

A Bear-Dragon alliance?

By Srikanth Kondapalli

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In answer to America's alliance and coalition-making targeting China and Russia, the latter two countries might be on the way to firming up their own alliance. Beijing and Moscow have been enhancing their interactions, coordination and cooperation at the global and regional levels.

Close on the heels of the Quad summit in Washington on September 24, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, speaking at the Council on Foreign and Defence Policy in Moscow on October 2, criticised the US-led Indo-Pacific strategy as lacking in consensus and for breaking the previous 'Asia-Pacific' regional construct. In March, after a virtual meeting of the Quad leaders, Lavrov had visited China to criticise the "rules-based order" – a major aspect of the Quad narrative -- as being against the Russia-China preferred "global governance" construct.

Although Lavrov noted Russian neutrality in the backdrop of the armed stalemate between India and China, following the Galwan incident, by suggesting that both are Russia's "friends and brothers", and sending signals of restrained military sales of hi-tech equipment to China during the border standoff, the larger US-Russia relations could that in the near future.

The US has declared Russia and China its "strategic competitors" and has kept up the sanctions imposed on Russia over its annexation of the Crimea. The US also abrogated the intermediate range nuclear forces treaty and the 34-nation Open Skies Treaty that allows mutual observation flights over military facilities and reduces chances of accidental war. This resulted in the Russian pivot to its east.

A year ago, Russian President Vladimir Putin surprised the international community by seemingly suggesting that while a military alliance does not exist with China currently, one could be forged in the future. He said, "Without any doubt, our cooperation with China is bolstering the defence capability of PLA." Russia, he said, had shared sensitive military technologies with China.

Russian ambassador to China Andrey Denisov interpreted Putin's comments to imply that things had gone beyond a traditional alliance in many ways. China and Russia do not need to establish a military alliance because their relationship is strong enough already. On the other hand, China's foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin, replying to Putin's comments, said that both countries have been consistent advocates of international cooperation and harmonious coexistence between major countries.

This indicates that while Russia may be interested in upgrading ties with China to an alliance, China wants to continue "multipolarity" through the loose association with Russia to protect itself from the US. An alliance with Russia could be problematic for China's rise in the international system in the longer term. Hence, Beijing perhaps wants only a tactical understanding with Moscow.

A mutual security understanding between the two countries was provided by Article 7 of their July 2001 joint statement: “China and Russia will participate in ensuring the stability and security of the Asian and Pacific region and consolidate the confidence and cooperation in that region on a bilateral and multilateral basis.”

However, while Russia has endorsed China’s positions on Xinjiang, Taiwan, Hong Kong and others, China is largely silent on the South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Crimean developments.

Alongside, even as China is making constant adjustments vis-à-vis the US – with an understanding recently on trade and Taiwan – it is skillfully using Russia as a shield in its battles with the US. Coordination at the UN, SCO, BRICS, and in cyber and space domains are a few areas of such an “united front” with Russia.

Russia had invested much energy in the Asia-Pacific construct with China. It is a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum, East Asia Summit and the defence ministerial grouping. While the traditional friendship between Russia and Vietnam had waned after the Soviet Union disintegrated, Moscow is still a major source of Kilo-class submarines, Su-27 and other equipment to Southeast Asian countries. In the cesspool of South China Sea conflicts, cleverly, Vietnam (and the Indian ONGC Videsh Limited) have reposed confidence in Russia’s Rosneft. All these have provided Moscow a foothold in the region.

In this context, while Russia and China have renewed the 2001 Sino-Russian treaty recently, and conduct intensive military “interoperability” exercises, including in the South China Sea, India needs to watch out and take countermeasures against any emergence of a Russia-China alliance. Also, India needs to keep an eye on the one area of growing friction between the two countries – Siberia.

[Read complete article on deccanherald.com](https://www.deccanherald.com)

India Must Take Strong View Of Attack On Hindus But Not With An ‘Anti-Bangladesh’ Mindset

By Dr Seshadri Chari

Author is a Secretary General of the Forum for Integrated National Security (FINS) Dr. Chari writes on foreign policy, strategy and security affairs

Hindus in Bangladesh as well as the small group of pro-democracy civil society leaders are the best guarantee for an India-friendly neighbour in the East. Don't let them quit.

The widespread vandalism of Durga Puja celebration sites and reported desecration of idols in Bangladesh is a disturbing but more or less regular feature during the festivities. Compared to other Hindu festivals, Durga Puja is a popular event observed in Bangladesh with as much fervour as it is observed in West Bengal and elsewhere in India. Since Bengali-speaking Hindus constitute the overwhelming majority of the over one crore Hindus in Bangladesh, Durga Puja is practically the unofficial national festival there. Like the regularity of the festivities, the riots and attacks on Hindus have also become an annual feature.

