

Analysis of the Intentions of the United States Defence Strategy in South Asia since 2001

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Abstract - The research begins with questions that relate to the objectives of the US Defence Strategy; whether it is to combat terrorism as stipulated in US Documents or whether it has other intentions bordering on any other hidden agenda. In this direction, this research proposed to find out the intentions implied, rather than what was expressed in the Declared Documents. It is started by hypothesizing that the declared objective was only a get set go - a deep laid hegemonic objectives. The incidence of the September 2001 terrorist attack was only a door that opened up for the US to make an international move at intervention in another country. The US introduced a Military Program of a Defence Strategy putting forward the wish to punish the offender – the Al Qaeda. The Methodology used in the research was a qualitative search through a multifaceted ethnographic mode of data gathering. The researcher made an interaction with the interviewees graded into their coverage and such information were juxtaposed against the documentary data available in relevant statistics and literature. The latter part of this research presents the relevant interventions and defence action that followed the US policy declarations. The intentions of long term objectives are implicit in the chain of defence activities that followed to date. This research has traced the historical path through which strategic changes were effected, through the Defence strategy document. It was a huge project dealing with India on one side and Pakistan, a polity with more differences than similarities with India. In addition, South Asia with almost 85% under poverty line, created for US a variety of problems that militaristic methods alone could give an answer to. Political Equality, Social Opportunity, Economic Liberty, Human Rights for Self-advancement were a part of the undeclared ideological change expected by the US in its broader deep laid ideology.

Keywords: Defence, Hegemony, Globalization

I. INTRODUCTION

Many International Relations scholars who investigated and observed the 2001 US Policy on the War on Terror pointed out that, this mission does not carry one objective, rather it is a combination of wider political, socio-economic and socio-

psychological objectives of the US to secure their interests in Asia. Generally, super powers tend to change their established strategies when they find that what they implement as policy does not fit in with what has currently developed in the field. The study of International Relations is a historically based evolving process. Policies modify according to the way the world process changes and moves forward. This way, the world public and the inquiring academic elite believe that, the objective of the US with reference to South Asia will not be limited only to the prevention of terrorism as what it was at the beginning. This strategy certainly stretched out to wider political, economic, social, cultural and hegemonic interests of the US. It will also change and expand in the future. This region comprises of many rich natural resources for future technology to develop their super power intentions. This, they thought will intensify the hold and cover of the Defence Strategy for South Asia.

Every Nation State implements their strategies in order to fulfil their national interests. When a particular state is developing its power into hegemonic superiority, it automatically opens up its power on and off around the world. In this regard, their objectives might be different from region to region. Sometimes, it might be the same objective, but it takes different shapes while being implemented. Further, some objectives might be declared and some not so specifically defined, which carry intentions that do not display established policy stands. Contemporary international relations are highly competitive and are in a struggle for power in the world scenario. Almost all the super powers are in some sort of tension and seek ways and means to retain their control over both developed and developing states. The escalating interests of super powers in the Sub Saharan Africa are a good example (Tull, 2006). Indeed, developed states are very strategic in this move. They surface out their strategic thinking through effective mechanisms and it is a continuing activity. Therefore, within this struggle in the international system, it is important to study about this point of view further. In this manner, this paper focuses on other intentions of the US Defence Strategy towards South Asia which could be declared or not specifically defined.

II. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Methodology of a research is the critical assessment of the relationship between the nature of the subject matter of the inquiry, and the appropriation of organized techniques to study and understand the subject matter (McNeill, 1992: 43, 5). It is critical because the method determines what organization of techniques help the most rational explanation of their efficacy at unearthing what really is there to be seen.

The academic discipline of International Relations is currently in the process of entering the domain of Science. Responding to the expansion of globalization institutionalized academies like universities are in a trend to evaluate research findings in terms of rational quality of argument, substantive empirical validity, quality reliability of methods and techniques used in studies (McNeill, 1992: 43, 5).

In this context, the direction of the research began with positivist epistemology. Positivism is the search for dead-sure empirical substantiation of hypothetical conjectures into applicable system of theory (Bilton et al. 1996: 532, 335). The positivist approach began in organicist epistemology, in the natural sciences, around the 16th century. Humanist sciences were in social and cultural constructivism because human behaviour was not 'natural' but of a social construction. Therefore, this research began its inquiry with a combined positivistic constructionist approach. Initially, it resorted to quantified data in the survey mode available in official documents and in critical evaluations of them in scholarly writings. Information was gathered through interviews conducted in an interactionist human relationships with citizen connected with international policy.

