

# The New Great Game: A Strategic Analysis

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## Abstract

*The theoretical framework is Mackinder's Heartland Theory witnessing the exit of Columbian Age. The New Age is of novel explorations like hypersonic, satellite, communication, transportation, cyber, surveillance, stealth, laser, drone, anti-ballistic-missile and space technologies plus altered strategic and economic outlooks. The Central Asian steppe, the Heartland, is the fulcrum of the New Great Game of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The management of strategic and economic interests to the exclusion of others has emerged as the focus of the New Great Game. The interests include the Silk Road, lithium, gold, copper, cobalt and other minerals and metals in addition to the oil and gas pipelines and the military bases. Americans have Eurasia in view as a sphere of influence. The idea is to contain China, force Russia and Pakistan, whereas, India is perceived as a reluctant partner. Iran is signaling détente; though, the strategic function expected in the function of neo-imperialism is being signaled. American strategic, legal and financial power is active. Yet, the locals are no more negligible. A new Balance of Power is in gestation in the pivot area of Eurasia. The passage of time demands a new fusion. It is time to pause and knee the book. The breach first occurs in MIND.*

**Keywords:** New Great Game, Eurasia, Central Asia, Foreign policy, Strategy, Trade, Oil, Gas, Minerals, Metals, Power-politics.

## Introduction

Foreign policy and by extension diplomacy leavened with covert wars is central to the New Great Game. Foreign policy's critical core is national interest, as opposed to a dissonance based perception, that remains oblivious to it. The chemistry of Westphalian system is in harmony only with the tangible world and lures of power, and not intangible thoughts and ideas. Any transcendentalism disorients foreign policy. It is cognitive dissonance. In statecraft, dissonance driven perception becomes an agony, when it seeks, but in vain. The vital national interest, the geographical integrity, cannot be pinioned with passions and emotions stemming from metaphysical ideas, or with the demands of fidelity. Foreign policy pursuits revolve around

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power, security and wealth. Foreign policy is not an abstract, philosophic or moral crusade. It is the game of compromises and brinkmanship e.g., the New Cold War or the New Great Game. The dimensions of the New Great Game involve geo-political, geo-strategic and geo-economic realignments. The game formally arrived in the region on the eve of American strategic withdrawal from Afghanistan, though; the American military bases are global and the Islamist insurgencies are extra-regional in the Islamic Space.

Other than the Great Powers, Pakistanis, Iranians, Turks, Saudis and the Central Asians are playing the game. The communist turned nationalist dictators of Central Asia are enjoying the financial enticing by all including Americans. There are no Central Asian Springs on the horizon. Central Asia in American perception provides an alternative to the chaos of Middle East and the decline of America. Still, it is proving intractable for a mixture of reasons. Out there is the *Real World*, more so strategically, and the devil is always in the details. It is practical business, tradeoffs, arms races and the Islamist insurgencies. Interests are defined and redefined and diplomacy surrounding foreign policy manages tangible thresholds vital for national security and state interests. The decisions involve geo-political, geo-strategic and geo-economic judgments. A judgment is an abstract part of policy involving make-up of mind, cognitive resources, perception, thought, thinking, analyses and decision making processes. It is both science and an art.

The Indo-US Entente, regardless of trade and diplomatic disputes, is in accord with the Indian and American interests and goals in Eurasia. The entente is an event of world significance. It is bigger than South and Central Asia. It is global. The idea is to establish the New Silk Road, excluding China, whereas, Pakistan is perceived as a transit space for the industrial parks of India established by the American corporations, for which, Islamabad is manipulated through the Asian Development Bank, World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Moreover, the Russian resource monopoly of the Central Asia and Caspian Basin is being challenged by the American businesses. The sanctioned Iran bargained after the limited relief, but remains in the crosshairs for Levant and the enrichment. Besides, the Turkey of the New Ottomans is a NATO member, though, the Kurdish Question and the Saudi concerns over Iran remain.

The strategic management of geopolitical interests is geostrategy,<sup>1</sup> whereas, geopolitics is a method of foreign policy analysis which seeks to understand, explain and predict international political behavior primarily in terms of geographical variables, such

as location, size, climate, topography, demography, natural resources and technological development and potential.<sup>2</sup> Political identity and action is thus seen to be (more or less) determined by geography.<sup>3</sup> The Napoleonic wisdom is that to know a nation's geography is to know its foreign policy. And an angle of diplomacy is to interpret the brinkmanship to differentiate between the real maneuvering and cosmetic posturing. Foreign policy is rational processing and harmonious decision-making in statecraft. The correct perception of the broader forces at work is critical in the understanding of strategic environment at any given time in history.

Foreign policy is an external manifestation of a perception stemming from a worldview. Other than the strategic and economic concerns, foreign policy entails philosophic differences between the competing perceptions e.g., the Cold War. These variances form the centerpiece of power struggle e.g., an Anglo-Saxon led NATO vs. the Sino-Russian steered Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) or earlier the Warsaw Pact. In foreign policy and in the exertion for power, symbols only symbolize, whereas, a mixture of military might, diplomacy, strategy, deception and economics works e.g., the New Great Game. This echoes the difference between the declaratory and an operational foreign policy. Realism sprinkled with insensitivity and wisdom must conduct the affairs of state and its foreign policy. Anything else is cognitive dissonance, a problem of perception. Vitality, either one comes up with everything, or nothing, for one runs out of tricks with time. It takes the wind out of sails. A diplomatic lie is only possible, when the whole truth is known.

In competitive interaction, balance of power remains a dynamic and fluid concept. For means, equations and alignments keep changing in a given historical setting. It is visible in the evolving Eurasian geo-political, geo-strategic and geo-economic landscape. The Indo-US Entente is the pointer of intentions, whereas, the SCO and the reset between Russia and Pakistan are meaningful responses. A new balance of power is emerging in Eurasia. China, India and Russia want to be on the High Table, whereas, Pakistan and Iran want to be counted. Americans pushed the envelope to create an environment to secure the US interests through geo-strategy. However, the efforts spread over one decade to control different sides and situations have been unsuccessful, including the failures in Afghanistan and Iraq. Still, an altered American militarism continues in the world at large. Essentially, everything is possible, but then an overreach has its limits and a price e.g., the former USSR.

