

HUMAN SECURITY PARADIGM: IMPLICATIONS OF THE US-CHINA STRATEGIC CONFLICT IN WESTERN PACIFIC

Zulqarnain*

Siraj Ahmed Nizamani†

Dure Shehwar‡

Abstract

Western Pacific region is extremely important owing to its political, economic, and geo-strategic importance. For decades, the region has witnessed the hegemony of the US and its strong collaboration with multiple states of Far East. However, the recent rise of China regarding political influence, economic development, and military might have posed challenges to the US hegemonic designs increasing the prospects for a strategic conflict. The resulting surge in China's assertiveness has also fuelled hostile emotions among states. This paper explores the ramifications of emerging strategic conflict between the US and China using the Human Security Paradigm (HSP). By employing qualitative research method paper articulates that the implications of strategic conflict in Far East can be a challenge to national interests of the US. Given the different nature of human security issues and their propensity to exacerbate the conflict, the paper advocates using preventive measures when dealing with human security problems.

Keywords: Human Security, US-China Conflict, National Interests, East Asia

*Zulqarnain is an Independent Research Scholar on Environment and Security. (Corresponding Author). Email: zulniz@hotmail.com

†Siraj Ahmed Nizamani is PhD Scholar at Area Study Centre for Europe, University of Karachi

‡Dure Shehwar has recently Graduated from Department of Politics and International Relations at University of Gujrat.

INTRODUCTION

In October 2006, when without warning, the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk was leading a US Naval Super Carrier Group in the East China Sea, a Chinese submarine surfaced in the middle of the group (Marshall, 2015). The US was enraged at what they saw as a sign or provocation by the Chinese. From the Chinese perspective, the move was a declaration of their intent to control the waters close to their shore. Apparently, it was a sign that China had entered the stage as a global power. The last quarter of the 20th century saw unprecedented growth of the Chinese economy at an average rate of 9 percent per year, allowing the Chinese leadership to spend its newfound economic wealth in upgrading their military hardware (Gallagher, 1994). Moreover, several analysts argued that it was only a matter of time when this increase in military capabilities would eventually pit the Chinese against the US and her interests, creating security problems in the Western Pacific (Bernstein & Munro, 1997).

In politics, the use of the term security means that a certain issue is above the regular boundaries of a political discourse. Securitization is a more extreme form of this scenario, where a security threat is presented as an existential threat (Buzan, Waever, & de Wilde, 1998). Examining historical events through the lens of securitization shows how different issues have been securitized at different points in history. For instance, the battle between democracy and communism during the Cold War can be seen as the securitization of political ideologies by the US and Russia. The end of the Cold War left a security vacuum that various political scientists attempted to fill. Some such as Francis Fukuyama, argued that the end of Cold War marked the end of 'History', implying there would be no more major ideological conflicts and ideological evolution in the world (Fukuyama, 1992). Others, such as Samuel Huntington securitized civilizations in the concept now known as the Clash of Civilizations (Huntington, 1997).

At the same time, the United Nations – led by Pakistani international development theorist Dr. Mahbub-ul-Haq – securitized the human being by presenting the concept of human security. While the concept of human security had existed as early as the 1960s, it was the work of Mahbub and his team that popularized it. Since then, several issues in the world have been presented under the paradigm of human security and the traditional notion of security transformed into non-traditional security. The human security paradigm can be applied to understand the gruesome implications of the strategic conflict in western pacific. Major human security implications that the conflict in East Asia will result in are related to Food Security, Economic Security, Energy Security and Political Security.

In East Asia, fish and marine food makes up a significant portion of diets. Threats to marine catch can result in food shortages for millions of people (Baker, Rees & Harnagel, 2016). Apart from diet, the fisheries in the South China Sea are also the source of livelihood and employment for millions of people in the region. Therefore, a clash in the South China Sea will endanger the economic security of these individuals. Moreover, the conflict encompassing energy resources and significant trade routes in East Asia will worsen the economic security challenges. Political Security is also a consequential problem since most governments in East Asia are not known for their promotion of democratic values and political freedoms. In case of a conflict, the governments of these nations are likely to securitize the decision-making process, and hence, take away political rights and curb political freedoms. These human security issues are not merely a problem for China, but every stakeholder will be affected due to the conflict, even national interests of the US will be at stake due to lack of confidence of Allies on the US whether she chooses to engage in conflict with China or not.

