

Oz must not get too close to the US

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Former Chief of Defence Forces Urges Restraint with US Alliance

Former Army chief, General Peter Leahy, sounds a tactful warning about our one-sided relationship with the US. Specialists are aware that the US is targeting China at Australia's great expense; local defence chiefs are under no illusions regarding the greatest potential threat to Oz security and it doesn't emanate from China! Of course the Americans would like us to think it does, however, there is no denying that Indonesia continues to present the greatest potential threat to Oz security!



General Peter Leahy

China's extraordinarily rapid development over the past four decades has today positioned it squarely in direct competition with the USA and the yanks don't like it, especially in view of the fact that Wall Street failed to gain control over the Yuan, which resulted in China winning the economic Globalisation war.

So now it's sour grapes and intimidation from the US; America hopes to 'contain' China (in its dreams) with bases in Korea and Australia, however, today's China is a far cry from the traditional 'yellow dog slave' nation the world has known for so long.

General Leahy spells it out for our servile and incompetent Canberra politicians who only know how to kowtow to Washington. Leahy, diplomatically asserts Australia's SOVEREIGNTY -- which Paul Keating compromised by floating our currency and Gillard surrendered by allowing FIVE full scale nuclear armed US military bases and a permanent US troop presence on Australian soil -- and emphasises that Australia's best interests are not served by kowtowing to the US or any other foreign power.

I need not stress that China is not an expansive, aggressive nation but has been forced to militarize in response to American aggression world wide and its threatening presence in what was once considered to be China's sphere of influence.

It is clear that Australia's best interests are served by skilled (future) politicians exploiting our new found regional importance -- a conciliatory, mediational approach between East and West is clearly the most advantageous option for Australia.

Report follows:

THE arrival of US marines in Darwin is a good thing. It provides a ready capability to respond to disaster and humanitarian crises throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

With their extensive experience in operating amphibious ships, marines can also assist Australia in developing the new Landing Helicopter Dock capability.

But there can be too much of a good thing, especially if it involves putting unnecessary pressure on China. By substantially increasing its close relationship with the US, Australia may unduly complicate its relationship with China. Care needs to be taken to ensure that Australia is not caught between the US, as security guarantor, and China as economic underwriter.

As a sovereign nation Australia should maintain the ability to say no to the US and separate itself from its actions. This will require careful thought and deft diplomacy.

Australia and the US share fundamental values. They have responded to oppressive ideologies, despots and humanitarian disasters across nearly a century of co-operation.

The ANZUS relationship was designed to enhance Australia's security in a hostile world. Australia has contributed troops to US global missions with the expectation that the US would return the favour in time of need.

Australia's security relationship with the US means that is more secure than we might otherwise expect. Joint facilities provide access to intelligence. Trade, scientific and professional co-operation allows Australia access to equipment, weapons and combat systems that are available to few countries. Personnel exchanges develop the skills of Australian soldiers, sailors and airmen.

Australians should be reassured by the US intent to pivot to the Asia-Pacific region. There are many uncertainties associated with the growth and increased assertiveness of China.

By agreeing to the US Marine Corps and potentially more extensive air and naval access requests, Australia has confirmed that it is firmly in the US security camp. At the moment the US is responding to the security concerns of many Asian nations. Parallel agreements for extended military co-operation with The Philippines and Singapore attest to this. There are more to come.

While it is the right decision to host an increased US presence and support its role in the region, there is cause for concern if the US pivot is handled hastily or insensitively and China sees itself as surrounded. Economic pressure on Japan was a contributing factor to the outbreak of World War II.

Concerns have been expressed by former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger and former US national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski. They echo the lexicon of the Cold War when writing in recent editions of Foreign Affairs. Kissinger notes the importance of not seeking to confront or contain China. He does not see China's military build-up as an exceptional problem and emphasises China's internal troubles. He argues that the challenge for the two nations is to move to a genuine effort at co-operation

rather than an assumption of confrontation.

Brzezinski refers to an anxious US and an overconfident China. He suggests that the US needs to provide room for China. This includes reducing close military reconnaissance against China, explaining the ambiguity of US policy on Taiwan and developing rules for naval operations.

Australia makes a "middle-power" contribution to the diplomatic and economic decisions shaping the future of the Asia-Pacific. Australia's military is capable but carries limited influence in this big league. The Australian Defence Force is crucially dependent on US support to conduct high-intensity operations and in lesser conflicts would be hindered without access to US intelligence, ammunition, logistic and transport support.

The US is the play-maker in security deliberations in the Asia-Pacific. It is an overwhelming force, including among its allies. It is difficult to say no, even as a friend. This limits Australia's ability to make independent decisions. If too closely aligned with the US, Australia will be associated with any mistakes. US actions, mounted from Australia, will implicate Australia. In the Cold War US joint intelligence facilities were a target for Soviet nuclear weapons.

Recent US force posture redeployments are primarily about control of the sea lines of communication in the Pacific and Indian oceans. Also prominent are the disputed fishery and resource assets of the South China Sea and China's growing ability to deny naval and air access to its coast. The key players in this environment are the US Navy and US Air Force operating under evolving Air-Sea Battle doctrine. Future Australian agreements with the US will no doubt involve greater access for air and naval forces to ports, training areas, mounting bases, and repair and sustainment facilities in and across Australia.

These are momentous decisions with far-reaching consequences. They potentially implicate Australia in a series of actions that could lead to increased tension and even conflict with China. War is improbable but not impossible. The Australian defence white paper of 2009 advocated a strategic posture that hedged against the growth of China. These agreements take that process a step further. Australia needs to be careful that it does not make inevitable the future that it should fear the most. Current decisions are being made without public debate or discussion. Once made they will be difficult to reverse.

The deployments have already attracted negative attention. Indonesia has questioned the arrival of the marines. Chinese academic Liao Kai, writing in the US Air Force's influential Air & Space Power Journal, warns that Australia should keep its military co-operation within an appropriate scope. There have also been proposals that the Chinese trade relationship with Australia should be downgraded.

So far Indonesia and China have accepted the explanation that the deployments will result in an improved capability for disaster and humanitarian missions. As US forces build up, this will be harder to believe. The US pivot to the Asia-Pacific has substance and the US is likely to persist. Australia needs to consider if, where and when to draw the line.

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