

# The Yalta System and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Asia-Pacific Peace

-- On the occasion of 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War

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*Abstract: A large number of facts show that, since the 1990's, Japan has deviated from its "no-war" commitment to the world, and especially to the Asian people. The bottom line of American appeasement to Japan still remains within the cold war framework, but has begun touching the bottom line of the Yalta peace system in the Far East. The Historical experience tells the United States that if it intends to maintain peace in the Asia-Pacific, and it is no good leaving the cooperation with China and Russia out.*

This year is the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the victory of the world anti fascist war, is an important occasion for summarizing and reviewing the history, as well as planning and looking forward to the future. China and the United Nations and some other countries hold commemorative events. The move shows that China is committed to maintaining the world's anti-fascist war victory, and determined to defend the world peace. World peace is not variable mirage floating in the air, but is guaranteed by the international system and its legal system with long-term legal effect. Understanding the Yalta system after WWII is indispensable for the maintenance of peace in the Asia Pacific region in the 21st century.

## Origin of the "Yalta System"

The Yalta system refers to a series of agreements and understandings shaped by the United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and China, etc., in the later period of World War II, in order to end the war, handle the left over matters from the war and maintain the postwar peace through the Tehran Meeting, the Yalta Conference, the Cairo Declaration, and the Potsdam Proclamation, which established the postwar international peaceful order and legal system in order to curb resurgence of German and Japanese militarism and set it as the logic starting point.

After the end of WWII, the Yalta system has considerable adjustments, but from the overall perspective, the system foundation to

curb German and Japanese militarism resurrection and thus the formed geopolitical architecture have not changed. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Yalta System in Europe is indeed disintegrated, is marked by the fact that Germany separated by the Yalta System became reunited and the Soviet Baltic Sea three Republics became independent and the Eastern Europe having belonged to the Soviet geopolitical sphere of influence entered the Western camp. Russia lost its geopolitical interests in the European region back in those USSR days, but also lost its responsibility of "protecting" Eastern Europe. However, in the Far East, we cannot say that the Yalta System has disintegrated, because the system elements composing the Yalta System and the legal responsibility of major powers' guarantee for the peace in the Far East have not changed: Russia still inherits the right to the Japanese four northern islands granted by the Yalta System; the United States still occupies the island of Okinawa; China's legal status of recovering Taiwan's sovereignty and reconfirmed by Yalta system have unchanged. Conversely, if we assume that the Yalta power structure in the Far East actually exercised by the United States, Russia and China over Japanese militarism has dissolved, then the current Asia-Pacific peace will lose its legal basis; the Russian and the U.S. occupation of relevant islands and China's sovereignty over Taiwan will be in question.

### **No lumping cold war system with the Yalta system**

At the beginning of the end of WWII, the three major countries, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Soviet Union run into some contradictions in the exercise of Yalta authority and the post-war interests allocations, which quickly led to the cold war. The two sides signed one treaty after another with their respective allies and established the "North Atlantic Treaty Organization" and the "Warsaw Treaty Organization" in confrontation, thus shaping the cold war system on the basis of these treaties and assured by organizational structure of these treaties. It is closely followed by the fact that in world politics the newly formed Yalta system of cooperation spirit between the major powers was shadowed by, the "cold war", reflecting sharp confrontation between major powers: originally the Germany separation matter, China's sovereignty over Taiwan and Japan's post-war status and other issues are all settled in the Yalta system, but now have seen "problems" in the cold war system. Especially in the 1970s as the two superpowers the United States and the Soviet Union reached the peak of their rivalry, the former enemies became friends, and former friends adversaries, which made people only remember the cold war system, but shelved the Yalta system, i.e. the legal achievement by major powers cooperation in achieving the victory over fascism. At the end of the 1980s and early 1990s, Eastern Europe witnessed upheaval, East and West Germany became unified, and the Warsaw Treaty Organization disintegrated, then, some scholars argue that the East and the West officially declared the end of the cold war, especially the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991 marks fundamental changes of international architecture with the two major military blocs confrontation as the basic characteristics, and so the Yalta system has completely collapsed. I

do not agree with this view. Here a question should be asked, as the most important organizational tools, the NATO has not disintegrated like the Warsaw Pact, but further strengthened, how can it be concluded that "the East and the West officially declared the end of the cold war"? Under the conditions that the Yalta architecture remains essentially unchanged in the Far East, how can it be concluded that having provided the world with nearly 50-year peace assurance, the Yalta system has completely collapsed?

