

# XI IS BURNING BRIDGES WITH HIS AGGRESSIVE NATIONALISM POLICY

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: India - China

China is already in conflict with all major powers of the world now, including India

On Friday early morning, when most of us were not fully awake, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's convoy departed for Palam Airport in New Delhi. He soon flew to Leh near the India-China border. He checked the preparations at the border post in Neemu. He met jawans of the Army and Air Force, along with personnel of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police, to take stock of the situation. He also met the injured soldiers at the Leh Sainik Hospital.

The prime minister's visit in these uncomfortable times gives a clear message not only to the soldiers, but also to other countrymen, and to the world that India will not bow down to any pressure. This tour was very important in view of the grief and anger across the country after the clashes in Galwan Valley, where 20 Indian soldiers were killed.

China also took his visit very seriously. The prime minister was still in Leh when a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman issued a statement that negotiations were going on to resolve the border issue and, in this situation, no one should act in a way wherein the situation worsens.

Was China going on the defensive, or giving us advice? Whatever the motive, the prime minister's visit achieved the desired objectives, and may prove to be a roadblock to Beijing's ambitions. China is already in conflict with all major powers of the world; now a confrontation with the elephant can hurt the dragon's ambitions.

Here, we should also remember the steps taken by Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison. He said the world was moving towards a similar situation seen in the 1930s, and increased Australia's defence spending for the next decade by 40%. But, what happened in the 1930s? The Great Recession, beginning in America, affected people globally, followed by World War II in 1939.

I am not saying that we are heading towards World War III, but China's aggressive ambitions have definitely reversed global diplomacy. China has always had a bittersweet relationship with India, Taiwan, Vietnam and Japan. Now, Australia has also become wary of Chinese aggression.

The policy of aggressive nationalism adopted by super ambitious Chinese leader Xi Jinping is probably not good for his country either. Until a few weeks ago, many countries, including Canada, the UK, New Zealand and Germany, were interested in friendship with China, but the situation has changed rapidly.

The world has become suspicious of Beijing after the repression of people in Hong Kong and Xinjiang, the covid-19 pandemic and its South China Sea policy.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson recently made a statement in parliament against China, and showed solidarity with the agitating citizens of Hong Kong. He even proposed to give British citizenship to 3 million Hong Kong residents. The US House of Representatives, too, unanimously passed the Hong Kong Autonomy Act to impose heavy fines and sanctions on banks that conduct business with officials involved in suppressing supporters of democracy in

Hong Kong.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel had already warned Beijing, whereas France and Japan have also extended support to India after the Galwan incident.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who is considered to be a supporter of Beijing, finds himself in an awkward situation. Canadians, who regarded China as an emerging superpower, are also shocked by its attitude—one survey showed that China's popularity in the country has declined by more than 20%.

It is wrong to think that Huawei or other Chinese companies will always win contracts with state support. Huawei is facing resistance in the US and Europe. In this changing world, where data is most important, it is not yet clear how Chinese corporations are using our data after tempting everyone with their discounted prices. India has banned 59 Chinese apps based on this logic. Chinese companies have also been deprived of many contracts. If this trend picks up in some other parts of the world, Beijing will surely be forced to rethink its policies.

US President Donald Trump wants to continue with this policy. Joe Biden, who is going to challenge him in the November election, is also promising the same.

We are approaching a situation where powerful countries in the West, as well as in Asia, are becoming increasingly suspicious of China, while Latin American, African and East European nations, besides a few small Asian countries, are indebted to China's largesse through grants. This equation can worsen if China and Russia write a prelude to the Second Cold War. However, many experts consider it to be too far-fetched.

But, one thing is clear. China's aggressive attitude has put a complete stop to rewriting a magnificent chapter of human history. It is a well-known fact that from the first century AD to 1820, India and China occupied almost half of the world's gross domestic product (GDP).

Together, the two countries could have revived their past glories, but China's aggression is throwing a spanner in the works.

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