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The Next U.S. Foreign/Military Policy: The « Indispensable America » to Lead the Free World…

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From Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, October 2011 as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan appeared to be ending:

« There are those on the American political scene who are calling for us not to reposition [to Asia], but to come home. They seek a downsizing of our foreign engagement in favor of our pressing domestic priorities. These impulses are understandable, but they are misguided. Those who say that we can no longer afford to engage with the world have it exactly backward — we cannot afford not to.... Rather than pull back from the world, we need to press forward and renew our leadership. The Asia-Pacific represents such a real 21st-century opportunity for us to secure and sustain our leadership abroad. »

President Obama's recent journey to Japan and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, beyond visiting Hiroshima and being welcomed by crowds in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, was primarily aimed at strengthening his administration's most important foreign policy objective — the political, commercial and military encirclement of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Now that Hillary Clinton is the presumptive Democratic Party nominee, Obama may rest assured that if she defeats Republican Donald Trump in November, as expected, his « rebalance » to Asia will continue apace. Indeed, a Clinton administration may move faster and more decisively.

Clinton was a strong advocate of the rebalance and thoroughly agrees with Obama that Beijing must never be allowed to diminish Washington's global hegemony, even within China's own South Asian region, and, like Obama, she always uses the code words « American leadership » in place of « American domination. »

Obama announced what he first termed a « pivot » to Asia in the fall of 2011 just after a 5,500-word article by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton titled « America's Pacific Century » appeared in *Foreign Policy* magazine. It began:

> As the war in Iraq winds down and America begins to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan, the United States stands at a pivot point. Over the last 10 years, we have allocated immense resources to those two theaters. In the next 10 years, we need to be smart and systematic about where we invest time and energy, so that we put ourselves in the best position to sustain our leadership, secure our interests, and advance our values. One of the most important tasks of American statecraft over the next decade will therefore be to lock in a

> substantially increased investment — diplomatic, economic, strategic, and otherwise — in the Asia-Pacific region. » The « otherwise » meant military.

While in Japan, Obama told the newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* May 26:

> Renewing American leadership in the Asia Pacific has been one of my top policy priorities as President, and I'm very proud of the progress that we've made. The cornerstone of our rebalance strategy has been bolstering our treaty alliances — including with Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines and Australia — and today each of these alliances is stronger than when I came into office. We've forged new partnerships with countries like Vietnam, which I just visited, and with regional institutions like ASEAN and the East Asia Summit. With the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the highest-standard trade agreement in history, we have the opportunity to write the rules for regional and global trade for decades to come. I believe that America's position in the region has never been stronger, and I'm confident that the next U.S. President will continue to build on our progress.

A week later in San Diego Clinton delivered a foreign policy speech. Its purpose was to show that she would be much better than Republican Donald Trump in furthering America's global interests. Accusing Trump of not understanding that Russia and China « work against us, » she declared:

> If America doesn't lead, we leave a vacuum — and that will either cause chaos, or other countries will rush in to fill the void. Then they'll be the ones making the decisions about your lives and jobs and safety — and trust me, the choices they make will not be to our benefit. Now Moscow and Beijing are deeply envious of our alliances around the world, because they have nothing to match them. They'd love for us to elect a president who would jeopardize that source of strength. If Donald gets his way, they'll be celebrating in the Kremlin. We cannot let that happen.
>
> Instead of defining the November election as a contest between the right/far right Republicans and the center right Democrats, Clinton depicted it as a choice between « a fearful America that's less secure and less engaged in the world [under Trump], and a strong, confident America that leads to keep our country safe and our economy growing.

Clinton has thus committed herself to a continuation of Washington's decades-long imperial foreign/military policies, replete with cold war rhetoric, the notion of an indispensible America, the commitment to « lead » the world, and targeting China and Russia as virtual enemies. There was no hint of making any efforts to reduce world tensions peacefully. As a result of Obama-Clinton policies the relationship between Beijing and Moscow has become considerably closer in recent years.

Meanwhile the Bush-Obama Middle East wars are expected to continue indefinitely, at least throughout the next administration and maybe much longer. If Clinton gains the White House she is expected to intensify U.S. involvement in these conflicts, particularly in Syria and Libya. Her primary rival, Sen. Bernie Sanders, is significantly to Clinton's left in domestic politics but only moderately less hawkish in foreign affairs. Trump is a dangerous enigma, correctly identified by Clinton as "temperamentally unfit to hold an office that requires knowledge, stability and immense responsibility."

