

America's Warm Wars A Question of Belligerency

June 23, 2016

In the first piece of this series, I wrote about several military initiatives of China, Russia, and the United States. Because of the increasing attention on the subject of China vs. U.S, I have expanded this discussion. This report is based on an article written by John Bolton. It appeared in *The Wall Street Journal* (September 11, 2012, p. 13). Its title is, "As China Muscles into the Pacific, the U.S. Lacks a Strategy."

Muscle? The title reveals an assumption many American citizens make about their country's presence on other countries' turfs. At the same time, we take issue with any insinuation about another country "muscling" near our boundaries. As indicated by the map of the western Pacific in Figure 1, who is muscling-out whom? The United States has scores of military installations and/or alliances surrounding China (depicted in red circles).

As examples of this situation, America has a huge military presence in Okinawa with Navy ships sailing in this part of the Pacific. American troops are stationed in South Korea, including scores of military sites. The United States has billions of dollars of aid with pledges to support the Republic of Taiwan.

Farther east in the Pacific. The United States has military troops and navy vessels in Guam and Hawaii. It also has a military installations in Hong Kong and Indonesia. Over one hundred sites are situated in Japan, shown with one modest red circle. Army installations operate in the Marshall Islands. Others are located on Wake Island, the Kwajalein Atoll, and the Johnston Atoll. These islands are symbolized with other red circles in the photo.

The United States has recently signed an agreement with Australia to establish a military site in that country. Perhaps the Aussies are in danger of being invaded by hostile Chinese forces. The two red circles on the left side of the figure symbolize military agreements with Pakistan and India.

Consulting the map in Figure 2 of the United States and the adjacent eastern Pacific and western Atlantic Oceans. How many Chinese military sites does China have near these shores? None.

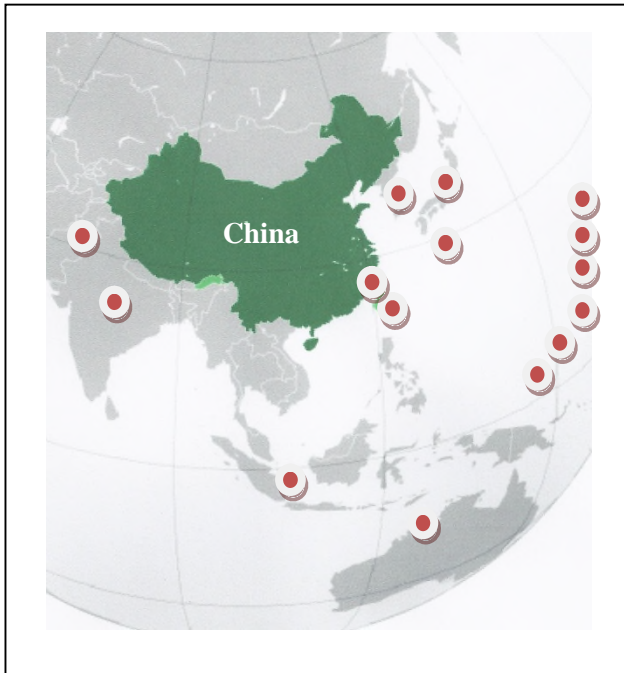


Figure 1. U. S. Military Presence in West Pacific.



Figure 2. China Military Presence in East Pacific and West Atlantic.

A Pause

Before going further, I ask both conservative and liberal readers: Do these two maps seem just a bit disproportionate in relation to the article in *The Wall Street Journal*?

I will likely not change one opinion---red or blue---with these articles. But let us not cloak ourselves in delusions about China asserting its muscles and building up its military structure because of their inherent belligerence.

Historically, China (for these discussions, the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries) has stayed away from launching offensive wars. Their military encounters entailed battling within their own boundaries (the 1949 revolution) or support for allies adjacent to China and associated boundaries (the Korean Conflict in the early 1950s and a short war with Vietnam in 1979 to support Cambodia). Skirmishes have occurred on China's west border as well, but they have been limited in scope. An exception to this practice was their Maoist inspired adventurism in southeast Asia during the Cold War.

For recent increases in their military, the Chinese are finally waking up to the fact that the foreign policy of the United States is so disjointed (every four to eight years of administration change, as one example) that it is incumbent on China to protect itself against the flip-flop military strategies of America. One term, a saber-rattler is in the White House. The next term, Neville Chamberlain's passive cousin takes over.

They are also reacting to a military system that has them surrounded. They are coming to realize if they are going to make their way in this world, they have to have a military capability commensurate to that of the United States.

General Picture

How long do you think China will countenance those red circles in Figure 1? Would I? Would you? Would any prudent leader of a strong nation? To China---after centuries-old experiences with the imperialistic world---the situation depicted in Figure 1 is demeaning to a world power and provocative as well. From China's view, it is potentially dangerous to its security.

I find it both amusing and disturbing that the media is beginning to paint China as an emerging, assertive bully. I'm in America's corner and am adamantly opposed to China's Orwellian repressive regime. It is a despotic system, using terror to kowtow citizens who step out of line. But facts are facts: Figure 1 would say otherwise about who started (or is starting) this belligerency.

Am I suggesting the United States tuck in its tail? No. If China becomes our next villainous adversary---as was Cuba, the Soviet Union, Mexico, Japan, Germany, Italy, Korea, Panama, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc.---we will be glad for those red circles. In the meantime, let's not disguise the reality of Darwinian competition with a phony cloak of moral, political, and religious righteousness.

As well, if we sail into the western Pacific, let's not pretend it is only for the defense of the freedom of the seas. It is also to promote Christianity and democracy over atheism and dictatorship...along with selling iPhones and Cokes to the natives.