In fact, the cold war and the Yalta system are two complete set of different things but closely overlapping in time. Regarding the birth dates, the Yalta system is earlier, the goal of which was to contain German and Japanese revival of fascism, while the cold war system is later, the goal of which was to contend for world hegemony by the Soviet Union and the United States. Regarding the death dates, part of the Yalta system collapsed marked by the reunification of Germany, which occurred earlier only in Europe; the end of the cold war between the Soviet Union and the United States contending for hegemony occurred later. Reality indicates that the cold war in the world is not brought to an end but is strengthened to some extent, and is still the basic characteristic of world politics. What needs to clarify is that the cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union, in history, is not a special case. Actually, soon after the Vienna system established in early 19th Century as Neapolitan was defeated, nearly a hundred-year cold war emerged from 1815 to 1907 between Britain and Russia covering Western Europe, the Crimea Peninsula, and then Afghanistan in Central Asia. During this time, in addition to 1853 - 1856 Crimea war, there was almost no international war. In view of the rising Germany, in 1907 the British-Russian cold war suspended due to the Anglo-Russian Convention. Soon after WWI, the emerged

Versailles system aimed at constraining the defeated countries, and in the meantime, the Russian October Revolution and the Soviet regime were in place. With the emerging and rising Soviet Union, between which and the West emerged the cold war again. In order to destroy the Soviet government, Britain, France, Italy and even the United States instigated the Germans to get armed again at the expense of the Versailles system - it is actually a continuation of the 19th Century British-Russian cold war, which results in WWII in 1939, only 21 years from the end of WWI.

With the Vienna system still instable, the cold war between Britain and Russia emerged, with the Versailles system still instable the cold war between the West and the Soviet Union emerged, similarly with the Yalta system still instable, the cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union kicked off. From March 5, 1946 when Churchill delivered the *"Sinews of Peace"* Fulton speech, to Mikhail Gorbachev came to power, the cold war lasted nearly 50 years. The U.S.-USSR cold war, despite the huge scale, generally did not break through the Yalta system framework. It is interesting that on February 2, 1953, Eisenhower, in order to promote the cold war against the Soviet Union, had ignorantly asked Congress to pass a bill, rejecting any secret agreement (referring to the Yalta agreement) reached with foreign governments in the past. As a result, opposition by the United Kingdom and West Germany forced the U.S. Government on February 6, state in the bill released by the Government and Congress that it did not condemn the Yalta agreement itself. Even so, the bill still failed to pass in the U.S. Congress.

Having come to power in 1985, Gorbachev tried to end the cold war: He first of all announced the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan (1986), and then, took the lead in unilateral dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty

Organization (1991) despite that the West does not agree with the reciprocal dissolution of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Meanwhile, Gorbachev mixed up the cold war system with the Yalta system as a whole, while initiating the end of the cold war, and also taking the lead in giving up the rights and obligations endowed on the Soviet Union by the Yalta system. It is giving up these rights and obligations that triggered the European pattern shaking and even disintegrating of the Yalta System in Europe. On the other hand, NATO in 1999 through a victory of the Kosovo war infiltrated the Western presence into the Balkans. It is unexpected to Gorbachev that the European pattern of the Yalta System ended but the cold war he intended to bring to an end does not come to an end but has reemerged asymmetrically in world politics after the Soviet disintegration.

#### **Japan drifts further away from its "no-war" commitment**

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the actual performance of Japan proves: Japan once again has restarted directing the Greater East Asia drama and will be pushed to the climax by the Japanese right-wingers. While the first scene is the Diaoyu Islands, because it can straightly touch the core of Japanese Asia-Pacific geopolitics.

