

# IS CHINA HEADING TOWARDS NEXT COLD WAR?

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## Abstract

*Due to the clash of interests between China and United States, and due to the emergence of China as an economic power United States fears that China in future will dominate the world affairs. And to contain China they have formed alliances with the states like Australia, India and Japan since long time so that they should encircle China and put pressure on her in any future conflict. But the China is avoiding any conflict with the United States and any other state because China believes in the peaceful co-existence. The US presence in the Taiwan and its selling of weapons to Taiwan represent a greater threat to the Chinese integrity and with the defence alliance with the Chinese neighbors show that US has some other reservations over the emergence of China. The presence of US in Iraq and Afghanistan has created a lot of trouble for the Chinese and in future they might not be too patient with these developments and they can interfere in the global affairs, and that will lead to the conflict with US and this process will lead a new Cold War which would be inevitable for China to replace the US as a global power.*

## Introduction

China is a huge country which has an area of "9,596, 960 sq km<sup>1</sup> with population of 1.30756 billion (2005) about 22% of total population in the world.<sup>2</sup> It shares its borders with Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Bhutan, Burma, Tajikistan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Nepal, Laos, Vietnam and North Korea. Its coastline is 9,010 miles (14, 500 km)<sup>3</sup>, with its neighbors Japan, South Korea and Philippines. Thus with this type of geography it can exert a huge influence over the global politics as it shares its borders with one of

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the important states of the world, which are located at important strategic places.

When we look towards the People Republic of China (PRC or simply China), because of the situation that prevails in the world where the superpower is losing its control over the world in the wake of the War on Terror which has really weakened the power of US around the world and have created a huge impact on its influence over the world.

The western thinkers thought that China is an emerging threat to the world order and it can drag the world to a new Cold War. Once we can see that we can also observe that although China has not yet claimed her intentions of hegemony and power, but she has been applying on Peaceful Co-existence and Mutual Cooperation in her affairs with the other countries of the world. But since we can observe that West perceives the emergence of the China as a threat and to take control in any future conflict with China they have applied a policy of countering the China by forming the alliances with different states so that they can counter the Chinese threat in future. The survey conducted during the months of August and September 2007 in the United States and China revealed that Americans view China's growing power as a serious threat while the Chinese feel the United States is trying to prevent them from becoming a top world power.<sup>4</sup>

The role played by the West during the Cold War era was not very good especially against the China because since the emergence of China on the world scene they have watched the China with the suspicion that it is a greater threat to their security and the Korean War of 1950-53 has clearly indicated that perception when they were engaged with the China. Although the Chinese Communist government at that time cleared that China is not in favor of the war but they would not also ignore the developments in the Korean peninsula as the West is intervening in its neighboring countries and trying to capture all of the North Korea which being a Communist

state and has the close ties with the Peoples Republic of China. The US and the West have ignored the warnings of the Beijing and continued their war in the Korean peninsula and as a result the Peoples Republic of China has to intervene in the war on the North Korean side due to the fact that US forces were coming closer to the Chinese border and China felt that its own security is jeopardized by these forces. West has blamed the North Korean invasion over the Peoples Republic of China and said that because China wanted to control the entire Peninsula so that they can pressurize Japan and gain control in the region. But the history has proved that China has never been an aggressor and the Great Wall of China is an example of their defiant strategy. The Chinese people have built this wall to defend the attacks from the Tatars and Mongols, and they have no such designs of aggression towards their neighbors. Although the Chinese neighbors have exploited the defiant strategy of China and when it became weak they have invaded China and took the Chinese parts. The 19<sup>th</sup> century treaties with China and the Japanese invasion of China during both the World Wars have also shown the fact that China has never been an aggressor but it has always defended itself from any foreign aggression.

The 1962 border clash with India has also been highlighted by the West as an aggression of China, and they have helped India in every field and provided economic, political and military aid to India so that she can defend herself from any aggression from China in future, but ignored the fact that it was not China but India who has the imperialist designs and those designs proved right when she was involved in another war with Pakistan in 1965.

### **Rise of Modern China and West's Strategy**

The Rise of modern China has created a new suspicion in the eyes of the West when they stated to develop their country on the economic lines. The rise of modern China started in 1978 when they started their policy of Opening to the world, and to modernize the Chinese

economy. Deng Xiaoping started the hard work and he was successful in bringing the reforms in the country which was ravaged by the civil war for longer time and the Communist government took long time to establish firm control over the country.

