THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF BRAHMAPUTRA AND THE BRIDGES OF NORTH EAST IN INDO CHINA RELATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The paper reveals the cruel secret of Indo-China’s relations of disharmony and competing interest over the mighty Brahmaputra, The river enters from china into india from Arunachal Pradesh, which china denounces to be ‘Aksai chin’, as a crucial part of Chinese territory. In this paper, I have broadly discussed about the greatness of the river in balancing the geo politics with an imperative to build Indo china relationship or will the construction of dams would create a graveyard for the people of North East as the serenity of the region would be vanished to droughts and water shortages and how Indian government would devise its strategy in bringing peace to the region. The Act East policy though activated could actually solicit the difference between Indo-China or it may result into a hot pursuit as we have seen a standoff in the Doklam. The construction of new bridges such as Bogibeel and Dhola Sadiya connecting upper Assam with Arunachal Pradesh has been seen as a threat perception by China.

Key-Words, Act East Policy, Bogibeel, river, territory, bridges, threat, China etc.

Introduction

The Brahmaputra is one of the major river of South Asia. The mighty Brahmaputra which has its origin in ‘Angshi’ glacier in China and well known by the name of ‘Tsangpo’, flows across the southern Tibet and break through the Himalayas in great gorges and enter India through Arunachal Pradesh. The river holds the key hope of the people of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, and other parts of North East till it enters Bangladesh. If we trace the history the river serves as the actual line of defence with the construction of bridges connecting Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. Today with the ‘Act East’ policy of the central government, our neighbouring China has a fear of losing Arunachal Pradesh, which they consider to be Southern Tibet i.e. ‘AKSAI CHIN’, Since Chinese endeavour and friendship with Pakistan, i.e the Sino–Pak axis, where china has been seen as a strong supplier of Pakistans military logistics and has always been a strong supporter of Pakistan against containing India. India’s policy maker clearly gives it a vibrant look to the Sino–Pak economic corridor in the northern part of India. Similarly with the recent Chinese standoff in Doklam, a disputed area between Sino-Bhutan territory, Where China has been seen as constructing roads closer to Indian border clearly positions Chinese vision in encircling India. In this paper, I will bring several issues claiming the importance of river i.e the mighty Brahmaputra and the newly constructed bridges, how will it act in the promotion of Indias connectivity with South East Asia.

BRIDGE CONNECTIVITY IN NORTH EAST.

The newly constructed bridges such as Bogibeel, Dholia Sadiya bridge (9.3 kilometers, Indias largest bridge) and Koliya Bhomora with several other multi dimensional projects, which has been approved and is completely under construction will definitely create a strategic boost in creating an actual line of defence, facilitating communication connecting the upper part of Assam with Rohing district of Arunachal Pradesh. Before drilling deep into the concept a small introduction to Bogibeel will bring several issues clear to us. More than 16 years in making, the country’s longest rail-cum-road Bogibeel bridge in Assam is now almost complete. Once operational, it would considerably reduce the travel time between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. The dedication of the Rs 6,000 crore national project will be done by Prime Minister Narendra Modi shortly. The foundation stone of the 5-km Bogibeel bridge on Brahmaputra was laid by former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Not only the people of the North-East but also the entire country is waiting for this multi-technology and strategically important bridge. officials said. The bridge will facilitate connectivity between north and south banks of the Brahmaputra in the eastern region of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. A distance of about 600 km now being covered between the two parts will be cut short merely by 40km. The materials and Defence logistics along the India China border is actually set to improve relations after the bridges being constructed connects Dibrugarh to Pasighat in Arunachal Pradesh. According to rail officials, the newly constructed railway routes will build strong communication network and could there by enhance stability and safety in the region the ambitious projects is both a symbol of development in the North-East as well as part of a strategic move to solve good movements issues for the armed forces stationed along the China border to get supplies from Assam i.e Tinsukia, Tezpur, Guwahati etc. India has 3,488-km long land boundary with China with almost 75 per cent of it falls in Arunachal Pradesh. The Bogibeel bridge, originally scheduled to be inaugurated in 2019, is being constructed since 2002.“The recent blockade of Manipur has created a severe range of problems from law and

order to the movement of goods and people across regions. The present government is also battling tough to create railway routes which would connect Assam to Imphal, the construction would likely to be completed by 2020. Further, the land acquisition which is carried on in Nagaland will further create possibilities of connecting Tibet to Kohima.

Objectives of bridge connectivity in North East

1) The main objective of constructing bridges is to link the entire part of north east with New Delhi
2) The reason behind is to create one India one rule
3) Modi’s Act East Policy will receive a tremendous boost with the creation of new bridges connecting the entire regions with the transborder highways connecting Mandalay in Myanmar.
4) The militant group such as ULFA, NSCN, NDFB, DHD who takes shelter under the Naga patkai hills could not function with the growth of strong hold of security of the region.
5) North East which has remained out of the visions of the politicians has now received fullest attention.
6) The region is resource rich if communication facilities develops the central government could be benefitted immensely by earning huge taxes and utilize the resources.
7) The bridge connectivity over the river Brahmaputra will also facilitate in providing more job opportunities for the people of the region.
8) Instability causing around by floods could receive immediate help as the transportation cost will be minimised.
9) The region can also grow in terms of infrastructures many medicine companies and steel industries, school and colleges are moving their structures and plans which earlier they used to fear off from threats from the militants and instability within the region.

The Mighty Brahmaputra and its importance over the region.

We know that Brahmaputra is one of the major river in South Asia. The location of the river and its tributaries in North East marks its importance over the region both for India and China. Presently we have seen that the multi purpose hydro electric dams which are built over the river to generate electricity may affect the region of North East specially Assam entirely. China has introduced several switch gate facilities which can control the flow of water over the region and this may create a huge water scarcity, drought in the region. The river can actually weaken the Indian government as it would jeopardise the livelihood of the region.

In conclusion, with the present development of infrastructure, land connectivity network, sophisticated land drilling projects and defence multiplication arenas, with the imperative to start PM Modi’s Act East Policy, the blue print of connecting North East with other part of India has been made, and it would definitely create pot holes in Indo China relation. China’s ‘AKSAI CHIN’ has been a dream project which China could never remove its desire, The dispute between India and China is mainly regarding the Brahmaputra river flowing through the two countries. The search for water resources in China and India has persistently been a source of tension between the two countries. Chinese efforts to divert the water resources of the Brahmaputra River away from India will worsen a situation that has remained tense since the 1962 Indo-China war. The melting glaciers in the Himalayas as a result of accelerating global climate change will have a dramatic effect on this river’s water supply. This will increase water scarcity as well as the likelihood of floods, impact agrarian livelihoods and strain the fragile equilibrium between the two Asian giants. A strategic position which will facilitate China’s dominance over the North East and it would entirely help China to contain India and could play all cards from economic to political expeditions.

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