In this study, the researcher intendeds to get views and opinions of relevant official and non-official contacts in personal interviews, but within the areas on which the public is constitutionally and democratically permitted to discuss. Continued in-depth discussions, dialogues were used in ethnographic note-book mode. The researcher tabulated in narration, the views of these related officials, within humanist and human rights demarcations. Then there was also those outside, but of academic and social distinction, university dons, populists and those with distinction in their respective and respectable avocations, whose viewpoints were significant and representative of internationalist policy thinking. Here again a constructivist ethnographic approach was adopted to collect the information. The data was presented in succinct narrative mode. This means that the research was essentially multi-faceted and customized. It is both quantitative and qualitative. It is ethnographic and

humanist. It does not seek out a final explanation. Rather the intention was to contribute a little more to light up the next lamp-post.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

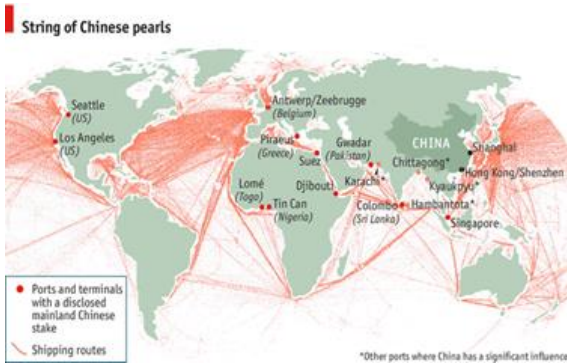
The research was based on a hypothetically construed contingency posed against the empirical data discovered by the researcher. What the researcher found out was the discovery of ambiguities and uncertainties regarding this policy of foreign intervention. The field of International Relations by definition imply that, it is problematic to arrive at definite conclusive remarks.

The US Defence Strategy is not a particular President's own discreet policy but a mixed set of intentions controlled by the media, the voting system and different establishment comprising dominant individuals and groups within the capitalist system (Daalder and Lindsay, 2003: 98). Systems of production, sale, consumer aspirations and bureaucratic regulations influence the construction and implementation of strategies at defence. This research hypothesized that, there is more to foreign policy and its defence strategies beyond the national constitution and wishes of the elites. It is a combined program in which individuals extend their power over the whole world through a variety of effective mechanisms. It is also a compromise between values that evolve through social changes like equality, liberality, fairness, human rights and the excess in global capitalism.

A. *The US Policy of the Containment of Chinese Power*

The main focus of the US in its broad perspective in looking at what is happening on the world, is in relation to Asia and not in South Asia. The US Defence Strategy relates to its interest in the Indian Ocean starting from South Asian points in its ground. To achieve this objective the US needs friendly access strategy to activate this access was to create a situation of security imbalance or political insecurity in the thinking of the contending state. Chinese intervention was mooted and many interpretations were given to Chinese activities in Asia all down the 'String of Pearls'. The String of Pearls Strategy is a geopolitical arrangement regarding potential Chinese intentions in the Indian Ocean. It refers to the network of Chinese economic facilities and relationships along its sea lines of communication, which was originally coined by the US scholars to account for China's perceived strategy (Virginia Marantidou, 2014). As the map below indicates, 'pearls' are widespread from the Strait of Hormuz to Strait of Malacca. The International Relations expertise explains this as purely commercial interest-based Chinese strategy towards South Asia which Chinese funded and supported by ports in South Asia such as Gwadar (Pakistan),

Hambantota (Sri Lanka), Chittagong (Bangladesh), Sittwe (Myanmar) and Maroa, Maldives.



Map 1 Chinese Strategy of String of Pearls

Source; Clint Joseph Shaji 5 April 2015, "What is the String of Pearls theory?" quora. Web. 07 May 2015.

