

Sino-US Relations in the Realm of Asian Geo-Politics

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Abstract

Geopolitics has always pivotal role in US policy implementations where sometimes it enforces Monroe doctrine for exclusion of European powers from USA or the recent imagination of hegemonic design in Pacific and Asia. The US is grappling for hegemony in Western Hemisphere by not allowing dominancy of any other peer competitor in northeast Asia and Europe. In this background China with wide land mass and assertive economy is contemplated as capable to have preponderance in Asia by excluding the US primacy. The US deemed Chinese assertiveness and growing military as nightmarish especially in South China Sea and Indian Ocean. Washington is concerned about China's anti-access/area denial, which is a prism in Washington investigation of the rise of Chinese sea power. Beijing assertiveness to control Island, water resources, to manifest power and related admonitory statements are indications that China wants its place as responsible stakeholder in international order. Hence this research is conducted to investigate main grounds leading for the US rebalancing "Pivot to Asia" policy for China containment and what are the strategies and main objectives of the policy? This piece of research has analytical approach and secondary data is used to describe the US policy of rebalancing. In the post-cold war arena, the assertive power penetration and persistent economic growth of China has compelled the US for shifting its strategic assets from Euro Atlantic sphere and rebalancing its forces in the Indo-Pacific by amalgamating Indian and Pacific Oceans. For the US to maintain security and stability required four dimensions; to curb the aspiring regional hegemons who are acrimonious to the US interests, inhibit tussle of major powers and regional polarization, to restrain the spillover of internal political socio-economic clashes across the borders which trigger regional instability; to build up cooperative relations with others in order to tackle transnational nontraditional security challenges. As buck passing strategy, of the offensive realism which signify that regional hegemon remained sidelined and let the local powers to observe the aspiring hegemon and when the need arises then militarily invade the region in order to curb the peer competitors. Accordingly, in the guise of 'Rebalancing Policy' Indian role has been giving preference which is amply manifested the Indo-US Nuclear deal.

Keywords: pivot, geopolitics, rebalancing, hegemony, containment

Introduction

"The future of politics will be decided in Asia, not Afghanistan or Iraq, and the United States will be right at the center of the action".

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Hillary Clinton

In international politics the Asian century has been regarded as geo-strategic focus or center of gravity for having simultaneous rise of China and India whereby different interests have formed the US grand strategy towards Asia since 1945. The US is a Pacific power since the start of Spanish American war of 1898 and secretary of state John Hay's "Open Door Notes" of 1899-1900. The US has enhanced strategic prioritization by imparting more resources to diplomacy, commerce and security in Asia-Pacific region. In 19th century the US cultural diplomatic and religious presence was established in East Asia which led to more Asian immigration to the US.

The US grand strategy since the WW-II has been formed by its policy to contain rival 'peer competitor' who can be capable to control Eurasian hub of economic and military powers (Lyne, 2006). This strategy was practiced during cold war against Soviet and China by deploying troops in Asia after 1945 (Buckley, 2002). Since mid-1970s the US realized to keep check on China's global political endeavor due to its Authoritarian political set up and closeness of China with countries which are of global concern. Since 1990s first Clinton presidency had striven coalescing China in international politics and enmeshing her in Asia Pacific regional configuration for having global and regional stability and peace. This contour of policy was preceded by Bush who kept constant eye on China.

The Obama administration is the first one which has kept the Asia-Pacific as basic primary regional strategic goal. Even during cold war and at the peak of Vietnam War, the US in spite of containment of China had given priority to the western front in order to do with the Soviet Union and Europe (Hasegawa, 2011).

The US advocates open international economic system having free trade and open exchange of services, goods and money while Chinese interests are to establish its sphere of influence in many regions. (Subramanian, 2012) According to Vali Nasr, senior advisor to ambassador Holbrook, the US conflates with China not only in economic issues comprised investment, trade and Chinese surpluses paying US debts but also in security issues stretching from Libya to Pakistan and Iran however when global affairs are contemplated then both countries interests get separated. In power play China is striving as rising power whereby the US as established power does not provide any space for China (Nasr, 2013).