U.S. arms for Vietnam

President Obama was warmly received by the Vietnamese Communist Party, the government and it seems by the people as well during his three-day visit starting May 22. A number of U.S. news articles marveled at the fact that Washington appeared to be totally excused for its brutal two-decade intervention to prevent the unification of temporarily divided North and South Vietnam. After all, some to 3.8 million Vietnamese people died from the American air and ground war, as did nearly two million in Cambodia and Laos combined due to U.S. led attacks on suspected North Vietnamese trails and hideouts in these neighboring countries. U.S. war deaths were 58,193 between 1955-1975.

Part of the reason Vietnam doesn't hate the U.S. is that it won the long war against the world's most powerful military state following Hanoi's victory against French colonialism and the earlier Japanese invasion and occupation. Vietnam was exhausted and in economic difficulty after 30 years of continual conflict when the Americans finally fled South Vietnam in April 1975.

Another reason for cautiously partnering with the U.S. is the existence of China on Vietnam's northern border. Chinese dynasties dominated Vietnam for over 900 years between 111 BCE and 1427 CE. Both Russia and China supported Vietnam in the fight against U.S. aggression but grave tensions and even the possibility of an armed conflict between the two giant nations was an additional worry for Hanoi, which needed their material support to pursue the war. On Dec. 25, 1978,Vietnam invaded and occupied adjacent Cambodia in order to drive out the ultra-left Khmer Rouge government after a number of border clashes between them. In February 1979, China — which had supported the Khmer Rouge — invaded northern Vietnam in a brief but bloody one-month war, with both sides claiming victory. Several short skirmishes took place until 1989 when Vietnam withdrew from Cambodia. Since then relations between the two neighboring countries with governments that seem to share the same socialist ideology have been peaceful but distant.

During his stay in Vietnam, Obama was publicly critical of what he considered Vietnam's human rights shortcomings, as though killing five million people in Indochina, millions in the contemporary Middle East, and uncritically supporting dictatorships such as Saudi Arabia gave Washington the international standing to wag its finger in Hanoi's face.

But Obama's criticisms of the country were primarily for show, paving the way for him to announce the ending of he 41-year ban on lethal arms sales to Vietnam. In Hanoi, Obama told a press conference that « we already have U.S. vessels that have come here to port [at Cam Ranh Bay and] we expect that there will be deepening cooperation between our militaries. »

According to *The Diplomat* May 31: « Uncorroborated Vietnamese sources in Hanoi [state that] prior to Obama's visit, U.S. officials proposed to their hosts the possibility of raising their comprehensive partnership to a strategic partnership [an important upgrading]. Vietnamese officials reportedly got cold feet at the last minute and politely left this proposal for future consideration. At the same time, although U.S. officials, including the president, described bilateral relations as entering a new phase, no new adjective was placed in front of comprehensive partnership in the official joint statement issued by the two presidents to indicate that relations had advanced significantly since 2013. »

China's *Global Times*, a party daily tabloid that tends to speak directly, argued May 26 in

reference to the U.S. decision to sell arms to Vietnam: « This is a new move by the U.S. to advance its rebalance to the Asia-Pacific strategy, displaying Washington's desire to reinforce military cooperation with China's neighboring countries.… Now, Washington is ironically trying to manipulate Vietnam's nationalism to counter China. U.S. Senator John McCain, a prisoner in the Vietnam War and now Chairman of Senate Armed Services Committee, plays a key role in rescinding the ban on the sale of lethal arms to Vietnam, believing it will rope in Hanoi to counter China's rise. »

In the same issue of *Global Times*, Nguyen Vu Tung, acting president of the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam in Hanoi, wrote an op-ed that expressed his « personal » views, stating: « In July 2013, Vietnam and the U.S. agreed to elevate their relationship to a 'comprehensive partnership' designed to further promote bilateral ties in all fields. It is noteworthy that the enhancement of Vietnam-U.S. relations ran parallel with Vietnam's forging its relations with China, a big neighbor that is of increasing importance to Vietnam's peace, stability and prosperity.… Vietnam-U.S. relations are not developing at the expense of the links between Vietnam and China. Instead of choosing sides, Hanoi tries its best to promote relations with both China and the U.S. and sees its relations with them in positive-sum terms.….

> The independent posture of Vietnam's foreign policy applies especially to Vietnam's defense policy where Vietnam strictly follows a 'three-no principle.' Vietnam will not enter any military pact and become a military ally of any country, will not allow any country to set up a military base on its soil, and will not rely on any country to oppose any other country. Recently, Hanoi has been under some domestic pressure to review this principle. Yet, adhering to it is still the policy mainstream.