The paper studies the implications of conflict between China and the US in western pacific and highlights that how human security problems in East Asia are threat to the US national interests. Though

the United States, considering her history, is expected to place its national interest at the apex of the pyramid and will not care about the human security challenges China will face due to the conflict, but overlooking the human security problems that Allied nations will face can be a concern for the United States. To understand these issues, this document first discusses the significance of the region and interests of different stakeholders in the region, second, it enlists the causes of emerging conflict by using Mearsheimer idea of Great Power Politics and recent developments in the region. Finally, human security model is used to understand the consequences of conflict for national interests of the United States. Though there is a lot of research as far the as US – China strategic conflict, territorial disputes in the South China Sea and human security in East Asia are concerned. There is a major gap in research related to human security implications due to a potential conflict.

Usually, researchers looked back at major events to look at the human security issues that arose from them. This paper adopts a forward-looking approach at the matter by predicting likely implications, and suggesting preventing measures, rather than corrective measures. Regionally and internationally, the research has the potential to help students and policy makers understand human security implications in a non-Western setting. It can also assist policy makers, especially those from different regions, in contextualizing policy frameworks such as human security. Furthermore, the research is qualitative in nature and considers the events of East Asia during the twenty-first century.

STAKEHOLDERS AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE REGION

The region is home to world's largest economies, huge energy resources, fisheries, and busiest trade routes and the South China Sea holds reserves of 11 billion barrels of oil, and 190 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. Chinese estimates of energy reserves are much greater, although there are claims that they may be exaggerated. According to

the Chinese National Offshore Oil Company (CNOOC), the area holds 125 billion barrels of oil and 500 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. In addition to reserves of oil and gas, the region is also important owing to the huge transportation of energy resources. The security of sea lanes is also necessary for states outside the region such as Australia as well (Herberg, 2016). In 2012, \$5.3 trillion of trade goods passed through the South China Sea. Apart from oil and gas, fish is another major resource in the South China Sea. Seafood production is an important element of economic and health security of the region, as it makes up a significant proportion of the Eastern diet and is a vital source of employment. There are approximately 1.72 million fishing vessels in the South China Sea, which provide employment to over 5 million people. Moreover, Asian seafood exports contribute to a third of the global seafood exports, with China's exports growing by nearly 200 percent in the past decade. Altogether, the marine food industry creates employment for over 14.5 million Chinese individuals (Baker, Rees & Harnagel, 2016).

Considering the significance of region, the claims over the disputed territorial entities are asserted with even more intensity because according to the United Nations Convention on Laws of the Sea, each island represents an increase in the state's territorial water, and subsequently, allows it to utilize the resources present in the area. The following disputed islands such as Parcel Islands (about 130); Senkaku Islanads and Spratly Islands (about 14) are considered the bone of contention between China and other East Asian States. Due to these economic and strategic reasons, several countries including China, the Philippines, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Vietnam have claimed the territory as their own.

Since China has the most territorial claims in the South China Sea and is perceived as the principal aggressor, it is important to examine the chain of events that has led to the current situation. In a nutshell, the dispute arose after the WW-II when China, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia scrambled to occupy the islands in the South China

Sea. In the 1990s, the regions hydrocarbon and fishing potential was realized, further complicating the territorial disputes. And later the emergence of China as an economic and military power in the 2000s has turned the region into a strategic battlefield between the powers (Buszynski, 2012).