Opening up an Asian map, we will see the Diaoyu Islands is a key link in Japan's so-called peripheral situation involving various links, and also the key connection part between the Japanese archipelago and the Taiwan islands having great strategic significance on the Japanese geopolitics. The Japanese government has announced granting private enterprises oil and gas exploration business to the east of the "median line" in the East China Sea, because China's exploitation of oil and gas is close to the Diaoyu Islands.

The unity between geopolitics and resource politics is the basic characteristic of

geopolitics. In fact, a country is a living body digesting resources. Japan is a developed economy with scarce resources, Japanese had economic rapid rise in the postwar, and a considerable part of whose manufacturing industry and the market distributed overseas, especially in the Southeast Asian region. But Japan has no actual control of the sea lane that determines the sustainable development of the Japanese economy from the Japanese archipelago to the South China Sea. This has stimulated the Japanese right-wingers again to seek the southward expansion, especially the military southward expansion impulse. The scope of the "surrounding areas", proposed in previous years, mainly refer to the China's Taiwan province and Southeast Asia, which is generally the geographical range from the Meiji era in 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the Japanese invasion of Korean Peninsula and China in the 1930s. An inevitable logic result of expanding "surrounding areas" is bound to be Japan's "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" in the 1940s. Then, China's Taiwan is located in the core area, and the Diaoyu Islands is seen as the forward base by Japan to control Taiwan.

A country to become a major political power needs to meet with some conditions. Firstly, benevolence. After the Second World War, especially since the 21st century, Japan has not only tried every means to deny its war crimes, but despite strong opposition from Asian countries, insisted on visiting the Yasukuni Shrine, which shows that Japan has power without benevolence, and cannot become a major power without benevolence. Secondly, geopolitical space. A major power must have the corresponding material wealth, but more importantly the geopolitical space compatible to its national power and confirmed by international law or tacitly approved by world-wide major powers. At present, it is not strength and wealth that Japan is lack of, but acceptance by the international community,

especially the Asian countries, at least a tacit consent to a certain extent. In the 20th century Pacific War, Japanese troops invaded most countries in East Asia and set up supportive puppet regimes in Korea Peninsula, and part of China. Japan almost included the entire Western Pacific region in its peripheral security space, surrounding the Japanese mainland. But these geopolitical "achievements" in the Yalta Far East pattern shaped by the United States, the Soviet Union and China after the war are taken away -- sovereignty of Taiwan islands Japan occupied after the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-895 is returned to China, Korea Peninsula becomes independent, and Japan's southern Okinawa Island is taken by the United States and the four Northern islands by the Soviet Union. These series of geopolitical changes and the relevant changes-confirmed documents shaped the Far East Yalta legal system, assuring in the Asia-Pacific region 50-year peace in the post-war. This system through clamp on Japan by the United States and the Soviet Union, and China from North of Japan to its South, i.e. from the four Northern islands to the southern island of Okinawa and Chinese Taiwan, disable the Japanese rearmament.

Similar to the situation in early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, in the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Japan again faces with a profound contradiction between its powerful productive forces and its narrow geopolitical space. Japan in the new century again faces a dilemma: a choice to become either the Asia's Switzerland or the Asia's Britain. Currently, it seems Japan does not show any possibility to choose the first one, but has an impulse to make an eager try for the second choice.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, confronting the rapid rise of China, the United States begins following a policy to contain China. Now, in its Northward move, Japan starts making claims at the "four northern islands" in Russian hand, and in its Southward