The attacks on Hindu settlements and vandalism have been triggered after a rumour spread that a copy of Quran was allegedly found on an idol in one of the Puja sites. The incident and the following riots, a repeat of past many years, seems to be a page straight out of ‘how to start a riot’ textbook.

It is reported that the person who placed the copy of the Quran has been arrested and more than 500 persons have been rounded up and placed under arrest. Soon, charges will be framed. Bangladesh Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal is on record to have said that the ‘authorities have identified the person behind the Comilla incident and will be arrested soon’. There will be more reports of the government’s crackdown on miscreants, arrests, political mediation and subsequent release of culprits, as routinely as the annual riots and frequent attacks on Hindus.

Sheikh Hasina brought change

The Awami League government headed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been in power for over 20 years now. She has steadfastly continued the fight against Islamic hardline groups and radical elements. The political overtones of counter-radicalisation cannot be missed if one were to read between the lines of the political history of Bangladesh since its formation in 1971-72. The first government under the popular leader and frontrunner of the freedom struggle Sheikh Mujibur Rehman projected a secular and liberal (but Islamic in principle) dispensation. Major General Ziaur Rehman, who seized power in the infamous 1975 coup, took the path of Islamic state and did away with the idea of secularism.

For some time, there were genuine apprehensions that the liberation will be a thing of the past and the “new state” will be back in the fold of its erstwhile rulers in Islamabad. But the new political party, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), prudently kept a safe distance from Pakistan but anchored the government firmly on Islamic principles using it as a political tool against Awami League. Killing of Hindus, dis-housing them in rural areas, vandalising temples and terrorising the minorities continued unabatedly under different regimes in Dhaka ostensibly obligated to radical Islamic pressure groups. In a dangerous turn of events, the situation became a fertile recruiting ground for the dreaded ISI of Pakistan to create new sleeper cells of radical elements to open a terror front against India in the Eastern border.

The Sheikh Hasina government came as a much-needed relief to the local Hindus as well as New Delhi, which was fighting a war against terrorism on two fronts. The resolve to fight Islamic radicalism became the primary objective of the Awami League government both as a dire necessity for political survival and to build bridges with Hindu vote bank.

Pressure from radical groups

The Islamic radical groups have reportedly been active in recent times increasing their pressure on the Awami League government and seeking to change the rules of political engagements. There were massive protests against Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Dhaka as part of the 50th anniversary celebrations in Bangladesh. The decade-old radical Islamic outfit Hefazat-e-Islam (HEI), which led the protests against Modi, has already given a 13-point demands list to the Sheikh Hasina government. These demands would make the Taliban look like greenhorns in radicalism.

In fact, there could be a strong link between the Hefazat-e-Islam and the Tehreek-e-Labbaik of Pakistan, which has been spearheading a movement for a stronger blasphemy law and many other radical Islamic agenda. Political expediency has already resulted in Dhaka watering down its ‘secular’ stand. In 2017, 17 popular stories and poems by non-Muslims and Darwin’s theory of evolution were removed from school curriculum. The statue of a saree-clad woman holding a sword and a scale depicting ‘Lady Justice’ that adorned the Supreme Court building was removed as it was considered “un-Islamic” by the HEI – objection being to both saree and the statue).

A careful Indian response

In the face of a series of attacks against Hindus, there are bound to be resentment, jingoistic rabble-rousing speeches and acts of bravado and revenge in India. It may even become difficult for political leaders to resist the temptation to jump into the ‘anti-Bangladesh bandwagon’ with a view to reap short-term political dividends.

Hindus in Bangladesh as well as the small but strong and determined group of pro-democracy civil society leaders are the best guarantee for an India-friendly neighbour in the East. If they decide to quit, it will be perilous for our security and economic development including the many projects under Look East Act East policy.

While New Delhi should take a strong view of the continued attacks on Hindus and vandalism of Hindu temples and properties in Bangladesh, there is a greater need for engaging with the Sheikh Hasina government and partner with it in its fight against Islamic radical outfits like the Jamaat-e-Islami, HUI and the HEI. Both New Delhi and Dhaka should work towards strengthening existing counter-terrorism frameworks and devise new technological tools to detect and prevent terror financing, drugs and human trafficking, and illegal border trade including cattle and fire arms smuggling.

The Modi government should immediately step in, use its best diplomatic brains and gears, and tackle the situation judiciously. Protecting the rights of minorities and punishing the culprits are as important as supporting Dhaka in its zero tolerance to radicalism policy.

[Read complete article on theprint.in](#)

Sri Lanka, Maldives Cite Major Threats In Region, Laud India's Response

Courtesy – Stratnewsglobal.com

Terrorism and the threat of radicalisation remain major threats to nations in the Indo-Pacific, Maldives Defence Minister Mariya Didi said at a virtual address during the Defence Conclave organised by BharatShakti web portal in Delhi.