When it comes to territorial claims, there are two principles used in international law, both of which go against China. The first principle is that of effective occupation, used by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in resolving the Las Palmas Islands case in April 1928. According to this principle, effective occupation refers to a state's ability to exercise continuous and uninterrupted jurisdiction on the claimed areas. China's claim falls flat as most of the islands have been occupied by ASEAN states. The second principle is based on the interpretation of the UNCLOS. The UNCLOS governs the rules regarding the exploitation of resources in exclusive economic zones and overlapping EEZ boundaries. Regarding this, China argues that since its claims were made before the UNCLOS came into effect in 1994, its boundaries should be adjusted to accommodate historical rights (Buszynski, 2012).

Apart from these East Asian states, the US also adds to the equation by its claims of presence in international waters. US has strong ties with East Asian states. It has strong strategic, economic, political interests in the region, coupled with her hegemonic desires. According to Mearsheimer, an examination of history shows that the US became a regional hegemon towards the end of the 19th century, and since then it has actively prevented other countries from doing the same. Moreover, the US wants to be the only nation to possess the 'freedom to roam' that comes with being a regional hegemon (Mearsheimer, 2004). It is this freedom to roam that has allowed the US to deploy two naval fleets in the Pacific, with one of them being based in Japan. However, the rise of China has become a challenge for the United States' hegemonic desires because as the Mearsheimer notes that the analysis of American history and foreign Policy makes

it clear that American does not tolerate peer competitors and wants to be the only regional hegemon on the planet.

MOTIVATIONS BEHIND CHINA'S EXPANSION

As it is apparent from the territorial claims of China, in the recent years China's foreign policy has become more expansionist in nature. And it is very important to understand the motivations behind a state's expansionist policies because it helps to comprehend the state's values, national interests, and provides insight into the country's history. It can also aid in grasping the country's response related to current developments, helping to design strategy to counter future expansion of the respective state.

When it comes to China, the first reason can be traced to the rising energy demands of China owing to the rise in economy. As highlighted by Gallagher (1994), the last two decades of the twentieth century witnessed a remarkable growth of the Chinese economy, at an average rate of about 9 percent per year. As China continues to grow economically, the need for energy sources has started to drive its foreign policy. Access to energy resources is vital for continued economic growth, as well as social stability. By targeting cash-strapped developing countries, China is gaining vital access to resources such as gold in Bolivia, coal in the Philippines, oil in Ecuador and natural gas in Australia, thus, China's economic influence is also growing rapidly (Zweig, & Jianhai, 2005).

Apart from access to energy resources, a significant reason for Chinese expansion especially the naval expansion can be traced into geographical realities that surrounds China. In his book, *The Revenge of Geography*, Robert Kaplan (2013) tries to explain how states' policies are influenced by geographical constraints. In the chapters *Allure for Sea Power* Kaplan introduces the ideas of American naval officer Alfred Thayer Mahan to explain China's naval expansion in the past few years. Mahan theorized that since the Heartland of Eurasia was the geographical pivot of empires, the areas surrounding

it would play a major influence in determining global politics. He specifically highlighted the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean as the hinges of geopolitical destiny. Mahan's ideas were a key factor in the expansion of the United States' naval capabilities towards the end of the nineteenth, and the beginning of the twentieth century. Moreover, they also influenced the United States' foreign policy with regards to the Pacific Nations. China's recent naval expansion can also be attributed to Mahan's naval philosophy. In a symposium held in Beijing, most Chinese scholars quoted Mahan's ideas, particularly those that were aggressive and expansionist in nature.

Third, China's expansion can be connected to the technological advancement of contemporary times. In the chapter the 'Crisis of Room', Kaplan borrows heavily from the ideas of Yale political science professor, Paul Bracken to argue that how geography and technological advancement can be used to explain China's expansionist policies. He states that unlike Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries, where military alliances were needed for ensuring territorial security, Asia's past was devoid of major military alliances. This can be attributed to Asia's size which made it difficult for armies to come to each other's aid. However, technological advances have now allowed nations to overcome geographical barriers. For instance, previously, the Himalayas provided a barrier between India and China. With China's military advances, while the prospect of an attack on India remains difficult, it is no longer improbable.

