

## Politics of Domination: Growing Tensions in Asia-Pacific Region

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Tensions and sharp exchanges are growing between China and US in recent times on the questions concerning the Indian Ocean and Asia-Pacific region.

The questions, in the main, are:

1. The dispute on the sovereignty over some islands in the South China Sea. China claims sovereignty over most of the South China Sea. Especially, it is exercising the sovereign right over the Woody island- a part of the Parcel Chain of islands for more than 40 years. Similarly, it exercises the sovereignty over Nansha (spartly) islands in South China Sea. It has recently converted some of the reefs into artificial islands and is using the same for its defence purposes. Some countries of this region, like Taiwan, Vietnam and Philippines too are claiming their right over these islands.

Thus the dispute here is essentially between China and some countries of Aisa-Pacific region. The resolution of the dispute can and must be attempted through negotiations and basing on the historic facts among the countries in dispute in the region. But the politics of intervention and domination sought to be played by the US and its ally Japan have further complicated and worsened the dispute. Pushing themselves into the dispute as the "protectors" of the rights of the countries in contest with China, these powers are doing everything to turn the dispute as one between China and themselves.

2. The problems between the North Korea and South Korea have their origin in the politics of invasion, armed occupation and division played by the US and Japanese imperialists during and in the after-math of Second World War. There is a strong urge among the people of both countries for the rectification of injustice caused by the imperialists and for a peaceful reunification. But the problems elude solution and get accentuated for decades together.

The US imperialists, who had come up in the Post Second World War period with wild ambitions for domination, had pushed themselves into Asia through their intervention in China, Korea, by bombing Japan and setting up military bases in South Korea and Japan in the name of providing military cover to them. It has become their consistent policy to arm and equip the South Korean rulers with new and sophisticated weapons while endlessly raising objections at the attempts of North Korea to build new weapons, impose restrictions and make a hue and cry about the dangers posed by North Korea to the peace, stability and security of South Korea and the Asia-Pacific region as a whole. The US imperialists and their Japanese allies are working overtime to keep the Korean crisis unresolved and use it as a tool and pretext to justify their own presence and intervention in Asia and Asia-Pacific region and pursue their politics of domination.

The reports say that the US is seriously working on a proposal to install the Terminal High Attitude Area Defence (THAAD)- an anti-missile system on North Korea's door step. The Analysts say that the radar, which is a part of THAAD system, has a range of 1000 kms. Each THAAD missile battery would cost 1.3 billion dollars and will be capable of covering half or two thirds of South Korean air space. Depending on the place of its deployment, it can easily pry into Chinese air space and potentially neutralise overflying Chinese ballistic missiles. The US argues that North Korea's nuclear test in Jan 2016 would necessitate the setting up of the THAAD system to protect the 27000 US troop deployed in South Korea.

China has raised serious objections to the proposed THAAD system. It said that this system will directly threaten China's strategic and security interests and lead to a security imbalance in North East Asia and the Asia-Pacific region, which could spark strategic rebalancing across a wider range. It charged the US of using the nuclear issue as an excuse for starting formal talks with South Korea on the setting of THAAD system. It criticised with the signing of the US-South Korea Mutual Defence Treaty, the US has risked peninsular security with a spillover effect on north east Asia and Asia-Pacific region at large. Accusing the US of pursuing double standards, it said, "On the one hand it (US) put enormous pressure on North Korea, but on the other hand offered a guarantee of safety to South Korea. Such acts will by no means ease the tension."

Now with the entry of big actors, the Korean crisis is being made a part of a larger Asia, Asia-Pacific region's problem. The US and China attempting to deal with it as a point of contention between them has every possibility of pushing the Korean people on both sides of the problem into mere spectators with no initiative and freedom to strive for a resolution of their problem.

3. China criticises that US has claimed that "it will take no position on the dispute over the Nansha (spartly) islands. But what it is doing and saying now makes us feel that it is provoking tensions and have a big question mark on the motives of the US side." China maintains that it is ready to play the role of a 'regional security provider' and seek a joint development of the Nansha islands, but "on the pre-requisite of not giving up our sovereignty."

China criticises that under the doctrine of 'Pivot to Asia' the US is building a naval base in the Asia-Pacific region which enables the US to deploy "70 per cent" of its naval force in the Asia-Pacific region and it is a root cause of tensions in the Asia-Pacific region.

