



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



GLOBAL HORIZONS JUNE 2023

Author

Nalin Surie

Volume I, Issue 6



Delhi Policy Group

Core 5A, 1st Floor, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003

www.delhipolicygroup.org



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

Global Horizons

Vol. I, Issue 6

June 2023

ABOUT US

Founded in 1994, the Delhi Policy Group (DPG) is among India's oldest think tanks with its primary focus on strategic and international issues of critical national interest. DPG is a non-partisan institution and is independently funded by a non-profit Trust. Over past decades, DPG has established itself in both domestic and international circles and is widely recognised today among the top security think tanks of India and of Asia's major powers.

Since 2016, in keeping with India's increasing global profile, DPG has expanded its focus areas to include India's regional and global role and its policies in the Indo-Pacific. In a realist environment, DPG remains mindful of the need to align India's ambitions with matching strategies and capabilities, from diplomatic initiatives to security policy and military modernisation.

At a time of disruptive change in the global order, DPG aims to deliver research based, relevant, reliable and realist policy perspectives to an actively engaged public, both at home and abroad. DPG is deeply committed to the growth of India's national power and purpose, the security and prosperity of the people of India and India's contributions to the global public good. We remain firmly anchored within these foundational principles which have defined DPG since its inception.

Author

Ambassador Nalin Surie, I.F.S. (Retd.), Distinguished Fellow for Diplomacy, Delhi Policy Group

The views expressed in this publication are those of the author and should not be attributed to the Delhi Policy Group as an Institution.

Cover Image:

President Vladimir Putin addressed service personnel from the units of the Defence Ministry, the Federal Service of National Guard Troops, the Federal Security Service, the Interior Ministry and the Federal Guard Service, which ensured law and order during the mutiny on June 27, 2023. Source: President of Russia

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing the Joint Session of US Congress, in Washington DC on June 22, 2023. Source: [PM Office](#)

PM Narendra Modi holds a meeting with Prime Minister of Nepal, Shri Pushpa Kamal Dahal, at Hyderabad House, New Delhi on June 01, 2023. Source: Twitter ([@narendramodi](#))

© 2023 by the Delhi Policy Group

Delhi Policy Group

Core 5A, 1st Floor,

India Habitat Centre,

Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003.

www.delhipolicygroup.org

Global Horizons

by

Nalin Surie

June was a complicated month with fast moving developments that have the potential to seriously impact international relations going forward and the situation in Europe. The brazen attempt on 24 June by Prighozhin, the leader of the Wagner PMC against President Putin (initially) and his generals, the march by him and his troops from Ukraine against Moscow; the virtual absence of resistance they faced en route; counter measures taken to secure Moscow; Putin's harsh response; and then the about turn by Prighozhin within 24 hours, followed by his exile in Belarus, played out live on TV before a bewildered international audience.

There is no shortage of analysis and assessment of why all this happened and what it means. But there are no definitive conclusions. And, all the while the official spring counter offensive launched by Ukraine on June 10 has continued at an understandably desultory pace, and there was little sign of Russia backing off or ceding any real ground.

While the future of Prighozhin and those who have chosen to remain with him remains uncertain, there is little doubt that the Kremlin and President Putin have a serious problem on their hands. Without stability in the ruling elite in Moscow, governance and control can get seriously affected, especially in the face of a determined Ukrainian counter offensive to regain territories lost to Russian forces.

Political uncertainty and a leadership problem in Moscow will give cause for serious concern in not only Europe but also in Washington, within NATO and in Beijing, which has entered into a no holds barred partnership with Moscow. It will also impact India.