Moreover, Bracken also points to the rise of nationalism in China as a motive for expansion and as a key player in its domestic and foreign policies. The presence of a large and relatively uneducated lower-middle class makes China more susceptible to resentful, hot-blooded nationalism in an age where military might, and symbols are indicators of national prestige.

The increase in China's military might and its rise of economy has gotten translated to its policy of assertiveness towards her neighbours. At the Party's Central Conference on Foreign Relations

in July 2009, there was an increased emphasis on being assertive and 'getting something accomplished.' As most of world was mired in the global financial crisis, China's economy continued to grow strongly. Hence, Chinese leaders felt that they had developed into a first-class power and should be treated as such. These shifts were also marked by Chinese stances on key global issues. In the UN Climate Change Conference in December 2009, China resisted American proposals on reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, China also began to openly challenge conventional interpretations of maritime international law for the sake of their national interests. China also began to harass American surveillance ships in its Exclusive Economic Zone, claiming that they were a threat to its security and sovereignty.

Expansion of China's national interests can also be seen as a reason for its shift and policy and approach. As a growing military power, China's maritime interests have gone beyond the confines of deterring possible American intervention in its dispute with Taiwan. China now wants to control the seas adjacent to its territory in order to ensure that the supply lines for its energy and raw material needs remain open. China sees itself as a great power and wants to develop naval forces that can patrol the Western Pacific, South China Sea, and the Persian Gulf to ensure the safety of its national interests. While discussing China's growing assertiveness, it is important to remember that China's claims in the South China Sea were made before it developed into a global power. It first claimed the sovereignty over islands in the South China Sea in 1951. It reiterated its stance in 1958, and again in 1982 and 1994 as the UNCLOS was signed and ratified. Hence, one can understand that the growing military power has made it more capable of assertive the claims it made over six decades ago (Yahuda, 2013).

EMERGING CONFLICT BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

The growing assertiveness and military might has increased the prospects of strategic conflict between China and the United States. As articulated by Mearsheimer (2004), who uses his theory of Great Power Politics in his seminal work “Why China’s rise will not be peaceful” to explain how China’s rise would result in tensions between the US and China. He argues that China is likely to behave in the same manner as the US did in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. It will do this by attempting to maximize the power gap between itself, and the nations it sees as potential threats, i.e. Russia, Japan and India. Mearsheimer believes that China will want to do this to ensure that it can dictate the conditions of acceptable behaviour in the region. He further adds that gaining regional hegemony is perhaps the only way in which China will be able to take Taiwan back. Once China gains regional hegemony, or is in the process of doing so, it would also want to push the US out of Asia. This can be interpreted as China’s own version of the Monroe Doctrine.

Similarly, another scholar explores the strategic conflict between the US and China and argues that the development of new naval strategies and capabilities by the Chinese has increased the United States’ involvement in the matter. The Chinese are determined to prevent Taiwan from declaring independence and deter the US from supporting them. Moreover, they also wish to develop a sea-based second-strike nuclear capability in the Western Pacific to act as a deterrent against American aggression (Buszynski, 2012). Likewise, a remarkable glimpse about the prospects of a strategic conflict between China and US can be taken from Glaser’s (2012) writing who argues that the clash is most likely to occur due to American military operations inside China’s exclusive economic zone. The US considers these activities in line with the UNCLOS, while China sees these exercises as challenges to its sovereignty, and regularly intercepts American reconnaissance flights and naval vessels.

Thus, there are many in Washington's inner circles who feel that China would go on to challenge U.S. military dominance in East Asia and destabilize the region. However, the US isn't alone in this sense of insecurity – China itself feels that Washington might resort to economic tactics to contain China. China's growth has already started to challenge American interests and policy stances in several regions. The foremost among these is loss of trading partners where the China's gains can be seen as a loss for the United States. In 2004, 40 percent of China's FDI went to Latin America. This allowed China to increase its soft power in the region which has traditionally been in the United States' sphere of influence. Similarly, Australian exports to China increased by more than 20 percent, causing China to displace the US as Australia's second largest trading partner. Most worryingly for the United States, China has sought access to Canada's tar sands to increase trade in natural gas, oil, and uranium (Zweig, Jianhai, 2005).