Foreign policy objectives should be in agreement with the capacity and not intentions. The course adopted should be rational as opposed to an emotional one. It is about identifying convergence and conflict of interests. In foreign affairs, nation-states act, react and interact, primarily for strategic and economic reasons. The synthesis of interaction should lead to an integrated and holistic approach, because, foreign policy should be the rational middle course within the framework of nation-state system. It is also termed as a boundary activity. The implication is that the decision-maker operates in two environments: an internal i.e., domestic and an external i.e., global. The conductor in the conduct of foreign policy mediates between these two overlapping environments. Foreign policy is an integrated management of the internal and the external. The idea always is to manage the thresholds or the breaking points.

The first act of orientation is to establish where you are, then the bigger questions like, where you want to go, come in. How you want to go is the next question? Similarly, the first task of foreign policy is to distinguish among vital, critical and peripheral interests in a particular strategic environment. Handling the gap between the resources and objectives is an aspect of foreign policy. And last but not the least is the phase of grand strategy and its implementation. No state has the capacity to defend all its interests with its own resources. As Frederick the Great observed, “he who tries to defend everything defends nothing”. Foreign policy revolves around rational choices to secure a set of foreign policy objectives. The yardstick is nation-state and national interest, stemming from geography. Foreign policy objectives are to be in harmony with the strategic, economic and security interests of the state in a strategic environment that will always be dynamic; local, regional and global.

The decision making for Pakistan is trickier, because, Pakistan’s domestic and foreign policies have become a complex mixture. The precision of thought and original ideas are critical. And precision of thought is an instrument e.g., engaging or disengaging wisely remains significant in the conduct of external affairs. For in foreign policy and diplomacy, the dimension of time is considered for granted. The application of time is post-facto. It is a material element. It is the essence. And both domestically and in the realm of foreign policy, history judges by answering as to what were the cards and how were those played? Bismarck rightly observed that, “in foreign policy, courage and success do not stand in causal relationship, the two are identical”. Still, American

perception of the situation in the regions like Persian Gulf, Caspian Basin, Crimean Peninsula, Central, South, South East and East Asia dictates wisdom and restraint, because, American expectations are failing. The mind has a touch of dissonance.

Other than the New Silk Road and maximum resource extraction, Americans want to change the Strategic Environment of Eurasia. Yet, the pivot area is changing in a different direction, from the one envisaged by America. The anything goes attitude and the business as usual is being challenged globally, regionally and locally. The wars have dented and taken the shine off from American foreign policy. The facts have overtaken the vagueness. The Emperor is without clothes. The bank is broke. And notwithstanding the non-state actors, the major players and their competing strategies are backed by hardware at conventional and unconventional levels. The new world of multi-polarity is shaping-up a new Eurasia in the midst of New Great Game. What have emerged are the anti-status-quo tendencies of the United States of America against the midterm global geo-economic and geo-political trends, besides, the long term geo-strategic reality.

Pakistan in the American perception is an “unresolved problem” in the context of US challenges in Asia and in the framework of New Great Game. Americans wanted to revise, amend and change Pakistan’s foreign policy and grand strategy towards Afghanistan and India. The impact on Sino-Pak strategic partnership would have been a bonus. For a Chinese-Pakistani alliance taking shape, most visibly in the construction of the Gwadar Port, near the Strait of Hormuz, and an Indian naval buildup on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, near the Strait of Malacca, the Indian- Chinese rivalry is taking on the dimensions of a maritime Great Game.<sup>4</sup> And Russians in response to the new alignments are neither idle nor inactive. The Russian revisionism in Crimea, Caspian and Central and South Asia has a meaningful geo-political and geo-strategic pattern. In such an environment, an inadequacy to understand that the reason of state is *raison d’ etre* has foreign policy implications. Pakistan may not be interested, but the New Great Game is certainly interested in Pakistan. To a cartographer, Pakistan is an Asian Power.

Eurasia has emerged as the contested sphere of influence between the Great Powers. The theories of Mahan, Mackinder and Nicholas Spyke are again dictating, this time the global New Great Game. There are two strategic routes to Central Asia. The northern path is from Eastern Europe, whereas, the southern course from Balochistan makes Afghanistan the critical aspect of Pakistani and

Chinese calculus. Balochistan is Pakistan's solitaire diamond making Pakistan central to the *Heartland* i.e., Central Asia. Balochistan is also part of *Rimland* i.e., Arabian Sea coastline. The Sino-Pak interests have decisively converged in Balochistan. The idea is to develop an expanded 21<sup>st</sup> century geo-strategic and geo-economic partnership. Pakistan is strategically an important and sensitive country in the world.

With Gwadar, Pasni, Ormara and Somiani as the strategic ports of Balochistan and part of the *Rimland*, the southern strategic route to Central Asia originates from Balochistan making it critical for the New Great Game and for both China and Pakistan, as also for the American led west and India. The Pakistani coastline with these ports overlooks the entrance and exit of Persian Gulf including the oil and trade routes of global economy in the Arabian Sea & the Indian Ocean. The fomenting of trouble and unrest in Balochistan is an attempt to delink Pakistan, China and Gwadar from Central Asia, let alone containing Pakistan's strategic and economic potential. The notion is to force Pakistan's compliance to exploit the minerals, metals, oil, gas and the strategic wealth of South and Central Asia. The Chahbahar alternative as opposed to Gwadar is part of the perception and the planned circumvention. A New Yalta is emerging and shaping-up a new Eurasia within the New Great Game.

### **The New Great Game**

The control of trade, pipeline routes and natural resources is the center of gravity of the New Great Game. The idea is to create strategic equations rooted in economic and trade relations. American efforts to integrate Central, South and South East Asia in a meaningful way indicate. The cartographic efforts to remap Eurasia strategically are also visible. The US Military Bases in Eurasia are on the rise since the dismantling of Yalta Agreement. Americans have bolstered their sway in Eastern Europe at Russia's expense and are bolstering their influence in Central Asia, again at Moscow's cost, and in East Asia to China's dislike. The idea is to encircle and contain ascending China, block revanchist Russia, convert Iran and keep Pakistan under check. The US strategic gaze covers Eurasia. The downplaying is strategic error plus. It has effect on Sino-Pak-Russian strategic and economic interests in Eurasia. The struggle for trade, pipeline routes, oil, gas, minerals, metals and bases has gone metaphysical, China global and Russia extra-regional. The New Great Game is about resource security.

Oil and gas are in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan respectively, whereas, the minerals and metals are all over the place.