Rebalancing Policy of the United States

In the post-cold war arena, the assertive power penetration and persistent economic growth of China has compelled the US for shifting its strategic assets from Euro Atlantic sphere and rebalancing its forces in the Indo-Pacific by amalgamating Indian and Pacific Oceans.

The “Pivot to Asia” doctrine marks a decisive shift in the US foreign policy-thinking in recent times. In terms of scope, purpose and resources mobilized for policy action, it is potentially more powerful than the previous “War on Terror” policy that defined American strategy since the beginning of this millennium. First articulated by Hillary Clinton in 2011, the Pivot to Asia strategy has gained considerable traction and seeks to reaffirm US pre-eminence in international affairs in the wake of Chinese economic and military ascendance.

Main objective of US pivot towards Asia Pacific is to counter China and changing global balance. The US wants to maintain lead in Asia which is difficult in future. (Mir, 2013) The US policy contours in Asia revolves around protection of US allies and partners from state hostilities, to flourish US leverage in key regions, curtailing military contests and arm races, protection of American from terrorist attacks, to impede the flow of illegal trade and proliferation of risky materials, surety about unrestrained flow of commerce and key resources and tackling of humanitarian emergencies and regional clashes. To maintain security and stability required four dimensions; to curb the aspiring regional hegemons who are acrimonious to the US interests, inhibit tussle of major power and regional polarization, to restrain the spillover of internal political socio-economic clashes across the borders which trigger regional instability; to build up cooperative relations with others in order to tackle transnational nontraditional security challenges.

This pivot to Asia also known as ‘Rebalance policy’ is based on five pillars. Firstly, collaboration with five US treaty allies (South Korea, Australia, Thailand, Philippines, Japan), secondly, close cooperation and building of capacity with emerging powers as India, Vietnam, Indonesia and Myanmar, Thirdly, establishing ‘constructive engagement’ with China, fourthly, close linkage with regional multilateral institutions as Association of South East Asian nations (ASEAN) and East Asian Summit (EAS), fifthly, dialogues and negotiations on trade and investment initiatives especially on Trans Pacific partnership (TPP) agreement.

According to Tom Donilon, National Security Advisor of Obama administration the rebalance strategy aimed to balance the American strategic environment in some areas and to sort out underinvestment in other spheres. Asia Pacific be fully granted due focus.

It was all inclusive strategy embodying not only military aspect but also political trade and investment development.

The strategic significance of Asia Pacific revolves around key grounds whereby the very first scene is simultaneous rise of China and India as two giants who have unresolved disputes with far reaching ramifications for regional security. India got sustained growth after 1991 economic liberalization and her 'look east' foreign policy which led to stretched strategic importance (Mohan, 2004).

The US according to John Mearsheimer is in struggle to become global hegemon and that seems impossible due to geography and water as main obstacle in this regard. The US in the past has remained offshore balancer in Europe and North East Asia by deploying military troops over there and developed logistical infrastructure so that to establish and maintain the US bases in the region (Mearsheimer, 2001). According to Mearsheimer the regional hegemon is not oblivion of the aspiring hegemon of other regions and keep watch on them. As buck passing strategy, which signifies that regional hegemon remained sidelined and let the local powers to observe the aspiring hegemon and when the need arises then militarily invade the region in order to curb the peer competitors (Mearsheimer, 2001). There is no satiation in power struggle. The US is using buck passing and offshore balancer strategies against China by giving preference to India. The US acts as offshore balancer in order to check the aspiring powers in the region which has been manifested in the form of pivot to East Asia – Pacific to contain China.

Since 2009 the US has started work on this policy as relations with Japan were taken on track by arranging 'two plus two' dialogues, collaboration in form of foreign and defense ministers' mutual visits and exchange, conceding to revise framework of the US–Japan defense cooperation, furthermore, shift on the Japan controlled Senkaku Island that is under the domain of both countries defense agreement. The US has taken hardware developmental aspects with Japan in 2012 as MV-22 Osprey Tilt-Rotor aircraft instead of US Marine corps Helicopters, decision in 2013 to add AN/TPY-2 X-band radar site in Southern Japan, deployment of US Navy anti-submarine and anti-surface ship patrol reconnaissance, P-8A. Both the US and Japan have planned to deploy two additional Aegis-equipped besides deployment of Global Hawk UAVs in May 2014.

