

Comment by Michael C H Jones
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I am not a military man, and plead guilty to having some very strong misgivings about their war theories over more than 50 years. History shows today's enemies are tomorrow's friends and vice versa. I cite Vietnam as a classic example in my lifetime, same communists but after about 5 million casualties including 3 million civilians directly/indirectly related to US military intervention in their civil war until 1975, now they are signed up members of the US TransPacific Partnership economic relations club to the exclusion of past allies China and Russia.

The US has a remarkable history of fighting one war to arm their enemies in the next war almost as if it is by design - Afghanistan, Iraq, and now Syria and less so Libya. Freedom is an American owned concept totally devoid of cultural historical inputs. The EU and NATO can be pushed virtually to the Russian borders without any recognition of the three invasions across the Ukraine since Napoleon and tens of millions of Russian dead.

Now the US generals have another war to plan. The next development will be the discussion of the use of tactical nuclear weapons as the Baltic nations are not defensible by conventional weapons even from Poland.

Yet the geopolitical implications are disturbing to say the least.

China in recent months, certainly over 2014/15, has been projecting three thinking/planning time frames re 2022 as the 500th anniversary of the first circumnavigation of the globe (this is a more important date than the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party in Shanghai in 1921); 2049 which is the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the PRC (certainly the CPC has speeded up China's Return to global leadership but it was inevitable); and 2101 as the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Commonwealth of Australia (a prediction that Australia will be a Great Power central to the prosperity of Induspac - Indian, Pacific and Southern Oceans).

Short and medium term the new alliances will be tested. Russia has been pushed into the China camp as that country slowly but surely economically dominates Eurasia. The EU has a choice, either quickly through diplomacy reincorporate Russia economically back into Europe or face an arms race that could escalate out of control - the "damage" will be in the EU not the US. Country neutrality on the Russian borders is the price tag, not too high a price for peace and prosperity.

Certainly the US is looking down the barrel, so to speak, of a three front war - cold and hot. Islamic Fundamentalism and hatred of American/Western values is not defeatable anytime soon and perhaps not for a 100 years if ever? Chinese reassertion of their historical place in the world, whether CPC led or otherwise, is not containable in the Western Pacific - like the Korean War it is just a question as to which line China intends to draw, first in the China Seas, second in the Western Pacific (Bering Sea to New Zealand) and third at Hawaii? And Russia under Putin until around 2022, when supposedly he retires again, making trouble everywhere, not only in Europe eastern and periphery, but in far islands like Fiji where his trainers need to upskill the locals on the use of his bargain sale weaponry.

Like the Muslim terrorists Chinese and Russian submarines are everywhere - even in the Southern Ocean/Antarctica.

And the new US President whether Trump, Clinton or whoever, will prudently have to continue the Obama military strategy of Fabius Maximus, the Great Delayer, in not committing US forces to every

dog-fight in the world - dog-fights deliberately provocative to bog down US forces to prolonged and financially debilitating land wars. Taiwan Province is no longer defensible militarily. A united Korea must be neutral. Bilaterally the 10 ASEAN nations will have to bow to China.

So the geo-political realities for Australia in the context of the current debate on our security and defence capabilities are stark. Allegedly the Australian people have been incredibly delinquent to allow their governments since the Vietnam War to run down our military forces so they are 15/20 years behind technological developments. We publish a series of Defence White Papers since 2009 at the same time that China militarises the South China Sea across the sea routes that take perhaps 60/70% of our trade, the lifeline of the country. We even allow a Chinese company, definitely with strong CPC connections, to lease the key harbour of Darwin thereby not only imperiling our own navy but seriously challenging the operational capabilities of our major ally, the USA in its so-called Pivot to the Asia Pacific.

The Chinese are patient, they play the long game like the British of old. Australia needs to think of its 200th anniversary in 2101 and act accordingly. Short term the US is our umbrella defence, medium term it must be a united ASEAN backed by Japan, India and Australia, and centered on Indonesia. Long term Australians must learn about, seek and exercise power. The Oceans are our protection but we need eyes and ears beyond the old Anglo club. An Australian string of pearls is required across the three oceans and security/defence policies that are geared to economic diplomacy.

The Great Game of Global Economic Relations should empower the thinking of our academic institutions. Governance in the island states that surround our continent, whether near like Fiji and Samoa or distant such as the Maldives and Madagascar, are essential for our values and aspirations of Human Rights and Democratic Forms in a global multicultural international commons not privatised by MNC. Australia will increasingly be no longer a bit player in the coming US/EU confrontations with China/Russia.