



The United States Revolution in Military Affairs and the Possibility of the Increasing Tension in East Asia

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ABSTRACT

The main focus of Revolution in Military Affairs is about possibilities, which are the new possibilities of war with low casualties, which makes war a more acceptable political means, the possibility of precision-strike, which use of the cutting-edge information and technology based military forces, that can attack precisely where the enemies are, and not lead to miss targeting the enemies, and so on. China and the United States have a relationship characterized by both competition and collaboration. After 147 years of US economic dominance, China's rapid economic growth has moved the US into second place. China's rapid economic expansion poses a challenge to the United States and could impact its status as a superpower. As a result, there will be greater instability among major powers under the multipolar international order. However, there are other potential sources of instability in the upcoming multipolar international order. Today's power dynamics have elevated the international system to a completely new level.

Keyword: Revolution in Military Affairs, Multipolar, Superpower

BACKGROUND

The Revolution in Military Affairs is more concerned about the future rather than the past. The Revolution in Military Affairs defined the capability of the armed forces in terms of what kind of armed force will be able to finish the task effectively in the future rather than what they are capable of in the present. The main focus of RMA is about possibilities, which are; the new possibilities of war with low casualties which makes war a more acceptable political means, as we all know, that the war itself is actually the extension of political means of a country; the possibility of precision-strike, which use of the cutting edge information and technology based military forces, that can attack precisely where the enemies are, and not lead to miss targeting the enemies; the possibility of maintaining small number of armed forces, but can still achieve the decisive military result and so on. However, for each thing the RMA makes it possible for the countries that capable in doing such Revolution in Military Affair to achieve new risks appear. To explain the Revolution in Military Affairs, whether it will affect the result of the war or not, I would like to use the developed countries such as United States to explain the phenomenon.



In 2003, U.S. started to deploy their troops to Iraq for combating the terrorism-supporting country. The 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq has become the largest, longest, and highest cost of armed force by the United States since they fought in Vietnam. U.S. invasion of Iraq is considered as the first major post-cold war international actions that taken by US, and also becoming the first-time experience for U.S. in occupying power in Middle Eastern country. There are several factors behind the U.S. invasion of Iraq, from the prevention of next 9/11 by attacking the terrorism right at their home, the fight for democracy until the willingness of the U.S. president, George W. Bush to surpass his father which was taking U.S. to go into the Gulf War back to the Bush Senior's administration.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

There is a term called the "calculus of war" that was introduced by an international relations and war expert, Von Clausewitz. Which in the practice is calculating the cost, effect, and casualties of the war. President Bush was speaking of this RMA-calculus of war in April 2003 when he addressed workers at the Boeing plant in St. Louis where F-18s are made: 'More than ever before, the precision of our technology is protecting the lives of our soldiers, and the lives of innocent civilians. The overwhelming majority of the munitions dropped in the Iraqi campaign were precision-guided. In this new era of warfare, we can target a regime, not a nation (The White House 2003).

According to this statement, it somehow shown that US is highly confident in conducting the war in Iraq, it means that they are well prepared to into war, but they are only preparing to have less casualties in their side, but as we know that US and alliances had suffer high casualties. One of the disadvantages of RMA is that the country which doing the RMA is mostly preparing only for minor casualties, the fact is there are over 6,800 US service members and over 6,900 contractors have died in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (Watson Institute 2021). Many of the U.S. forces casualties also come from the friendly fire, there might be a possibility of the unfamiliar personnel with the weaponries which is the high tech weaponries. The need to have weaponry-highly educated personnel is very important in armed conflict, especially when using high-tech weaponry. This should be implemented at both strategic and operational level. The advance of technology should be followed by the capability of the personnel itself.

The use of high-tech weaponry system by U.S. which could highly damage the opponent side has the side effect that U.S. ever reveal or not, which is the safety of the civilian itself. U.S. High tech weaponry system has effectively attacked the enemies force and make it



harder for the opponents to compete or even counterattack the U.S. forces. The “invulnerability” of the U.S. forces has created idea for the Insurgencies group that they will not able to attack the coalition forces with a high damage, but then realize that that the best targets for undermining the coalition forces project for creating a new Iraq after Saddam Hussein’s regime was to target the most vulnerable part, which by bombing the UN headquarters and targeting aid workers and foreign civilian contractors, So then, the insurgents were able to prevent the coalition forces from creating a civilian infrastructure that could deliver on the promise of a better life after the Sadam Regime.

The important thing that should be considered that could affect the result of the armed conflict is the “social risk” management. Social risk is the variety of risk that lead to the damage of the building and social environment as the result from the external factors, such as technology development, industry, which later will create the growth of ”social sickness”, the ignorance, passivity, egoism and fatality. If we see from the U.S. invasion of Iraq, we might see that there lies an unsupported action that did by the Iraqi citizen to the U.S. and coalition forces. It was as the result of high damage to the civilian building and social environment that led to the anger an untrusty feeling of the Iraqi citizen to the coalition forces. Rooted from the U.S. invasion of Iraq, many experts arguing about the U.S. as the strongest military power at that time, but still hard to win the war. As we all know that the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) has given the United States armed forces a decisive advantage. However, the war in Iraq has somehow illustrates that the advantage in military hardware which hold by US is not easily translated into political result of the war.