The 2010 overthrow of the government in Kyrgyzstan was one more aspect of the New Great Game. Russians supported the new government and the Kyrgyz leader thanked Russia while vowing to close the base supplying the forces in Afghanistan. Kyrgyzstan in the absence of oil and gas chose the dangerous path of allowing American and Russian bases at the same time. Americans want to maintain the airbase at Manas, but the Russians oppose it. The country also borders China having trade interests in Kyrgyzstan. Ethnic riots broke-out in Kyrgyzstan in June 2010 displacing 400,000 ethnic Uzbeks. Around 2,000 of them were killed in Osh and Jalalabad. The Uzbek women were raped and Chinese commercial interests were attacked. The country in the process is being torn apart by competing Great Power interests. Americans are banking on Turkmenistan and want to cultivate Uzbekistan. The Russians renewed their military base contract with Tajikistan until 2042. The Third Rome is attentive and responding to the New Rome on the chess board in its Near Abroad.

Likewise, the New Great Game took an exciting turn when the US State Department in June 2010 announced the discovery of minerals and metals worth \$3 trillion in Afghanistan. The exploration will turn Afghanistan into a lucrative mining center of the world. The US Geological Survey, the Department of Commerce, US Trade and Development Agency, USAID, the PENTAGON and the State Department are working with Afghans. The deposits include iron, copper, cobalt, gold, niobium, rare earth elements and lithium. Afghanistan can become the Saudi Arabia of lithium, a key material used in the batteries for laptops and cell phones. Later, the discovery of an oil field in Northern Afghanistan was also announced and the uranium reserves are not being mentioned. Both China and India have won major copper, coal and other contracts worth billions of dollars in Afghanistan. The Sino-Indian economic competition is noticeable and the strategic rivalry now has a new theater. Earlier, the Russian proposal to resolve the Afghan issue through the United Nations Security Council was declined by the Americans. And the strategic environment was altered when the New Great Game was formally acknowledged.

However, the conflict in Afghanistan will go on until the emergence of a victor; make no mistake. The Afghan resistance is alive. There is nothing objective to indicate that the conflict will end. The Islamists have survived the American led onslaught and

have vowed to continue the struggle. An atmosphere of political and strategic uncertainty prevails in Afghanistan. Historically, the political transitions in Afghanistan never had a solid basis. The same is true for tribal reconciliation. The heavily armed Northern Alliance remains operational and the Islamists are fighting against the Tajik dominated Afghan Army. The regime is in name only. The war continues. Afghanistan is tribal. The war at metaphysical level is clannish. A viable end game is neutral Afghanistan, though; the reality is mixture of small and big games. It is foreboding. The Islamists intend defending the sanctuaries in the AfPak region. A good strategist stands on the objective, analyzes the impact of capturing it, and then calculates backwards up to the start point. It is time, space and correlation of forces.

It is in Eurasia as whole where the New Great Game will be decided. In Europe, the countries concerned are largely the same, those covered by the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, stretching from the Baltic coast to the Black sea.<sup>5</sup> However, unlike Germany; the challenge this time is Sino-Russian. The energy policy is the heart of Russian foreign policy and its geo-political lever in Europe, Caspian Basin, Central Asia and with China. The contest resembles a battle-hardened chess grand master playing against a bunch of inattentive and squabbling amateurs.<sup>6</sup> Russia cemented its energy dominance of Europe and secured its southern flank by invading Georgia and later annexing Abkhazia and South Ossetia, let alone the strategic Crimean Peninsula. And the strategic energy corridor of Caspian Basin i.e., Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey is witnessing an increasing Russian influence in the resolution of local conflicts like Nagorno-Karabakh. Besides, China's global reach is generating as much anxiety as prosperity.<sup>7</sup> The iron laws of history and politics are intact and struggles for status and influence in the world have returned as central features of the international scene.<sup>8</sup>

The emerging new realignments are shaping a new world. The grey area complexity is increasing, compared to the simplicity of Cold War. Uncertainty continues to convulse the strategic environment in Eurasia. The trust-deficit is on the rise. Americans are adding to the chaos through their policies and actions. Increasing chaos can be part of strategy. For the war against al-Qaeda focused international attention on the Caspian region as an area of strategic importance and the Afghan campaign is only an episode, albeit an important one, in a much larger struggle: "the New Great Game".<sup>9</sup> The good news for Pakistan is that the US has run out of money to continue its quest for military hegemony in the



Middle East and Central Asia.<sup>10</sup> The global financial crisis lingers on with no signs of solid recovery in the short and midterm. And by the time long term financial recovery arrives, the altered strategic environment will be a stable one. There will be a new balance. History is on the march, decades do not matter.

The Indians want to reach the objectives of the New Great Game through Iran and Afghanistan, while keeping the long term geo-political door open towards America. In South Asia, India in the midterm wants communication and infrastructural integration for the eventual long term assimilation with the futuristic New Silk Road. The efforts to stabilize relationship with Pakistan are short term objectives. The idea is to maintain strategic autonomy from America and a calculated ambiguity towards China. The ‘autonomy’ is good relations with all. Although the way Indians play it is not to the taste of America, there is a clear long term convergence of the Indo-US Eurasian interests. An Indo-US dominated land based trade through the New Silk Road in an integrated Eurasia is the objective of the Indo-US Entente. The Sino-Pak strategic partnership is the problem.

Moreover, China’s rapid rise forced a shift of focus of American foreign and economic policies from Euro-Atlantic region to the Asia-Pacific region. Europe is no more part of foreign policy debate. The strategic gaze has shifted. The Sino-US relationship is the top foreign policy issue for both America and China. Americans have initiated the strategic rebalancing act and 60 per cent of the navy, by 2020, will be deployed in the expanse of Asia-Pacific. India in the American perception is an important aspect of this rebalancing act, because of the strategic convergence of interests against the growing Chinese influence. Americans expected strategic contributions, but the Indians did not deploy the naval assets in the Pacific and South China Sea. Indians are aware of the American efforts of courting China, the G-2, and then moving towards containment, after failing to woo the Chinese. Indians know that there is no alternative to India and China is a shared Indo-American strategic concern.

However, and despite the Indo-US military, naval and air exercises, the Indians refused agreements with the Americans “for seamless communications between the weapon systems of the militaries and guaranteeing mutual logistical support”. Still, the strategic logic and the realism behind the Indo-US Entente remains firmly entrenched. The Indian foreign policy and grand strategy is aimed at securing the short and midterm interests in Afghanistan, South and Central Asia, while working towards the New Silk Road

in the long run. For China seeks to balance India within its neighborhood and the US globally, and to that end improving Russian and EU relations are important.<sup>11</sup> China and EU too have trade disputes and Europeans also need Chinese help to overcome the financial crisis. The challenge for China is the next stage of economic development. The Chinese are well positioned to compete globally in the realm of sophisticated products worrying both Americans and Europeans alike.