China's growth also challenges the US in its classification of evil and rogue states. By engaging in trade agreements with states like Iran, Sudan, and Myanmar, China is challenging the United States' goal of isolating rogue states and punishing them for failure to follow international norms. For instance, in 1997 China ignored the US ban of doing oil business with Khartoum. Similarly, in September 2004, China successfully watered down the U.S. backed United Nations' sanctions on Sudan (Zweig, Jianhai, 2005).

Apart from naval build up and economic clashes with the United States, China's assertiveness on her neighbours regarding resources and territory can also spark off the conflict since these states are allied to the United States. As highlighted by Herberg (2016) who states that since Japan and Northeast Asia are completely dependent on imported oil and gas, the presence of energy sources near their coastlines is likely to be a matter of great importance to all stakeholders. Hence, territorial claims in the South China Sea can have major implications on the control of energy resources in the

region. For example, in 2012, China announced a column of nine exploration blocks that extended into Vietnam's 200 nautical-mile exclusive economic zone. In May 2014, China moved its deep-water drilling rig into Vietnamese claimed waters, resulting in violent demonstrations in Vietnam.

The region accounts for 26 percent of Vietnam's total oil production. However, the Chinese lay claims to these oil producing regions, and have regularly harassed Vietnamese survey ships. Similarly, disagreements between China and the Philippines have also grown in the past few years. In 2011, Manila announced its intention to offer 15 exploration contracts for the area next to the Palwan Islands. This region is also claimed by China, and immediately resulted in Chinese harassment of Philippine's oil exploration ships (Buszynski, 2012). The disagreements between China and Philippines over natural gas deposits in the South China Sea can also brought the US into the conflict due to the 1951 Mutual Defence Treaty signed between the Philippines and USA. In a scenario of conflict between China and Philippines, the failure of the US to come to Philippines aid would damage relations between the two and would also reduce American credibility to others states in the region. Similarly, when it comes to disputes between China and Vietnam, the development of ties between Washington and Hanoi has the potential to embolden the Vietnamese to be more confrontational with China (Glaser, 2012).

Despite these confrontations and issues, critics of neo-realism are often quick in dismissing Mearsheimer's perceived pessimism towards China's rise and the possibility of the United States-China conflict. Some scholars, such as the proponents of the economic interdependence theory argue that the reliance of both countries on one another for trade and economic growth will be enough to prevent a conflict between the two (Echeverri-Gent, Herlevi, & Ganczak, 2014). However, Mearsheimer isn't isolated in his belief about China's rise not being peaceful. In 2014, the Foreign Policy Magazine and College of William and Mary, conducted a survey across 1375 colleges

and universities in the United States. The survey asked the scholars to compare foreign policy challenges for the US today with their predictions about the future. The results showed that many of them believed that China's rise will be a major concern for the US in the coming years (Maliniak, Peterson, Powers, & Tierney, 2015).

HUMAN SECURITY PARADIGM AND CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICT

The strategic conflict between these major powers can result in devastating consequences for Human Security in the region as a result creating challenges for national security. The Human Development Report of 1994 links human security to the protection of human life and dignity. This means that it applies to people all over the world, irrespective of the financial or social status. In order to achieve human security, it is important to protect and empower individuals and communities. The term protection implies a top-down approach, and involves strategies that are set up by states, international agencies, and NGOs to shield people from menaces. It requires protecting people in systematic, comprehensive, and protective ways. The term empowerment is a bottom-up approach that involves developing capabilities of individuals and communities to make informed choices. Both protection and empowerment are mutually reinforcing and cannot be conducted in isolation. Human security analysis is an extremely valuable operational tool and is being increasingly adopted to guide foreign policies and international development assistance.