<https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-String-of-Pearls-theory-1>

As against this Chinese Strategy, the US has developed its interests to have more economic ties with Asia within the strategy 'Pivot to Asia'. This strategy is introduced and focused on within the Obama Administration in the year 2012. According to this 'Pivot to Asia Policy', (Campbell and Andrews 2013: 2-8) the US expects to strengthen its ties with Asian States. With the objective of containing Chinese expansion, the US tends to have strong ties with South Asian States specifically with India and Pakistan. India already has conflicted with China over the border. However, some scholars have pointed out that, the reason why the US supports India on this issue is because the US may think that, this enmity could be utilized to contain China within the country. Mr. Chapa Bandara stated in an interview on 03 May 2016 that, the US has followed a dictum, "Enemy's enemy is a friend". In this way, both the US and India sharing good friendship since 2001, within both Bush and Obama administrations is dilemmatic. But, it is also suspected that, the US has no deep trust towards India since their history of relations has given examples of letting them down by India. However, the US strategically handles Pakistan to control India. Pakistan is an important state to the USA to hold at bay, both India and Afghanistan. But, for some other scholars, the ultimate objective of the US is to contain Chinese expansion and maintain their continuity in economic hegemony.

According to the Chinese perspective, all of these are a part of the US 'China Containment Policy.' However, the US has an answer to this, "At this moment, the US is not having any rivalry or competition with China. And the US is considers China as the major economic partner to them" (Donald J. Trump, 2016). In this way, the Strategies of both of these

super powers are confused, controversial and it is beyond public citizens' imagination. According to the public citizens' viewpoint in Sri Lanka (as the researcher found out through her questionnaires), most of them (nearly 65%) are more partial towards Chinese relations with Sri Lanka as they believed that, Sri Lanka should continue its relations with China rather than USA because of the historical and cultural affinity. But at the same time, they are not rejecting the American way of life and its hegemonic development and support to Sri Lanka. Most of the citizens believed that, the US is intervening in South Asia and prominently in Sri Lanka to fulfil their other political and economic objectives rather than its declared objective of prevention of terrorism. Nearly 75% of citizens in Sri Lanka stated that, the US is controlling local policies in most of the developing states in South Asia, particularly so in Sri Lanka. Further they strongly believe that, China is safer state in relation to Sri Lanka to have relations with, because of their non-intervention history. But, most of them does not have a clear idea the nature of the relationship the US and China are sharing. More than 50% of citizens in Sri Lanka believed that, both nations are competing with each other to take a military and naval foothold in Sri Lanka. This is controversial and confused. This kind of stand has not been expressly stated by either nation US or China. However, when considering the economic relations with US and China, no one can attribute any hostility between these two countries because it is the biggest network of economic partnership in the world.

TABLE 2. Value of Trade Among the Three States (in millions of dollars)

Year	India-China Trade	India-U.S. Trade	U.S.-China Trade
2013	68,052	96,749	616,542
2012	68,869	93,794	585,071
2011	72,201	87,150	546,293
2010	58,689	74,048	492,294
2009	40,983	60,015	395,130
2008	41,680	66,430	437,696
2007	34,068	57,884	412,223
2006	23,468	45,344	364,776
2005	17,351	36,880	302,129
2004	10,150	28,920	245,842
2003	6,182	23,930	191,755
2002	4,152	21,002	158,145
2001	2,751	18,551	130,918
2000	2,212	19,084	124,897

Sources: United Nations Comtrade database and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA).
 Note: Bilateral trade with the United States is based on BEA data, including goods and services; bilateral trade between India and China is based on United Nations Comtrade data, which exclude services.

Table 1 Value of Trade among US-China-India

Source; Bureau of Economic Analysis. US Department of Commerce, May 2015. Web. 05 May 2015. <https://www.bea.gov/international/factsheet/>

According to the above table, it is very clear that the US-China economic relationship is stronger and more important to either country, rather than US-India or China-India relationship. The essence of this table indicates that, any hostility does not come to affect trade and market objectives. China representing the biggest share of the US market. On

the other hand, US scientific knowledge and technology is significant to maintain Chinese trade all over the world. In this way, both of these super powers have no any survival without them. Therefore, whatever the strategy they implement, it does not affect their main national interest of economy and trade. This is the expected behaviour of any super power who is trying to maintain their hegemonic interests. At the last, every objective links with this political or economic hegemonic interest.