With the arms sales Vietnam is now considered an allied member of the informal U.S. coterie of East Asian and Southeast Asian nations, six of which are contending with China's claims to most of the South China Sea, with Washington's backing. Beijing says it is willing to negotiate with the six on a one to one basis but the U.S insists on multilateral talks. In addition to Vietnam the countries involved in the claims include Taiwan, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines and Japan.

China's claim is based on two points: 1. Implicitly, its long history — about 4,000 years, nearly all of it under Chinese dynastic imperial rule until 104 years ago. 2. Explicitly, the 1947 « nine dash line » map produced by the Chinese Nationalist government in 1947, two years before the success of the Chinese communist revolution replaced the semi-capitalist/semi-feudal Nationalist enterprise called the Republic of China with the People's Republic of China. The Nationalist government, army and many civilians fled to Taiwan, an offshore province of China that still maintains that the nine dash line is absolutely legitimate, as does the PRC. The U.S. — which supported the Nationalists to the extent of keeping Taiwan in China's permanent Security Council seat until 1971 — did not question China's claims until fairly recent years. U.S. support for the six claimants is an important political part of the containment of China by increasing the number of regional allies and dependencies that will support Washington's political goals.

There are military and commercial aspects of the rebalance to Asia in addition to using allies to strengthen opposition to China.

The U.S. has militarily dominated the East Asia region since the end of World War II in 1945

but it has been significantly increasing its military might since launching the pivot to Asia. More Army and Air force units have been ordered to existing bases in Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Guam, and other nearby locations, as well as a new base in Australia. Up to 90,000 U.S. military personnel are in the vicinity. Navy aircraft carriers, other warships and submarines have been shifted from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans. An aircraft carrier battle group is patrolling the East China Sea. Some U.S. ships navigate extremely close to small Chinese islets that are being upgraded — a practice that could inadvertently spark an armed confrontation.

The principle commercial element of the effort to contain China is the corporation-dominated Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) — Washington's neoliberal free-trade proposal for 12 Pacific Rim countries that is intended to enlarge U.S. economic influence in the region at the expense of China, which has not been invited to join. The 12 signatories to the TPP agreement in 2010 included Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, United States and Vietnam.

Ratification of the trade pact the may not happen, not least because recent political developments in the U.S. may bury this major Bush-Obama initiative. Hillary Clinton, once a strong advocate as secretary of state, turned against the TPP during the Democratic primary in order to opportunistically convey the impression she was as radical as Sanders in order to attract his constituency. She also wanted to retain the support of the AFL-CIO, which strongly opposes the pact. Trump rejects the TPP because many working class supporters believe that such trade deals take away American jobs, which they do. Some commentators suggest Obama may be able to get it passed after the elections and before the new president assumes office, but it's a long shot.

Vietnam supports the TTP because its economy stands to gain from increased trade. It is of interest that China is Vietnam's biggest trading partner and will remain so, as is true of most regional nations aligning with the U.S. superpower. Beijing's rise over the last 20 years has benefitted all these states, not to mention the transfer of reasonably priced reliable goods throughout area.

U.S. President visits Hiroshima

Obama arrived in Japan May 25 to attend a Group of Seven meeting and to further strengthen Japan's commitment to help in the effort to surround China, but the international media focused entirely on the first American presidential visit to Hiroshima in the 71 years since the United States obliterated Hiroshima and Nagasaki with nuclear weapons.

He didn't apologize to Japan because that would be unpopular with many Americans and also with Korea and China, countries that suffered woefully from the vicious and racist Japanese invasion and occupation. They believe Japan hasn't sufficiently atoned for its numerous wartime atrocities.

Instead Obama delivered a quite moving speech: « We come to ponder a terrible force unleashed in the not-so-distant past. We come to mourn the dead, including over 100,000 Japanese men, women and children, thousands of Koreans, a dozen Americans held prisoner. Their souls speak to us. They ask us to look inward, to take stock of who we are.... »

His address was hypocritical, particularly when he declared: « We may not be able to

eliminate man's capacity to do evil. So nations and the alliances that we formed must possess the means to defend ourselves. But among those nations like my own that hold nuclear stockpiles, we must have the courage to escape the logic of fear and pursue a world without them. We may not realize this goal in my lifetime, but persistent effort can roll back the possibility of catastrophe. We can chart a course that leads to the destruction of these stockpiles. We can stop the spread to new nations and secure deadly materials from fanatics. And yet, that is not enough, for we see around the world today how even the crudest rifles and barrel bombs can serve up violence on a terrible scale. We must change our mindset about war itself. »

In reality Obama is not only slower than his three predecessors in reducing nuclear weapons but he has initiated a trillion dollar effort to upgrade America's entire nuclear arsenal and delivery systems.