The cutting-edge technology that is being adopted in the military weaponry system has somehow affected the outcome of military conflict, but there is something above the high-tech weaponry system which is the international framework itself. Because the international framework itself who allowed U.S. to deploy the high-tech weaponry system. We could see from the U.S. status quo power, which for example, able control the international economy via the IMF or the rules of trade set in WTO. As we know that United Nation which act as one of the biggest international frameworks did allow U.S. to use of military means to Iraq through the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1441 (UNSCR 1441), adopted on Nov. 8, 2002, by a vote of 15-0 (UNSC 2002). Even though there are some argues that the resolution did not mention about the use of military means to cope with Iraq, but in the fact that U.S. already invade Iraq.



Possibility of Conflict in East Asia Triggered by China-US relations.

The relation of United States and China are in both cooperation and competition. The China fast economic growth which put US in the second place for the first time in 147 years of US economic domination. Some scholars argue that the China fast economic growth as a threat to U.S. that will affect the U.S. position as a superpower country. We may see from the military spending of both countries. In 2014, US military spending reached \$571 billion, a huge distance ahead of second placed China's \$129.4 billion. The high jump that reached by China, both military and economic has shown the emerging of china as the new rising global power. The U.S. action towards the China's Rise was shown by the establishment of the 'US Rebalance Policy' which believed to be the tool to encounter the China's rise. China then, stated that they are in the "Peaceful Rise" (Duncan and Martosko 2014).

The future relations between U.S. and China for the author would likely to be a warm peace rather than going into the hot war. Because we might see that U.S. and China has cooperation in some field, and competition in the other hands. It could be seen from the Xi Jinping visits to US to establish a better relationship in cyber space, including the protection of trade secret and the enforcement of IPR. The relation between U.S. and China could be seen from the "interdependence hypothesis" theory which both U.S. and China are still need each other to further enhance both economic, military and technology while they are also in competition.

If we see from the Power cycle theory, the U.S. now can be considered has reaching its maturity level, so in the future, United States will not further be levelling up, but rather decreasing. On the other hand, China is on the way to reach the maturity level, so, even though the China will still be increasing its growth, but the increase level will go quite slow. Based on this theory, we could see that even though China has reached the second position in military spending, but in order to face United States, china will not be able to reach it in the few recent years, but there might be a probability that China will reach that level in the future. So, the clash between these two giants would not likely happen.

Current Tension

During the Cold War, the international system was in a bipolarity form, but then it changed just after the end of the Cold War, which marked by the collapse of Soviet Union into a unipolarity, which then led by the United States of America. And now, our world is seemingly to be changed into multi-polarity, since the existence of the rivalry among the states, and the trend of arm races, especially in nuclear proliferation. There is a strong possibility of great



power rivalry in East Asia region, as its region has weak regional alliances and institution, which is different compared to the Southeast Asia which has ASEAN as trust building institution in the region. The economic rise of some actors in the East Asia region will indeed represent a serious sources of instability in the near future, more over the increasing military spending will also lead to insecurity feeling in the region, as it is could be seen from the “enduring rival theory”, which a theory when a country increases it’s military of a country would likely to present a fear to its neighboring countries, then the other will perceived it as the threat, and will try to reach the same level as the threatening country. The reducing of the US role and the rise of China would likely to undermine the balance of power in the Asia and would also trigger the old rivalries between Japan and China (Shambaugh 2006). The China rise and the advancement of missile technology is seeing as threat by the Japan, because Japan, as one of the U.S. alliances still worried on the China medium-ranged Missile, and now U.S. has concerning more to the otherside of the wold, which makes Japan afraid that U.S. will not help with full support if something happen between japan and China. The stability of the region appears even more difficult to achieve considering that the concept of balance of power requires shared common values and similar cultural understanding, requisites that are not present between the two major powers of the Asia Pacific region, China and Japan (Friedberg 2012). In the other side, India also has the power to develop nuclear has threaten the Indian very neighbor which is Pakistan. The relation between India and Pakistan is in the vulnerable time.

Russia now is a country which controls the European provisions of energy as they export large amounts of gas and oil and also has increases its military expenditure for the last decade, if approved, the defense 2016 defense budget will increase by just 25.5 billion rubles (\$400 million), around 0.8 percent, over 2015. It will be the first time since 2011 that Russia’s military expenditure has not increased dramatically. Which will possibly become the potential threat for instability in the future (Gady 2015). Moreover, the control of the gas prices in Europe and the enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Central and Western Europe have already been causes of tension between Russia and the West. The possibility to exploit and supply a large number of natural resources, the growth of its military power and divergences with the US in some foreign policy issues, such as the Iranian nuclear program or the status of Kosovo, indicate that the stability of the future multi-polar world could be seriously undermined by a resurgent Russia (Arbatov 2007).



CONCLUSION

The multi-polarity international system will therefore provide more instability among great power. But that is not the only source of possible instability in the future multi-polar international system. The distribution of power these days has brought the international system to a whole new stage. The capabilities of middle, small powers and even the non-state actors have the military capability that could threaten the global security. In the future of multi-polarity international system, the issue of nuclear proliferation has also will even contribute to the instability of the global security in the future.

While some scholars argue that nuclear deterrence “could reduce the war-proneness of the coming multi-polar system” (Layne 1993). most of them consider the presence of nuclear weapons as a source of instability (Varisco 2013). If there are more actors that have the capability of nuclear weapons, then it will be the concern to the global security. If a country like Pakistan, attack or be attacked by India, the war between these two neighboring countries will involving the rest of the world in the war. If the DPRK attack Japan with a nuclear weapon, then it would trigger the US actions as an alliance of Japan and will trigger a nuclear proliferation “domino effect” in East Asia. Moreover, if there is a terrorist group who has the ability to purchase and develop nuclear weapons, the world will be in a holocaust nuclear war.



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