In case of Australia, besides the high-profile visits in 2011 and 2014, an agreement was contracted for deployment of 2500 US marines annually to Darwin. The Obama presidency got stretched rotational approach to Philippines military facilities. Furthermore, military

agreements were ameliorated with New Zealand by overcoming restraints to formal defense contacts.

The US has officially declared to expand arm sales and technology transfer to India and to have defense industrial collaboration acceptance framework, welcomed premier visits of India whether of Ex-PM Manmohan Singh or current Modi. Moreover, Obama has also visited India on their Republican day celebration. In case of Vietnam, the US initiated defense agreements encompassing logistical arrangement repair at Cam Ranh Bay for the supply of the US ships, ended its embargo on sales and defense related stock.

Through this shifting policy the US is stretching contacts with China in order to have greater say in the region. Accordingly, Strategic and Economic Dialogue 2010 for tackling cyber, nuclear security and space matters, educational exchange programs were also started comprised 100,000 strong initiatives. In spite of Taiwan tension, military to military contacts were strengthened. Consequently, Chinese leader Xi Jinping meeting ‘shirtsleeves’ in June 2013 to the Sunnyland Ranch was welcomed whereby Obama also visited 2014 summit in Beijing.

The US ensured participation in regional multilateral institutions where Obama signed the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and cooperation and a permanent ambassador to it was appointed. The US full joining of East Asian Summit was announced in 2011. The US has applied low-end and high-end capabilities across Asia-Pacific, built operational concepts such as Air Sea Battle to ameliorate responses for tackling regional military threats.

Economically the pivot policy led the TPP, which is free-trade zone connecting economies forming 40 percent of global GDP. Obama administration caused the joining TPP by Japan in 2013. Furthermore, ratification of the Korea-US Free Trade Agreement (KORUS. FTA) in 2011 became possible by the US.

America is searching ‘level playing’ grounds for its companies and products (Christopher & Robert, 2012) for liberalization of Asian economies instead of existing mercantilist strategies of developmental state. (Robert, 2013) Japan and other major trading partners of the US in the region has sought developmental strategy dependent on export to the West and the US and providing protection to infant industry to the selected natural champion supported by soft government directed credit.

The US maintains “hub and spoke” security settlement in the region which has five tiers of security; firstly, a unilateral military presence, forward deployed 325,000 military and civilian persons in the Asia-Pacific region. These forces are deployed in Guam, the Mariana Islands, South Korea, Hawaii, Australia and Kyrgyzstan. The US 60

percent naval assets will be shifted to Asia as per Leon Panetta statement, to have five long lasting bilateral alliances in Korea, Japan, Australia and Thailand, and non-allied 'security partnerships with New Zealand.'[†]

India and Singapore, to participate in multilateral security arrangements multinational exercises, professional military education and intelligence sharing and lastly Bilateral military and security exchanges with countries which are not allies and strategic partners of China.

Pentagon posture of Indo-Pacific construct with air sea battle planning, US readjustment and military and strategic deployment in this region is in consonance with the US 'pivot' to Asia. (Medcalf, Raoul & Justin, 2011) This strategy aims to inhibit peer competitor in region and unification of region to exclusive and inward looking. (Ciorciori, 2011) Second aim as comprehended by Brezinski is imperial geo-strategy as he suggested for inhibiting any confrontation and having security dependence among vassals, to keep tributaries pliant and protected and above all keeping the barbarians from coming together. (Beeson, 2009)

US Modus Operandi

US Modus Operandi for enhancing her influence in the region can be analysed by the measures being taken by US as under: -

- a. US is adamant to gear up her activities in the region to create a space and fill it for gaining foot holds in various countries in order to increase numbers of allies.
- b. US create situations in the area and then render supports to overcome the situations and influence governments.
- c. To overcome disaster, exploit weakness through increase intelligence and military assistance.
- d. Introducing new dimensions in the field of trade and economics, which is evident from US exports of goods and jobs opportunity (in 2012, &555 billion and 2.8 million jobs). US is the only one bigger investor in the region which can help her rebalancing Strategy in the region.
- e. Democracy is being used as a cover for her increased political presence and activities in the region.

