

Geopolitical Situation in East Asia and People's Security (summary)

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1. General background:

* China-U.S. angle of the East Asian situation; U.S. empire globalized since the end of the Cold War and demise of the Communist bloc; neo-liberal globalization with all its irresolvable contradictions,;

* Long-term determinant: U.S.-China rivalry over global hegemony; not just regional, in long term; how to handle United Europe and China as potential hegemonic rivals; China - chose to get integrated into neoliberal global capitalism (WTO), building up, esp. economically, for a future hegemonic bid, but not now; maintaining political/military autonomy capable of countervailing U.S. empire (WTO, joint exercise with Russia).

* But U.S. not for containment of China; rather engagement, considering rapid capitalist growth, vast market, in the globalized capitalist market U.S. controls;

2. Geopolitical situation now developing in NE Asia:

Korean peninsula - North Korea nuclear issue; U.S. overstretched to make war; South Korea goes autonomous over NK issue; U.S. to rely on China; six-party talks; S. Korea-Japan discord, "past glories," territorial dispute, N. Korea policy;

Taiwan straits - status quo, China's anti-secession law, CCP-KMT rapprochement

Japan - renewed and deepened commitment to U.S. empire, renewed in 1995 (Okinawa; guidelines) and post-2001 adventurous bet on U.S. imperial reign, participation in Bush war - amendment to the Constitution (Article 9), but U.S.-pressured change for remilitarization conjures up the specter of the Japanese empire (Yasukuni, textbook), total diplomatic failure, incl. UN Sec. Council; isolation from neighbors, China, S. Korea, N. Korea, Russia.

3. "East Asian community"

East Asian community in fashion; regional integration and post-1997 development - Neo-liberal formation - FTA: ASEAN + 3, China (2001?2003); "East Asian community," East Asia summit (2005; India, Australia, NZ); Japan-China, Japan-S. Korea slow progress; China/Japan contention for regional hegemony; all for neo-liberal integration perpetuating, deepening, inequalities and differences;

a) China - rural issues, urban workers, migrants and unemployed, gender, environment - the new leadership, huge middle-bureaucracy, protests and riots;

b) China's increasing economic influence;

- c) rich and poor gaps in most countries, aggravated internal tensions, e.g. southern Thailand;
- d) exploitation of wage and other differences assumed (

4. People's security - concept (cf human security)

- a) Possibility of East Asia state level alliance as a countervailing power to U.S. global domination; positive aspects - if for peace (denuclearized zones, demilitarization, conflict resolution) and if effective in countering global imposition of neo-liberal policies (like in 1997) through minimum democratic processes;
- b) Security and peace at the more fundamental level - people's security as creation of new relationships in society (see APA-founding declaration; Muto, "Asian peace movement and Empire"); UNDP Human Security Report (Ogata and Sen) - a step forward from earlier human security, but still the agency is the state; people's security as security not only of and for but by the people.
- c) People's security as social movement, or people-to-people alliance building - people as the agency:
 - (a) movement pressuring governments to take better policies;
 - (b) movement of the people to create a compelling alliance situation where war and other forms of mutual killing is made impossible; this last is up to us, non-state actors including the church, and that is where we have full power to decide and act as we can reap as much as we sow. Examples: Korea - North- South relations; Okinawan militant pacifism (state does not protect people); women in 1999 Indonesia; India-Pakistan; former Yugoslavia;
 - (c) People's security as resistance to neo-liberal divisions and competition for greater equality: most difficult part of alliance, but alliance building requires permanent processes whereby to overcome the exploitative, oppressive, and discriminatory relations and cultures in actual realities; this requires critical assessment of history as the premise for the change of existing relationships.

5. Centrality of the people

From Sagarmatha Declaration (People's Plan 21, Kathumandu, 1996): *"While the dominant economic and political systems attempt to relegate our concerns as peripheral, we collectively reaffirm the centrality of our struggles and our visions. This centrality is rooted in our daily lives, in our living and in steering our ways through the chaotic currents stirred up in the dominant systems This centrality is the multiplicity of our practices and responses in which lie imaginative alternatives to the dominant systems. We will not, and need not, wait only for our elected representatives and political leaders to address and resolve the multifarious economic, political, ecological and cultural crises that we face."*