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A THEORETICAL REVIEW ON CHINA-INDIA BORDER RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WAR OF 1962

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Abstract: India got independence on 15th August 1947 while China became a communist state in 1949 through a bloody revolution. These two developments have large impact on the political, social and economic life of the South Asian countries. India was the first state to recognize the People's Republic of China (Singh 1998). The Relationship between these two most populous countries was very cordial in the early period. In this research paper we tried to make a theoretical definition of war. We have also discussed about the characteristics of the war. Why and how war is happened? Nature of the war and different interpretations about the war has also been explained. This paper discusses why one particular approach is suitable to explain the war. The paper discusses about the China-India border relations and the events that led to the Sino-Indian war in 1962. The main objective of this study is to understand the Sino-Indian border relations; and to understand their impacts on the South Asian countries including Bangladesh. The findings of the study are very crucial for South Asian countries including India and Bangladesh. The findings show that the border relations between China and India are not good at all. Methodologically, it is a qualitative study based on secondary data. At the end of the study, some policy recommendations have been provided to strengthen the relationship between these two neighbouring countries.

Keywords: China-India Border Relations the War of 1962.

Introduction

'Panchsheel' was keystone of their relationship and 'Hindi-Chinibhai-bhaislongan' (Singh 1998) depicted cordial attitudes between these two Asian neighbours. Towards the end of the year of 1962, these two countries fought wars with each other primarily in the North Eastern parts of Himalayan ranges. The 1962 Sino-India war came as rude shock and surprise for Indian leadership. Since then India uses pinch of salt before arriving at any decision in the context of the relationship with China. Following paragraph recaptures a background of the war in a brief. Important cause of the war was territorial dispute between these two Asian neighbours. Colonial ruler, British officers left India without demarcating boundary among India, Tibet and China. According to Naviel Maxwell, since early 1950's Chinese leaders were asking for amicable resolution of border disputes between India and China. Chinese were unhappy about the border demarcation of both McMahon line in North East Frontier Administration (NEFA) as well as Johnson Line in Aksai Chin Area in Kashmir (Maxwell, India's China War 1971).

However, The Nehru government calculated that with the diplomatic backing from the Soviet Union and the United States, India's position of moral authority would cause Beijing to back down and accept Indian claims in Aksai Chin and the NEFA (Maxwell, India's China War 1971). When Zhou En Lai came to New Delhi in 1960, he pursued a proposal for resolution of border dispute but Nehru did not show any interest (Noorani 2012). India was shocked due to the severe strikes of the Chinese forces. This implies that India never thought China as potential threat. But, Vallab Bhai Patel in his famous letter warned Nehru about the threat that had emanated from north eastern sector (Patel n.d.). However, Nehru replied back to him that China was a country that would make us worried; rather we need to concentrate on threat from North West i.e. from Pakistan (Noorani 2012).

Apart from boundary dispute, Tibet issue also played a role in Sino-India war. Dalai Lama fled from Lhasa and took asylum in India. India granted recognition to Dalai Lama's government in exile that was established in Dharmashala (Rajgopalan 2009). Till now we have understood the background of this war in context of bilateral border relations. But, it is equally important to touch upon the situation of international politics prior to the war. Period of this war was coincided with the cold war and at that particular time, cold war was assumed to be turning into a real war. As Cuban missile crisis had generated clouds of wars between the then superpowers United States (US) and Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). We have to keep in the mind the situation that had emerged in the realm of world politics in order to analyze Sino-India war. According to western scholars and governments, China is an aggressor country and it invaded peaceful India. China was considered as a hostile country during Korean War of 1950's.

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It will be inappropriate if we neglect domestic situation of the both countries, because it might encompass some of the indications that could help to explore the causes behind the war. After establishing communist regime in China, Mao Zedong was among one of the communist leaders of the world. However, his program of 'Great Leap Forward' actually turned into jump towards backward. Failure of this program coupled with great famine in China that forced many families of China for starvation. This whole episode was setback for the image of Mao. On the contrary, Indian state under leadership of Pandit Nehru was moving on the path of growth, development and prosperity. Nehru was the greatest leader of India among the different political leaders. His popularity was touching new heights. His policy of non-alignment also made him global leader. This made Mao critical of Nehru (Rajgopalan 2009).

We have come to learn about the domestic, bilateral and global background of the war, this discussion tells us that boundary dispute, Tibetan uprisings, domestic politics, personal animosity as well as global situation pushed India and China towards the war. It is now imperative to know how war actually happened. It is very crucial to mention that without a peaceful South Asia and China, the development plans of both China and India are not possible in the entire region (Clark 2002). Both China and India should move forward to find a political way to resolve the long lasting border disputes for the greater socio-economic and political interests of South Asia, India and China.