B. Strategic Interests over Resources and Trade

The declared objective of the US to plan out and implement a defence military program for South Asia arise from their own 'national interest' created and implemented through the American institutional structure. This structure comprises of social, military, political, economic and cultural expectations. The experience of the two great world wars made the US elite to think that a super power could bring a continuing peace to the world. The super power, they believed should be the United States. The other question examined, in this research was: 'Is the American Foreign Policy interested in developing the economy of South Asia?' as declared in their policies. The research found out that, the US contributed through US Aid to those areas in which combating terrorism was closely related to the economic activity.

When considering US economic ties with South Asian states, India is the key state among others. The United States considers India as a large emerging economy, a key driver of the global economy and a major player in Asia. Taking into consideration its geographical location, the vast sea board it controls, the Indian Ocean itself is highly valuable economic resource. According to figures from the US Bureau of Economic Analysis, total economic cooperation, as measured by aggregate trade in goods and services and direct investments, has increased from \$19.3 billion in 2000 to \$66 billion in 2007 (India-USA Economic Relations - The Next Decade, June 2009: 4). These statistics indicate that, the development and economic engagement of these two nation states. Indo-US Economic Dialogue, India-US Financial and Economic Forum, India-US Commercial Dialogue, Trade Policy Forum, India-US High Technology Cooperation Group, Defence Procurement and Production Group and Agriculture Knowledge Initiative are some of the agreements and forums both countries agreed to work up to now. In similar vein, Indian companies such as JSW Steels, Tata Group and Mahindra USA are developing overseas business operations and their investments in the USA, have taken them to more develop and competitive economies. Also, US has provided billions of dollars for different types of development projects and programs in other South Asian states. For example, the State Department's request from the US AID in 2009 for \$6.5

million for Sri Lanka was effected (Kronstadt and Vaughn, 2009: 16-17). Also, the US has been provided the assistance to Pakistan \$1.3 billion in 2007-2008 (Strengthening the U.S.-Pakistan Economic Partnership: Policy Recommendations to the Obama Administration 2009: 5). When considering these examples it is evident that, the US considers that Pakistan equally is as important as India. That is why, the US is having high-standard bilateral investment treaties, implementing new trade policies and ensuring long-term financial commitments to Pakistan. Basing on this data, it is quite clear that, although South Asia has a popular name for roots of conflicts, the US is having good economic ties in spite of their differences and conflicts. This does not mean that, inter-state relations between South Asian countries are amicable or conflicting. They do not matter when it comes to US-South Asia relations.

According to the viewpoint of a distinguished diplomat on 28 April 2016, "The United States is more strategic and careful, when it wants to manage both regional powers like India and Pakistan. This is because both states are equally important for the US economy." However, when it comes to Afghanistan and its current requirements for the US, the support of both India and Pakistan are essential and significant. According to another viewpoint of a journalist Vijaya Dissnayake, on 29 April 2016, "There is an economic motive of every action of the US. The invasion of Afghanistan is also a part of an economic 'game'. It is a large scale political, economic and strategic program. The main objective of this strategy is oil, in other words energy." He refers to most of the wars after 1990 are interpreted as Energy Wars. This is because developed states like the US is in search for energy for their survival. Energy is playing a key role today in international politics. The researcher can see that, 'Resource Politics' in South Asia as in 'Oil Politics' in the Middle East. The above journalist further stated that, "the main objectives of the US in South Asia lie with the market and exploitation of resources". According to him, the exploitation of resources has given a euphemistic colour wash by a brand name for it 'Neo-Colonialism'.

However, US avoided those areas which led to giving a helping hand to develop political sovereignty within these nation states. Activities discerned strong interest and curiosity over the ocean and deep below. The data suggested that, underlined intentions of the ocean bound activities were a mapping out of the Indian Ocean for under water resources and hidden potentialities. US looks towards a science based technology to sweep out the worlds resources to their advantage. They believed that, this is based on their advanced application of science in high technology – the presumption that scientific technology is the ultimate power in the future. Instead, the research envisioned that the US

was making an effort to continue the hegemony that they were left in their hands at the end of the Second World War. Secondly, this political hegemony is strongly connected with the US intention to trade with Asia. Asia could be easily the largest market for the goods that American firms produce and sell – or for the goods sold by multinationals dominated by American capital. The question here is ‘Do the South Asian countries ask for a continuing strategy of Defence as stated and is it the plan to continue this Defence Strategy indefinitely, and carry it to expansionist objectives. One needs wider research for more data to either say ‘yes’ or ‘no’. This research however clears up the way towards the door that can open for, further research.