[†] Technically New Zealand and the US remains member of ANZUS, but the military components of this alliance have been attenuated since 1976.

- f. Beside economic development and strengthening regional institutions, US is also using regional security as a tool by exploiting the existing rivalries among various lobbies. The US intentions are very much evident from the increased trips of US Secretary of Defence Mr. Chuck Hagel. There is irregular power distribution in Asian region where China is supreme due to assertive military and nuclear arsenal. Chinese navy has unfolded strategic notion of 'offshore active defense' and is grappling for sea control in coming decade.

Similarly, Japan military potential is also surpassing the regional powers, which is taken as extension of the US military presence in the region. Asian region, which is infested with violent nationalism, enhanced economic development, more struggles for power has major tectonic shifts, as the Chinese rise and assertiveness, resultantly the US security and strategic role is dependent on Japan and consequently Japan is striving for dominant political part.

According to Brezinski, Chinese rise is nightmarish for the US but the US should restrain from encouraging Japan for acquiring huge military potentials in the Asia-Pacific because it will not only isolate Japan but will also muddle Japan and Chinese stability in relations. As China is far away from becoming global hegemon hence any containment policy is not appropriate strategy. China significance as global economic market is needed to be considered and trade relations of both China and US required to be strengthen.

Grounds of conflict in East Asian regional perspective are many but in territorial aspects it is Taiwan, which has generated confrontations in US-China relations since last sixty years whereby Taiwan mainstreaming with China is politically pivotal for Communist party of China. Chinese ruling echelon has time and again insisted the US to lessen the arms sale to Taiwan. There is other uneasiness in military sphere also as the US military operations in air and water nearby China particularly in Chinese claimed exclusive economic zones and sensitive yellow sea. Air-Sea Battle concept has been announced by the US military which is a way forward for the US military to the China. The US direct political engagement over South China sea is uncomfortable for China which is actually contemplated as indirectly siding with Chinese rival by the US. Another ground of uneasiness is the US claim that US-Japan security treaty embodies the issue of East China Sea conflict and Senkaku Islands administered by Tokyo but mutually claimed by China and Japan.

Chinese sea lanes security and safety which are very significant for China economic development of exports and access to energy and raw material have been guaranteed by American security order. Consequently, China is free rider on the US navy. Furthermore, China has other positive

aspects of international order as veto-wielding membership on the Security Council and its nuclear power status (Steinberg & Hanlon, 2014).

There is enhanced strategic significance of Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) which connect the Asian economies with the Indian Ocean attached resource hubs. Indo-Pacific SLOCs have achieved vital importance as according to analysis between half and two third of the world's oil shipments in which half consists containers cargo and 1/3rd bulk goods shipments cross the Indian Ocean where most of these heading towards east of the Malacca Straits (Ladwig, 2012).

The intra-Asian growing trade and cognateness have woven 'horizontal Asia' a spreading spider web of highways, ports and railways which is connecting Eurasia into the ambit of economic interdependence (Bubloo & Cook, 2010). These assertive economic linkages between East Asia and Pacific Rim have caused North Atlantic and Asia Pacific to come closer and has given shape to strategic geography (Bisley & Phillips, 2013).

The US interests in Asia are multiple comprised security, economy as well as normative. For this sake an international system and order has been established by the US after world war two to promote mutual security and open markets. This system embodied various international institutions as UN, NATO, IMF, WB and WTO. Besides there are bilateral and multilateral commitments to forward the aforementioned tasks. After world war two most of security commitments in Asia have been done due to apprehension about Chinese possible threats to the US interests in free market and security. However, the post Mao China has tendency to profit rather than challenge international system. The US is focused on engagement in Asian region where wealth and power will determine US economic and security interests throughout 21st century. The US grapple for leadership role in the region and to have long lasting preponderance in it. In post-cold war world, the emerging economies of India, China, South Korea and Indonesia would render it the status of world's leading economies whereby the US access to Asian consumer market will be pivotal to the economic prosperity of US. In this regard the country which would keep the US economic interests and power at stake will be great setback to US objectives.

