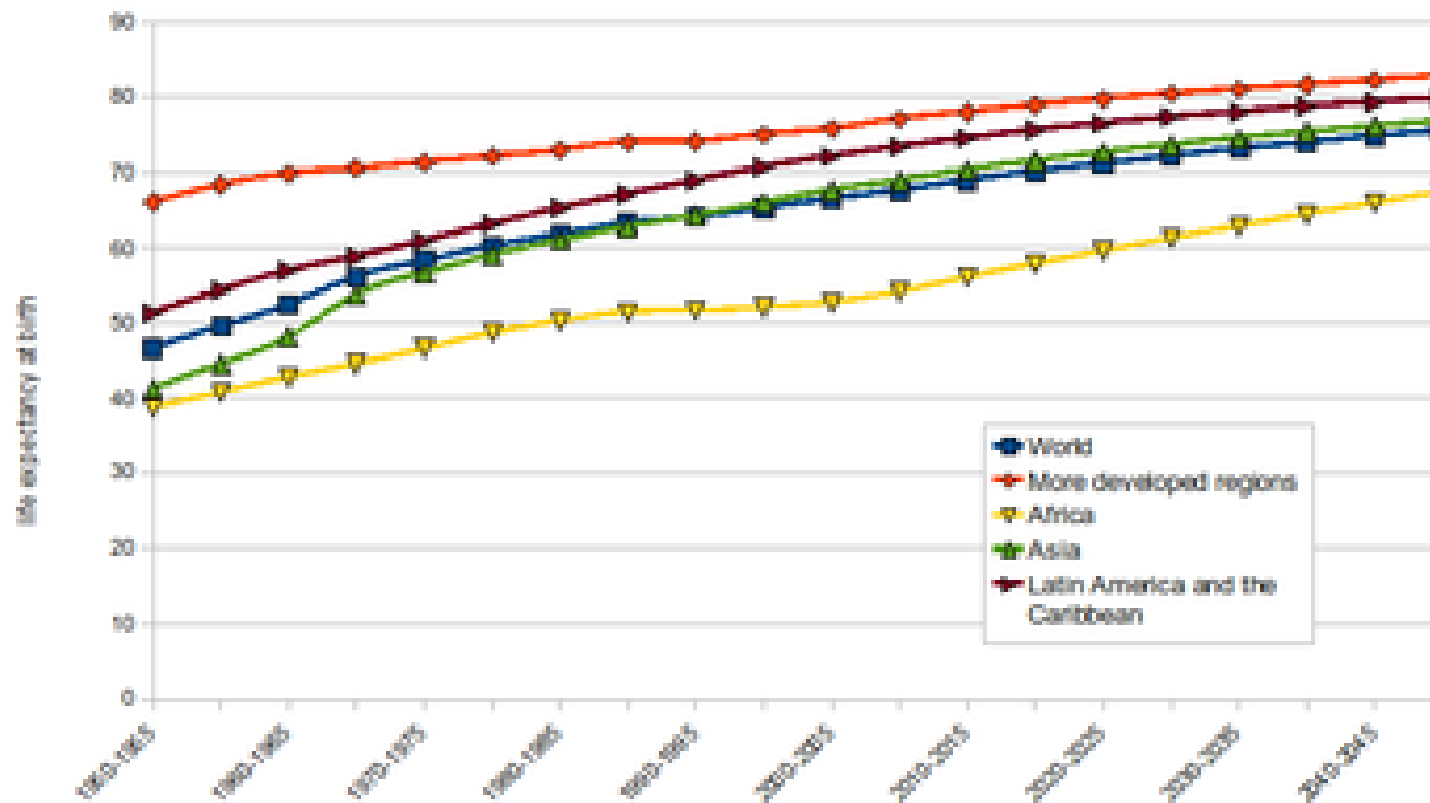
Period of Economic and Social Prosperity

- + Global GDP has grown remarkably in this period (\$4 to \$79 trillions).
- + It means that education, health, basic amenities are more accessible to more number of people across the globe.
- + Literacy and life expectancy have improved significantly.
- + It is also reflected in debates which have increasingly included non-traditional security issues in the discourse.

Life Expectancy

Life Expectancy at Birth by Region, 1950-2050.

Source: UN World Population Prospects, 2008.



Period of Discontent

- + But last 70 years also meant that peace and prosperity along with globalization have brought greater sense of discontent.
- + In the period of 'end of history', loss of belongingness and purpose.
- + There is devaluation of peace and compromise.
- + There is also devaluation of being liberal, modern, secular, progressive, statusquoist, peace-loving etc.
- + Rather than being satisfied by the achievements of the international order for last 70 years, there are dramatically large number of narratives of dissatisfaction.
- + The issues of identity and ultra-nationalism has become more popular in the discourse.

Rise of Aggressive Leaders

- + Donald Trump in the US
- + Vladimir Putin in Russia
- + Abe Shinzo in Japan
- + Xi Jinping in China
- + Rodrigo Duterte in Philippines.
- + Tsai Ing-wen in Taiwan
- + Park Geun-hye in South Korea
- + Narendra Modi in India
- + Theresa May in the United Kingdom
- + Angela Merkel in Germany
- + Kim Jong-un in North Korea

Exceptions:

- + Emmanuel Macron in France
- + Moon Jae-in in South Korea

Problem is Success of Liberal Order?