The effort to signal flexibility already seems to have begun in an effort to corral downsides and look for fresh opportunities to help break the Ukrainian logjam. The calculated US response was quite clearly manifest in a detailed interaction US Secretary of State Blinken had with the President of the CFR in New York on June 28. The following observations he made on relations with China are an indicator of the flexibilities that have been necessitated, inter alia, by the happenings in Russia:

1. There is no clear finish line in the ongoing (US) confrontation with China, not only in the near term but also in the longer period beyond. The two are in intense and long-term competition. Neither country is going away and the objective is to have peaceful and maybe more productive coexistence;
2. The US is determined that its competition with China will not veer into conflict but the US will address the China challenge from a position of strength where it is able to shape what comes next and the US vision of a liberal world order prevails;
3. It is not in US interest to contain China and to hold it back globally and economically; the US is not economically decoupling from China; but it will not allow China to get technology that it may turn around and use against the U.S.;
4. The China-Russia relationship is both a marriage of convenience and conviction;
5. On the Ukraine issue, he suggested that China was involved in a delicate balancing act but expressed the hope that going ahead, China could play a constructive role; and
6. On Taiwan, there is no give for China.

It would appear that, for a variety of reasons, the US stance on China is veering towards European positions that are clearly nuanced. In the latter context, it is important to bear in mind that China has been very actively working to seriously get the G7 and the West in general to walk back from the positions taken vis a vis China at the G7 summit earlier in the year.

The forthcoming NATO Summit in Vilnius, to be held on July 11-12, will have before it a particularly serious agenda including an assessment of the internal political situation and stability in Russia; the impact of the latter on the conduct of the war in Ukraine; the implications for relations with Russia of offering timelines for Ukraine membership of NATO; on how to restore strategic stability in Europe ; the expansion of NATO partnerships with Japan, ROK, Australia and New Zealand; and the Chinese reaction to NATO's forays into the Asia-Pacific.

The NATO summit will be held in the wake of very serious riots in France which began on June 26 following the shooting by police of a 17 year old boy of Algerian descent in a Paris suburb. The riots have forced President Macron to postpone a scheduled state visit to Germany. Massive security arrangements have been made to bring the situation under control. The incident has once again drawn attention to the very serious issues of racial and religious integration/assimilation in several European countries; an issue that has gained additional salience following the very large inflow of refugees and

immigrant workers into Europe from North Africa, Syria etc. in recent years. This is a problem that requires serious remedial actions that are sustained and guarantee not only equality on paper but in practice and as the societal norm. France will undoubtedly have to find novel solutions to address this serious issue.

Germany adopted its National Security Strategy on 14 June. The war in Ukraine and the need to respond to Chinese moves were no doubt pertinent in its formulation and it shows. It states that "Today's Russia is for now the most significant threat to peace and security in the Euro Atlantic area" and goes on to say that neither Germany nor NATO seek any rivalry or confrontation with it.

In an allusion to China it is said that "some countries are attempting to reshape the current international order, driven by their perception of systemic rivalry." China is described, consistent with the EU stance, as a "partner, competitor and systemic rival." The Chinese are said to "view human rights, civil liberties and democratic participation as threats to their power". Rivalry and competition with China are on the increase but China remains a "partner without whom many global challenges and crises cannot be resolved" and for this purpose opportunities must be grasped.

Clearly Germany wishes to walk, if feasible, the middle path vis a vis both Russia and China going forward. Time will tell whether circumstances will permit this to happen.

The ROK adopted its National Security Strategy on June 7. The DPRK's nuclear weapons and WMD are described as the most pressing challenge and will be countered. The intention behind the strategy is to further bolster the alliance with the U.S.; to enhance collaboration among ROK, Japan and U.S.; for the U.S.-ROK alliance to expand its scope and range of collaboration to a global level; and on global economic security, expand strategic communications with the U.S, Japan, E.U. and Australia and participate in the IPEF. The directions are quite explicit. The ROK seeks to break out into the broader Indo-Pacific. In addition to ensuring sovereignty, territorial integrity and bringing about unification, the ROK seeks to grow its regional and global footprint.

India's External Affairs Minister attended the meeting of the BRICS Foreign Ministers held on June 1 in Cape Town, South Africa. The meeting was preparatory to the forthcoming Summit later in the year. In his intervention, Minister Jaishankar stressed, inter-alia, on the need for BRICS to stress the development of multipolarity; for the organisation to represent a symbol of change; that old ways cannot address new situations; that the problem of

economic concentration must be addressed; and that terrorism must not be condoned under any circumstances. He said that India had an open mind on the comprehensive institutional development of BRICS, an exercise it approaches in a positive spirit. Presumably the latter was to signal the approach to the demand for expansion of membership and other crucial issues. He reminded his audience that discussions on all issues will be held in the spirit of equality, mutual respect, and complete consensus as is the norm in BRICS. In effect, India was not going to be hustled on decisions that will have far reaching implications going ahead.