The Chinese rise has caused closeness of regional allies with the US due to possible threats. Consequently, Beijing should weaken the linkages of the US with regional allies. Chinese efforts in this regard revolves around projection of its leverage in the neighborhood by expansionist design in east and south China sea while on the other hand US is hugely investing to counter the Claims of China and to guarantee security to regional allies against China.

The conflicts between dominant US and peer competitor like China is based on geography in east and southeast Asia where the very claim by Beijing turned adverse to US regional allies and resultantly hawkish policy to be adopted by both countries. However same factors hamper their direct conflicts as interdependence of both economies where China is substantially holding US treasury bonds. Hence any conflict will bankrupt China with dwindling of its financial market. Because in China where even external outside conflict had instigated internal revolution and violence then the US will be capable enough to doom the communist regime. Moreover, if political reforms enacted in actual sense then democratic China would be agreed by Taiwan for integration with, which in turn will dissolve cross straits contests.

According to Beijing, Washington's Asian strategy has features of overwhelming military posture, effective deterrence, an ideological standpoint for delegitimizing China, restoring regional diplomatic bloc and regional military bilateral alliances. Unlike the cold war where the US strategy in Asia sustained longer and the Soviet Union could never have thought of enmeshing US economically, today's super power is super indebted where power and the strategic rival in Asia (China) is its biggest external creditor hence how can the US encircle her own banker militarily?

China and US bilateral contest seems as regionalism rivalry, (Feng, 2013) which is somewhat dominated by China like the past as in response of George W. Bush 'shock and awe' unilateralism, charm offensive of Beijing in South East Asia was alluring to many countries which convinced the emergence of Sino-centric East Asia order (Mark, 2009).

In the decade of war on terror Francis Fukuyama emphasized the US that China's rise is greater geopolitical achievement which must be fresh in US memory. Although the rise of China is nightmarish for the USA but however, she expects strategic reassurance with China.

Alfred Thayer Mahan, a naval strategist has said, "whoever controls the Indian Ocean dominates Asia. This ocean is the key to seven seas in the 21st century, the destiny of the world will be decided in these waters". Basically, Mahan's statement is unfolding security dynamics in Asia. Chinese rise is connected with sea trade for energy imports as 80 % of hydro-carbons are transported by this mean (Erickson, 2010). In Indian Ocean maritime traffic is limited to the points of straits of Hormuz in Persian Gulf and Malacca Strait. China has Malacca strait dilemma whereby Indian hawks Bharat Karned former member of Indian national security advisory board stated that in case of tussle with China, India will adopt strategy of naval blockades by blocking oil and trade lanes of China in Indian Ocean (Joshi, 2011).

'First Island Chain' is also apprehensive to Chinese maritime thinking comprised a close arc connecting South Korea through Japan and Philippine to Malaysia and Indonesia. Basically, it is configuration of the US and its allies impeding Chinese nautical activities (Yoshihara, 2012) which is contemplated as containment of China by the US (Li, 2012). Accordingly, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India would serve India to 'seal of Malacca' and to inhibit China in Indian Ocean by having hold of Malacca straits (Yoshihara, 2012). Meanwhile India built command bases of Nicobar and Andaman in port Blair for serving its interests in Malacca straits, south East Asia for deploying its military in the region (Raghuvanshi, 2013). For countering Malacca dilemma, China is constructing ports in littoral states as Gwadar in Pakistan, Sittwe in Burma, Hambantota in Sri Lanka and Chittagong in Bangladesh which served as corridor for oil and trade of China. As Middle Eastern oil from Gwadar could be transported through 2000 km road and rail link to Kashgar in Chinese Xinjiang province by overlooking Indian Ocean sea route (Business Monitor International, 2010). This strategy of constructing ports in Indian Ocean by China is labeled as string of Pearls which is nightmarish for India by taking it as base for PLA military deployed in future. Hence India takes it its encirclement. But there is no indication of China for making it as naval base (Lu, 2012). As China has sternly rejected the Pakistani offer of naval base in Indian Ocean in order to avoid any confrontation with US and India (Pant, 2012). Basically, Chinese naval power capability is for establishing harmonious sea through international cooperation.