- + Arguably, the success of liberal international order for a relatively long period has been responsible of emergence of 'new leadership' across the global.
- + Most of these aggressive leaders assume that international politics and nature-behavior of all other states would remain same and they may revise their own position by their aggressiveness.
- + In few other cases, a leader justifies his/her aggressiveness as a reaction to other/s aggressiveness.

Great Power Equations

Major Trends in Asia-Pacific

- + Rise of China and US-China Rivalry
- + China-Japan Contests
- + Turmoil on the Korean Peninsula
- + Division in ASEAN
- + Two Futures of Asia-Pacific

Rise of China and US-China Rivalry

- + Rise of China is undisputable, though its future suitability is debatable.
- + China now has moved beyond 'hide your capacity and build your strength' dictum of Deng Xiaoping. Under Xi Jinping it has been asking for a G-2 (great power relationship) with the US.
- + There are concerns that China's rise can not be peaceful and gradually it may become revisionist.
- + China appears to seek more space in Asia to shape its economic and security order.
- + China is number one trading partner of almost all the Asia-Pacific countries, AIIB, OBOR etc.
- + In security domain also, it has been more aggressive in South China Sea, East China Sea. It wants to grow beyond first and second strategic line and wants to be a player in Indian Ocean.
- + The US is still not ready to give up its place. The US policy of 'pivot to Asia' may be less than it was promised but the US intent is quite obvious.
- + Donald Trump has also been talking about 'making America great again'. He may compromise to China on few issues with some strategic purposes in mind, his administration overall is not willing to concede any future ground to China.

China-Japan Contests

- + Rise of China and aggressive Japan under Shinzo Abe are also connected.
- + East China Sea dispute- Connections between Senkaku/Diaoyu islands disputes and China's ADIZ in the ECS.
- + Japan's approach has been also related to its quest to become 'normal state' and ultra-nationalism.
- + Japan's economic stagnation has also led to its security assertiveness.
- + Japan has also got obvious consent from the US which does not find capable to alone counter China's assertiveness.

Turmoil on the Korean Peninsula

- + North Korean nuclear and missile tests are more frequent and it has become almost irreversible (Moon and Moon).
- + South Korea's new administration has looking into breakthrough but it is not easy.
- + China was moving close to South Korea but THAAD has changed the whole equations.
- + US-China relations have been closely linked with their approach towards the Korean Peninsula.

Division in ASEAN

- + ASEAN in its 50 years of existence was never so much divided
- + The euphemism of 'ASEAN Way' has significantly disappeared.
- + The US-China rivalry and China's relations with countries of ASEAN have created a less predictable direction and orientation of ASEAN as unit.
- + ASEAN, ASEAN+3, East Asian Summit and other institutions appears to be rudderless and empty.

Two Futures of Asia-Pacific

First

- + The US would maintain its primacy in the Asia-Pacific
 - + Directly: unilaterally
 - + Indirectly: through Japan or an Alliance of countries such as Japan, Australia, India and South Korea

Second

- + China would be able to create a unipolar Asia by overthrowing the US and by stopping alliance formation against Beijing

Role and Response of India

India's Dilemma

- + India is poised to play an important role in the changing equations of the international politics but there is still a substantial gap between the desire and capacity of the Indian foreign policy.
- + India internally has got influenced by the trend of international politics and have an assertive leader in Narendra Modi. But it has long tradition of non-alignment and peace maker.
- + India's growing economic and political clout is recognized earlier also but the new leadership in India seeks more space in shaping up of Asia-Pacific.
- + India on the one hand wants to work with the US through an informal alliance to stop China's rise and assertiveness.
- + However, still its age-old approach (idealism, middle path and non-alliance) makes it uncomfortable with the enumerated two futures of the Asia-Pacific.

A 'Third Way'

- + However, there are scholarly articulations that the two futures of Asia are based on narrow and myopic vision.
- + Given the devastating capacity of weapons (which makes any full scale war between two big countries unimaginable) and complex exchange and interdependence of states of international politics, there would soon be realization that assertive leadership and desires are either very dangerous or unsustainable.
- + Thus, a third way must be created in which the role of middle power such as India, South Korea, Indonesia, France, Germany etc would be important.
- + These middle country would bring new ideas, institutions and mechanism to deal with global problems. They would seek collectively a multipolar world and Asia where power is used to prolong peace and prosperity with more social and regional justice. The collective force of these middle powers through constructive ideas and measures may make the big powers' rivalry irrelevant and unpopular.

India and the 'Third Way'

- + India also has historical desire to be leader of the 'third way'.
- + The reasons for India being attracted to the 'third way' is both ideational and pragmatic.
- + Ideationally- Middle path of Buddhism, Non-alignment, Security provider etc.
- + Pragmatically- India in the game of power politics would always be 'second fiddle'. If it provides new and constructive ideas, norms, values, institutions and concerns to the Asia-Pacific region, it may provide a leadership role to India.

Modi's Foreign Policy

- + India's role and response to changing reality of the international politics during the Narendra Modi government arguably is devoid of a grand vision and picture.
- + Contradictory India's foreign policy behavior is not part of big game plan but basically lack of it.
- + When great changes are happening in the international politics, it seems that Indian government is more concerned about domestic politics of India.
- + Even if this allegation is not true, at least till now India has been trying to explore all the possibilities without making up its mind in favor of one or other options.

Conclusion

Global Trend of leadership

Changing inter-state equations in Asia- Pacific

Rising India but still insufficient capacity

Dilemma of India

Future course?

Thank you