The Indians are aware of the transition to a new balance of power having its own dangers and opportunities. The Indian restraint indicates the lessons learnt in the context of “limits of military power”, experienced by the US in Afghanistan and Iraq. Indians are cautious people and perceive the world on multipolar lines. Americans expecting India to be hegemonic in Asia was puzzling. American problem is that the world wants to engage with the rising China and not confront it for the sake of America. Indians in this strategic environment are trying to increase India’s strategic and economic space through the application of various elements of comprehensive national power, including culture.

Yet, President Putin of Russia snubbed India over bilateral economic issues, after snubbing Turkey and Pakistan earlier, though, the Russian foreign minister and Pakistan’s army chief made official visits to Islamabad and Moscow. Historically, the Indo-Russian cooperation includes arms sales, trade, economic, scientific, technological and cultural aspects of the relationship. The Russians assured the Indians that “Russia will not sell any arms to Pakistan and that we are always cooperating with India to ensure safety of the region and that we have never created trouble for India, compared to other countries”. Nonetheless, Pakistan and Russia’s Slavic strategic partner Serbia signed a defense collaboration and arms sales agreement. Russia and Pakistan are transcending the Cold War experience in Afghanistan and beyond. Pakistani Establishment is all set to enhance the relationship to further diversify its options and alternatives. Earlier Iran and Russia had conveyed concerns to India at the highest level over the Indo-US Entente and the conflict of interests. The New Great Game is increasingly black and white for India, more so in the context of old relations. Both Iran and Russia are hardcore realists.

The anti-American radical nationalist currents have emerged in Russia. Eurasianism is popular. Russia is acting with a swagger to chart its sphere of influence. The Russian General Staff is lobbying to add a military dimension to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and some top officials are championing

the idea of foreign policy realignment directed against the west.<sup>12</sup> The related strategic uncertainty is the strategic concern of the west. The collapse of US-Russian relations could give China much greater flexibility in dealing with the United States.<sup>13</sup> And whereas the Soviet Union rivaled the US as a military competitor only, China is emerging as both a military and an economic rival—heralding a profound shift in the distribution of global power.<sup>14</sup> The post-Cold War mix of American nuclear and strategic posture i.e., the Missile Shield “meant to deny the enemy the ability to strike” is not working in the strategic sense in the Eurasian space.

Obama within days of his reelection attended the East Asia Summit (EAS) in Cambodia and visited Thailand as also the new convert Myanmar. And notwithstanding the importance of Bay of Bengal, the lifting of sanctions and the opening of the US embassy baptized the conversion and blessed the nuclear openness. The Sino-Japanese and the Cambodian-Philippine tensions dwarfed the EAS, let alone the claims by Malaysia, Brunei, Vietnam and Taiwan. Still, Chinese stalled the debate with the Cambodian help. Obama gave expressions of concerns, but treaded carefully with the Chinese premier. The mind is burdened with Chinese gravitas. The Sino-American pushing and butting for influence and resource control in Asia continues. A new Sino-American Cold War looms large on the horizon. The Asian perception of all this is of a dangerous power play with economic and strategic implications. Asia is heavily armed in the midst of a dangerous mixture.

The stakes involve global economy, stability and world peace. The world, especially Asia, is now dependent on China and its markets. Yet, Americans have opted to contain China, because, the geo-political, geo-economic and geo-strategic reality is asserting itself in no uncertain terms. And ASEAN too in addition to Central Asia has emerged as a contested sphere of influence between China and America. The wary Asians know it since sometime and this is vindication of Asia’s strategic importance within Eurasia. The ASEAN proposal to establish Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) as opposed to the American proposed Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), that excludes China, indicates. Americans perceive the TPP as a foreign policy instrument to contain the rising Chinese influence. Lack of consensus within Asia creates time and space for Americans and escalates tensions. Asia within Eurasia is up for grab.

Chinese perceive containment abroad and the separatist groups domestically. The build-up and the drive for the conventional high-tech weaponry have a rationale. The deployment

of Chinese Navy off the African coast against the pirates ending 2008 was the desire to project power. The Sino-American naval brinkmanship in South China Sea manifests. As China gets richer and stronger, as opposed to the weakening America, the tasks of the US operational foreign policy are increasingly difficult. The Chinese defense spending is worrying Americans, whereas, Chinese are likewise apprehensive of the advanced technologies. China is faced with strategic maneuvers and a global arms build-up. It fears being surrounded by America, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan and India. The Chinese have dug their heels on Taiwan, Tibet, Xinjiang and the world should not expect discounts.

The Indian Ocean from North Africa to South East Asia has Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal as its two most important bays. Pakistani coast line with string of pearls including Gwadar sits atop Arabian Sea. The strategic importance of the Indian Ocean is a mixture of oil, gas and trade routes. The aspirations to control these paths are resulting in Great Power reorientations. The Sino-Indian efforts to flex naval muscles in the Indian Ocean are indicators indicating the global power play. Americans desire to pitch the Indian Navy against the Chinese, while tilting towards the former with naval bases in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. As the new generation of leadership took over in Beijing, the outgoing President Hu Jintao pointed out the necessity of “strengthening the naval forces to protect maritime interests and the need to win local wars in an information age”. The incoming Xi Jinping “urged the military to prepare for a struggle” during a visit to South China Sea fleet. The test of Chinese Navy is in the Strait of Malacca or in the defense of interests not covered under the UN charter. China is preparing for “sea control and decisive battle” e.g., the Air Defense Identification Zones in Yellow, East and South China Seas. The challenges include seizing and holding or the denial.

And China’s neighbors are equally on the defense splurge. Australia has \$72 billion naval up gradation plan to induct 12 submarines, air warfare destroyers, cruise missiles, stealth fighters, aircraft carriers, tanks and helicopters. The South East Asian power, Indonesia, will build 12 submarines by 2024, plus, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, South Korea, Bangladesh and Pakistan are purchasing submarines and ships. Singapore will have six subs by 2016 and there is an American-Philippine strategic renaissance in the spirit of Cold War. And Beijing will have five nuclear powered submarines with JL-2 strategic nuclear missiles having a range of 8,000 KMs. The Indians already have one and have ideas for the future.