Role of India

India is apprehensive of Chinese objectives in Indian Ocean. Indian concerns are based on grounds that China will encircle India, will diminish its influence in Indian Ocean and South Asia although China has denied it. In this regard India has taken the incident of 2014 Chinese submarine and 2 Chinese naval vessels that entered Sri Lanka but did not dock at Sri Lanka port authority berth in Colombo but rather docked at Colombo south container terminal which was built and run by Chinese company (Singh, 2015).

In the post-cold war scenario, the US-India realized convergence of strategic interests due to common concerns towards China, some democratic values and aspiration. The US engagement in the region made India as great advocate of the US policies. Where the Indian role is contemplated as an indispensable in the US defense strategy for providing security to all countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

As China is threatening for the US but the US ingress in Indian Ocean for containing China will also be challenging because it will not only take her away from North East Asia but will also hang in the domain of un-ending rivalry of China and India whereby India will no more be at the US beck and call for protecting its hegemony. Furthermore, this aspect of grand strategy can lead to extravagance and nothing else. Second strategic aspect of decreasing intra-Asian security dilemma also seem unyielding because Indian Ocean and East Asia are contrasting. In East Asia the strategic antagonism is due to cold war inherited tussles as in the Taiwan Strait, Korean war, territorial conflicts of maritime or Archipelagic as Sekaku/Diaoyu Island and South China Sea conflicts. The very efforts of the US bilateral alliance system along deployed military assets have not ended these conflicts. Undoubtedly the US extended conventional and nuclear deterrence to Japan, Australia, Taiwan and Korea have prevented them from seeking deterrence capabilities which have mitigated local disputes.

On the other hand, Indian Ocean region restrain US from controlling local security dilemmas. The US has no security guarantee in this region of nuclear proliferation and land-based disputes (Pak-India, China-India). Hence for the very scheme of grand strategy in Asia, the availability of only few local actors and that with required assurance would enmesh the US without any strategic premium.

Indo – US Nuclear Deal

The US-India relations are diplomatically, militarily and politically capable enough to transform the power dynamics in Asia and world. Most significant aspect and security ties whereby the 123 agreement or US-India civil nuclear agreement signed in 2005 is remarkable. Accordingly, not only in 2008 the nuclear supply group conceded to award India ‘waiver’ which gives it immunity from rules covering civil nuclear deal but also the US moratorium on nuclear trade with India was removed. Recently during Narendra Modi visit in 2014 to US, both countries signed ‘Declaration on defence cooperation’ due to which both countries will be closest ally and US will grant sensitive technology to India for co-production in defence. Furthermore, both countries signed 10 years defence agenda in June 2015 which impart opportunities for high level strategic discussion, mutual armed forces exchange, joint strategic vision for Indian Ocean and Asia Pacific region. This arm deal of US with India will trigger arm race in the region which will be a hurdle for peace as manifested by consequent defence deal between Pakistan and Russia in 2015.

Indo-US civil nuclear deal has further signified US tilt towards India in the region. Big power interests in India for economic reasons and US desire to prepare India as counter to China places India in a better position vis-à-vis Pakistan. US will also like India to play a role in Afghanistan to fill in the vacuum which will be left after their departure. Moreover, US strategic partnership with India is apprehensive for China especially in the wake of 2008 civilian nuclear deal Chinese concern arise about possibility of the policy of containment which affect Chinese relations with India and the US. For China, Indian economy is charming for trade and investment but simultaneously Indian economy is getting as potential military rival. India and China have growing trade as Chinese export amounted \$29 billion in 2009 to India (Damodaran, 2010). Hence India is an economic partner as well as source of security apprehension.

