

SECURITY AND DISARMAMENTS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC: DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPECTS.

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"NOTHING SUCCEEDS LIKE SUCCESS AND NOTHING FAILS LIKE FAILURE"¹

Security is today a complex concept comprising a wide range of military, political, economic, ecological, socio cultural and humanitarian components. In the light of the considerable success achieved recently in reducing international tensions, a long term tendency has become apparent in practice towards reducing the role of military powers as a means of maintaining security at all levels, with a simultaneous sharp increase in the importance and significance of non-military factors for ensuring security.²

Détente between North and South Korea, in activity of hostilities, among warring groups in Kampuchea, flexibility in relations between Moscow and Tokyo and China's willingness to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, account for substantial reduction of tension in the Asia Pacific Region.

The present Political and Economic Scenario presents a pessimistic picture due to power vacuum in the aftermath of Soviet Union's collapse. The U.S. is taking efforts to maintain its Naval-military presence in the vast Asia Pacific region, the Indo-Pakistan tension over conflicting issues, and lack of political understanding since years between China and United States on the Latter's role in the "NEW WORLD ORDER". The gulfwar and its after effects also raised new issues concerning the role of small and weaker states in a Unipolar system. Under such situations one has a feeling that the relaxation of political tension is achieved to some extent among the North East and South East Asian region, a marginal break-through has been achieved for peace, disarmament and conflict resolution in

South Asia. Security and disarmament in the Asia Pacific regions should be examined in the phases of un-resolved conflicts and proposal for conflict resolution.

The institutionalized politics of alliances and the cold war which got its place since world war-II in International system is more or less ceased after the collapse of Soviet Power and the East West power tussle is about to be over. Presently we can find the possibilities of disorder in the Asia Pacific region as regard U.S. North Korean nuclear issue, resurgence of territorial disputes among some ASEAN Member countries, failure of peace process in Indo-China with particular reference to Kampochia China's role against the U.S. dominated World Order and Indo Pakistan tension on Kashmir.

Looking to the above facts, threats and challenges to the peace and stability of Asian Pacific, the U.S. nearly closed its military bases (Clarke and Subic) of Philippines. The United States has been allowed the military foot hold in Singapore after a bilateral accord. In the case of Indian ocean, a slight possibility of U.S. withdrawal from the ocean following the Soviet dis-union and disappearance of credible security threats, United States will maintain its Naval military presence in the Indian Ocean because of its strategic interests in the oil rich Gulf region, are closely linked with its symbolic deterrence in the ocean.³

SECURITY AND DISARMAMENT

The cold war controversies and unresolved political disputes divided the region. This was the result of outbreak of north and south Korean war-Indo-China war and India and Pakistan war. Moreover the conventional and nuclear arms race supported by the super powers involved in various type of conflicts. Heavy deployment of weapons threatened peace and security in the North East and South Asian regions.

During 1969 Soviet president Leonid Brezhnev introduced his Asian collective security scheme (ACSS).⁴ But the proposal of ACSS by Brezhnev did not receive a support from the Asian Countries. Besides that the Mongolian Government put forward the proposal of Asian security. The draft of proposal was made in May 1981 and called for convention on mutual non-aggression and non-use of force in relations to the countries of Asian and the Pacific region.

It was also "to be supported by corresponding guarantees by the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council."⁵ "Interestingly, most of the proposals and plans for the Asia Pacific region were presented by the socialist and non-western block countries but their implementation required consent from the United States and its allies.

Gorbachev had also given the scheme of peace and security in the Asia Pacific region. His scheme was more practical as he announced substantial unilateral cuts in his country's Pacific fleet. This security scheme was viewed with great interest and anxiety as it included China as an equal partner and had broadened the geographical dimensions of his proposal to the Pacific region, whereas the Brezhnev's proposal of 1969 was aimed at containing the Peoples Republic of China. He rejected outrightly the idea of hegemony in Asia by saying:

"No state would be in a position to take on the role of guarantor of strategic Socio-Economic and political Security of Asia".