Deng Xiaoping's reforms brought a good change for China and their economy showed a positive attitude although the Peoples republic of China remained calm in the international affairs, due to the fact that they were not so developed themselves and they were focusing on their own development rather than interfering in other states with affairs. This has paid them because Chinese economy was able to cope the challenges and the policy of peaceful co-existence has gained the confidence of the Peoples Republic of China that rising China is not a threat to them, but it will help them.

Then the question arises in the mind as to why the West is suspicious about the rise of China? Its answer lies in the fact that the power transition in the west has not been very peaceful as we can see right from their history that the battle is inevitable between the emerging powers and the existing powers as it did happen during the two world wars, and even during the Cold war era. The United States of America perceives Peoples Republic of China as a potential challenger to its global hegemonic power and for that purpose the United States has built a web of alliances to counter the Chinese influence in the region. The United States has a defense pact with Japan since the Second world War, and the South Korea is also a US ally, and to ensure the security of both South Korea and Japan more than 37,000 US troops are present in the Pacific Ocean to protect its allies from their enemies especially the North Korea (which is one of the closest country of the Peoples Republic of China) since the end of the Korean War of 1950-53.

United States of America is also protecting Taiwan since 1949 as the US policy of Containment during the Cold War era was in practice at that time, and when in 1949 Communist forces under the leadership of Mao Tse Dong took over the control of mainland China from the

Nationalist forces. The Nationalist forces fled to the island of Formosa (currently known as Taiwan), and the Communist forces tried to take control of the Formosa and unite it with the mainland China under the Communist Party, but the United States Seventh fleet came for the rescue of the Nationalist forces and it stood between the Formosa and the mainland China. The US during the Cold War era was practicing the Policy of the Containment, and for that purpose they rescued for Nationalist government in Taiwan so that they can protect a non Communist government from the Communist forces. Since then the United States is helping the nationalist government in Taiwan against the mainland China. United States did not recognize the Communist government as a legal government of China since its coming into power in 1949 and even has opposed the Communist government to take over the United Nations Security Council seat and has recognized the Nationalist government in Taiwan as the legal government of China. In 1979 the United States switched diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing as the legal government of China.<sup>5</sup>

The Communist government has always emphasized that Taiwan is an internal issue and they will not allow anyone to interfere in their internal affairs of the state, and they will reunite the Taiwan with the mainland China if necessary by force. On this stance China has stood firmly and have always warned that they might use the force for the purpose of reunification. The use of force might lead to a confrontation between both the powers i.e., the United States who will come for the aid of Taiwan as she did in 1949, and China which recognizes Taiwan as an integral part of the mainland China. China also passed an Anti-Secession Law in 2005 to prevent any independence call by Taiwan. Taiwan condemned it and urged international community to put pressure on China.<sup>6</sup>

The next US ally in the region is India which is one of the global emerging powers due to the fact that she has the second largest population of more than one billion and huge resources to counter

China. The Sino-Indian relations have not remained friendly right from the start because of the border disputes which have culminated in the 1962 war which brought a horrible disaster for India in which China outclassed them in the war. Since then both the powers have tried to decrease the tensions and at the end of the Cold war Sino-Indian relations have reached to somewhat normal level but still India considers China as its competitor in the region rather than Pakistan and her policies also reflect as we can witness that they have adopted their nuclear policy which will focus to achieve the global role rather than the regional role, and it looks as that India is considering an arms race with China to counter its influence in the region. "Sino-Indian relations hit a low point in 1998 following India's nuclear tests in May. Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes declared that China is India's number one threat", hinting that India developed nuclear weapons in defense against China's nuclear arsenal.<sup>7</sup>

China is the second largest oil consumer after the United States and its majority of oil imports comes from the Gulf region, and due to its dependency on the Gulf oil China needs to safeguard its ways of oil, and for that China can exercise its influence in the Indian Ocean, and that will lead China directly in conflict with India, because India considers Indian Ocean as its sphere of influence. China is modernizing Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) so that it can assert its influence beyond the Asia-Pacific region especially in the Indian Ocean, and for that purpose Pakistan plays an important role due to its important geo-strategic location and through the Gwadar port China can find an easy access to the Indian Ocean.