“Whether it has been the Christchurch attack, the Easter Sunday bombing in Sri Lanka or the terror attack in the Maldives (on former president Mohamed Nasheed) terrorism and threat of radicalisation remain key concerns. The Colombo Security Conclave (a new mini-lateral between India, Sri Lanka and Maldives) has made a beginning. But the momentum needs to be kept up.”

She noted that “India’s constant bid to robustly promote security and growth for all under Prime Minister Modi’s SAGAR initiative had helped to push forward a free and open Indo-Pacific under the grouping of the Quad.”

Maldives and Sri Lanka have welcomed the revival of the trilateral NSA-level meeting last year to discuss maritime security, followed up more recently by another meeting at the deputy NSA-level in August this year, focussing on marine security, human trafficking, counter-terrorism, and cyber security.

Kamal Gunaratne, Sri Lanka’s defence secretary said close coordination between the three capitals and the efforts of the strategic and academic community had helped provide a “stable platform by which sound assessments on defence and security of the IOR could be maintained.” He stressed that policing of the world’s most important regions was essential as it faced threats today from external actors, terrorism and radicalisation, sea piracy, and both human and drug trafficking. Such threats needed to be fought jointly if stability was to be ensured.

“We as neighbouring countries must build common ground on securing the IOR as this is essential not just for economic growth but for common well-being as well. As the pandemic has shown there has long been negligence in a joint response to health security. But it’s not just health security, environmental security has been long sacrificed at the altar of economic gain.

We need better coordination and joint naval patrolling to tackle issues such as humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, capacity building and most importantly – intelligence sharing.”

The Indian Ocean Region, extending from the Malacca Straits in the East to the Straits of Hormuz in the West, is home to three billion people and the main artery through which 40% of the world’s oceanic trade, two-thirds of the world’s oil trade and around one-third of global cargo trade passes. This makes it essential that security and stability is maintained and for that India can and should take a leadership role.

Didi said that India-Maldivian relationship had only strengthened with President Ibrahim Solih’s “India First” policy, reciprocated through Prime Minister Modi’s announcement of a “Neighbourhood First” policy when he visited Male in 2019. “India is our first and best responder at all times of need. Whether it was the coup attempt in 1988, the tsunami in 2004, the water crisis in 2014 and now Covid-19, India has always been there for us. We wish India all the best in its bid to become a Self-Reliant India (Atmanirbar Bharat).”

[Read complete article on stratnews.global.com](https://stratnews.global.com)

Ending Taiwan’s Diplomatic Isolation

Courtesy – Taipei Times

Fifty years ago, on Oct. 25, 1971, the Republic of China (ROC) was unceremoniously ejected from the UN and forced to cede its seat on the Security Council to the People’s Republic of China (PRC).

For a time, it had seemed possible that Taiwan and China might be able to coexist within the UN. During the 1960s, the idea of “dual representation” was floated by Washington — which would have kept Taipei and Beijing at the UN, with China taking over the ROC’s seat on the Security Council.

However, this was shunned by then-president Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石), who said: “Gentlemen do not stand together with thieves.”

By the time Chiang had come round to the idea, it was already too late: Support for Taipei had ebbed, culminating in General Assembly Resolution 2758, which recognized the PRC as the sole representative of China, pushing Taiwan out to tread a lonely path of diplomatic isolation.

On Monday, Chinese President Xi Jinping (習近平) marked the anniversary of the move with a typically insipid speech, laced with vapid blandishments. There was a call for “greater global cooperation,” a pledge to pursue world peace, and an assurance that China opposes “all forms of hegemony and power politics.” Xi pointedly did not mention Taiwan.

However, for all the placid mood music and soothing diplomatese, beneath the surface Xi must have been seething with rage, as just two days prior, Beijing was thoroughly outmaneuvered by Washington.

On Saturday last week, the US Department of State released a statement that US and Taiwanese officials had met for a “discussion focused on supporting Taiwan’s ability to participate meaningfully at the UN.”

This was a red rag to a bull. Chinese state media pronounced US President Joe Biden’s administration “the most incapable and degenerate in the country’s history,” adding that Washington’s push for Taiwan’s participation in the UN was a “cheap shot” and “shameless manipulation.”

On Tuesday, the state department released another statement — a strongly worded communique in support of Taipei titled “Supporting Taiwan’s Participation in the UN System.”

Signed by US Secretary of State **Antony Blinken**, the statement praised Taiwan’s democracy, and its importance and contributions to the global economy, ending with a rallying cry for “all UN member states to join us in supporting Taiwan’s robust, meaningful participation throughout the UN system and in the international community.”

