

China's Belt and Road Initiative in Central Asia: Challenges and Policy Options for India

Ramakrushna Pradhan and Atanu Mohapatra

The chapter deals exclusively with China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in Central Asia. The centrality of Central Asia in the geopolitics of India and China, and the unprecedented rise of China pose serious challenges for India; indeed, it hampers New Delhi's strategic and economic efforts in the most vital heartland. The effort, therefore, in this chapter is to analyse China's grand strategy in Central Asia largely through a geopolitical lens. This chapter argues that Beijing is asserting itself to gain political leverage over its neighbours, especially the energy-rich Central Asia, and establish hegemony in the region as part of its strategic calculation to achieve global supremacy.

Conceptualizing the BRI

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), also known as One Belt, One Road (OBOR) Initiative, is one of the most ambitious foreign and economic policies in recent times put forward by any country. Given the sheer scale and objectives various scholars have drawn parallels between the BRI and the Marshall Plan. This project is close to President Xi Jinping's heart and aims to strengthen Beijing's economic leadership through a vast program of infrastructure building throughout China's neighbouring regions. The project has been touted as the transcontinental multi-mode connectivity network that aims to foster economic cooperation and has

The Belt and the Road Initiative: Implications for India

Mamish

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Energy Security and India's Foreign Policy

■■■ by *Dr. Ramakrushna Pradhan*

Introduction

Energy has been the foundation of all societies and the civilizations. The historical revelation reflects the ultimate use of energy in the advancement of human society and civilization. In fact, "Energy has freed people from slave and animal labour, from an agrarian society and the constraints of space. The energy is fundamental to economic development" (Pradhan 2020). In absence of energy, companies will not be able to light up their stores; people and goods will not be able to enter the affluent markets on the other side of the world; homes and schools will be more difficult to heat, and the manufacturing industry will not be able to produce any daily necessities. In short, the most of the world countries depend on energy and the major economies mostly rely on low-cost and plentiful energy supplies.

Historically, each stage of the development of civilization is brought about by changes in the energy use patterns of human population and economic system growth. In fact, since the mid-nineteenth century, the use of various energy sources has increased the population by a factor of four, and the global economy has grown by a factor of forty.

The continued dependence on oil as the largest energy source poses special geologic, geographic and political problems. The supply is limited by geological conditions but the demand for it beyond the borders and barriers has given rise to energy price volatility, energy crisis (1973, 1980 and 1991), political turmoil and lately climate change. Competition for oil started between developed and developing countries. As the supply remains concentrated in a few geographic locations of the world, countries formulated their foreign policy and direct them with a vision to



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DILEMMAS *in* **WORLD** **POLITICS**

Exploring the Frontiers



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Chapter 13

Globalization and the Third World

Myth and Reality

Ramakrushna Pradhan

13.1. INTRODUCTION

Former United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Kofi Annan once said that we are living in an era of gradual globalization, which seems as natural and inevitable as the law of gravity. There is no doubt that technological advancement is among the key motivating forces behind globalization because it curtails the distance by largely trimming down transportation and communication costs. In recent years, the removal of politically imposed obstacles has further contributed to this. Especially after the Iron Curtain fell in 1989, the process of globalization has accelerated. Most of the former Eastern European countries have integrated into the world economy and are experiencing a shift from a regulated and planned economy to a liberalized free and open market economy (Rousova, 2009, p. 1).

Because the course of globalization is all-embracing and vibrant, its advantages and disadvantages have become one of the most intensely debated topics in international economics in recent years. On the one hand, Ricardo's theory of comparative advantage (Ricardo, 1817, p. 82) predicted two centuries ago that trade liberalization will lead to more efficient resource redistribution, which in turn creates a net advantage for both parties involved in the exchange of goods. On the other hand, people are worried. The uneven distribution of the

benefits of globalization can lead to increased inequality (Krugman & Venables, 1995, pp. 8578–8580; Milanovic, 2005, p. 712). That is why Kofi Annan argued for 'wise, rational and non-discriminatory policies' that would improve the globalization process for the advantage of all. In the light of the varied discourses of globalization, this chapter makes an attempt to contribute to the ongoing debate on globalization. Further, this chapter will look into the myth and reality of globalization in the context of the Third-World countries and will evaluate the gains and losses to understand its effect on the less developed countries.

13.2. DECODING GLOBALIZATION

The term 'globalization' is believed to have been derived from the word *globalize*. It means an integrated and international economic system. The earliest use of the expression of globalization was possibly made in 1930 in a publication named *Towards New Education*. A relative yet similar phrase 'corporate giant' was advanced in 1897 by Charles Taze Russell referring to national trusts and other similar enterprises of that time. However, the credit for coining the term 'globalization' is attributed to the economist Theodore Levitt, a Harvard professor. In his article 'The Globalisation of Markets' in the *Harvard Business Review*, Levitt has used the term globalization for the first time in 1983. Since its inception, globalization has inspired and invited competing definitions, concepts, interpretations and perspectives, both old and new, dating to the great movements of goods and trade in ancient times to the new economic transactions across the globe through the medieval oceanic trades. Although there is no fixed meaning of the term 'globalization', it is based on the maxim of 'think globally and act globally'. Sometimes referred to as the new face of world capitalism known as neo-capitalism, globalization has widely accepted as an offshoot of 'LPG', that is, liberalization, privatization and globalization—the trinity of the present world economy. Clearing the clouds of confusion, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has identified four essential elements that denote globalization—'trade and transaction, capital and investment movement, migration and movement of the people, and the dissemination of knowledge' (IMF, 2000).

Geopolitics of Energy in Central Asia

India's Position and Policy

Ramakrushna Pradhan



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India's Central Asia Policy: Prospects and Retrospect

DR. RAMAKRUSHNA PRADHAN and PROF. AKBOTA
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Introduction

Central Asia is a buffer between two nuclear powers – the Russian Federation and China. Major geopolitical massifs – the Eurasian, Islamic, Chinese, and Indian – intersect here. Central Asia is also the geographical centre of Asia where four world civilizations – Islam, Buddhism, Christianity and Hinduism – meet. The region also critically links to the security of almost all the countries of the world and offers immense opportunities to regional and extra-regional players.

A good portion of India's political history has been shaped by events in Central Asia. The region used to be a staging ground for invasions into India. Central Asian dynamics vis-à-vis Indian strategic thought has been mentioned in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. Central Asia was also a bridge for promoting Indian commerce and culture across Asia through the famous

INDIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH GLOBAL POWERS

While engaging with different global centres of power, it is essential to know the issues India needs to address and the challenges it has to overcome in dealing with such issues. There are a wide range of areas of cooperation ranging from investment in trade and commerce to military strength, research in space, nuclear energy, information and technology, combating terrorism, healthcare, environment and other issues of common concern where collective action is indispensable for attainment of goal of sustainable development and global peace.

This book, containing 16 papers, seeks to explain and investigate the aforesaid issues pertaining to India's engagement with global powers. Different issues and their critical analysis help the reader to understand the dynamics of India's engagement with different nations such as USA, China, and Japan, Look East, neighbourhood and other issues from the larger canvass of geopolitical reality. Therefore, this book is intended to focus on the contemporary research and their findings from a large range of issues delving deep into India's neighbourhood first policy, India's Look East Policy, India's Central Asia Policy, India as an emergent power in global politics, Indo-Pacific and other issues.



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