In his Asahi Shimbun interview Obama also said: « I believe that we've substantially enhanced America's credibility in the Asia Pacific, which is rooted in our unwavering commitment to the security of our allies. We continue to modernize our defense posture in the region, including positioning more of our most advanced military capabilities in Japan. As I've said before, our treaty commitment to Japan's security is absolute. With our new defense guidelines, American and Japanese forces will become more flexible and better prepared to cooperate on a range of challenges, from maritime security to disaster response, and our forces will be able to plan, train and operate even more closely. I'm very grateful for Prime Minister Abe's strong support of our alliance. »

Abe is a hawk about China. « No one country is more enthusiastic than Japan to advocate containing China, » according to a May 19 commentary by Zhang Zhixin, the head of American Political Studies at China's Institute of American Studies. He continued:

> The strategic competition between the [U.S. and China] is becoming more apparent. In economic and trade areas, the EU and U.S. denied granting market economy status to China. In the South China Sea, where China is trying to secure its maritime sovereignty and rights, the U.S. believes China is challenging its regional hegemony and military dominance in the area. As deputy Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken said, the U.S. is intensely focused on China's 'assertive and provocative behavior.' Therefore, the U.S. Navy is pushing for a more aggressive policy of patrolling close to Chinese-fortified islands and caused more dangerous encounters between the U.S. reconnaissance aircraft and Chinese jet planes.
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> What makes the situation more complicated is that Japan, as an outsider in the South China Sea issue, is trying to insert itself into the conflict. At the end of last year, the Japanese Foreign Minister talked about the possibility of joint patrol with the U.S. Navy in the [South China Sea] area. This year, Japan is becoming increasingly aggressive in charging that China's a threat in the Asia Pacific region. It is understandable for the Prime Minister Abe to do so to the domestic audience to sell his proposal of revising the pacifist Constitution, but when he was selling his viewpoint to the EU countries, that's too much. Japan is allied with the U.S., but the latter never restrained Japan's anti-China rhetoric. Furthermore, Japan actively sold advanced weapons to countries around the South China Sea, participated in more multilateral military exercises, and conducted more port calls in the area, which just made the regional situation more tense.

Another area of sharp Chinese-Japanese contention is in the East China Sea. Both countries

claim rocky, uninhabited protuberances known as Senkaku by Tokyo and Diaoyu by Beijing. China scrambled jets to meet Japanese military aircraft in disputed airspace May 21. Japanese officials said it was the closest Chinese jets had flown to their planes. It came as China was holding air-sea naval exercises with Russia in the region. Tokyo officially protested to Chinese ambassador Cheng Yonghua June 9 about a « Chinese and three Russian warships » that entered what Japan called the « contiguous zones » near the disputed Islands. The Chinese Defense ministry responded June 9 calling the navigation legal and reasonable, insisting « China's naval ships have every right to navigate in waters under its jurisdiction. » The reply came a day a before the beginning of a large-scale eight-day joint military drill in the western Pacific involving the U.S., Japan and India.

According to Stratfor in a June 10 analysis: « Japan under Abe has upset Beijing by broadening the geographic and functional scope of the operations of the Japan Self-Defense Forces, which Japan's postwar pacifism long limited. Perceptions of Chinese expansionism have prompted Japan to prioritize responding in the South China Sea. In 2015, Japan announced the start of talks with the Philippines on a Visiting Forces Agreement that would permit Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force personnel to rotate through Philippine bases. Later that year, Japan secured an agreement with Vietnam to allow Japanese warships to make port calls at Cam Ranh Bay, which they did in April of this year. Even more ambitiously, Japan has responded that it might be amenable to U.S. calls for regional powers to join freedom of navigation operations in waters far beyond the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force's traditional domain in Japan's near seas. Though these steps are incremental, they represent slow and steady progress toward a clear endpoint most unwelcome in Beijing — the routine presence of Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force operations in the South China Sea. »

The 42nd G7 summit meeting in Japan May 26–27 accomplished little. It was « an opportunity lost » according to Montreal Star columnist Thomas Walkom, who wrote June 1: The leaders of seven important countries had a chance to do something that would rekindle the sputtering global economy. Some, including Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Canada's Justin Trudeau urged their fellow leaders to foreswear austerity and, among other growth-inducing measures, spend money to stimulate the world economy.