Taken together, the statements represent a decisive step toward the Biden administration’s goal of ending Taiwan’s diplomatic isolation. Behind the scenes, Washington and its democratic allies have been systematically working to achieve this goal, having realized that they must speak and act with one voice if they are to contain Chinese aggression and expansionism.

As the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, the AUKUS security pact, recent high-profile delegations by eastern European nations and French senators, in addition to crucial COVID-19 vaccine donations and vocal support from Japan and several European nations show, China’s strategy to isolate Taiwan is slowly disintegrating.

Beijing’s “one China” principle and its wider strategy of diplomatic isolation are a deliberate ploy to squash Taiwan’s international recognition: If Beijing launches a “military unification” of Taiwan, it can then cast a foreign military intervention as “interference in China’s internal affairs” and a declaration of war against China. This is why it is so important that democratic nations continue to coalesce around Taiwan and push back against Beijing’s strategy of diplomatic isolation.

[Read complete article on taipeitimes.com](https://www.taipeitimes.com)

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Nation is Indebted to:

Dr. C.P. Mathew

07 Sep 1929-19 Oct 2021

Allopathic doctor who combined Siddha, Ayurveda and Homeopathy



If one feels that the picture on left is that of a Brahmin priest, you are way off the mark. The person on the right side is (with Rudrakshas) is Dr C P Mathew, Kerala’s first ever oncologist. The doctor, born in a conservative Christian family, lived throughout his life as a follower of Sanatana Dharma.

Dr Mathew was a disciple of a traditional tribal physician who took him to the deep forests in South India and introduced him to many herbs and plants with potential to cure any diseases.

The tribal physician also took him to Lord Muruga temple at Palani, where he saw devotees consuming the water with which the priests bathed the idol.

Lord Muruga statue was made up of nava paasahna (nine poisonous elements) that include mercury, arsenic, sulphur etc. “It was the unique property exhibited by the idol of Lord Muruga that made me study Sidha medicine. Bhogar, an ascetic, was the person who carved out the statue and he was an authority in Sidha medicine. The remains of the Abhisheka performed on the statue is given to devotees and this cures them from all ailments,” Dr Mathew had said.

Cancer is the second most common disease in India responsible for maximum mortality with about 0.3 million deaths per year. This is owing to the poor availability of prevention, diagnosis and treatment of the disease. Dr. C P Mathew, MBBS, MS, DMR, had vast experience in the subject of Radiotherapy in the various Medical Colleges of Kerala. His unique research skills and pious attitude has made him a very famous oncologist and holistic practitioner. Engaged in the field of cancer treatment since 1960, he came up with marvellous combination of Allopathic, Ayurvedic and Siddha drugs, which has been a blessing for a lot of cancer patients.

Dr. Mathew having researched on the different treatments for cancer and had come up with holistic treatment which is affordable by common man as well is result- proven. According to his vast experience in the field of oncology research, he could conclude that allopathy is a disease-oriented system. In this system we diagnose the disease and treat the disease. He said “Allopathy does not treat the patient. In short the system can be called Roga Veda (Science of disease and its treatment)”

Ayurveda and Siddha systems correctly speaking do not treat the disease. They treat the patient. Ayur means life. So, these systems can be called science of life and not science of Roga or disease. By boosting the immunity of the patient, he/she overcomes the disease. In fact, this is more effective than treating the disease alone. So, it is logical to conclude that by combining allopathy and indigenous systems of Ayurveda & Siddha by combining Roga Veda and Ayurveda, we can achieve results which are many folds superior to using any of these systems alone. Once he said, “I have been using this method since 1984. More than 3900 cases of advanced cancers have been treated by this method. It was an accidental observation of a dramatic cure of an advanced cancer case using this method that prompted me to adopt this method in all advanced cancers”. On the auspicious occasion of him turning 90 yrs, Cherian Ashram and Siddha Medical Association of India along with the support of cured patients published an autobiography of Dr. Mathew which would be an eye- opener for the future generation.

He was born on September 7, 1929, the son of Paul and Catherine. After finishing his Intermediate research, he secured one of many six seats from Thiru-Kochi State. He grew to become an MBBS graduate out of 100 college students who gained without dropping a single topic and without dropping a year. After serving in Thrissur Civil Hospital, Viyur Central Jail and Thiruvananthapuram Medical School, he did submit commencement in Radiology from Madras Medical School. From 1960 he served as Oncologist in Thiruvananthapuram, Kozhikode and Kottayam Medical Schools. He joined Kottayam Medical School as Superintendent and retired as Vice Principal in 1986.

Post-retirement he visited Soorya Kaladi Mana and subjected himself to Upanayana from the head of the Mana. The rest of the life he dedicated to learn Vedas, Upanishad, Ayurveda and Sidha.

Dr. C.P. Matthew died on 19 Oct 2021 at the age of 92.

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