



CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC

Sayed Ali Mujtaba¹, Asma², Hamza Ishaq Satti³, Sami-ur-Rehman⁴, Muhammad Nabeel Sajid⁵, Muhammad Waleed Malik⁶, Muhammad Shah Zain⁷, Syed Muhammad Burhan Bukhari⁸

¹⁻⁸BS International Relations, Department of international Relations, Muslim Youth University Islamabad Campus, Pakistan.

ARTICLE INFO

History of Article

Received: 25th November, 2021

Accepted: 4th December, 2021

Corresponding Author:

† Sayed Ali Mujtaba

BS International Relations,
Department of international
Relations, Muslim Youth
University Islamabad Campus,
Pakistan.

Mail Id:

alimujtaba200@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

China since the 90s has experienced a rapid economic growth putting it on par with the U.S if its debt to GDP ratio is taken into consideration. This economic growth was a result of capitalizing its economy and various other factors which has since put the U.S on alarm. China has since used a foreign policy which is an amalgamation of its economic and military strength. The main goals of China's foreign policy is to limit interference of other states in its territory evident from its protectionist trade policies and to protect the regime by increasing their influence abroad on other continents and its different regions a direction which is quite similar to the behavior of other authoritarian states. However, the success of Chinese foreign policy cannot be denied in many areas and this success is credited not in small part to the U.S after Donald Trump came into power which has given China space to increase its influence like the U.S role in the Japan-South Korea tensions which threatened to terminate the 2016 military intelligence-sharing agreement.

Keywords: China, Asia-Pacific, Nations, Economic.

© www.albertscience.com, All Right Reserved.

How to cite the article?

Sayed Ali Mujtaba, Asma, Hamza Ishaq Satti, Sami-ur-Rehman, Muhammad Nabeel Sajid, Muhammad Waleed Malik, Muhammad Shah Zain, Syed Muhammad Burhan Bukhari, China's foreign policy in the Asia-Pacific, ASIO Journal of Humanities, Management & Social Sciences Invention (ASIO-JHMSSI), 2021, 7(2): 09-11.

INTRODUCTION:

China since the 90s has experienced a rapid economic growth putting it on par with the U.S if its debt to GDP ratio is taken into consideration. This economic growth was a result of capitalizing its economy and various other factors which has since put the U.S on alarm [1]. China has since used a foreign policy which is an amalgamation of its economic and military strength. The main goals of China's foreign policy is to limit interference of other states in its territory evident from its protectionist trade policies and to protect the regime by increasing their influence abroad on other continents and its different regions a direction which is quite similar to the behavior of other authoritarian states.

The Asia-Pacific region is by no means an exception and can be called the backyard of China similar to how South America is considered the backyard of the U.S by some scholars who view China as an aspiring hegemon [2]. China's foreign policy towards the Asia-Pacific has been quite complex with an unsavory past with Japan, close relations with North Korea which are a relic of the cold war which are also somewhat a bone of contention in its relation with South Korea, disputes with Vietnam, [3] Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and Philippines in the South China Sea which on many instances have led to armed conflict between the disputant parties, relatively good relations with Singapore which were affected with China's actions in the South China Sea and finally Taiwan which China considers its province and since Xi

Jinping came into power, taken aggressive steps with China exercising considerable influence over some states which have diplomatic relations with Taiwan, one of which is the Solomon Islands which has shifted its diplomatic allegiance from Taipei to Beijing. China has quite cleverly used economic statecraft to woo Asian-Pacific nations with intimidation from its military capabilities and installations. [4] However, these policies has not been completely successful but they have proven to be quite effective in increasing Chinese influence and diminishing American influence in the region.