Yet, the US is going ahead with all its plans in the region. The US has proclaimed itself as the "protector" of the rights of the countries to use the sea routes as passage. One must be clear that the US is busy in carrying out its strategic designs to impose its hegemony over the Asia and Aisa-Pacific region. Its move to appoint itself as the "protector" of countries' right of passage in the seas of the region is only a means to carry out this design. First it imposes itself as the protector on the countries which agree to come under its wings, encroaches upon and violate the rights of other countries which are opposed to US and ultimately seek to turn the entire region into a potential arena for its politics of intervention, domination and war. So the countries which are allowing or inviting the US into the region to act as the protector of their rights are not only putting their freedoms and rights at a great risk, but also consciously or unconsciously becoming a tool of US strategy for hegemonism in Asia and Asia-Pacific region.

The US sees China as a potential foe in Asia and Asia-Pacific region. It also fears that China may become a serious hurdle in the way of its strategy to impose its hegemony over the region. So containing China economically, militarily, dismantling China's strategic advantages in the region, roping the maximum number of countries in the against China and asserting its right to encroach, interfere, police the seas and sea routes had become an important part of US strategy to impose its hegemony on the region.

China has every right to make all preparations to defend itself from possible attack or invasion by a foreign power. It has every right to claim its legitimate rights over certain islands in the South China Sea. At the same time, it must be in a position to defend and prove its legitimate rights on the basis of historic facts and through fair, reasonable arguments and negotiations with the contesting countries in the region with no foreign intervention.

The question of right to passage in the seas for legitimate activities, must be decided in accordance with the international norms, commonly agreed principles and rules, without infringing the rights of littoral countries and without harming the peace and without transforming the region into a zone of contention for domination and war. On the contrary, one country assuming the responsibility of the 'regional security provider' or as the guarantor of free passage to a group of countries in the seas is most undependable. It only carries the seeds of insecurity and loss of freedom for countries and people in the region.

4. A strategic alliance of US, Japan and Australia led by US is active in Aisa, Asia-Pacific region. India too was drawn into it. Clearly, it is a tool of US hegemonism. The Indian Govt. under NarendraModi has gone a long way in pursuing its "tasks" under this alliance. Speaking at the International Fleet Review 2016 on Feb 7, 2016 at Vishakhapatnam (AP), the Indian Prime Minister has said, "the Indian Ocean region is one of my foremost policy priorities. Our approach is evident in our vision of 'Sagar', which means "Ocean" and which stands for Security Growth for All in the Region. We would continue to pursue and promote our geo-political, strategic and economic interests in the seas, especially the Indian Ocean." The Indian President Mr. Pranab Mukherjee spoke in more clear terms on the same day in Vishakhapatnam. He said: The country had established a credible record of co-operative initiatives to promote stability of oceans by realigning its maritime strategy. India's geographical location on major shipping routes of the Indian Ocean gave it a pivotal maritime role, and the Indian Navy played a central role in ensuring the safety of the vital sea lines of communication across the ocean. The Indian rulers, who had tied India, through a strategic alliance, to the chariot wheel of US hegemony,

can only be expected to play a so-called “pivotal maritime role” and “central role” as required or dictated by the interests of US hegemonism.

The US imperialists too are moving fast in deeply involving India in its designs. The US Pacific Commander Admiral Harry B.Harris is continuously pressing India to take part in the US, Japan and Australia’s Joint Naval patrols and multilateral groupings in the Indo-Pacific region. He proposed to India: “we should be exercising together and we be turning those exercise into co-ordinated operations.” He expressed the hope that “in the not too distant future, American and Indian Navy vessels steaming together will become a common and welcome sight throughout Indo-Pacific waters, as we work together to maintain freedom of the seas for all nations.”

By tying India with the US led strategic alliance aimed at establishing the US hegemony over the Asia and Asia-Pacific region, the Indian ruling classes are in the thick of a dangerous gamble. This strategy makes China as an important target is a fact known to all, including China. The so called ‘Pivot to Asia’ doctrine, in which India is sought be made a main actor, is, doubtlessly, a noose around neck of our country and people. By dint of this, we lose the right and freedom to decide our relations with other countries in the interests of our country and people and in the interests of peace and security of the countries and people of the Asia, Asia-Pacific region as a whole, but will be compelled to dance to the tune of imperialists and hegemonic powers.

It is only a conscious united intervention on the part of the democratic, freedom and peace loving forces and people of entire Asia, Asia-Pacific region who can effectively challenge and put an end to the attempts of imperialist powers to turn the entire region into a playground for their politics of intervention, division and domination.

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