In the context of East Asia, this tool can be effective and essential when it comes to guiding foreign policy of the United States, China and other East Asian States because as discussed above regarding the economic, political, and strategic importance of the region, there can be perilous impacts on human security revolving around economic security, food security, energy and even political security. Solely, the implications of a mere shut down of South China Sea can be ruinous for economic security. The South China Sea has shipping lanes

through which \$5 trillion worth trade goods pass annually. This accounts for more than half of the world's merchant fleet tonnage, and a third of worldwide maritime traffic. Moreover, approximately two-thirds of South Korea's energy supplies, sixty percent of Japan and Taiwan's, and eighty percent of China's crude oil imports flow through the region. In case of a shutdown of shipping lanes, various tankers would have to be rerouted, incurring costs of \$600 million per annum for Japan, and \$270 million per annum for South Korea (Fensom, 2016).

Moreover, as a component of food security, fish can be an important tool of analysing human security issues stemming from the dispute in western pacific. However, despite being a widely exploited resource, the importance of fish and other marine foodstuff is often overlooked because fishing grounds are large and difficult to patrol. This allows several grey areas that are regularly exploited by the fishermen including the exploitation by the nationalist government sentiments. In order to get a thorough understanding of the matter, it is important to understand the importance of fish to local population. Seafood production is a crucial component of economic and health security of the region because it accounts for a significant portion of the Eastern diet and is an essential source of employment. There are approximately 1.72 million fishing vessels in the South China Sea, employing over 5 million people. Furthermore, Asian seafood exports contribute to a third of the global seafood exports (Fish: The Overlooked Destabilizer in the South Asia, 2016).

China's exports have been increasing by nearly 200 percent in the past decade, and over 14.5 million Chinese people are employed in the marine food industry. As the production of marine foodstuff industries rises, there is also the problem of depleting resources. The demarcations introduced by UNCLOS have contributed to increased confrontations between fishing vessels of different nations. This situation is worsened by China's ambitious goal of achieving export capacity of 5.4 million tons by 2024. In doing so, Chinese fishermen

often encroach the waters of other countries, leading to confrontations with coastguards and patrolling vessels (Fish: *The Overlooked Destabilizer in the South Asia*, 2016).

Political Security of Individuals and Community will also be at stake due to the conflict. Because in case of a conflict, all governments would be forced to take extraordinary measures to ensure the state's sovereignty and territorial integrity. This would have implications for political rights of the people. Moreover, the conflict can directly threaten the individual and community security of the people (Yang, 2001). Considering these implications, the US response towards the conflict is important to understand.

As discussed above, the analysis of American foreign policy in the past leads to the conclusion that the US does not like peer competitors as far as regional hegemony is concerned. Hence, it will try its best to prevent China from developing into one, resulting in a conflict. But the analysis also reveals that in matters of human security, the United States' stance is dictated by its national interests. These interests coupled with relations with the countries involved, decide the foreign policy. Thus, the US has a mixed past when it comes to promoting causes related to human security. When its national interest is tied with matters related to human security, it is quick to use these as an excuse for executing its strategic policies. The Iraq War can be considered a prime example of this. Back then, human security issues stemming from Saddam's dictatorial rule and alleged pursuit of weapons of mass destruction were used to justify the U.S. invasion of Iraq. However, it was later proved the Iraq was not pursuing weapons of mass destruction, and the American invasion threw the Iraqi society into turmoil, further engendering human security in the region.

On the other end of the spectrum, relations with Saudi Arabia show how the US can overlook matters of human security if it goes against its national interest. Despite being one of the most oppressive regimes in the world, the US has formed a close relationship with the Saudis due

to the vast energy resources under their territory. Considering this, it can be said that US in case of a conflict in East Asia will not bother about the human security challenges China would have to face. However, equation is not that simple for as indicated above the conflict will have severe consequences for human security of all East Asian States who are allied with the United States. Thus, this will impact the relations between US and her allies, resulting in significant challenges to national interests of the United States. The problem gets more complicated because in the context of Far East the concept of human security is different. As highlighted by Kiwimaki (2014), who states that while discussing human security in East Asia, it is important to keep the difference in perceptions in mind. Since the Asian mind-set values the collective, community, and state more than the individual, national security is considered an important component in these societies.