> They failed. Italy's Matteo Renzi was on side with Canada and Japan, as were France's François Hollande and U.S. President Barack Obama. But Germany's Angela Merkel and Britain's David Cameron insisted that debt and deficit control were more important than fiscal stimulus. The final communiqué from the session said essentially that each nation would continue to do what it thought best. So what do we make of the G7? In some ways, its time has passed. It no longer represents the world's major economies. China is conspicuously absent. Russia, briefly a member of what was then called the G8, was summarily expelled in 2014 for annexing Crimea.

The importance of India

As soon as President Obama returned home he put aside time to work out plans for ensnaring rising India more deeply into Washington's informal anti-China coalition. He met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the White House June 7. This was their seventh meeting in the two years since the Indian leader was elected in May 2014, which must be some kind of record. Modi addressed Congress the next day and his speech was received with great applause. Earlier Indian governments, while friendly to the U.S. were closer to

Russia (and the USSR in earlier days) and nonaligned countries than to America. Modi is campaigning for a much closer relationship with Washington, which is exactly what the Obama administration wants.

The Economist noted June 11: « China worries about signs that Western countries are cozying up to its giant neighbor. It fears that Modi will exploit better ties with America as a source of advantage. For years the Pentagon has pursued India as part of an effort to counterbalance growing Chinese strength, but only in recent months have Indian military officials begun to show eagerness for co-operation. This month the two countries will hold their annual naval exercises not in Indian waters, but in the Sea of Japan, with the Japanese navy, near islands claimed by both Japan and China. In a wide-ranging speech before a joint session of Congress on June 8 Modi said that America was India's "indispensable partner." An outright military alliance between India and America remains unlikely, but even the remote prospect of one will concentrate Chinese minds.

In her pivot to Asia article referred to earlier, Clinton foresaw intense U.S. involvement in the region « stretching from the Indian subcontinent to the western shores of the Americas.... Among key emerging powers with which we will work closely are India and Indonesia, two of the most dynamic and significant democratic powers of Asia, and both countries with which the Obama administration has pursued broader, deeper, and more purposeful relationships. » India and Indonesia are second and fourth ranking countries in population. (China is first, U.S. third.)

According to the Center for International Studies « Washington has made it clear that Jakarta is central to the U.S. rebalance, toward the Asia Pacific, both in its own right and as a leader in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN.) » It is also the largest Muslim country by far.

India, however, is the big prize. As a result of U.S.-Indian talks after the Modi government took power India has been designated a « Major Defense Partner » by Washington, although it is not entirely understood what this unusual title obligates India to do. For its part the U.S. is supplying India with technology, loans, equipment, and other means of enhancing India's economy and military.

Commenting on the Obama-Modi meeting June 7 the Associated Press reported « The two governments said they had finalized the text of a defense logistics agreement to make it easier for their militaries to operate together. The U.S. and India share concern about the rise of China, although New Delhi steers clear of a formal alliance with Washington.

In an article published by the Cato Institute April 29 and titled *Persistent Suitor: Washington Wants India as an Ally to Contain China*, Ted Galen Carpenter wrote:

> A growing number of policymakers and pundits see India not only as an increasingly important economic and military player generally, but as a crucial potential strategic counterweight to a rising China.... Strategic ties have gradually and substantially deepened. President Barack Obama has characterized the relationship between the United States and India as 'a defining partnership of the 21st century,' and Indian Prime Minister Modi has termed it 'a natural alliance.'" Perhaps more significant, India has contracted to receive some $14 billion in supposedly defensive military items from the United States in less than a decade. Washington has now edged out Moscow as India's principal arms supplier.

> Bilateral strategic ties received an additional boost in mid-April 2016 with the visit of U.S. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter to Delhi. That trip generated considerable uneasiness in China, where opinion leaders noted not only was it Carter's second trip to India during his relatively brief tenure as Pentagon chief, but that he cancelled a previously scheduled trip to Beijing so that he could make this latest journey. That move, they feared, suggested a rather unsubtle tilt against China in favor of one of its potential regional geostrategic competitors. The agreement that came from Carter's visit would do nothing to reassure the Chinese….
>
> Moreover, India maintains an important economic relationship of its own with China. Indeed, according to most calculations, China has now emerged as India's largest trading partner. Trade between the two Asian giants topped $80 billion in 2015. In addition to the economic stakes, there are bilateral security issues, primarily unresolved border disputes, as well as security issues throughout Central Asia of concern to Delhi that could be exacerbated if relations with Beijing deteriorated. Shrewd Indian policymakers may well conclude that the best position for their country is one of prudent neutrality (perhaps with a slight pro-American tilt) in the growing tensions between the United States and China.