The US seeks Indian power as a partner in its rebalance policy against China. Washington has strategic ties with India and sold \$ 10 billion of weapons and military system to India, discussed arms and technology transfer and has initiated plan of combine military exercises. The US-India civilian nuclear deal had shifted the US stance on nuclear proliferation whereby India was facilitated with international approach to nuclear fuel and technology. However, the US has not received the expected return from New Delhi in diplomatic, military or technology but similar cooperation is desired in future for tackling China in order to distract Beijing attention and resources for having stable security in South Asia. For many India-US have divergence on non-proliferation, rogue regimes and commerce and trade.

US administration stated that India is vital for US interests because it could assist the US in establishing strategically stable Asia (Qazi, 2009). India was going to be a bulwark against a rising China and balance its influence to provide stability to Asia (Qazi, 2009).

The US is major supplier of military hardware to India. (Srivastava, 2009) Furthermore, the US, Singapore, Australia and Japan have joined naval exercise of India called 'Malabar 07' in Indian Ocean in 2007. This is foreboding for China as she deemed it an effort for formation of Asian NATO and to encircle and rebalance China (Bidwai, 2007). Furthermore, China is apprehensive about US-Indian nuclear deal. This deal has kept Pakistan out of its ambit hence both China and Pakistan were resentful of this arrangement because it was giving an edge to India in South Asian balance of power and triggering a nuclear arms race in South Asia. (Page, 2008) Moreover, it exposed double standards and paradox of US on the issue of nuclear non-proliferation (Buckley, 2008). In past India has conducted joint military exercises with Pentagon more than any other country (Berteau & Green, 2012). The US presence at

Deigo Garcia in Indian Ocean was nightmarish to Indian officials but for India China is sworn enemy. In order to balance the Chinese supremacy over Indian sea lines of communication, Indian power has been projected into Pacific to reach China's marching in the Indian Ocean. However, India is cautious on 'Indo-Pacific' and most of its interests are based on geo-economic grounds. Whereas in 2007 South China Sea was termed as maritime area of interest for India (Scott, 2013).

Secretary Clinton emphasized India to come out of 'look east' policy as it has strategic autonomy hence it should strive to engage and act east also (Gupta, 2012). Since 1990s India has stretched naval exercises with south East Asian countries and military presence in western Pacific by partnership with Japan, Australia, US, Singaporean navies.

The US Pacific command head Admiral Harry Harris in New Delhi's speech urged India to be strategic ally of the US for curbing China. The US harnessing of India is due to several reasons as India is world second largest emerging economies which has been well-equipped militarily with facilitation of even blue water navy. Moreover, it is dominant in South Asia and can better serve the US projective power in Eurasia, China and energy abounding region of Central Asia and Middle East. India has greater access into the Indian Ocean. The Indian Congress government from 2004-14 has developed strategic terms with Washington whereby it grappled to relegate Iran to isolation. Recently Narendar Modi's government led by Bhartiya Janata Party has strongly allied Washington in China's containment. In this regard it is taking China as offensive in South China sea although it is Washington who in guise of navigation freedom is patrolling China's shores and to control Straits of Malacca through naval power. The bourgeoisie India is utilizing military geopolitical and diplomatic power imparted by its partnership with Washington for having regional dominancy.

Conclusion

Divergence of interests is mainly due to power play and to increase influence in the region by countering other state leverage. The US inhibits China's outreach in the region where China is having assertive military and nuclear arsenal. China with vast land mass and extreme economy is considered capable for supremacy in Asian region. In Asian region the US requires advanced military potentials to succeed, to perpetuate stability and to get preponderance in regional affairs despite dominancy of China. In coming years China will be able to enhance its anti-access benefits from current status and to stretch it into the Pacific, to Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia. Hence in this backdrop both US and

China must agree on certain red lines and threshold in the Asia Pacific region if a serious breakdown of security in the wider Asian region is to be avoided. Common interests can be identified such as trade and commercial relations and common approach to the freedom of navigation and avoidance of securitization of the Asia-Pacific regional countries and militarization/nuclearization of the Indian Ocean.

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