*"As China and India rise politically and economically on the world stage, it is natural that they compete with one another for influence. Although China's economic rise will continue to be faster than India's, Beijing may seek to counter New Delhi's political and geo-strategic influence. Rivalry between the two nations will be fuelled especially by each country's efforts to reach into the other's tradi-*

*tional spheres of influence, for example, China in South Asia and India in Southeast Asia.*<sup>8</sup>

The Indo-US alliance has created lot of troubles for China, because China feels that US economic and military assistance to India has been directed against China.

The Indo-US nuclear deal of 2005 has been made to enhance the US cooperation in nuclear sector to India so that India would modernize its nuclear capability regardless of the fact that US has ignored the fact that India is not even the member of the NPT. The basic purpose of the Indo-US nuclear deal is to equip fully to India and help it to emerge as a regional power, so that India can counter China as China cannot challenge the US hegemony globally.

### **Impact of China's Rise on the Sino-Japan Relations**

At the end of the Second World War although Japanese became weak state, but it was assisted by US and its allies to rebuild the Japanese and provided the security guarantees to Japan in the wake of the cold war. The question arises why US and Western powers have supported Japan rather than China, who was the part of Allied Forces in the Second World War, whereas Japan has been the Part of the Axis Powers.

West supported China until there was the nationalist government in China, but when in 1949 Communists took over the power in China through the Communist Revolution West turned its back and even supported the Nationalist government who fled to Formosa (Taiwan) and West including Japan not even recognized the Communist government in China as a legitimate government until 1970s, and they were denied their right in the United Nations and their seat was occupied by the Nationalist government who called themselves as the real representative government of China and occupied the united Nations seat until 1970s.

Since 1972 when the relations between Japan and China were normalized they have faced lot of problems with each other but the basic issue between both the states is the history. Because of the past the two nations looked suspiciously towards each other and there are bitter memories of the history especially to China and Korea, when their people were mass murdered by the imperialist Japanese forces before and during the Second World War.

With the rise of China Japan has been left behind and it can be worst case scenario for the Sino-Japan relations as they have the conflict over various issues such as:

- Frequent visits made by the Japanese leaders to the Yasakuni Shrine has led the anger in China as they are paying tribute to their war dead especially China thinks that it is tribute to their war criminals who are buried there and have killed thousands of innocent Chinese during the course of the second world war.
- Japanese textbooks have omitted the atrocities that had been made by the Japanese forces in China during the Second World War, and have further aggravated their anger though they still claim that they haven't done anything wrong in China.
- The territorial disputes between China and Japan in the East China Sea for the natural resources have led the relations between both the states remained strained.

There are two scenarios that will be in the Japan's mind on the rise of China. They are

- 1- Battle over the energy resources in the East Asia.
- 2- Isolation of Japan by China with the help of the South East Asian countries.



The conflict between both the states is going over the economic dominance in the region.

Japan and China are in growing competition for global energy supplies, and there is a risk of direct confrontation in and around the disputed waters of the East China Sea. Relations between the two countries are already strained, and they will have to manage new sources of friction with care.<sup>9</sup>

As Japan is the arch competitor of China in the region and it does not wish to see China emerge as a global power. Since Japan is not as much powerful to engage China in a war so it wants India to challenge China in both the military and economic fields as both the states are vying for the dominance in the Indian Ocean. Japan is the US ally since the end of the Second World War.

The United States and Japan have benefited from China's economic growth and its contributions on issues like North Korea. But Tokyo and Washington are also concerned about Beijing's political and military clout, to the extent that a minority of Americans and Japanese favor containment of China.<sup>10</sup>

With the increasing of Indo-US cooperation Japan finds it in her favor to court India to contain China, and provides every kind of assistance to India.