India is planning to have a 160 plus naval force including 3 aircraft carriers with 400 aircrafts. The satellite surveillance and space based radars would be force multipliers. The Indians have also conducted number of anti-missile interceptor tests. A full spectrum conflict with Pakistan is part of the perception. Pakistan specific Cold Start Doctrine continues to be the heart of Indian strategic thinking and planning within the military establishment. The induction of 6,000 ton INS Arihant furthered the arms race. It is powered by 85 megawatt nuclear reactor with a speed of 44 km an hour i.e., 24 knots under water and is armed with torpedoes and ballistic missiles. Pakistan reacted to the induction by terming it destabilizing and vowed to maintain the strategic balance. The perception is that it has repercussions for all the littoral states, including Pakistan.

Pakistan Navy faced with a challenge, viewed the act as an action that puts at risk the security paradigm of the entire region, not only Pakistan. Indian Ocean has energy and trade highways crucial for world economy. With its choke-points at Strait of Malacca and Bab al-Mandab, Indian Ocean links East with the West. The Indians are preparing to lay a blockade from Persian Gulf in the West to the Strait of Malacca in the East. The strategic environment in the Indian Ocean region forced Pakistan Navy to deploy operational naval assets at Gwadar. The naval power projection in the Indian Ocean and Pakistan's national interests are now directly linked. The New Great Game also has a Strategic Oceanic Frontage.

A 9,000 mile coastline and many natural harbors available to it, the Chinese Navy has added Strategic Oceanic Frontage to the geo-strategic power of Peoples Liberation Army. China is beefing-up its navy, air-force and strategic missile forces while trimming its army. The perception is that the path to struggles ahead is paved with uncertainties. The Chinese are in the open as opposed to the earlier behind the scene style. The growing might of China and its economy is unsettling for the Anglo-Saxons. America is striking a strategic balance between the low and high end of warfare in the realm of trans-oceanic naval power projection. The Western Pacific is critical. Yet another thought is to raise a force of 1,000 naval ships. The Naval Summit of 26 navies held at New Delhi in mid February 2008 called for an alliance of navies having stakes in the Indian Ocean. The Indian naval strategists believe that "it is almost a matter of time before ships from China arrive in India's backyard", let alone the drive to modernize Pakistan Navy. The strategic rivalries are part of the

mixture. The enforcement of stable full-spectrum hegemony is now a challenge in Eurasia, mainly in Asia. For the air and naval vulnerability has emerged. And the economy is displaced. It is Cold Peace.

### **The New Great Game and Pakistan**

The 9/11 replaced the “Tournament of Shadows” making Islamists part of the New Great Game. The underlying problems create powerful emotions, not only driving people into the arms of opposition movements but firing those groups with a determination to seek far-reaching change and empowering individuals who are willing to go to extreme lengths to bring it about.<sup>15</sup> And Pakistan, China, Russia, India, Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, America, European Union and multinationals are also playing the New Great Game. The conflict at the state level is over the routes the pipelines and the intended Silk Road will follow. Likewise, few would deny that Moscow’s quest for regaining its Great Power status is based on its energy reserves, and that in order to secure the future demand for its gas, Russia aims to control transit routes and buy upstream Central Asian gas and downstream assets in Europe.<sup>16</sup> Americans are working for the downstream and westward shift of Central Asian and Caspian energy resources.

Interestingly, China places Central Asia in the Russian sphere of influence to cover its strategic rear. For the thrust of China’s strategic orientation is at Taiwan. Still, China is in Central Asia having commercial and trade interests, as it was in the last two millenniums. On 30<sup>th</sup> October 2012, Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) i.e., China, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Pakistan agreed in the 11<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference to invest \$23 billion in the regional transport infrastructure and energy and trade initiatives aimed at creating seamless connectivity and prosperity in the region. The “Wuhan Action Plan” prioritized 68 projects linking the ports in eastern China with the Caucasus and beyond, and connecting northern Kazakhstan to the Pakistani trading hubs of Karachi and Gwadar. The former has an ominous *Indus Cone Delta Connection*, whereas, the latter is strategic plus.

It was also agreed to establish a CAREC Institute by 2014 to support strategic projects through analytical work, training and knowledge based management. The presence of Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Monetary Fund, the Islamic

Development Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, and the World Bank was meaningful. The President of Asian Development Bank Kuroda in keynote address to the conference said “regional cooperation is essential to promote inclusive and environmentally sustainable growth and that poor connectivity arising from inadequate transport and communication infrastructure can impede the trade expansion and investment attraction”. China is broadening its geo-economic engagement.

In addition, CAREC nations have invested \$19 billion in over 120 projects that includes 4,000 KMs of roads, 3,200 KMs of railways, and more than 2,300 KMs of power transmission lines. Earlier, the CAREC 2020 framework for the region was endorsed in the ministerial meeting held at Baku Azerbaijan in November 2011. The Beijing Consensus as opposed to Washington Consensus is on the march, let alone the challenges in space, stealth, hypersonic and naval technologies e.g., the displaying of P-8A Poseidon. Pakistan is China’s strategic partner and has strategic convergence of interests with Saudi Arabia. America was keen to achieve domination over strategically and economically important territories like Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan.<sup>17</sup> American policies have unleashed the sectarian streak in the Islamic World pointing towards the intended *Arc of Shiite States*.

Getting what you want can be as much a tragedy as not getting what you want.<sup>18</sup> American prestige and power because of the war on terror and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq is degraded and damaged around the world. It had to happen. Whether it is in stars or in one self is hardly an issue, because, “in a fracturing world, the only thing worse than a self-absorbed hegemon is an incompetent self-absorbed hegemon”.<sup>19</sup> The wise in America worry that a cold war mind-set persists among US policymakers—and that it blinds us to the new balance of forces in the world.<sup>20</sup> Somehow, there is no substitute for MIND, principally in statecraft rooted in wisdom.

