

## **China's dream is India's nightmare<sup>1</sup>**

Whatever happens in the future in Ladakh, India has already lost the battle. Even if the Chinese agree to withdraw, they will still claim that particular area near the Karakoram pass as theirs and this, forever.

Though the Chinese incursions or transgressions, as it is poetically termed by the MEA, occur regularly, this time it was much deeper than usual and while during 'routine visits', Chinese troops come and go (after leaving some 'souvenirs' of their visit, such as rock paintings in red), this time, they came with their tents and provisions. It is a big difference.

Postponing Premier Li Keqiang's visit to India next month could have been an option for India to show its displeasure. Unfortunately, the present leaders do not have the political will.

Look at what China did to the British Prime Minister David Cameron. He had to cancel his visit to Beijing.

His crime? He had met the Dalai Lama in May 2012 in London. The South China Morning Post says: "British Prime Minister David Cameron abandoned a trip to China planned for this month as Beijing punished him for meeting the Dalai Lama."

Delhi should have shown its displeasure in that way; simply because it is a language Beijing can understand. But it is not the Indian way!

When one studies the Chinese incursions in Ladakh (as well as in Arunachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand), it is important to look at them in the context of 'the Chinese Dream'. Since November 2012, when he reached the top of the Party, Xi Jinping regularly speaks of the 'Chinese Dream', a dream of a

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rejuvenated, non-corrupt China, where the Chinese 'race' could live a happy, prosperous and harmonious life.

In an article in Asia Times, Francesco Sisci, a China watcher, made a fascinating analysis of Xi Jinping's new concept. Sisci argued that this dream is not enough: "Both Chinese and Westerners have spent a lot of time and spilled much ink trying to explain the significance of the Chinese dream, yet Xi Jinping presented also another concept that is possibly even more important. He said the earth needs a 'world dream' (shijie meng)."

Does Xi have a World Dream? It seems so.

In an interview with BRICS journalists before he left for his foreign tour, Xi said: "China being the world's second largest economy, the China Dream also will bring opportunities to the world. ... The China Dream will be realised through a road of peace."

A few days later, addressing the Moscow Academy of International Relations, the Chinese President asserted: "The China Dream will bring blessings and goodness to not only the Chinese people but also people in other countries."

On April 10, commenting on Xi Jinping's speech at the Boao Forum in which he rebuked North Korea, The China Daily wrote: "This new concept of shared security is in stark contrast to the parochial approach, which tends to view security based on one's own interests and needs. Driven by such an undesirable approach, a country will always calculate its own gains first whenever there is a regional or global security crisis."

An editorial published in Beijing by The Voice of China (zhongsheng) at the time of the visit of General Martin Dempsey, the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff General, spoke of "an interdependent global village in which

security comes from cooperative measures and allowing other states space for their security, rather than unilateral measures.”

Peter Mattis, in an article in the China Brief of the Jamestown Foundation explained further: “[It] means countries must respect each state’s right to pursue its own political and economic development. Xi noted the world’s increasing interdependence and non-traditional security threats meant that states should not pursue security unilaterally, but should rely on cooperative security, collective security and common security to address their threat environment.”

Sisci rightly affirmed: “Despite the fact that the content of the Chinese dream is still vague and hazy, it is clear that the Chinese dream and the world dream must be consistent with one another. China should not clash with the rest of the world or with the incumbent powers, but should lead alongside them. China speaks of a dream of living a good life, free of need and hunger.”

His conclusion was: “China’s world view needs in fact to be consistent with the broad world view that has shaped and dominated the world for the past 500 years.”

Now, considering Xi’s dual Dreams (for China and for the World), how to explain the deep Chinese intrusions into Indian territory in Ladakh ?

Is the Chinese Dream’s aim grabbing more Indian territory ?

Does China want to show India its place as a subordinate country ?

When Xi says that “the China Dream will be realised through a road of peace”, can it be after humiliating and putting down a ‘friendly’ neighbour like India ?

Clearly, if President Xi wants his Dream to be holistic, it will have to include China's neighbours and the world at large. Unfortunately, the Ladakh episode does not seem to go in this direction.