One can understand Gorbachev's Asia Pacific scheme and disarmament in the region from his speech of 1986 before the 27th CPSU Congress, in which he said:

"The significance of Asian and Pacific directions is growing. In that vast region there are many triangled knots of contradictions and, besides

the political situation in some areas is unstable. Evidently it is expedient to begin with coordination and pooling of efforts in the interests of political settlement of painful problems so as, in parallel, on that basis, to atleast take the edge off the military confrontation in various parts of Asia and stabilize the situation there".⁷

While taking more initiative, Gorbachev proposed peaceful settlement of disputes in the Asia Pacific region and cessation of military confrontation. In his concepts and ideas which he delivered in his speech at Vladivostok on 28th July 1986 he carried solid suggestions for the conflict resolution and cooperation among the countries of the Asia Pacific region. In his initiative for arms control and disarmament were not limited to Europe or other strategic areas of the World. In his Vladivostok speech for peace and security in Asia region he said:

"Our view about security of Asia Pacific region did not come out of thin air – They take into account the experience of the past and today. We have witnessed the efforts of a number of states to solve in practice common Economic problems and the attempts to regulate conflicts. For an objective, however remote, we would like to propose a conference, in the model of the Helsinki conference to be attended by all countries gravitating towards the ocean, when an agreement is reached on its convocation it will be possible to establish the place for this conference. Hiroshima is a possible option. Why should that city the first victim of nuclear evil, not become "Helsinki" for Asia and the Pacific ocean".⁸

In Vladivostok speech, Gorbachev suggested two important measures.

1. To arrange a Helsinki – type conference to discuss steps for conflict resolution.

2. To sign an agreement among the Asian - Pacific countries, to solve their political matters of peace and security.

President Gorbachev's Asian Pacific security scheme covered three important tension area's:

1. North East Asia.
2. South East Asia
3. South Asia

Gorbachev's South Asian security plan also called for stoppage of hostilities in Kampuchea, specially the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops. For south Asia Gorbachev called it a tension free region consisting of Indo - Pakistan rapprochement and sino-Indian normalization.

By 1988 Gorbachev changed his policies and was moving step by step towards accomplishment of his foreign policy goals, particularly those related to Europe and the Asia pacific region. In his speech delivered at the Seberian town of Krasnoyarsk on 16th September 1988, Gorbachev proposed seven point peace programme for Asia pacific region. His proposal at Krasnoyarsk was an extension of his Vladivostok speech.

In Krasnoyarsk's Gorbachev's emphasized on a "quid proquo with other powers of the Asia pacific region, particularly United States with regard to the withdrawal of U.S. military bases from Philippines, Moscow offered to withdraw its naval presence at the cam Ranh base in Vietnam.

During his address to the members of the Japanese parliament on 18 April 1991, He said, "Asia and the pacific whose inhabitants make-up half of the world's population, face a host of economic, ethnic, social, regional, environmental, and other highly complex problems. No country can cope with them single handedly. Therefore, we feel that the idea of a multilateral forum on security and

co-operation remains as relevant as ever, sooner or later, life will make us accept that idea."

Gorbachev's suggested five important proposals for the Asia Pacific security scheme:

1. Five nation conference, to be attended by China, India, Japan, (Former) Soviet Union and the U.S, to precede THE 1993 convening of a previously proposed meetings of foreign ministers of all nations of Asia and the Pacific.
2. U.S - Soviet and Japanese Talks "To remove misunderstanding and building of confidence through different agreements and pacts".
3. Creation of a "Zone of a co-operation".
4. Conclusion of a formal peace agreement between Moscow and Tokyo.
5. Opening a formal dialogue between the Soviet Union and Japan on Military matters.¹⁰