But that does not mean that East Asian academicians and policy makers altogether ignores the human security. Upon closer analysis, it can be seen that the concept of human security is not too alien to the region and is linked with national security. In the case of China, for instance, some domestic aspects of human security such as poverty, piracy, drugs, human trafficking, and social security receive tremendous attention from the government and academicians (Evans 2004).

However, national security is most significant. As highlighted by Kivimäki (2014) who adds new justifications to elements of national security such as sovereignty. It implies that in matters of human security, the sovereignty of the state cannot be compromised. This then closes the door on initiatives such as humanitarian intervention as they compromise the sovereignty of the state.

Since national security and national interest is placed at the apex of pyramid and human security is linked with national security, the threat to any of these can result in severe and extreme actions by states. Thus, the US-China conflict with its human security

implications is actually a national security threat to East Asian States which would hamper the strategic, political, and economic ties between the US and her allies challenging the hegemonic interests of the United States.

The argument that human security challenges in the Far East are threat to the national interest of the US can also be manifested by analysing the US policies in the region which seems to identify the problem. Following the rise of China, the United States has tried to reinforce her ties with neighbouring states who have themselves looked toward allying with the United States to counter China's assertiveness. As Buszynski (2012) points out that the United States' response has been rejecting the Chinese proposal of influence in the Western Pacific, as they felt it would undermine American alliances with Japan and South Korea. The U.S. has also attempted to strengthen its relationship with Philippines, thus, terminating the ban on contact with Indonesian Special Forces unit Kopassus. The United States' Indo-Pacific Strategy Report of 2019 manifests the existence of free and open Indo-Pacific based on the liberal international rules and norms. To materialize this goal and to counter rise and assertiveness of China, the US according to this report assigns herself the role to protect regional states from coercion and to obstruct rise of any single dominating hegemonic power.

Preventive Measures

Where Human Security paradigm can be used to understand the implications and challenges to national interests of regional states in case of the strategic conflict between China and the United States, it can also be used as a tool for preventing war in the Far East. This is important as the South China Sea dispute has developed into a headache for all parties. On one hand, no country wants to concede its stance, on the other, it is very difficult for any country to solve the matter militarily. While the western concept of human security is highly idealistic, it can still play a role if it is contextualized with respect to the scenario in East Asia. Human security is usually defined

as a human-centric approach to matters of security. However, such terminology has the tendency to be rejected in the East Asian society where ideals of collective interests are placed above those of individual rights. Hence, first it is important to remove the distinction between national interests and human welfare. Another reason to adjust the human-centric rhetoric, especially with regards to the South China Sea dispute, is that there are no settlers in the South China Sea. This would make it difficult to present and promote the concept of human security in attempting to resolve this matter. By linking human and national security, states can go for cooperation, engagement, and peaceful settlement of disputes for human security issues are interdependent, transnational and demands a multi-dimensional approach.

CONCLUSION

Considering the significance of western pacific region, over-lapping interests of different stakeholders including major political, economic, and military powers, and rise of China, there are increasing prospects for a conflict between the US and China. Apart from other devastating implications, major consequences of the conflict can be approached by using Human Security approach which reveals that the conflict in the region would result in extreme economic, political, food and energy security consequences. This when it comes to ramifications solely for China, may not be considered as a problem by the United States. However, the human security implications would concern the whole region including the states that are allied with the United States. The lack of consideration by the US can lose the confidence of her allies. Moreover, in Far East, human security is highly linked with national security and that makes it even more essential for states to consider implications of the conflict.