Pakistani fears with regard to the New Great Game are not new. Pakistan in January 2011 told the visiting US Vice President Joe Biden that “Pakistan hoped there would be no New Great Game pertaining to Afghanistan”. However, there was a gap between the clarifications extended by Biden and the ground realities. No headway was made during the visit that revolved around the endgame in Afghanistan. It was also meant to find out as to what will move the Pakistani Establishment to extend the wholehearted cooperation. Joe Biden failed to dispel the Pakistani fears and the vagueness with regard to the US intentions and

actions in the region. The distrust continued long after Biden was gone. It was not different after Marc Grossman in October 2012 proposed the joint management of the endgame in Afghanistan. The uncertainty over the transition in Afghanistan forced Americans to make choices. Americans wanted Haqqanis and Mullah Omer to be delivered on the table without conceding leverage to Islamabad. Americans also expected guarantees for the smooth transition and the withdrawal route for the US hardware. And as Pakistan responded to the efforts of Afghan High Peace Council, al-Qaeda's leader Ayman al-Zawahiri denounced the Nation State and rejected the UNO as a conflict mediator.

The geo-political construct of spheres of influence is at the root of the strategic tension between Russia and the United States in Central Asia,<sup>21</sup> and in the Ukraine. The states pursue two goods through their foreign policies i.e., *change*, which constitutes efforts to alter the status quo, and *maintenance*, which constitutes efforts to prevent changes in the status quo.<sup>22</sup> The principle guiding the conductors is "maximization of interests". Russians and Chinese have chosen and view American military presence in Central Asia with suspicion, whereas, Americans perceive the two as regional cum global strategic and economic foes. And other than Afghans and India, Americans are relying on the Turkic ethnic core originating from Anatolian Plateau and going through Central Asia up to the resource rich Chinese province of Xinxiang where Eastern Turkistan Movement is active against Beijing. Central Asia is no longer a "no-go" or "no interest" zone for others, but is a pivotal theatre of the new geopolitics<sup>23</sup>, e.g., the *Pak-Saudi Entente*. The logic of *Swarms Connection* is strategic and extra-regional, let alone the Levant.

One should not be blind to the happenings. No one is backing down from the competition. Americans are living up to their worst fears. The American strategy envisions a greater role for India and Japan in Asia, and for India in Afghanistan and in the New Great Game. The Chinese perception of Japan is of an American strategic instrument to make a comeback in Asia. India too has emerged as an anchor in Asia. It has convergence of interests with America. The cooperative Indo-U.S. relationship is because of "the geo-political objectives of India which it is pursuing in a very hard-headed way, [and] are quite parallel to American interests."<sup>24</sup> The west and now Japan also are selling hardware worth tens of billions of dollars to India. It is also working on an Anti-Ballistic Missile Defense System. American



design has tilted in India's favor. Pakistan shuns India's hegemonic designs and is responding.

Pakistan is also conscious of the fact that as the situation in Afghanistan approached the endgame; the reality of the New Great Game formally emerged in Afghanistan and Central Asia. All the Great Powers are playing the game. Pakistani perception is that this will destabilize Afghanistan and Pakistan. Pakistan understands the implications, especially in the post 2014 context, when most of the ISAF forces will not be present in Afghanistan. Still, the test of a first rate intelligence is the ability to hold two ideas in the mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function.<sup>25</sup> For the tendency to go into the orbit and the loss of connection with the nucleus is a dilemma. More importantly, Pakistan's nuclear weapon capability is a strategic roadblock on the road to Eurasia and in the context of the New Great Game. What is the set of circumstances that will convey to *others*, what they expect from Pakistan?

Pakistan joins together Central, South and South West Asia. It is in the eye of storm. The night of trial continues. The situation is complex and there is a history of proxy wars in South and Central Asia. All the actors are cognizant of the fact. The nature of the strategic environment is competitive and no one is ready to trust the others. There is a consistent perceptual resistance on the part of all with regard to the others. All have their narratives as opposed to the counter-narratives of others of the New Great Game. Pakistan has clearly sensed the macro shift in the pegging order. Earlier Americans had also turned down the Pakistani offer of jointly forming the government in Afghanistan, though later offered the joint management of the endgame in Afghanistan. The Indian role in Afghanistan is not clean and the Pak-US Strategic Dialogue impractical. And whereas the skipping of Kashmir dispute and the water issue overloads the circuitry, the idea to deploy jet-powered Avenger and Predator C drones in India is dangerous. Pakistan's response will be decisive, if it comes to it.

The *Real Game* within the New Great Game deals with the *Real World*. There exists only one region in which all Great Powers are present, that is Eurasia, particularly the sub-region of Central Asia; the first meeting place of China, India, Russia, the US and the EU in history and here the gaps between the Great Power rhetoric and the reality of their policy approaches are all too evident.<sup>26</sup> All Great Powers fear the emergence of a Talibanized nuclear Pakistan—a global swing state.<sup>27</sup> *Raj Naiti* demands feeding these fears. In the past, the balance of power relied on

occasional wars to rebalance the system or to deter aggressors, but in a nuclear age, that is no longer acceptable and a minnow can still inflict unacceptable damage on a Great Power.<sup>28</sup> Pakistan's nuclear weapons are tactical cum operational and strategic. Pakistan is not a "low hanging fruit".

The outcome of US policy towards Eurasia will shape the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Asia within Eurasia has troubled America since World War II. As the center of gravity shifted from Europe to Asia; Americans reviewed their relationships with Japan, South Korea and Australia and have forged new ties with India. India is playing the ball and the reality is different from what Pakistan was told to believe. The Islamic World between Israel and India is crucial for trade, energy and strategy. Nothing is strategic in this space, except Pakistan's nuclear weapons. An original awareness of the strategic environment, the "scheme of things entire" is critical. For there are those who speak of a larger conspiracy to fragment Pakistan in order to rule the region and exploit its resources,<sup>29</sup> after Pakistan's nuclear castration. The gap between the perceptions is wider as opposed to any time in the past decades. The nuclear monitoring continues.

### **Conclusion**

The world of science is as chaotic as was the world of conjecture centuries ago. American policies have destabilized the world. The Great Power rivalry is in full swing in Eurasia. American presence in Central Asia is viewed as an alien that needs to be removed. The regional and global geo-politics are now transitional for variety of reasons, including the New Great Game. And as the New Great Game intensifies and expands, all are playing to catch up with the dynamic reality. The new realities must be factored into calculations, because, the New Great Game symbolizes the chaos of the New World Order. The oblong of the New Great Game is expanding. The stakes include Eurasian security system and trade and energy corridors in South Asia, Central, East and South East Asia. Other than states and state actors, independent non-state actors capable of independent developments are also demonstrating their reach and grasp in the Islamic Space. The connection is trans-national, trans-cultural and trans-geographic.