### **China-South East Asia**

China-South east Asia relations started after 1972 US policy of "Rapprochement", ...forcing Association of South-East Asia Nations (ASEAN) nations such as Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines to swiftly change their respective policies on China and establish diplomatic relations with Beijing,<sup>11</sup> because US felt threatened by the Soviet Union and its influence in the region so she has encouraged South East Asian nations to develop relations with China. China sought this as an opportunity to gain control of the region by the

cooperation with the South East Asian nations especially after the coming of Deng Xiaoping in 1978 when he started his policies of Opening Up. His policies effectively worked and China got a huge advantage to increase its influence in the region when in 1979 Vietnam occupied Cambodia for ten years. China cooperated with South East Asia and cooperation has further strengthened the relations between China and South East Asian countries. US was the main player in encouraging the relations between both China and South East Asia during the Cold War years. At the end of the Cold War the relations between China and South East Asia have further increased and when in 1991 China became the first nation to build official ties with ASEAN the relations became more stabilized. 1997 financial Crisis has jolted the economies of the South East Asia, China came for the immediate help of South East Asia, and US due to certain reasons was late to provide help to the ASEAN. This has developed a new web of relations and since 1997 the annual summits of China-ASEAN are held.

9/11, 2001 has engaged the US in long war and has provided China an opportunity to increase its influence in the region and have proposed free trade agreement in 2001. Since 9/11, 2001 the relations between China and ASEAN have taken a new shape as Indonesia-China have declared strategic partners and the reason behind was the increasing pressure of the US on Indonesia to fight terrorists according to US policies which have put lot of pressure on Indonesia and to balance that pressure they have sought the strengthening the relations with China. China has also cordial relations with other states of ASEAN especially with Myanmar and Cambodia as the China is the main supporter of both the states in both political and economic arena.

China has never looked for the world leadership but rather it has emphasized on its internal development, and it is the result of her low profile foreign policy that she didn't interfere in the internal affairs of the state. And that is the main reason that South East Asian

nations have some other reservations over the rise of Peoples Republic of China.

*South East Asian nations are considering about the rise of China as a great opportunity with security challenges rather than as a serious and excessive threat. During the peak of Cold War it was widely believed that Chinese communist party has supported South East Asian communist insurgents, because of that South East Asia viewed China as an abhorrent ideological enemy. But now position has been changed and the shift in the South East Asian perception of China is as significant landmark in China-South East Asian relations. Most importantly China considered South East Asia within its sphere of influence.<sup>12</sup>*

The shift in the balance the region has raised alarms for the U.S and Japan because they think that they have lost their traditional partners in containing the Communist threat as they did during the Cold War Era. South East Asian nations have sought this opportunity to increase their opportunities for growing their economies with its neighbors like India and China rather than to distant allies.

## **Conclusion**

China has so far not shown any sign of irritation against the US alliances in the region against her especially the Indo-US, and US-Japan alliances. But she even have supported few US policies with some reservations as they did support their policy of war on Terror, North Korean Nuclear Issue, and other issues facing the security of the world.

China has the reservations over the US presence in Afghanistan and Iraq and they even have opposed the US invasion of Iraq without the United Nations approval. United States is trying to encircle the China and for that purpose they are present in Afghanistan and Iraq and are trying to get access to the Central Asian region, which is the second largest area of energy reserves. China has the reservations

because they would ensure that their energy supplies would continue in future without any hindrances as they have the energy deal with Iran and Gulf and are looking for the energy reserves of the Central Asia. On the other hand China is the member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) which is basically formed to counter the US influence in the region. As traditionally Central Asian regarded as the Russian sphere of influence of area so Russia is also the member of the SCO.

Whereas on the other hand in the South East Asian region which was a traditional area of US and Japanese allies have somewhat become a Chinese influenced region as their trade is increasing with the China and they do not feel any threat from China which has been the cause of major concern for Japan because in any future conflict China might isolate Japan in the South East Asian Region and they both have also disputes over the East Asian reserves where they might go for the war.

China is also increasing its influence in the South Asia as she had friendly relations with all the South Asian countries and have always provided assistance to the states except India and as a result they are developing the Gwadar Port in Pakistan where they would guard their interests in the Persian Gulf as the Gwadar is at the mouth of the Persian Gulf which will increase its influence in Indian Ocean and in the gulf region.

The United States is losing control over the global affairs and with the rising China they are feeling the heat that they might replace them as superpower. As Chinese have been successful in asserting their policies and are pressurizing US to abandon its support to Taiwan. The relations between China and US and its allies are reaching to a certain point where these conflicts would lead to a New Cold War which will divide the world and will decide about the future superpower of the world.

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