

Trilateral template between US,China & India - that of soft balancing with no hard alliance : Prof. Srikanth Kondapalli

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“On a preliminary level the trilateral relations between US, India and China are significant, this template and its evolving equation needs to be analysed. India is the 4th largest in terms GDP figures after US, China and Japan. Based on productive assets, savings and other indicators, the World Bank predicts that by 2030 a major transformation in this global economic hierarchy will take place and US will be no. 2, China no. 1 & India no.3 ” explained Prof. Srikanth Kondapalli during his lecture on ‘The India-China-US Strategic Triangle: Competition, Contestation, Cooperation’ held recently at The International Centre, Dona Paula. This programme co-organised with Centre for Latin American Studies, Goa University was part of ICG Lecture Series by Eminent Persons. The lecture was co-chaired by Yatin G Kakodkar – President, ICG and Dattesh Parulekar – Assistant Professor, Centre for Latin American Studies, Goa University.

Kondapalli, Professor in Chinese Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University described that “ in the last 25 years; following President Nixon’s visit to Beijing in 1970, US – China relations have acquired depth of strategic nature. Also in last 11 years, US – India relations have also been deep, with the signing of the 123 agreement and various subsequent agreements. In May 2014, before Narendra Modi was to take over as PM, the Chinese president sent his foreign minister as a special envoy to India. This high level signaling indicated a strengthened bilateral angle in the India - China context, despite various issues such as the unresolved territorial dispute, the Tibet issue; Dalai Lama’s presence in India and nuclear dimension of China-Pakistan relation”.

“The 1979 Chinese state visit to US was a major strategic shift in China – US relations and was crucial for subsequent global history” Prof. Kondapalli explained further “ China helped US in the disintegration of the Soviet Union and China became a major beneficiary economically, partly by US subsidies, so much so that China became the largest exporting country. US and China share a 580 billion dollars trading relation; the largest in the globe today between any two countries. Also the US has an understanding with China on proliferation issues; depending on China to rope in North Korea on the nuclear issue. US rebalancing strategy includes constructive cooperative partnership and China-US have maintained a strategic stability. The Chinese assess US as a declining power, as it was increasingly dependent on allies in Iraq and Afghanistan; this is the major point of departure and this is where India figures in the light of this understanding” he substantiated .

Kondapalli, former Chairman of the Centre for East Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University described how substantial transformations have taken place in US India relations in the last decade. He highlighted “in 2005, Condoleezza Rice made a statement suggesting that US wants to make India a major power in the 21st century. The National Security Strategy (NSS) described US position on India and China; in 2002 it counts on India for a strategically stable asia and indian ocean and it welcomes emergence of a strong, powerful and prosperous China. In 2010, the US point of view on India & China remained similar. In 2015 NSS came out with a revision, in the light of Obama's visit, India is

considered as a regional provider of security. After the new government has taken over there is a lot of momentum in US India relations” he opined.

Prof. Kondapalli concluded “trilateral relations among US, China and India are becoming intense with a kind of soft balancing between cooperation and competition is taking place; with no one country entering into a hard alliance with any other”.

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