India has, as chair of the G-20, proposed membership of the Africa Union to the G-20.

The Prime Minister of Nepal paid an official visit to India, from May 31 to June 3. This was his first overseas visit after assuming the office of PM on this occasion. A slew of important agreements to grow the bilateral relationship on a long term basis were signed. In his briefing to the media, India's Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra conveyed that the talks between the Prime Ministers were, inter-alia, constructive, future oriented and aimed to achieve outcomes beneficial for both societies. PM Modi assured the Nepal PM that India "will continue to work to give our relationship the height of the Himalayas".

On his return to Kathmandu, PM Prachanda is reported to have described to the media his visit to India an "outstanding success" and spoken of the newfound trust and foundation established through the power trade agreement.

Without doubt, the high point of Indian diplomacy in June was the highly acclaimed and successful state visit of PM Modi to the USA from June 22-24, during which he also addressed, for the second time, a joint session of the US Congress, a singular honour reflecting bipartisan support in the US for the bilateral relationship, notwithstanding the naysayers in segments of the US media, political community, and analysts. Importantly, there is also substantial mainstream support within India for a serious enhancement of the India-U.S. strategic partnership. In India too, there are of course those who are cautious about this or outright opposed.

The visit was especially well prepared by both sides, with a series of high-level visits to ensure that all loose ends are tied up. The outcomes are ambitious, futuristic and intended for instance to help India fill technological and other gaps, enhance the defense and security relationship, cooperate further in cutting edge technologies, in space matters, in ensuring security of supply chains and critical materials, further developing people to people relations, in education, and in S&T, to help India fulfil its ambitious developmental goals.

In his media briefing on June 23, Foreign Secretary Kwatra described the visit as “exceptional, landmark and path breaking” and that “the decisions taken are truly transformative across a wide range of areas”. This was a reflection he said, of the deep trust between the two sides who are in it for the long term.

President Biden, while addressing the media on June 22, had said that this was “A partnership that is among the most consequential in the world, that is stronger, closer and more dynamic than any time in history”.

For his part, PM Modi during his address to the joint session of Congress on June 22, pointed out that in India’s approach to the world, the U.S. enjoys a special place. He spoke of a new dawn in the bilateral relationship that will shape not only the destiny of the two countries but also of the world. He defined the scope of bilateral cooperation as endless; the potential of synergies limitless; and the chemistry of partnership effortless.

The injection of this huge cross sectoral impetus in Indo-US relations will require to be systematically nurtured to ensure that old hesitations on both sides are not allowed to act as speed breakers. This refreshed partnership is clearly to mutual benefit as also to peace, security, stability and development in the world; to multipolarity not only in Asia but in the wider framework; to strengthening the QUAD; to build the Indo-Pacific as a region of peace, development and inclusivity; to reform multilateralism and address the challenges on the global commons including climate change and terrorism. The onus on both sides to successfully implement the agreements arrived at is therefore very heavy and requires bipartisan support in both countries. This will not be an easy ride but an aspirational India can be expected to deliver its side of the bargain.

There are those who argue or suggest that the objective of the Modi-Biden agreements and the rejuvenated Indo-US partnership is essentially to contain China. This would be true if the Chinese game plan is to seek to be the sole super power going forward. The churlish Chinese reaction to the visit would suggest that a stronger India-US partnership is a matter of serious concern to them. Maybe China ought to best take steps to convince the region and the world community that it genuinely believes in the so-called principles it espouses, and that achieving the so-called China Dream is not to be at the cost of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbours and the Indo-Pacific to start with.

2023 has so far been a tumultuous year and there are no real signs that this may change in the months ahead. The need for dialogue and diplomacy has thus

become that much more imperative. To begin with, the mother of all current global hot spots, the war in Ukraine, needs to be resolved.

New Delhi. July 04, 2023.



Delhi Policy Group
Core 5A, 1st Floor,
India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road
New Delhi - 110003
India

www.delhipolicygroup.org