Study Methodology

This study has been carried out based on the secondary sources of data, and observation. The researchers have observed the border situations of India and China for long time through the different media, electronic and print media and social media as well. Other secondary sources of data on Sino-India border relations have been used in carrying out this study. Relevant books, journals, research monographs, daily newspapers, weekly magazines, international newspapers, daily news of international electronic media such as BBC, Aljazeera, and CNN have also been employed in carrying out this study. Some video documentaries of China-India borders have been analyzed in carrying out this study.

Definition of War

War is characterized as an organised and prolonged conflict among political communities. Extreme sort of violence, disruption of social life and economy are some of the features of the War. War is actually intentional armed conflict and it has political nature. War is always about collision of two living forces. To define war in the words of Clausewitz: War represents organised mass violence and this distinguishes war from other human activities. He described the definition of war in an equivocal sense that war is "an act of force and there is no logical limit to the application of the force" (Paret 1986).

Different Interpretations of the Wars between China and India

Wars between China and India were very limited in its scale and time period. However, political implications of the wars were large scale. In the case of India, war came as rude shock and it generated clouds around the image of Pandit Nehru. Immediate fallout of the war was resignation of then defence minister V.K. Krishna Menon. So, how this war was interpreted by different scholars? Neville Maxwell is considered as an authoritative voice on Sino-Indian war of 1962. Maxwell claims that he had access to some parts of Henderson Brooks, Bhagat report that was instituted by Indian Army in post war period. That report is still classified by many ways. Maxwell in his book 'India's China War' gave in depth analysis of that war with details (Maxwell, India's China War 1971). Other voice on Sino-India war is Prof. Rajesh Rajgopalan. He is a Professor at JawaharLal Nehru University in New Delhi in India. He also interpreted this war from 'Realpolitik' perspectives. Following section interprets these perspectives about war in brief.

First, we will deal with the analysis of Neville Maxwell. As a journalist posted in New Delhi, he had access to most of the political leaders and military personnel. He also knew about Indian decision making process. His thesis is very simple. India inherited boundaries from the British, who by virtue of being paramount power in the region, arbitrarily drew boundaries and took advantage of weak Chinese powers. British were actually playing Great game with Russia and wanted to treat Tibet as buffer zone. And hence in 1914, they tried to settle border's disputes through tripartite Simla Agreement among British India, Tibet and China. Chinese were present but they backtracked. After independence, India inherited those boundaries but they became symbol of the national identity without strong backing of power and evidences. Maxwell further clarifies that Indian leadership was concerned about the strategic advantage of the area and hence Nehru refused to negotiate and tried to appease China by other means like granting recognition or support for UN membership etc.

India, especially Nehru and his defence minister along with military officers like B.M. Kaul and Mulik instituted 'forward policy'. This involved aggressive border patrolling by Indian army and setting up indefensible pickets close to McMahon line. Dhola post on Thag La Ridge was actually a few miles North of McMahon line. Indian's thought line passes through highest point in the Khinzemane sector. Maxwell says that China was willing to let India occupy territory, south of the McMahon line what they considered as just a border point and not the McMahon line that was arbitrarily accepted by India. China attempted to find amicable solution but Indian leadership was not interested. Hence, faced with aggressive policy of India, China launched pre-emptive strike on 20th October 1962. This attack was coinciding with Cuban missile crisis. Second phase of attacks on 14th November 1962 accomplished Chinese victory. Maxwell further argued that Indian military was weak in strategy, logistics and training. Maxwell does not subscribe to western theory

that China wanted to humiliate India and put break on India's growth and development. Rather, he looks this war from realist frame of mind. He blamed India for this war and gave judgement that India was aggressor because of its aggressive 'forward policy'. Maxwell, think that Indian aspiration of controlling strategically located territory is root cause of the war. Indian aspiration created agitation among China and they became concerned about their sovereign rights. Hence, Maxwell's conclusion suggests that war was result of classic case of 'security dilemma'. He also blamed Nehru, Krishna Menon and military officers B.M.Kaul for waging a war against China.