U.S.-China Relations

The contradiction between Washington's words and deeds is no better exemplified than in its relations with China. U.S. rhetoric rarely includes threats, except occasionally regarding the South China Sea. Most though not all its multitude of discussions with Chinese leaders are soft spoken and civil. From time to time the U.S. speaks of China as a « partner. » Never stated openly is the fact that Washington will continue pressuring Beijing until it learns how to behave in a fashion acceptable to the world's only military and economic superpower. Part of that pressure consists of continual exaggerations of China's military power, which is far behind that U.S.

The Beijing government never threatens the U.S. It is well aware of the meaning behind Washington's friendly words because it is surrounded by U.S. military power and Washington's obedient allies in the region, by exclusionary trade deals, the rejection of its claims in the South China Sea and innumerable efforts by the White House to undermine China in all the political and economic associations and coalitions in the East Asia region.

Beijing rarely mentions this publicly and works to develop a cooperative « win-win » relationship with Washington. China clearly recognizes the U.S. as the world's great power and occasionally appears slightly deferential.

The following June 6 report from Xinhua news agency about the annual China-U.S. Strategic and Economic Dialogue held in Beijing that day is typical example of the Chinese approach:

> President Xi Jinping urged China and the United States to properly manage differences and sensitive issues and deepen strategic mutual trust and cooperation at a high-level bilateral dialogue. The differences between China and the United States are normal, Xi said.
>
> As long as the two sides tackle differences and sensitive issues in the principle of mutual respect and equality, major disturbances in bilateral relations can be avoided, Xi said, adding that China and the United States should strengthen communication and cooperation on Asia-Pacific affairs.

> The broad Pacific Ocean, Xi said, ‘should not become an arena for rivalry, but a big platform for inclusive cooperation. China and the United States have extensive common interests in the region and should maintain frequent dialogues, cooperate more, tackle challenges, jointly maintain prosperity and stability in the region, and « cultivate common circles of friends’ rather than ‘cultivate exclusive circles of friends.’
>
> The Chinese president also called on the two sides to expand mutually beneficial cooperation, uphold the win-win principle, and raise the level of bilateral cooperation…. [He] stressed that China will unswervingly pursue the path of peaceful development and promote the building of a new model of international relations with win-win cooperation at its core.

At the same time, as we have written at length [1], China openly rejects in principle the existence of a unilateral global hegemon — a position the U.S. has occupied for the last quarter century since the implosion of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Beijing advocates a form of shared global leadership. Washington is convinced that it deserves the right to in effect rule the world and has no intention of dismantling its shadow empire. This is the principal contradiction between the U.S. and China.

Beijing is doing what it can to avoid a major clash with the United States, short of appearing to kowtow to Washington. The U.S. does not want a clash as well. Both sides fear the possibility of war and each is aware that one may eventually take place. That is certainly one of the reasons the Obama administration has launched its decades-long program costing a trillion dollars to modernize America’s nuclear arsenal.

China, for all its progress since the 1980s, is still a developing country and behind the U.S. in many ways, but is destined to become a major power in a few decades at most. The U.S. cannot but accept China’s inevitable growth. At issue is whether Beijing will eventually subordinate itself to the U.S. as have other powers, such as Germany, UK, France and Japan, have done, or in any other acceptable fashion.

There are current and historical reasons why China will not do so. At this point the U.S. is drawing upon all its resources to contain and surround the growing giant. This can only lead to big trouble in time, for both countries and the world.

Unfortunately, both U.S. neoliberal capitalist political parties are absolutely dedicated to world domination and ultimately to the use of terrible violence to defend American « leadership. » Unless this changes substantially imperialism eventually will lead to global calamity. This is a matter that goes far beyond the Hillary, Donald, and Bernie political preoccupation of the moment. None of them would substantially transform the existing foreign/military policy. Only a genuinely left wing mass movement in the U.S. has a chance of changing direction.

Note

[1] For article « The Hegemony Games — USA v. PRC, » click on 5-31-15 Newsletter Hegemony Games

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