It was Gorbachev, however, who was in a sensible to realize the Brezhnev agenda is Soviet - American relations i.e. to re-establish arms control as the central defining element of the super power relationship. This agenda now aimed not only to create a ceiling for future force levels, but to facilitate Soviet reforms at home. In fact, for the Brezhnev leadership, détente was in many ways a substitute for domestic reforms. But the exaggeration of the Soviet "threat" in the west undermined the possibility that a comprehensive, geopolitical détente could be maintained with Brezhnev's Soviet Union. Important domestic forces in the United States failed to accept the original, highly competitive concept of détente put forward in 1972 as a decisive contribution to a "generation of peace".¹¹

Not so long ago, Moscow expected some foreign, & especially Japanese, cooperation in expanding East Asian Siberia and tapping its mineral resources. However, the dreams of a Siberian bonanza have not been fulfilled. The reasons are many, but in the forefront must be the hard facts of economic cost effectiveness. While there are undoubtedly important resources in Soviet East Asia, they are simply too expensive to be exploited given contemporary market prices. In addition, political considerations make the Japanese and Americans less likely to take the economic risk.¹²

Gorbachev's initiative for peace and disarmament in Europe and the Asia - Pacific region was linked to the adoption of confidence Building measures in military and non military field. His frame work on Asia pacific security scheme was divided into two main points.

1. Conceptual proposals and plans suggesting steps for arms reduction and conflict resolution.
2. Practical measures, which were taken with particular regard for normalisation of relations with China and Japan, as well as support for the Vietnamese troops withdrawal from compochia.

CONFLICT IN STORE

In this context the conflict between the rival powers have to be reckoned with keeping in the view the vagaries of the cold war a conflict characterized structurally by Eurocentrism in two respects.

1. The core arena of the cold war has always been considered as being in Europe, with the East West conflict spreading to Asia with a time lag of a few years.¹³
2. While the Asia has been treated by the super powers as a secondary cold war arena, it has been in Asia,

particularly on the Korean and Indo Chinese peninsulas, that massive bloodshed has taken place as a result of "hot wars". Thus, while Asia has been Peripherized in the cold war, it has had little say in its development while paying an enormous human cost.

This peripherized feature of the U.S. Russian conflict in Asia has given rise to peculiar conditions which programmes for peace in this region have to cope with.

The near absence in the Asia - Pacific region of an institutional frame work for bilateral, let alone multilateral, negotiations to mitigate cold war tension. No international forum exists for either nuclear disarmament talks or conventional arms reduction talks. No Geneva, no Vienna, no Helsinki, no Stockholm. This is due to the low priority the super powers give to this region as well as the complex cleavages the cold war has caused. A first step that needs to be taken is to establish an institutionalized, agreed - upon frame work for negotiations to deal with those issues having a direct bearing on the regions peace and security.¹⁴ Which are still relevant in the existing geo-political situation. The collapse and disintegration of the Soviet Union not with standing.

CONCLUSIONS

Today, the world is at a crucial turning point, the old pattern is gone, but a new one has yet to take the shape. The certain relaxation is seen in the world situation, the tense confrontation between two major blocks have come to an end and some regional hot spots have been resolved or these are in the process of being resolved. Yet it should be noted that there are still some destabilizing factors in the Asia Pacific region and it is necessary to bring some positive changes to settle regional conflicts peacefully and to work hard to promote regional security.

In this sense there are two possibilities as far as the future scenario of security and disarmament in the Asia Pacific region is concerned.

First, the failure of settle regional conflicts may lead to unpredictable results.

Second, the process of conflicts resolution in North East and South East Asia will continue to result in the relaxation of tensions.

The road to security and disarmament in the Asia Pacific region will not be clear and smooth, however, it will take some time to stabilize clear and smooth, however, it will take some time to stabilize the ongoing process of co-operation in different conflicted areas of this region. The scope of a proposal like the zone of peace, freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) should be extended to South Asia and a consensus on a Nuclear weapon-free zone (NWFZ) should be reached among the regional countries. Such steps are necessary for accentuating the process of security and disarmament in the Asia Pacific region. In past the post cold war era should witness substantial reductions in arms build-up, not just the maintenance of the statusquo.

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