South China Sea:

The biggest bone of contention and which has great influence upon the foreign policy of China in the Asia Pacific are the disputes over the chain of islands and the waters of the South China Sea, some of the disputes being political, some of military importance and some important economically. In addition to these disputes, there are also historical disputes which has proven much poisonous not only to China but even to the most important of U.S allies.[5] These disputes have led to warming up of several countries like Vietnam, Cambodia, Philippines, etc, to the U.S because of the assertive actions which China has employed in the disputed Paracel and Spratly island groups with its ever increasing military presence in the South China Sea. China has installed several military facilities and bases on these islands as well as created artificial islands in the sea which are also used for military purposes to maximize its power in the region. [6] China has cunningly and quite successfully used the economic carrot such that the need has not yet come to use the military stick too often and when the need came, it was only used for a slight tap. [7] The South China Sea is a very important point from a trade, economic, military or political view. The area is in abundance of natural resources such as oil and natural gas which can help the country which gains it reduce its dependency on the oil exporting nations, the oil reserves are estimated to be near 11 billion barrels perhaps even more and the natural gas reserves are estimated at about 190 trillion cubic feet.[8] The military importance is no less as it has and continued to provide a foothold for U.S in the region and the biggest maritime threat for China is from the South China Sea. In the area of trade and economics, one third of the total global maritime trade between Africa, Asia and Europe crosses through these waters. The oil of the Middle East, the markets of North America, 80% of China's Oil exports as well as that of South Korea and Japan and its finished products receives passage through these waters. Trade circulating through the South China Sea is in billions with most of the major economies of the world GDP

involved in trading activities. Control of the South China Sea will give the state influence and leverage almost equal to the Strait of Hormuz or the Panama Canal. It is by no means an exaggeration to term the activities in the South China Sea as the cornerstone of Chinese foreign policy keeping in consideration the advantages of these waters.[9] The claimant nations have in the past rejected any bilateral solution with the powerhouse of the region but Chinese foreign policy can be said to have been effective as the position of some nations has softened with President Duterte agreeing to solve the disputes through bilateral talks despite a tribunal's decision against China's claims, Indonesia since the beginning has not been too adamant about the claim some of the islands, Malaysia only claims a small portion of the Spratly group and the Government of Vietnam in 2018 announcing it is open to a bilateral solution with China over the disputed islands according to international law and norms. A Code of Conduct (CoC) has been in work between ASEAN and China to reduce the clashes in the South China Sea for many years with little progress but a draft agreement was negotiated and agreed to in 2018. One of the reasons for the slow progress on this CoC is that it will not affect countries from outside the region like the U.S and its freedom of navigation which is a source of risk. The actions of U.S and its allies are the biggest concerns of China in the South China Sea according to some Chinese observers. These actions can be considered as some of the triggers which have led to an aggressive Chinese behavior in the waters. However, while the economic advantages of the South China Sea are alluring, the main goal of Chinese foreign policy is to control the sea which many historical strategists have called the 'National Gateway' to China as through these waters came the barbarians (Europeans) leading to the Opium wars and the century of Chinese humiliation.

Chinese Foreign Policy towards Japan:

The relations between China and Japan after WWII have kept transitioning from cordial to the brink of confrontation due to history and disputes in the East China Sea. The animosity from the disputes have now been down downsized but the ones from history have not because while ties between the two states began to normalize after 1972, the memories of Japanese war atrocities still remained vivid. The events of the war are still to the present day a thorn on the path to better relations with many controversies caused by Japan of these times which is not a surprise considering the magnitude of the Japanese actions, the victims of which were more than 300,000 Chinese citizens. Japanese soldiers and their officers were responsible for slaughter, rape, pillage, brigandage, torture, arson and countless other acts of extreme barbarism. Japanese

government officials which include cabinet secretaries and Prime Ministers have either expressed sorrow or shown deep remorse and after 1990s, have apologized for Japanese actions during the war. However, apologies have largely been undone by government officials such as Justice Minister Shigeto Nagato in 1994 who made the inappropriate remark about the Nanjing massacre that it is a fabrication or the more recent event when Shinzo Abe's government asked a United Nations rapporteur to revise a report on wartime which was done in 1996. Also, the problem arises out of Japan's omitting of their atrocities in their textbooks as well as the controversial Yasukuni Shrine which is visited by Prime Minister or an offering is sent by the Prime Minister in the honor of Japanese soldiers which also include war criminals which infuriate not only China but also South Korea, Philippines and other states subjected to Japanese occupation during the world war.[10]