move, Japan starts denying China's sovereignty over the Diaoyu Islands, deepening high-level contacts with the "Taiwan independence" elements, and intervening in the affairs of the Taiwan region.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the subsequent disintegration of European Yalta pattern, the U.S. diplomacy is consciously or unconsciously deviated from the policy that the cold war played a main role while giving certain consideration to Yalta system during the U.S.-USSR contention for hegemony— half-heartedly in the beginning and then straightforwardly carried out policies, through getting rid of the Yalta system, especially the legal liability of monitoring Japan, and to appease Japan and strengthen the cold war policy of containing China (and Russia). This policy has the Chamberlain type diplomatic gamble features: Chamberlain, at the expense of the Versailles system, continuously appeased Germany to launch attacks on the former Soviet Union, which resulted in igniting war flame in Europe that had not only destroyed Germany but also brought to an end the British Empire. In order to contain China, the United States is quickly opening the Far East "Pandora's box", which provides Japan with a hope to subvert the Yalta Far East pattern in attempt to regain its geopolitical interests partly or thoroughly lost in Yalta agreement. In fact, from 1999 the bill on situation in the surrounding areas to 2005 nearly completing the amendment of the peaceful constitution, Japan has generally made domestic legal preparations for subversion of the Yalta Far East pattern. Japan's next step is to challenge the restrictions on Japan by the Yalta System. And the bill on the situation in the surrounding areas, denying the trial legitimacy by the Far East Court on the Japanese war criminals and Japan's efforts to become a "UN Permanent Member of the Security Council", etc., are the specific

performance of this challenge.

At present, Japan denies its goal of becoming a military power on public occasions. On May 6, 2005, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi stated to Russian media that Japan, after the Second World War, has always firmly pursued the following belief: Japan will only become a major economic power, instead of a major military power; only adopts peaceful means to solve any problem without the use of force. The clauses of the Yalta System on Japan are set to prevent Japan once again from becoming a major military power. Therefore, Japan, "never becoming a major military power", should honor its commitments under the peace treaty of Yalta. However, a large number of facts show that since the beginning of 1990s, Japan has deviated further away from its "no-war" commitment to the world, especially to the people of Asia.

### **Neither China nor Russia or America should be left out in maintaining Asia-Pacific peace**

The U.S. reckless policy of conniving at Japan brings the Yalta peace mechanism and its system closer to an end in the Far East. Currently, the bottom line of the U.S. appeasement on Japan has not yet broken through the cold war framework, but has touched on the bottom line of the Yalta system of peace in Far East.

Peace should be understood as a stable structure protected by international cohesive force on the basis of international law. If this view is agreeable, then in essence, the Asia Pacific regional peace is the peace within the Yalta system instead of any other system. The fact that Japan renounces rights to war and takes a peaceful development road is also imposed by the Yalta agreements and accepted by the defeated Japan. "The Cairo Declaration of Three Great Allies", i.e. China, the United States and the United Kingdom in 1943 clearly



states: It is their purpose that Japan should be stripped of all the islands it seized or occupied since the beginning of the First World War in 1914 in the Pacific, and that all the territories that Japan has stolen from China such as Manchuria, Taiwan, Penghu, etc., shall be restored to China". On July 26, 1945, the Potsdam Proclamation by China, the United States and the United Kingdom urges Japan to surrender: the terms of the Cairo Declaration shall be carried out, and the Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku, and minor islands to be determined. On August 10<sup>th</sup> the same year, the Japanese Government stated clearly to the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and China that it is prepared to accept the terms set by the Joint Proclamation signed on July 26, 1945 by the United States, the United Kingdom and the Chinese Governments, as well as later signed by the Soviet Government in Potsdam. Japan will have the above-mentioned intentions confirmed in the form of national law in the officially announced "Japanese Constitution" on November 3, 1946. Provisions of Article 9 of the Constitution provides: the Japanese people sincerely seeking international peace based on justice and order, forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes". To this end the article provides that "land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained and the right of belligerency will never be recognized. It is these constraints on Japan and their acceptance by Japan that constitute the cornerstone of the Far East peace mechanism within the Yalta System. As long as the Yalta System in the Far East is not undermined, and Japan is accepted by the Asia Pacific countries and people as a major power in defiance of its commitment to peace, then it is very difficult for it to become a normal major power. In other

words, if Japan intends to rearm and become a political major power, it is bound to destroy the Far East Yalta peace mechanism.

