**Russia, US, China, Iran, Turkiye, India et al**

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The Covid lockdown and restrictions confined the world to their homes. Global powers are now posturing for dominance and almost all flashpoints are presently triggered. Russia has been heavily sanctioned by the west, similar to Iran. Facing an economic crisis, Russia initially reached out to its long-time ally, India. Seeing India being held back by the rebuke of the United States, President Putin recently visited Iran where he was warmly welcomed. Russia and Iran signed cooperation deals, which is a historic first since they have had territorial issues in the past. Iran seemed happy to welcome a major world power, after being declared a pariah by the US and other western powers for four decades now. Iranian drones have been procured by Russia. Iran was isolated in the world and hence unable to truly encash its oil wealth. This was due to western sanctions and its ideological differences with the Islamic world. However, Iran maintained its national resolve of dignity and the spirit of enterprise. The creation of drones, without external technological assistance, is proof of this.

The Turkish President also met the Russian president in Iran and there were talks between the two. Tayyib Erdogan also mended fences with Saudia Arabia, recently after the two had a highly publicized dispute over the murder of Adnan Khashoggi. Erdogan’s Islamist approach and his patronage of the Jihadi ideology with state-sponsored Television dramas like Ertugul contributed to Turkiye being grey-listed by FATF. A major diplomatic row with Saudia Arabia also hurt trade. The Turkish Lira has been badly hit hence. Turkiye used its NATO membership as a bargaining chip to pressure Finland and Sweden to stop their support of the Kurdish movement- which it sees as a counter-terrorism stance. President Erdogan has wisely changed his stance and re-engaged with the world to benefit his country.

US president Joe Biden was facing internal political pressure due to the unceremonious and hasty US military withdrawal after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in 2021. This was essentially the defeat of a superpower by a ragtag militia, after a 20-year-long siege. As the President, Biden was constitutionally the supreme military commander, and so the defeat belonged to him.

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The Capitol insurrection of Jan 6, 2021, by Republican party supporters, had sown the seeds of civil war in the US. To the surprise of analysts and policymakers, the participants of the insurrection movement were educated whites, who were doctors, dentists, lawyers and business owners. A certain percentage were formerly military men. These middle-aged educated professionals were responding to the threat of the Great Replacement theory.

Disseminated by French author Renaud Camus, the theory states that, western elites are complicit in the ethnic French and white European populations at large, being demographically and culturally replaced with non-white peoples. This replacement is being achieved through mass migration, demographic growth and a drop in the birth rate of white Europeans. This theory has found wide support in the United States, due to the socio-economic toll of the rise of corporate America and the War on Terror.

In the US, Donald’s Trump election as the POTUS was due to him championing the Great Replacement Theory, where his targeted population group were the Mexicans. His outspoken and unbecoming comments against India and other Asian nations were in this spirit. The recent Supreme Court ruling in the United States overturning the fifty-year-old Roe vs Wade ruling to ban abortions is in the spirit of boosting the population growth rate of white Americans. This is aimed as a mitigant to the White Replacement Theory.

To boost his domestic image POTUS Joe Biden announced the killing of the Al-Qaeda top leader. This move accomplished many goals. It boosted the US military’s image and recovered some of its lost prestige. It also served as a diversionary measure from President Putin’s diplomatic victories across Asia, which were undermining the US, especially after POTUS Joe Biden’s unsuccessful bid to bolster economic ties with Saudi Arabia. It also sent a message to China with the ongoing visit of Nancy Pelosi, over its recent military buildup aimed at Taiwan.

The US role in Ukraine and its support to NATO was in the spirit of maintaining the dominance and even hegemony of the western world. The recent drone strike killing Aiman Al Zawahiri in Afghanistan was celebrated by the Republican rivals of The Democratic President. POTUS Joe Biden has very skillfully raised red herrings with the proxy war in Ukraine and with the strike in Afghanistan. The red herring of Taiwan is also very well timed as among other things it is also riding upon the recent wave of anti-Chinese racial hatred in the US, triggered by the Coronavirus, which originated in China. These moves will help to subvert the threat of internal unrest and civil war, feared by a significant portion of the white American population.

China flexed its muscle by sending fighter jets to the Indian border at Ladakh. The move forced India to announce its plans to install another squadron of the S400 Russian cruise missile system at the volatile Aksai Chin -Ladkash border. It is important to note that India had earlier fired the Russian Mach 3 cruise missile Brahmos, in Pakistan -claiming a technical malfunction. The Indian Air Force has repeatedly shown weakness when it comes to conventional air combat. The February 2019 engagement with the PAF announced the weakness of the IAF to the world. India is trying to buffer its security with Russian supersonic and hypersonic cruise missiles since it cannot rely on its pilots to secure its airspace. The Indian news channel WION was panicking over the latest stealth fighter jet being made in China.

Saudi Arabia has seen major changes both domestically and internationally under the new leadership of the young Prince Muhammad bin Salman. He seems to have a strong resolve for Saudi Arabia having an important role in the 21st century. Meanwhile, Pakistan is busy trying to procure loans to pay off earlier loans and public emotions are rife with all kinds of divisive politics. We are our own worst enemy.

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