Pakistan's neighborhood both in the east and west is crucial for the Great Powers. The post 9/11 US strategy was based on the desire to defeat the Islamists militarily and secure the trade and pipeline routes. The assumption was that it will also strategically circumvent China. The efforts failed and the strategic

environment is not in consonance with the American desires. And as the failure became too apparent, the desire to negotiate the Bilateral Security Agreement with Afghanistan emerged to manage the New Great Game and the New Silk Road. The New Silk Road will start in Turkey go through Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and will end in South East Asia, as opposed to the ancient Silk Road that linked Iraq with China. No wonder there are mutually reinforcing ideas like the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Sino-Pak trade corridor.

The Eurasian Championship continues. Eurasia has emerged as the hinge of the global power struggle. It is generational. The encirclement is yet to take place. Choosing and abandoning is going on, including strategic maneuvers and arms build-up. The Egyptian-Russian and Saudi-Canadian hardware connections are independent developments. And the broad convergence of the Indo-US and Sino-Russian strategic and economic interests are clashing. The idea of containment has emerged as the key strategic concept. The critical geo-politics are dynamic and not fixed. The desire to eject others is substantive. The neutral technological developments have forged a globalized world. The integration of Eurasia to create new trade and energy corridors is strived for. The reorientations are meant to control the resources and routes. All are awaiting the birth of a new order of things.<sup>30</sup> What would it be like few decades from now?

The global and regional strategic environment is extraordinarily uncertain in the post-Cold War era, as opposed to the certainty of the Cold War. The threats are dynamic and keep emerging in the new places and forms. The pitch is interesting. Nothing is specific and everything is diffused. The things have gone wrong for America since 9/11. The circumventions, encirclements and containments have counters. Asia is changing because of China's economic and strategic weight and diplomatic finesse. This is the new uneasy reality for Americans, Europeans and Indians. The Chinese financed deep-sea ports of Hambantota in Sri Lanka and Gwadar in Pakistan along with a naval logistic base in Seychelles are upsetting for Americans and Indians. Chinese are also planning to build a rail link across the Karakorum Range through Khunjerab Pass up to Rawalpindi in Pakistan. This will change the geo-politics and geo-economics of the region. A probable broad balance of power is Washington-Tokyo-New Delhi axis vs. Beijing-Moscow-Islamabad axis.

The Chinese are playing a global game,<sup>31</sup> since sometime, and are demanding a bigger role even in the Middle East, let alone

Central Asia where the New Great Game has its roots. In 2009, for the first time in centuries, Chinese trade with Central Asia surpassed that of Russia. The Chinese are on a spending spree in Central Asia lending billions of dollars and have secured energy rights in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan e.g., South Yolotan gas field is one of the most prized in the world. China is also actively pursuing uranium and oil projects in Kazakhstan and has built modern roads for transporting Chinese manufactured goods to Central Asia. Still, the securing of pipeline routes to control energy from northern Central Asian regions remains an American dream. The gasp endures and perplexity visible.

China is forging its sphere of influence from Central Asia in the west to the Pacific Ocean in the east and from Russian Far East to the Indian Ocean in the South. Still, India is a sovereign geographic space in China's intended sphere of influence. Indians also have an air-base in Tajikistan. India is relevant for the American relevance in Asia. The fundamentals remain strong. For the perception of China is that of a multidimensional "complex global challenge". The shift of focus from Atlantic to the Pacific strained the traditional American ties with Europe, notwithstanding the Ukraine. The allies are aware of American pragmatism. The New World Order is emerging in the vastness of Eurasia to the disadvantage of America. The world of revanchist nationalist Russia, an ascending global China and the rising India is complex and multipolar. It is also truly Machiavellian. In such an environment, one deals with the originality of the opponents. And the things have gone original for those playing the game, especially Americans.

Unpredictability could be an answer to the uncertainty of the strategic environment. The storms are on the horizon in Afghanistan, Central Asia, Crimea and the Asia-Pacific region. The matters of statecraft and diplomacy are serious stuff. Diplomacy begins when appeasement stops and heels are dug in to promote national interest and guard sovereignty. The state is not abolished; it withers away.<sup>32</sup> The failure of nations today is heavily influenced by their institutional histories.<sup>33</sup> The allies and adversaries need to be dealt with strategically and not tactically. Meanwhile, there is this expansion of the strategic space of the conflict. It is now extra regional. There is also this talk of currency and trade wars, like the tariff wars of the 1930s. All are staring at each other intently. Americans endorse India from East Asia to East Africa and dangle the UNSC membership for India.

Americans have in mind the New Silk Road in Central and South Asia linked with South East Asia.

Conversely, China's grand strategy is aimed at displacing the financial, economic and strategic domination of the modern world system by America. It is core vs. periphery. The Chinese intentions are backed by an ancient High Culture spanning over two millenniums. An internalization of science to develop and progress speaks for itself, whereas, Yuan turning into an international reserve currency in the days ahead will turn the tables on America. This will begin a new regional financial design as opposed to a dollar based monetarist order i.e., ASEAN. It will take some time, but that is not important. China already has the military muscle to defend whatever it has achieved so far and back its ambitions for the future. The strategic and economic growth of China continues to the dismay of American led west. The west is responding to the rise of China in the strategic sense, because, economically it cannot do much. Australia which is an American strategic military base focused on China and selling uranium to India has been reinforced by the PENTAGON.

Similarly, the dissonance based newspeak at Lisbon was neo-imperialist where NATO desired for global power projection. The American Missile Defense Shield is to be a barrier between the Euro-Atlantic community and anyone in the East or South, especially China. American economic and strategic decline is relative to China, and no one else. The perception is to exclude, encircle and contain China. The strategic containment of Russia will be an additional bonus in the context of New Great Game. The idea is to hang onto power at any cost and by any and all means and change the world according to the dissonance based desires. However, there are alternate independent perceptions of reality in the global politics. The sense is that enough is enough. It cannot go on as usual. The ground reality has altered.

And notwithstanding the Sino-Indian trade worth \$85 billion, the Indian naval establishment is of the perception that the growing Chinese maritime power is "truly impressive and a major cause for concern". The naval cardinals are shedding their reluctance with regard to South China Sea. Take for example the pledge by the Indian naval chief to help the Indian state energy firm ONGC Videsh in its search for oil in South China Sea. The firm is in an exploration contract with Vietnam which has naval exchanges with America. The Indian Navy with one aircraft carrier and two more on the way is adapting to the new realities. It is buying submarines and dozens of naval ships and conducting naval

exercises to be prepared to help ONGC Videsh. The Eastern Naval Command at Vizagapatam with a submarine base will expand. The intention is to play the game and the reference is to the Law of the Sea for the resolution of disputes in South China Sea. The blue water Indian Navy is critical for power projection and for delivering extra-regional neo-Clausewitzianism punch. India is aiding and abetting the global power play. The focus on China is more than obvious.