Professor Rajesh Rajgopalan's Views on China-India War

Now, we will come to the thesis of Prof. Rajesh Rajgopalan, he viewed this war as result of misunderstanding between the leaderships of both China and India. He considered this war was result of 'realpolitik' that was emerged at the global scale. India raised the issue of border dispute with China during 1954 but that time China was busy in her domestic affairs, and hence China did not show any interest in resolving the border disputes between the two countries. But, late 1950's China became impatient and the asylum of Dalai Lama in India worsens the image of India among the Chinese leadership. Indian leadership thought that China though unhappy with Indian posture about the border dispute, it will not resort to war. They thought that things will remain limited to the extent of skirmishes. Symptoms of border disputes were resulted in growing misunderstandings between the two countries. China, misunderstood Indian stance as aggression and thought that India wants to become a dominant power in the Asia (Rajgopalan 2009).

Here, Rajgopalan also indicates that world politics works on the logic of 'balance of power and bilateral relations between India and China were also examples of this logic. Before the start of war, relations between communist states of USSR and China were unpleasant. At that time USSR was tilted towards India and China was unhappy about it. China asked USSR to choose between India and China. China looked towards India as possible competitor while USSR considered India as possible ally against US. USSR sold missiles to India and this also angered China (Rajgopalan 2009). Though global power politics was tilted towards India but onset of Cuban missile crisis changed all this. USSR was in need the support of communist China during Cuban missile crisis and US also assured China that it would not attack China (Raghvan 2012).

Indian leadership failed to understand this dynamically changed real world politics. Nehru thought that if ever China attacks India then it will turn into 'great powers rivalry' (Raghvan 2012). However, in practice this was not true. Nehru neglected realpolitik and he thought that, India was big country and has stature in world politics, but India failed to distinguish its global position and relevance of 'power' in global politics. Indian political and military leadership neglected preparedness of military forces, and it should be noted

that the material capabilities determine power and status of the country. It is impossible to carry out any war without proper training and logistic support. In addition to these flip sides, military strategy was very weak. Rajgopalan considers war is such a big event and hence it is very difficult to ascribe any single point as reason of war is impractical and actually war is a result of the combination of factors.

Which interpretation is to be chosen?

After knowing both the interpretations it is necessary to choose one of the interpretations. On personal level, we feel that war could not be viewed from any single dimension rather it is multidimensional. Different combination of factors is at work when war happens. Hence, we find interpretation of Prof. Rajgopalan most appealing. However, in addition to the aspects listed down by Rajgopalan, we feel that domestic politics also play crucial role in the incidence of wars. Especially, we do not have full access to Chinese account and we need to guess about Chinese political and military process based on some limited information. Leadership tussle among the Chinese leaders and the decreasing status of Mao is also a factor worth noting. Due to the failure in the domestic affairs in terms of economic issues and there was a situation of frustration among Chinese people and, that might have destabilised Chinese government. Henceforth, to change the attention of Chinese people, China decided to launch so called pre-emptive strike against India. Here, we feel that Clausewitz is right when he says that "war is continuation of policy by other means" (Paret 1986).

Another purpose of war was to bring India on board for negotiating in the table and solve the boundary disputes (Krishnan 2012). The upward stature of Nehru in world politics was also a cause of concern for the Chinese leadership. They also felt fear about the increasing Indian influence in the world politics. Therefore, they wanted to humiliate India and placed India at a negligible position in the world politics. Indian voice was not heard seriously after debacle in the war. It was after the economic growth story in the first decade of 21st century i.e. after almost 40 years after war, India claimed rightful place in the world politics. This indicates that power dominates the world and one has to pay heavy price for the neglect of power.

Chinese leadership also carefully studied emerging relationship among the superpowers. The dynamics of cold war paved the suitable way for the Chinese, and USSR remained neutral. India was allied with the support of the USSR for any emergency situation but the Indian leaders failed to read global equations (Raghvan 2012). Indian leadership and military officers also had overconfidence about their own military forces. Previously, Indian forces had experience of fighting war but it was limited mainly in plain lands and did not have training of fighting wars in the mountains. Misconceptions about own strengths and about world view based on moral authority proved fatal. This misperception proved costly and India received humiliating defeat.

Realpolitik is a key for state to survive in the web of world politics. Neo-realism also shares some of the principles of *Realpolitik*. Respect for power, material capabilities and self-dignity are few to mention. Apart from these features, pragmatism or practical exposure of world politics was lacking on part of the Indian leadership. We think that Indian leadership was not able to read these basic principles of the world politics.

Why and how war was occurred between China and India?

The scale of this war was very limited. It was fought mainly in hilly areas. In June 1962, Indian forces established an outpost at Dhola that was North of McMahon Line. In August, China publically lodged diplomatic protests and began occupying positions at the top of Thag La. However, then commanding officer of operations, B.M.Kaul ordered Indian forces to move ahead and secure region south of Thag La. On 20th October 1962, Chinese forces struck on both McMahon and Johnson lines. People's Liberation Army (PLA) sought to expel Indian forces from Chip Chap valley in Aksai Chin while they were fighting in the Eastern sector. The Chinese forces attacked unarmed and unprepared Indian security forces and advanced their run till Walongon, the McMahon line. Here, Indians were little bit successful in inflicting heavy casualties for Chinese side but elsewhere Chinese attack was so strong that Indians were evacuated without much resistance. Tawang is an example of fierce Chinese attack in the Eastern theatre of war.

