**The Fearful Hegemon**

[Amb Dr. M. N. Zakaria](https://www.nation.com.pk/columnist/amb-dr-m-n-zakaria)

November 02, 2023

[Opinions](https://www.nation.com.pk/opinions), [Columns](https://www.nation.com.pk/columns)

The world has been transforming ever since its existence. Human instinctive desire to exercise control over others has led to wars, as devastating as World Wars I and II that consumed hundreds of millions of populations, annihilated countries and regions, crippled generations, and subjugated nations.  
Unfortunately, the power struggle continues to date with approaches assuming different manifestations from military to political to economic to technological influence, primarily, for subjugating the nations that are weak and their vulnerabilities were exploitable. The Hegemon has taken advantage of and maintains this policy approach. The divide and rule approach has proved to be an effective tool in the past and in the contemporary times it has become more effective, thanks to the technology that has virtually removed the distances to zero. Even a cursory look at the geopolitical situation across the globe should make it clear which regions are in turmoil what the dominant factors make up those regions and in which region the Hegemon is overtly active. One would be naïve not to observe the political developments in the Asia Pacific region, whose strategic interests are linked to this region and why, and who are those countries that the Hegemon sees as its competitors or adversaries in the region?  
AUKUS, QUAD or QSD, NSG manipulation, grooming of a lynchpin in the Indian Ocean region (to be used as fodder or to trigger turbulence by equipping it with LEMOA – COMCASA – BECA), defining the Indo-Pacific and Pivot to Asia are some of many moves that clearly indicate what’s cooking up in the Asia-Pacific pot! It is not beyond conception as to how the brewing up of conflicts within the region will be apocalyptic, should the Hegemon be allowed to succeed in its nefarious design.  
The question is what the Hegemon’s objective is? The region, where historically traditional rivals have existed and over time their economies have also been flourishing, should not be allowed to remain stable.  
For a long time, in recent decades, the strategy at play was to keep manageable or controllable instability. The world has remained divided especially after the WW-II. The struggle for dominance gained greater momentum and significance. The global community’s mindset has been tuned to conspiracy theories. All tools are out and at play to blur the demarcation between right and wrong, true and false, facts and propaganda. Amidst the perpetuating chaos and conspiracies ridden times, China has emerged as a symbol of peace, prosperity, and stabiliser. Perhaps the only country in human history to have doubled its GDP thrice during its journey to be the world’s second-largest economy. China’s rise neither in isolation nor just for itself. Production line caters to most countries of the world, which on the one hand drives its economy and on the other hand the inter-dependence has made China realise its responsibility to invest in those countries in the areas of their deficiencies benefiting both. So, the Chinese investment should be seen from this perspective and not as a ‘debt trap’ a misperception which the Hegemon is trying to create through propaganda despite Chinese Leadership’s repeated assurance that ‘China will never seek hegemony.’ The Hegemon and its stooge in South Asia not only negatively portrayed ports on the BRI route derogatorily as ‘String of Pearls’ but also countering it with a so-called ‘Necklace of Diamonds’ strategy.  
China’s BRI to connect the three continents with an estimated trillion-dollar investment is fearfully seen by the Hegemon and its allies or China’s adversaries in the region and beyond as a changer of Great Game’s dynamics, presumptively, threatening the Hegemon’s dominance or disturbing the world order. Efforts are also on to confuse people in Pakistan about CPEC, the Flagship project of BRI. I am reminded of the Chinese FM Yang Yi beautiful phrase, who said: “If ‘One Belt, One Road’ is like a symphony involving and benefiting every country, then the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is the sweet melody of the symphony’s first movement.”  
Against the misperception being created to malign and vilify China, one should compare how China’s progress engaged the world in a chain of economic activities and how the Hegemon’s warmongering has caused devastation across the globe and created an unending chain of miseries. China’s investments to the tune of US$ 50bn in Central Asia in developing the infrastructure, CAREC is one of many cases in point, in Africa, in South Asia and most in the US touching US$ 29 bn in 2022 alone which makes the world power politics interesting, intriguing and sometimes serves as a food for thought.  
Besides what has been underlined about the designs of the Hegemon for this region by exploiting the irritants among the regional states and destabilising it, those dancing to the Hegemony’s tunes must realise that the region of the target has five nuclear powers. In case of a flare-up, what will happen to the regional countries and their populations? Of course, nothing less than total annihilation while the Hegemon will be watching from a safe distance. The fear that the Hegemon has been instilling into the hearts of the regional countries having differences among each other and which can otherwise be negotiated and settled amicably, is based on genuine grounds and whether the fear the Hegemon showing on his part is genuine or a pretext? The world has before it the example of WMDs which turned out to be a hoax but not before the aggression imposed on the countries in that region claimed millions of lives, displaced hundreds of millions of innocent people, and destroyed economies. The leadership of the countries in this region should think and think hard about whether will it be safe for them and their people to be part of the play that has been staged here by the powers that are external to it and it entails the least risks for them.