**The American Juggernaut**

[Columnist](https://nation.com.pk/authorpost/columnist/)[Imran Malik](https://nation.com.pk/authorpost/columnist/imran-malik/)

On **May 23, 2022**

The US strategic design to neutralise the Russo-Chinese challenge to its undisputed global hegemony continues to emerge steadily. Its intent to tackle them piecemeal is becoming more evident as events unfold in Europe and Asia/South-Central Asia Region (SCAR). This multidimensional US juggernaut, encompassing military, diplomatic, economic, political, technological and informational domains, threatens to scuttle Russian ambitions in Europe and elsewhere, as a prelude to conclusively degrading the Russia-China Combine. To that end, Russia is being systematically isolated and cornered. Its economy is being shackled ruthlessly; at an enormous cost to the apparently clueless, dumbfounded Europeans. Its international relations, in particular with China and India, are being brought under severe pressure.

NATO’s increasingly aggressive eastward expansion continues unabated. The Russian invasion of Ukraine was intended to occupy and deny NATO the critical strategic spaces that would have given it overwhelming operational and strategic advantages over it. However, Ukraine has fought back ferociously with meaningful military, technological and intelligence support from the US-led West. Overwhelmed by the developments in Ukraine, Sweden and Finland, erstwhile spearheads and paragons of non-alignment and neutrality, have felt compelled to reverse their traditional policies and sign up with NATO. Their applications are likely to be accepted without much ado, Turkey’s objections notwithstanding. The ensuing strategic imbalance will worsen as Ukraine, or whatever remains of it, eventually joins NATO, motivating others like Georgia, Moldova etc, to follow suit. This will not only more than double the length of the border that NATO would then share with Russia but would also fundamentally alter the security architecture and paradigms within the region. Russia will be literally walled off from the rest of Europe; isolated diplomatically, embargoed economically and ostracised socially and culturally. Its ostensive sphere of influence will be steadily circumscribed, its perimeter of security curtailed and its military operations in Ukraine, largely stalemated. Its threat perceptions will become graver. It will be constrained to mount compatible responses, both conventional and nuclear-missile, at the operational and strategic levels. It will be obliged to restore strategic balance in a progressively vitiating geostrategic environment. Its prowess and technological excellence in nuclear, missile and hypersonic weapon systems is well established. Its increasing reliance on its strategic weapon systems will thus be a direct function of the prevailing strategic imbalance in the region. Such an adverse strategic balance will cause much lower nuclear thresholds and put strategic weapon systems on a hair trigger. The nuclear overhang will be pervasive. The strategic environment in Europe is and will continue on a perilous downward spiral, much to the detriment and horror of the hapless Europeans. The risks and stakes are rising by the day. The US military-industrial complex will, however, not be entirely displeased.

The juggernaut’s tentacles are gradually becoming more visible in Asia too. Here the US will have to deal with three of the world’s very significant military, nuclear and missile powers, China, India and Pakistan, sitting eyeball to eyeball in arguably the most sensitive nuclear flashpoint of the world—the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir Region (IIOJ&KR)! The IIOJ&KR is of vital national interest to all three belligerents! US engagement of India has two apparent overwhelming objectives; one, to wean it away from Russia and degrade its military, economic and trade dependencies on it and two to equip, prepare and motivate it against China for the next phase of its global strategic design.

The US is ruthlessly exploiting India’s vulnerability, its vanity. It is appeasing India by feeding its Hindutva-crazed megalomania and bloated ego without compunction. It regularly refers to it as a strategic partner (not strategic ally), major regional power and main security provider in the region. The elusive permanent membership of the UNSC is referred to at regular intervals. It is not being sanctioned under the CAATSA for buying the S400 ABM system, aircraft, other military equipment and oil at concessional rates from Russia. India’s very significant dependence on military supplies from Russia restricts its options to a great extent. Anywhere between 60 to 70 percent of the equipment held by the Indian military is of Soviet-Russian origin. However, the US is now reportedly offering it a military package worth US $ 500 million. It intends to supply it with aircraft, tanks, naval platforms etc in a bid to slowly start replacing Russian technology. This will also help in interoperability that the US expects to see in military operations against China, some day. However, India is clearly not in a position to pursue or implement US’ strategic design in this region in any practical manner. It is no match for China in any respect and even struggles to dominate Pakistan in the Indo-Pak subcontinent; much less in the South Asian or region-at-large contexts. Its military suffers from a veritable strategic paralysis when confronted with the fearful prospects of a two-front war scenario with China and Pakistan. The destabilised internal front in IIOJ&KR furthers its woes. The overall strategic environment is thus patently unfavourable for India and it is not likely to start any (mis)adventures which it cannot bring to a fruitful closure. Reinforcing India’s military might however will have very serious strategic connotations for Pakistan which will always be constrained to maintain a viable strategic balance in the region. The larger the differential between Pakistan’s and India’s conventional forces, the more will the former rely on its strategic and nuclear forces and the lower will its nuclear thresholds sink! Trying to wean Pakistan away from China is not likely to succeed either because, quite like the Russo-India relationship, this Sino-Pak strategic partnership too is unimpeachable, unassailable.

This US global strategic design portends ominous ramifications. It entails high-stakes risks of conventional and nuclear wars in Europe and Asia/SCAR. Sanity and peace must prevail!

The writer is a retired brigadier of the Pakistan Army. He can be reached at im.k846@gmail.com and tweets @K846Im.

The nuclear overhang will be pervasive.