On the western sites, China easily controlled and occupied disputed territories. On 19th October, China attacked all along the western line and the Indians were evacuated from Daulet Beg oldi which is south of line claimed by China. By 24th October, PLA effectively controlled all of the territories along Johnson and McMahon line that was previously administered by Indians (Maxwell, India's shameful Debacle 2001).

On 4th November, Zhou En Lai, sent a letter to Nehru and offered for NEFA in exchange of Aksai Chin. Indian parliament strongly resisted Chinese presence on Indian soil and passed resolution to drive out Chinese forces from Indian land. The US and UK also supported Indian response, USSR remained neutral because of Cuban missile crisis. Due to the backing of the great powers, Nehru on 14th November refused the offer of Zhou En Lai. Nehru's rejection again started war on both Eastern and Western fronts (Calvin 1984).

On Eastern front, the PLA attacked Indian forces near Se La and Bomdi La on 17 November. PLA forces attacked through mountain trail and this attack cut off supply line for Indian forces and hence isolated large number of Indian troops (Calvin 1984).

On western front, PLA forces attacked again on 18th November near Chushul. Attack from Chinese side forced Indians to withdraw from the high mountain positions. This war saw heavy casualties on both sides, especially at Rezang La (Calvin 1984). Few Indian soldiers were died because of the

lack of logistics and snow cover also made it difficult for them to sustain. On 19th November 1962, China unilaterally declared ceasefire after they took control of the claimed territories.

Impacts of the War between China and India in 1962

One of the most unwarranted happenings in the international history of India was India-China war. China and India, the two Asian giants, went on to fight a war in the end days of October in 1962. The main cause of the war was the competing interests of India and China which took the form of sharp differences over the borders. These were most acute in the western and eastern extremities of the Himalayas separated by over thousand miles. As the border dispute was the immediate cause of the war, it is essential to understand how it was occurred. At the very first instance, it is important to examine the view that both countries have enjoyed the friendly relations for over two thousand years and the problems between them have arisen only during the last five decades since India became independent and the People's Republic of China had emerged out of Chairman Mao's Revolution. This euphoric view had been sanctified by the writings and speeches of Jawaharlal Nehru to a great extent, even before he assumed the position of India's first Prime Minister. Nehru had a grand vision of India and China working together and contributing to the cause of peace and development in Asia and the world (R. K. Jain, 1981, P.3).

Speaking in a Radio Broadcast on September 7, 1946 Jawaharlal Nehru, Vice-President of the Interim National Government of India stated "China that mighty country with a mighty past, our neighbor, has been our friend through the ages and that friendship will endure and given that we will continue to be reliable friend to each other in future to come (R.K. Jain, 1981, P. 3). However, this vision was obviously not shared by the Chinese leadership, which considered India as being still under the influence of Great Britain and the west, generally that view had been reinforced when India close to remain with the Commonwealth (R. K. Jain 1981, P.3). K.M.Panikkar quotes "Mao opened the conversation by saying that in China there was an old belief that if a man lived a good life he would be reborn in India" (John Lail, 1988, P.232).

These relations between China and India during the first ten years of the existence of the People's Republic of China which came into existence on 1 October 1949 were amicable. This friendship between the two countries became a matter of envy for the imperialist powers. The reasons were obvious. India, after a long struggle and enormous sacrifices, was able to throw off the yoke of imperialism. The anti-imperialist struggle of the Indian people and their final victory paved the way for the liberation of many countries in Asia. Two years after the independence of India, the people of China succeeded in their revolution which had its genesis in the anti-imperialist movement. The two countries, therefore, had a common basis for

their friendship. The populations of both countries constitute about one-third of the world population. Both the countries suffered under those rulers who exploited the vast resources of these countries for their vested interests and made the people economically backward. Both needed development to reconstruct their economies and usher a new era of peace and prosperity for their people. India signed the Panchsheel agreement with China on 29th April 1954, with the hope that the friendship between these two countries based on the 'Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence' would herald a new era of friendship and cooperation in Asia in spite of their different social systems and forms of government (R.K. Jain, 1981, P.61).