REFERENCES

- Bernstein, R., & Munro, R. H. (1997). The Coming Conflict with America. *Foreign Affairs*, 76(2), 18–32.
- Buszynski, L. (2012). The South China Sea: Oil, Maritime Claims, and U.S.-China Strategic Rivalry. *The Washington Quarterly*, 35(2), 139–156. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2012.666495>
- Buzan, B., Waeber, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). Security Analysis: Conceptual Apparatus. In *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (pp. 21–33). Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc.
- China's Maritime Disputes. (2016). Retrieved January 3, 2017, from <http://www.cfr.org/asia-and-pacific/chinas-maritime-disputes/p31345#!/p31345>.
- Echeverri-Gent, J., Herlevi, A., & Ganczak, K. (2014). Economic Interdependence and Strategic Interest: China, India, and the US in the New Global Order.
- Evans, P. M. (2004). Human Security and East Asia: In the Beginning. *Journal of East Asian Studies*, 4, 263–284. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203888636>
- Fensom, A. (2016). \$5 Trillion Meltdown: What If China Shuts Down the South China Sea? Retrieved January 1, 2017, from <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/5-trillion-meltdown-what-if-china-shuts-down-the-south-china-16996>.
- Fish: The Overlooked Destabilizer in the South China Sea. (2016). Retrieved January 1, 2017, from <https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/fish-overlooked-destabilizer-south-china-sea>.
- Flecker, M. (2015). Early Voyaging in the South China Sea: Implications on Territorial Claims.
- Fukuyama, F. (1992). *The End of History and the Last Man* (5th ed.). Penguin Books.

- Gallagher, M. G. (1994). China's Illusory Threat to the South China Sea. *International Security*, 19(1), 169–194. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539152>
- Garver, J. W. (1992). China's Push Through the South China Sea: The Interaction of Bureaucratic and National Interests. *The China Quarterly*, 999–1028. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305741000045513>
- Glaser, B. S. (2012). Armed Clash in the South China Sea. *Council on Foreign Relations*. Retrieved from http://i.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/CPA_contingencymemo_14.pdf.
- Herberg, M. E. (2016). The Role of Energy in Disputes over the South China Sea. Retrieved January 1, 2017, from <http://maritimeawarenessproject.org/2016/06/28/the-role-of-energy-in-disputes-over-the-south-china-sea/>.
- Huntington, S. P. (1997). *The Clash of Civilizations an the Remaking of World Order*. Haryana: Penguin Books India.
- Kaplan, R. D. (2013). *The Revenge of Geography*. New York: Random House.
- Kivimäki, T. (2014). Can the Pragmatic East Asian Approach to Human Security Offer a Way for the Deepening of the Long Peace of East Asia? *Journal of Human Security*, 10(1), 76–88. <https://doi.org/10.12924/johs2014.10010076>
- Leifer, M. (1995). Chinese Economic Reform and Security Policy: The South China Sea Connection. *Survival*, 37(2), 44–59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396339508442789>
- Maliniak, D., Peterson, S., Powers, R., & Tierney, M. J. (2015). The Best International Relations Schools in the World. Retrieved January 1, 2017, from <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/02/03/top-twenty-five-schools-international-relations/>

- Marshall, T. (2015). *Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps That Explain Everything About the World*. New York City: Scribner.
- Mearsheimer, J. J. (2004). Why China's Rise Will Not Be Peaceful, 1–5.
- Rowan, J. P. (2005). The U.S.-Japan Security Alliance, ASEAN, and the South China Sea Dispute. *Asian Survey*, 45(3), 414–436.
- Sekwat, A. (2009). *Human Security in Theory and Practice: An Overview of the Human Security Concept and the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security*. United Nations
- Sokolsky, R., Rabasa, A., & Neu, C. R. (2001). *The Role of Southeast Asia in U.S. Strategy Towards China*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.
- Storey, I. J. (1999). Creeping Assertiveness: China, the Philippines and the South China Sea Dispute. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 21(1), 95–118. https://doi.org/10.1355/CS21_1E
- UNDP. (1994). *Human Development Report 1994*. New York City.
- Yahuda, M. (2013). China's New Assertiveness in the South China Sea. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 22(81), 446–459. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2012.748964>
- Yang, T. E. (2001). Human Security and South China Sea: War Prevention Between Northeast and Southeast Asia. In *Annual International Seminar on National Security and Military Strategy*.
- Zweig, D., & Jianhai, B. (2005). China's Global Hunt for Energy. *Foreign Affairs*, 84(5), 25–38.