C. Establishing Democracy and Human Rights

Democracy is one of the major values that US believes in governance. Apart from the principle of Democracy as the method of government, other principles such as Equality, Liberty and Human Rights are also the main pillars of good governance. According to the Charter of the UN, it should respect the right of sovereignty of a state. But if any state challenges the international security and peace, a super power may intervene and open to negotiate with the UN. The major nation states that hold the right of veto in the Security Council have often resorted to this in the past. In this way, the US also holds an objective of establishing Democracy and Human Rights around the world. When considering the South Asian Region, there were not any overt signs of military action by the US. But, the US has intervened several times with political actions to establish democracy and human rights in the South Asian Region. The US has given humanitarian assistance and political support to establish democracy in Nepal. “U.S. policy objectives toward Nepal include supporting democratic institutions and economic liberalization, promoting peace and stability in South Asia, supporting Nepalese territorial integrity, and alleviating poverty and promoting development” (Vaughn, April 2011: 1).

But, when it comes to the case of Sri Lanka, some of the scholars, journalists and experts criticized actions of the US, by saying that the US has implemented and still implementing a policy of ambiguity. The US supported the nation state by extending military and training resources at the beginning of the war. The stand they took appeared vague and ambiguous. The US step back in its support to final termination of the war after they found that Sri Lanka was build port in Hambantota with the assistance of the Chinese government. At the beginning the CIA was in the view that, the LTTE were one of the most dangerous and anti-social terrorist organizations. By the time that Sri Lanka was attempting to end the war through its humanitarian operations, US changed its approach. US and its allies negotiated with the Sri Lankan government and demanded

the safe extradition of the terrorist leader into their custody. Later, Sri Lankan government was blamed for war crimes believed to have happened at the final stage of the war. The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) came out with viewpoints and data that were not finally concluded with substantial empirical evidences.

Many steps taken by the US Administration regarding developing states in South Asia has caused concern among the academic elites of these countries. Some even go to the extent of labelling these states as ‘failed states’. Although, at the beginning the US has started their assistance to establish democracy and promote human rights, it showed signs that economic development had not followed according to UN acceptance. Therefore, the researcher feels that, the US objective of establishing democracy and human rights has some unclear dual policy. Here, the researcher did not intend to say, the actions of the US based on any hidden agenda or tricky plan. In fact, there were some good examples the US actually taking some efforts to establish democracy and human rights such as the case of Nepal. But, many instances have shown that, the failure of the US could be in the ambiguity of its policies. The ambiguity may be a consequence of unintended expectations. It is difficult in a narrowed down small space like this research to conclude any concrete finding, rather open up a wider area for further examination.

D. Preventing Nuclear War and Inter-State Conflicts

India and Pakistan both are considered as nuclear powers in South Asian Region. According to the recent statistics, it is reported that India has 100 – 120 nuclear warheads and Pakistan has 110 - 130 nuclear warheads (Kronstadt, 2004: 6-7). The US was trying most of the time to convince both India and Pakistan to join the NPT within Clinton Administration and also within later administrations. The US set forth non-proliferation benchmarks for Pakistan and India, including the halting of further nuclear testing, signing and ratifying the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), halting fissile material production and pursuing Fissile Material Control Treaty negotiations, refraining from deploying nuclear weapons and testing ballistic missiles, and restricting any and all exportation of nuclear materials or technologies. (Kronstadt, 2009: 16-17). Neither Pakistan nor India are signatories to the CTBT or the NPT. This means that, it is very difficult to get these countries rid their traditional rivalries. Therefore, the international community continues to believe that, there is a risk of nuclear war in South Asian Region. However, some of the critics of international relations criticized the US stand regarding this objective. According to them, this objective of the US also holds a policy of ambiguity. Although, they declare their intentions to prevent a nuclear war and establish regional stability, they do not attempt to

prevent traditional enmities and bring about a peaceful solution to redeem the conflict. This surfaces out a US policy inclined more towards favouring Indian nuclear power. The nuclear cooperation between India and the US holds more economic objectives rather than establishing regional stability. They further stated that, the US has no intentions to build a peaceful environment in South Asia. They need to increase interstate conflicts and build up a more conflictual environment. If this continues, US will succeed in keeping South Asia within its conflicts and underdevelopment. This will eventually swell their own hegemonic power. In this manner, they make sure that a threat to their hegemony will not emerge from South Asia.