Aftermath China According to the PLA's official military history, the war achieved China's policy objectives of defeating the Indian forces and securing peaceful borders in the western sector, as China retained de facto control of the Aksai Chin. After the war, India abandoned the Forward Policy, and the de facto borders stabilized along the Line of Actual Control. Published learning in China is still expected to explain and justify not criticizing the decisions of the Chinese Communist Party, at least on such sensitive matters as war. India at the end of the war, memorial was erected for the Indian troops who died in the war. Arguably, the main lesson India learned from the war was the need to strengthen its own defences and a shift from Nehru's foreign policy with China based on his stated concept of "brotherhood". Indians in general became highly sceptical of China and its military. The war also put an end to Nehru's earlier hopes that India and China would form a strong Asian Axis to counteract the increasing influence of the Cold War bloc superpowers. Sensing a weakened army, Pakistan, a close ally of China, initiated the Second Kashmir War with India in 1965. However this war was still indecisive and led to a cease fire. In the later skirmishes, India also declared a series of skirmishes after the 1962's war but never been confirmed by China. One report provided by India shows that: In late 1967, there were two skirmishes between Indian and Chinese forces in Sikkim. The first one was dubbed the "Nathu La incident", and the other the "Chola incident". Prior to these incidents, there had been the Naxalbari uprising in India by the Communist Naxalites and Maoists. Also on the 11th September, 1967, Chinese troops opened fire on Indian troops who were protecting Engineering Company in Nathula. The conflict escalated over the next five days to an exchange of heavy artillery and mortar fire between the Indians and the Chinese. The extent of Chinese casualties in this incident was not known. Chinese troops were forced to move sideways along the Thag La ridge, away from the valley. The Army's strong response was regarded as the exorcism of the ghost of 1962. By 1987, Beijing's tone becoming ominously similar to that in 1962 and this prompted many Western diplomats to predict war. For logistical and tactical considerations, the

Chinese focused on the September 7, 1993 "Peace and Tranquillity along the LAC Agreement" with India.

China-India Border Relations in the Narendra Modi and Xi Jinping Era

The Cold Peace has considered the China-India relationships since their 1962 border war have persisted into the 21st Century. At the moment, as in the past, essentials of collaboration and contest are progressing in bicycle, though the last has been excelling further swiftly in recent years. While India and China have grown-up more tactfully and economically engaged since the 1990s, close economic amalgamation and political commitment has yet to reduce tensions in the security ground. Common distrust is possibly as enormous as it's ever been. A 2013 Lowy Institute poll showed 83% of Indians considered China a security threat while 70% thought China's goal was to dictate Asia (Linda Jakobson and Rory Medcalf, June 23, 2015). A 2014 Pew poll found just 31% of Indians with a positive view of China. In the same poll just 30% of Chinese surveyed had a complimentary view of India (vs 50% for the U.S.) (Pew Research Center, July, 2014).

Mutual relations continue to be characterized by a key disparity in threat perception. Remarkably, many in India's security concern, at present, view China as a bigger security threat than Pakistan, and Indian perception of China is coloured by fears of Chinese hegemony. Chinese view toward India, in the meantime, is regarded as by lack of interest and scorn. The spokesperson of China's nationalists, the Global Times, has debated that India is "not a foremost power" and is being misled by a U.S. and Japanese scheme to hold China (Global Times, September 25, 2014). "Due to the Indian elites' blind egotism and self-confidence in their democracy, and the weakness of its common people, very little Indians are capable to treat Sino-Indian relationships precisely, impartially and reasonably (Hu Zhiyong, Global Times, May 11, 2015).

Conclusion

Above discussion in detail tell us about the Sino-Indian war. This part recaptures the background of the war from the each level of analysis. The discussion also talks about how war actually happened, and it gives us two different interpretations of the causes and implications of the war. The research article clearly states and acknowledges that the lack of reading of power politics on part of the Indian leadership. It might be said that the war is not a result of any single reason rather it is a combination of various causes at domestic, national and international levels that work together and result into war. Above discussion also clearly tells us that it is very much essential for state leadership to understand realpolitik that is taking place around it. Considering above discussion it can be said that the border relations between China and India are not good at all. In June 2020, there was a

serious fight in Ladakh between the forces of China and India where twenty Indian soldiers were killed. South Asian leaders, people and the Chinese leaders do not want to get involved into a war which causes huge damages and human sufferings along with the breakdown of the different establishment. The war also destroys the infrastructure built in the countries for public services. Peace is always desirable than war. Therefore, China, India and other South Asian countries should emphasize on the importance of peace, prosperity, and development. Also mutual respect, self-dignity and overall economic development can bring peace and long term political stability in the entire region.

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