China's Policy towards the Koreans:

China has since the Korean War been one of the few nations which offered support of a financial and political nature to North Korea. China has substantial clout on North Korea evident from Kim's meetings with Trump but the further strengthening ties of South Korea with the U.S and its allies has been a point of concern for China as it fears it could have a double-edged application of containing China. However, relations between China and South Korea have improved with South Korea in addition to announcements which are pleasing to China has also decided to limit the scope of a military intelligence sharing agreement with Japan and in the same month had also rejected the inclusion of Japan in a U.S-South Korea naval exercise. The Moon administration had also shined a spotlight on Japanese crimes during the war and had timed a visit of the South Korean President Moon Jae-In to China to coincide with the anniversary of the Nanjing massacre to play the historical bonds between China and South Korea as victims of Japanese imperialism. Similar to the tactics which China had used in its relations with Japan, to leverage the disputes it had with South Korea and Russia, it has also done the same with South Korea.[11]

CONCLUSION:

It is without question that China is a major power and has an effective foreign policy. However, effective must not be taken as omnipotent as Japan and South Korea are still important allies to the U.S, Philippines enjoys

close military relations with the U.S, Malaysia has a balanced relation, Vietnam is diverting towards the U.S, Indonesia is also U.S oriented, Taiwan's relations with the mainland has deteriorated after the 2017 address to the Communist party and Singapore has deepened relations with the U.S out of concern for regional stability. However, the success of Chinese foreign policy cannot be denied in many areas and this success is credited not in small part to the U.S after Donald Trump came into power which has given China space to increase its influence like the U.S role in the Japan-South Korea tensions which threatened to terminate the 2016 military intelligence-sharing agreement.

REFERENCES:

- [1] Kobayashi, S., Baobo, J., & Sano, J. (1999). The "Three Reforms" in China: Progress and Outlook: Sakura Institute of Research. *Inc., RIM*, 45.
- [2] Chhabra, T., & Hass, R. (2019). Global China: Domestic politics and foreign policy. *Brookings Institution, September Report*. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/global-china-domestic-politics-and-foreign-policy/>(accessed March 28, 2020).
- [3] Kim, J. (2015). Territorial disputes in the South China Sea: implications for security in Asia and beyond. *Strategic studies quarterly*, 9(2), 107-141.
- [4] Hass, R. (2021). How China Is Responding to Escalating Strategic Competition with the U.S. *China Leadership Monitor*, 67.
- [5] Amer, R. (2014). China, Vietnam, and the South China Sea: disputes and dispute management. *Ocean Development & International Law*, 45(1), 17-40.
- [6] Taylor, R. I. D. (1994). Chinese policy towards the Asia-Pacific region: contemporary perspectives. *Asian Affairs*, 25(3), 259-269.
- [7] Rabbani, A. (2019). China's hegemony in the South China Sea. *World Affairs: The Journal of International Issues*, 23(3), 66-79.
- [8] Hu, W., & Meng, W. (2020). The US Indo-Pacific Strategy and China's Response. *China Review*, 20(3), 143-176.
- [9] Hu, W., & Meng, W. (2020). The US Indo-Pacific Strategy and China's Response. *China Review*, 20(3), 143-176.
- [10] Campbell, C., Meick, E., Hsu, K., & Murray, C. (2013). *China's "core Interests" and the East China Sea* (pp. 1-7). US-China Economic and Security Review Commission.
- [11] Xu, B., & Bajoria, J. (2014). The China-North Korea Relationship. *Council on foreign relations*, 22.