IV. CONCLUSION

The US Defence Strategy is a combination of defensive and offensive policies. In theory, defending and protecting the interest is achieved by using methods like the military. Militaristic methods could be divided basically into two categories. 'Defending' and 'Offending'. In practice, it could be clearly observed that, these are activities organized into the overall strategy of conducting and active war. Creating this balance geographical settings, social and political affinities, diplomatic histories and factories between nations could be used. Nevertheless, if on the other hand hegemonic stability is the overall defence strategy, a constant readiness for war will interfere with national interest, or the interest of individual citizen. Under this hegemony, it is difficult to effect a balance of offense and defence. Rather, accept the policy of defence as the national interest of the hegemonic super power. The US is the super power.

At the beginning of the research it was hypothesized that the declared objective of interference in South Asia, was with a declared purpose. The declared purpose was combatting terrorism. However, after covering the accessible and the available literature on the subject it was hypothesized that, this policy of combatting terrorism may not be the 'everything' about the US Policy. This does not mean that, such a policy always carries hidden agenda with unpleasant nuances to the world community. It only means that, international policies can go, and they do go, beyond the context in which they were originally instituted. This policy of 'War against Terrorism' was instituted during the time of President Bush. Policies that were adopted during the President Bush's term of office, were different from that of the policy of President Clinton in the previous term of presidency. The policies adopted by President Obama, after Bush carried more similarities, and the differences were less. Each historical context demanded this extension. Today the world is in an accelerated process of International Globalization. This process has produced a 'paradigm shift' to

explain the phenomenon of new and emerging changes. One relevant instance of this new phenomenon is the proximity of men, women and nation states in one whole. The world now is a village. This is a world where ideology is for cooperation and not conflict. Theoreticians believe that the world will soon realize that, the producer should satisfy the consumer and, the seller should maximize the profits but simultaneously maximize the satisfaction of the buyer. Under such a growth of ideology, global hegemony of one or more super powers do not carry any value and could hurt the sensitivity of the common citizen. Fairness is increasingly a value in global jurisdiction. This is what is implicit in 'Nuclear non-proliferation' agreements between the super powers. That is the non-exploitation of the individual by large capitalist organizations involved in the production of armaments and ammunition. This is also the thinking of the US public, over their traditional lean towards aggressive nationalism. These changes in ideology are currently beginning in the very US Political System of the day. US citizens themselves may in the future strengthen their arms to control public policy.

As empirical data from the field cumulatively suggest that, the US seem to follow only one path. That is the path leading to the establishment of hegemonic control not only of South Asia, Asia but the entire world in its globalization process. One such instance is the activities connected with containing Chinese power wherever possible. This objective of course which is officially undeclared, containing the power of its enemy or the imagined enemy is seen by themselves as imperative. Any super power attempts to get rid of their enemies and protect their establishments. Rise of regional powers is also abhorred. Super powers sometimes pretend as good friends and control their policies. In such friendly pretensions and diplomatic manoeuvres, they gain diplomatic benefits and political power. If underdeveloped powers start moving towards development they will, the super powers think will be disadvantaged. Therefore, it is their wish for their hegemonic powers to take advantage and exploit further. The defensive mechanisms they used carry the advantage of resorting to peaceful methods to achieve their objectives. More defensive strategy, such will help hegemonic powers to keep the contending states under defensive control.

As per the findings of this research, the researcher believes, has opened up a relevant and timely topic to inquire into. It cannot be viewed as research developing out for 'research for research sake,' but for the welfare of all humanity. Men and women must continually correct the path of the future. Limitations from purpose, and time barred the continuation of this research, but it has contributed in significant manner to the discipline of International Relations in many ways. The

main significance is the introduction of the torch that illuminates the usually unseen areas of Foreign Policy, whatever nation it may be. And again the torch will light up the dark alleys of the evolution of humanity.

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