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How Wars Are Born: China versus the U.S. Beijing Challenges American Expansionism

by Shamus Cooke
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Those of us making the “radical” claim that wars are the result of economic/corporate interests pushed abroad, were recently given a nod of approval from a typically unfriendly source, *The New York Times*.

The corporate controlled New York Times published a revealing article about how U.S. foreign policy really works, and why. The motive behind the sincerity is that China’s foreign policy was being attacked. However, the article soon made it clear that China’s policy is the same as the U.S.’s : dominating regions that are of “economic (corporate) interest” — raw materials, cheap labor, shipping lanes, markets, etc. — through military buildup.

Dangerously, the article discusses how China’s economic expansion —and the military buildup used to protect it — is coming into conflict with the U.S. overseas militarism. For example:

"The Chinese military is seeking to project naval power well beyond the Chinese coast, from the oil ports of the Middle East to the shipping lanes of the Pacific, where the United States Navy has long reigned as the dominant force, military officials and analysts say."

Why is China expanding militarily?

“Chinese admirals say they want warships to escort commercial vessels that are crucial to the country’s economy, from as far as the Persian Gulf to the Strait of Malacca, in Southeast Asia, and to help secure Chinese interests in the resource-rich South and East China Seas.” (April 24, 2010).

Shen Dingli, a Chinese intellectual, recently argued in favor of creating the first Chinese overseas military bases (the U.S. has 909 military facilities in foreign countries):

“With the continuous expansion of China's overseas business, the governments are more accountable for protecting the overseas interests...the guarantee of smooth trading; the prevention of overseas intervention...” (January 28, 2010 - China.org).

Typically, the U.S. military is in charge of policing most of the global shipping lanes, so that corporate goods are unhampered by pirates or hostile nations, etc. But China is no longer content with this situation, and wants protections of its own. But why?

One reason is that China has been listening to the increasingly hostile attitude of the U.S. corporate elite, who have expressed the view that China’s economic rise is inherently in conflict with or in competition with the profit-making ability of U.S. corporations. Obama’s recent provocations against China — arm sales to Taiwan, the visit to Washington by the Dali Lama, threats about Iran, currency, etc. — are all proof that China’s economic rise will not be met with friendship and cooperation.

The above-mentioned New York Times article admits “...there are few indications that China has aggressive intentions toward the United States or other countries.” Nevertheless, the whole article intends to scare and frighten. For instance:

“Of particular concern is that elements of China’s military modernization appear designed to challenge our [U.S. Navy’s] freedom of action in the region,” the admiral [Willard] said.

“Japan is anxious, too...”

and

“Lee Kuan Yew, the former Singaporean leader, reflected widespread anxieties when he noted China’s naval rise and urged the United States to maintain its regional presence.”

These scare tactics are intended to steer public opinion into a hostile stance towards China, which the U.S. government views as a possible war target. This eventuality was made clear later in the article:

“...in reaction to China’s growth, the United States has recently transferred submarines from the Atlantic to the Pacific so that most of its nuclear-powered attack submarines are now in the Pacific... The United States has also begun rotating three to four submarines on deployments out of Guam, reviving a practice that had ended with the cold war...”

And most alarmingly: “American vessels now frequently survey the [Chinese] submarine base at Hainan island, and that activity leads to occasional friction with Chinese ships.”

China’s economic and military rise is pushing up against territory dominated by the U.S. military, which is pushing back. Military “incidents” are increasingly likely in this situation, which can be used as a pretext for war.

Behind the military jockeying for power are economic interests. Controlling the U.S. economy are powerful corporations, who rely on the U.S. military to ensure them super profits overseas, including domination over whole regions — the Middle East, Latin America, the Pacific — that are viewed as the “exclusive economic zones” of U.S. corporations. The fact that China is now declaring itself master of its own zones is intolerable for U.S. corporations, which will stop at nothing — including war — to maintain U.S. military dominance over the globe.