India -China Relations straining again?

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It seems India- China relations are hitting an all time low ebb or even the nadir. Keeping abreast of the recent strain involving the two Asian powers, an emerging one and a giant power it is evident that both are prepared to face each other openly without any diplomatic consideration or economic consequences the estranged relation might affect. Continuous mud slinging regarding the recent tiff between Indo-China involving the latter to ask the former to refrain from oil exploration by ONGC Videsh (OVL) in the South China sea in two Vietnamese blocks 127 and 128 freshly brought the uneasiness into the limelight. Newspaper reports are flooded with claims of China enjoying indisputable sovereignty in the South China sea and the neighbour islands. What came as an unexpected jolt was India hitting back in return asking China to abstain from resisting its efforts to stop oil exploration in the region.

External affairs ministry spokesperson Vishnu Prakash from New Delhi substantiated India's position to move forward in co operation with Vietnam bypassing Jiang Yu's claims as a spokesperson of the Chinese foreign ministry. Matters became worse when India claimed of OVL 's long term presence in Vietnam with plans of expansion and conduct in the South China Sea according to the 2002 declaration. Talks regarding this issue were supposed to be discussed later in the week when External affairs Minister of India S M Krishna and his counterpart Pham Binh Minh met at Hanoi, Vietnam on September 16, 2011. India's current stand has definitely made China uncomfortable who was trying to be the indomitable supremo in the area with estranged relation with Philippines, Japan, Vietnam and of course U.S who was looked at being too much meddling in the region surrounding South China Sea.

India too being headstrong in opposing China's indulgence in projects in areas
concerning the Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) where China rubbished India's claim to solve the incessant disputes between the two neighbours personally. It proves one thing that India is unstoppable as far its proclamation of enjoying the liberty of navigation in international waters. China seems to be a bit taken back by India's show of strength and audacity to interfere in the territory claimed by the Asian giant which has been termed illegal. Is it concerning China that India is trying to surpass China's influence and the very fact of the presence of Chinese troops as many as 11,000 in the Gilgit-Baltistan sparking fresh tension an imminent conflict. The speculation which was somewhat like Pakistan handed over control of the strategic area to Chinese troops even if the presence was attributed to construction of rail and road links between Pakistan and China. An apprehension however remains that the tunnels under construction might be used for storage of missiles. India has always been surrounded by strategic allies and neighbours who have thwarted her boundaries constantly and the raging wars of the past and intermittent conflicts will substantiate this point that India is always under threat at all times.

It is also very disturbing to notice that the recent liaison between China and Pakistan providing fresh passage for the troops in the Gilgit-Baltistan area is a definite anti-US stand. Pakistan is not subservient to U.S as it used to be when under U.S pressure it had to withdraw support for Taliban to protect U.S interests in Afghanistan. However both Pakistan and China has snubbed reports declaring that the projects are undertaken in that area for construction and development purposes. Nevertheless, India has throughout opposed Chinese involvement in the disputed region of PoK as both countries claim shared territories which are extremely sensitive zones. Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh released a statement in a local daily that China wants to take advantage of India's weakness in the Kashmir area, which was again followed by a modified speech given by defense minister of India, A.K. Antony in a military conference that India doesn't want to disengage itself from developing friendly relations with China but keeping in mind that China is expanding its physical and
military strength in order to claim absolute leadership and control in South Asia.

Disputes and conflicts over strategic issues and border problems have always existed between the two countries. For example, Beijing in 2009 tried to block an economic aid or loan issued to India by Asian Development Bank on grounds for purpose of flood control project in the controversial Arunachal Pradesh, which China claims as its territory. India on the other hand deployed troops in the same year in Assam in close proximity to keep watch on Arunachal Pradesh which angered China. Beijing is also opposed to India's supporting the virtual reign by Tibetan government with the exiled monk Dalai Lama whereas Tibet shares borders with both India and China. The recent friendly gesture and favourable behaviour of Obama administration and the tilting of balance on behalf of U.S more towards India as a way to curb Chinese influence in South Asia and its further control and expansion in that area.

U.S stand is also very complicated as it abused China in harsh tones regarding the latter's help to build nuke reactors in Pakistan, a non signatory of Nuclear Proliferation Treaty(NPT). Strangely in 2008, U.S signed a Nuke deal with India for nuclear expansion even though India too was not a signatory of NPT. The debate can go on and on and there will be innumerable points to substantiate the flexing of muscle, show of strength and reaction of both India and China at present towards each other. However an imminent conflict seems unlikely as in the twenty first century and age of Globalization and of course China's open trade policy it will not be too keen to sever its bilateral trade relations with its neighbour out of strategic indifference. Indian companies are operating smoothly in China and the Asian giant is so called top trading partner of the emerging power. So what happens between the two in respect of settling strategic and territorial issues is a far fetching issue. Whether China will keep its economic ties with India and interdependent tendency or will it carry on its expansion and refrain India from meddling in its territorial sovereignty in South Asia, only future can tell.