Taiwan's sovereignty by the Yalta System belongs to China, which is the legal basis of the "one China principle", and also the legal basis for the United Nations to accept the People's Republic of China and reject the Taiwan authorities in the United Nations. It is worth mentioning that the historical factors for today reality of Taiwan separation is the cold war system instead of the Yalta system. So before emergence of a new cooperation system unanimously accepted by the Asia-Pacific international community, the United States, Russia and China have the authority to ensure, and Japan also has the obligation to fulfill its commitments made in 1945 to the international community, and maintain the existing Far East Yalta peace pattern. Within this pattern, Japan must comply with its peace constitution, cannot be re-militarized, cannot have armed forces, must take the road of peaceful development, and also must not shake China's sovereignty over Taiwan.

Now the problem is that, in order to constrain China, Americans are choosing the Chamberlain's way: instead of continuously honoring and keeping the peace commitments made to the peoples of the world in the 1940s international documents such as the Atlantic Charter, the Charter of the United Nations and "China, Soviet, the United States, the United Kingdom Declaration on General Security", the Tehran Declaration by the Soviet Union, the United States and the United Kingdom, the Cairo Declaration by China, the United States and the United Kingdom, Crimea (Yalta Conference) Bulletin, the Potsdam Proclamation urging Japan's surrender by China, the United States and the United Kingdom; and instead of maintaining peace in Far East together with Russia and China and other Asia-Pacific countries, but unilaterally appease

Japan and seek the opportunist interests from the irresponsible expressions of "burying the Yalta legacy". In Asia, if there were no waning and civil strife inside China and Russia in the late 19th century, there would be no Japanese Meiji dominance, neither Japan could grab Northeast Asian Geopolitical Interests and eventually illegally seized the Western Pacific. After the 1895 China-Japan War and 1905 Japan-Russia War, Japan had rapid rise in Northeast Asia. At the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> Century, it occupied Korea and Northeast of China, and launched all-out war of aggression on China under the U.S. appeasement in the late 1930's. In the 1940s, Japan entered the Anglo-American sphere of influence in Southeast Asia and launched the Pacific War after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Then, the United States was seeking China's help, Japan was defeated in the Sino-U.S. cooperation and was forced largely to return to the territory of the Meiji era by the Yalta system. For the outbreak of the Pacific War, Americans bear a corresponding responsibility of appeasement. One month before the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt still stated his willingness to get contacts with Japan and intended to conclude a Joint Convention to maintain peace in the Pacific, but only after the United States was attacked by the Japanese troops, did Roosevelt turn to tie up with China he had once referred to as an "extra burden", and left China to digest the evil fruit by Japan. At both the Cairo Conference and the Yalta conference, the United States made a number of commitments to China and the Soviet Union, so it is on this basis that the Far East pattern of the Yalta system was shaped after the victory of the

Pacific war.

The 100-year history of 20<sup>th</sup> Century shows that no matter how strong the United States is, in order to stabilize the Pacific, it must implement the policy of cooperation with major countries, especially with China and Russia. The history from ancient Rome to the British Empire shows that in the world there is no Empire whatever strong it might be is unable to maintain long-term unilateral grasp and dominance of the world, the United States is no exception. The Pacific War, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the U.S.-USSR cold war in 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and the U.S. war on terror in the Middle East and Central Asia in the 21<sup>st</sup> century repeatedly show that the United States is unable to bear the important task of reforming the global politics and even the regional politics. In the modern history of Asia, it is Japan that formally declared war on the United States and launched attacks on it, but also claimed to be its ally. In Asia in the 1940s, if there had not been a geopolitical environment favorable to Japan and unfavorable to China and the Soviet Union, Japan would not have the political conditions to launch an attack on the United States. On the contrary, the Sino-U.S. cooperation has taken historical tests and is a relatively stable cooperation from the strategic perspective. The historical experience indicates to the United States that if it intends to maintain peace in the Asia Pacific, there is no way to leave out the cooperation of China and Russia. Similarly, the purpose of today cooperation between China and Russia is not to squeeze the United States out but to keep it stay in the Far East Yalta system.