Economic development is very important to China. It always viewed its economic relations with America and rest of the world as critical in the last three decades. The reality changed, but China was prepared. It had rather worked hard to be able to face this day. The Chinese prestige has grown in the midst of years old global financial crisis. Chinese are poised to continue to grow, both economically and strategically, on the basis of domestic consumption. American conservatives believe that ‘economically’, China will take over the town, so the playing of the strategic card. The Chinese perceive China’s military build-up as logical and an outcome of its economic development. Notably, the Chinese leaders should not be expected to wait patiently while the web of containment is strengthened around them.<sup>34</sup>

Both the US and China are urging Pakistan and India to develop better bilateral relations, but from different perspectives.<sup>35</sup> Washington wants India to be active in a sort of ‘containment’ of China and does not want Pakistan to bind one of India’s hands.<sup>36</sup> China seeks détente in South Asia to dissuade India from participating in any such containment scheme.<sup>37</sup> America and China are making moves to shape-up the post-Soviet Asia.<sup>38</sup> The Chinese influence is radiating all around in countless lines. Its power is probing and pushing in Central, South, East and South East Asia. All the elements of a global power play in the Machiavellian taste are in place. And off course Russians have soared-in on the Chess Board with arrogance. The playing of a Marshall Swindler is an Old Russian art. The Empire of Bases is on the defensive. It is a different world.

Also to the surprise of Americans, Russia is developing the next generation of nuclear weapons and delivery systems to ensure its nuclear deterrence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Russian strategic nuclear forces under Project 955 will be fully modernized by 2021. The global strategic balance is being maintained and signaled through the naval patrols in the Caribbean, exercises, test firing of long-range Topol-M missiles and the Eurasian Union. And China has developed an integrated anti-access cum area-denial capability.

It is becoming a long-range air and maritime power with a blue-water navy. The first Sino-Japanese aircraft-carriers are being displayed. More are on the way. A boost-glide Clausewitzian, neo-Clausewitzian and nuclear arms race is operational. It signals global strategic competition between Moscow, Washington and Beijing. And South China Sea with billions of barrels of oil, 900 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and competing territorial claims has emerged as the centre of gravity of the conflict in East Asia. The dimensions of time, space and correlation of forces are being contested regionally and globally.

The new reality is gaining momentum. The relative distribution and dispersal of global power, wealth and influence has altered. The strategic environment is autonomous and self-directed. It has overtaken the perception. The “morning after” is here. The new mosaic has many shades and colors. It is multi-polar, multi-lingual, and multi-cultural. The words are no more minced. The passage of time tore off the veil and made obvious what was already known to the world. The magnitude and the associated power is the problem, for it dictates and is dynamic. The lowest ebb in the relationship is not far off, unless rectified. Cynical calculations continue. The perception is that China moves two steps forward and a step backward, whereas, the Chinese perceive the context as an opportunity. The indicators are here and visible to all. Pakistan is the exemplary case; as China’s power increases, it becomes a yet more valued patron.<sup>39</sup> It is more than patronage and enough to rectify the misperception.

And whereas the Pak-US Strategic Dialogue remains devoid of long-term solutions and anything concrete in the short and midterm, the Council on Foreign Relations counseled *nonalignment* for Pakistan. The Pak-US dialogue lacks regional and global understanding. The strategic fundamentals are not there. There are no grand basis involving questions of war and peace. It is transactional and a tactical cum operational connection. It never metamorphosed into strategic over the decades. It was not meant to be. The impossibility of fitting into the plan remains. The trust deficit persists, as opposed to *somewhat trust*. The strategy is ambiguous, not spelled-out, whereas, the commitment lacks. The perceptions are dissonant. Pakistan is cautious, despite an upbeat assessment.

The global strategic environment has triggered Palmerstonian activism, though; the power projection is now more costly. It is also increasingly insecure and not a cast-iron option. The influence is battered and an intervention in the Islamic World

or elsewhere is not an option. For it is not deterring. And the simultaneous cooperation and containment of the “Main Enemy” is not rational, whether it is procurement or planning for the future, or the intentions and the efforts to impede the economic growth of the dragon. The US efforts to pivot America firmly in the geopolitical, geo-strategic and geo-economic reality of Asia remain, though, the viability of options is not certain. Even an economic struggle is not a sure option, because, not only the strategic, but the global financial grip has also loosened, let alone the Yuan emerging as an alternative currency. America is trying to squeeze a square peg into the round hole of the New Great Game. The contents and the intentions are clear to others. Because, the rapid military build-up that has accompanied China’s economic rise has sparked considerable worry by some who view it as part of an aggressive Chinese design to remake East Asia and the globe.<sup>40</sup> China is the new paranoia, another Iron Curtain on the mind.

India has an active \$100 billion hardware modernization programme and an economic and geo-strategic convergence of interests with America in Eurasia, besides, an American strategic partner in Afghanistan. And Americans are not willing to see Pakistan, except through the prism of Afghanistan. All types of big and small games are on in the AfPak region. The halo around the New Great Game is local, regional and global. It is also metaphysical and likewise has an element of ambiguity, which makes it opaque, complex and sophisticated, let alone chancy and dangerous. There are no coincidences in foreign policy. Even a diplomatic coincidence is a mixture of many good and bad things, especially, in the context of an emerging balance of power and the ongoing New Great Game. The imposing of a *cosmology*, where there are many *Kosmologies*, is always at the cost of harmony. Let wisdom prevail.

For sometimes the un wisdom and unnatural desires are tempting and provocative, though, the infantile nature is understandable. One should ignore it. What characterizes the realm of strategy is the impossibility of achieving straightforward results by straightforward actions, because others exist and others react in between the two,<sup>41</sup> in the *Real World*. The mind is undefeated, focused, fearless, ruthless, and “commendably democratic—and dangerous”.<sup>42</sup> It has the will and capacity to kick these up a notch or two, certainly more if required. Pakistan has a *Freudian Sword* to dissect the sophistication, expanse and complexity of the New Great Game.



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