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American Aggression against China

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Mondialisation.ca, 08 février 2016
New Eastern Outlook 7 février 2016

On January 30th the United States committed a deliberate act of aggression against China when it sent the guided missile destroyer USS Curtis Wilbur within the 12 nautical mile territorial limit of one of the Paracel Islands in the South China Sea. The islands are claimed historically by China, though Vietnam also has filed claims to the islands under the Law of the Sea Convention. The Americans state that Taiwan also claims the islands but since Taiwan is just a province of China I will ignore that claim here.

The Chinese have the superior historical and present claim and the islands have long been administered by China. Chinese forces, either Kuomintang or communist, have occupied them since 1946. The Chinese have both civilian and military facilities located on the largest of them, Woody Island, including a hospital, a bank schools, an airport, a seaport and a town hall and have built a large sea port on Duncan Island. The islands are also popular with Chinese tourists.



The territorial disputes were settled long ago when the French tried to incorporate the islands into their Vietnamese territories but after the Sino-French War of 1884-85 France recognised the islands, as well as the Spratly Islands, as Chinese territories. In 1933 the French stabbed China in the back and seized the islands but were then displaced by the Japanese in 1938.

The islands reverted to Chinese control at the end of the Second World War. There was a brief war between Vietnam and China over the islands in 1974 but the Chinese succeeded in maintaining their control of the islands. The Vietnamese still contest this but the fact is that China's historical claim and influence on the islands dates as far back as the 7th century

A.D. and has been continuous since that time.

The law that applies in this situation is the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) which was negotiated between 1973 and 1982 and came into full force in 1994. Almost every country in the world has become a party to the Convention except for the United States which has refused to sign due to concerns it has about certain sections dealing with deep sea mineral mining. However, the United States has always recognised the Convention as a codification of customary international law and therefore has accepted the 12 nautical mile territorial limit, allowed all nations, including itself, as the law.

It is well to keep in mind that in 1988, President Reagan issued a proclamation extending American territorial waters to 12 nautical miles for national security purposes. Further, the United States was a party to the negotiations regarding modifications to the treaty that were made in 1994 and once again affirmed, at that time, that it recognised the Convention as general international law.

In May 2007, President Bush recommended that the US Senate ratify the Convention. In January 2009 at her senate confirmation hearing, Hillary Clinton argued, before the Senate, that the Convention be ratified. She argued for it again before the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in 2012 and both the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Martin Dempsey and the Secretary of Defence, Leon Panetta, joined her in urging a quick ratification of the Convention, as did several senior generals and admirals. However, the Republicans succeeded in blocking ratification until today, on the grounds that any law that limits the ability of the United States to do what it wants in the world is against American “interests.”

Nonetheless, the point is that the United States recognises that all nations are entitled to claim a 12 nautical mile territorial limit as China claims over the Paracel Islands. Even if the competing claim by Vietnam was valid the limit still applies. Yet the Americans now arrogantly claim that they can go where they please and do as they like and that these limits do not apply with respect to these islands, or, in fact, to any Chinese borders.

The American government, as reported by CNN, stated that it sent its war ship into the 12-mile limit to challenge “excessive maritime claims that restrict the rights and freedoms of the US and others.” Who the others are was not stated. The statement was absurd on its face since no nation can send its war ships into another nations 12-mile limit without permission of that nation. To do so is considered a hostile act, an act of war.

An American military spokesman for the US government, Commander Bill Urban, told CNN, “This operation demonstrates, as President Obama and Secretary Carter have stated, the United States will fly, sail and operate anywhere international law allows. That is true in the South China Sea, as in other places around the globe.” The absurdity of his statement and the American position lies in the fact that international law does not permit them to send their warships inside any other nations 12 mile limit without permission of that nation and they know it. Once again, the Americans display a contempt for international law, and an arrogance towards the rest of the world, that seem to be without limit.

The American government and media bragged about the fact that “neither China, nor Vietnam was notified of their (US) intention to send their war ship inside the 12 mile limit.” The only right foreign ships, and in particular foreign military vessels, have to pass inside the 12 mile limit is in a case of “innocent passage” that is when a ship is merely transiting the area and it must be with the permission of that nation. But no war ship can pass inside

territorial waters in a show of power or for any hostile reason whatsoever. But this is exactly what the American ship did, crossed into Chinese territory with hostile intent.

So, while the Americans blow hard about complying with international law it is they who, once again, vigorously violate it. The Chinese government has rightly and strongly protested this hostile act. Foreign Ministry spokesman, Lu Kang, stated the next day that the "United States is …pursuing maritime hegemony in the name of "freedom," which was opposed by all developing countries and added that the American action was "both dangerous and irresponsible."

The United States is pushing China to respond to its aggression but the Chinese have exercised a great deal of restraint over the years in the face of a series of American provocations from spy planes over-flying its air space to a series of naval exercises in the Pacific and South China Sea that are clearly aimed at China and are all part of America's "pivot to the Pacific," a shifting of the concentration of its military forces to confront China, in fact a preparation for war on China. The question is how far the Americans are willing to push.

But they are pushing everywhere, like bullies on a drunk, roaming down a street beating and shoving aside anyone they meet. Recently the Iranians detained two small American patrol craft attached to the American fleet in the Persian Gulf that entered Iranian waters. The presence of those boats in those waters at that time has given rise to a lot of speculation about their purpose but no answers, except the obvious one of preparing for hostilities of one type or another. The Americans continue to press Russia in the Black Sea using both naval and air forces and are openly committing aggression against Syria by sending their military units into Syria, allegedly to fight ISIS, without the permission of the Syrian government. And, at the same time as their ship violated Chinese territorial waters, the Americans blasted Russia by claiming Russian planes had violated Turkish airspace, a claim the Russians vehemently denied and labelled the claim what it was, a provocation.

The double standards, the hypocrisy, the constant barrage of absurd statements by American officials about international law as they ravage it, are enough to make anyone doubt their sanity. But unless we can talk about a national psychopathy with respect to the United States and the elite that governs it, and there is a lot of evidence that we can, we are forced to realise that the world is faced by the threat of a gangster nation, a nation that lives for one purpose only, conquest and domination of the planet.

Once again the United Nations proves itself either a useful tool of the United States and its dependencies or completely irrelevant to what is going on. Once again democracy is shown to be an illusion as the desire of all the peoples of the world for peace and cooperation among nations is ignored and worse, the desire for peace is called unpatriotic or treasonous; and the puppets in the mass media are as guilty as their puppet masters as they manipulate the minds of the citizens they claim to inform and stir up the hot blood of war.

And so we wait, sweat dripping off our brows, our faces grim, our muscles tensed wondering where the next blow will fall, when the next provocation will take place, when the fuse will finally blow and annihilate us all.

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