



US policy in South and East Asia not helpful: Xinhua

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Further militarizing South Asia and East Asia, especially with a policy that has a rather unobvious bias against China, does not improve the overall security environment, an expert said in a recent interview with Xinhua.

"Instead, Washington should focus on adopting a more neutral stance regarding territorial disputes involving various regional powers and should accept that Beijing's growing economic and military influence can play a stabilizing rather than a disruptive role," said Ted Galen Carpenter, a senior fellow for defense and foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute in Washington DC.

The US does have important economic and security interests in both South Asia and East Asia, especially the latter, said the defense expert at the institute, which advocates limited government.

Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter has wrapped up his first Asia trip since taking the post in February, committing to "enter the next phase" in rebalancing American foreign policy to the Asia-Pacific region with reallocated weaponry, redistributed troops and modernized military posture.

Carpenter said that the "next phase" of the US rebalancing strategy would seem to emphasize strengthening Washington's alliances with various security partners in East Asia and South Asia, backed up by a more visible and robust US military presence.

"There are multiple motives for the Obama Administration's strategy," Carpenter said, "although that move is implicitly directed against China, the new phase of the rebalancing strategy is also directed against North Korea and Russia."

"The bottom line is that the rebalancing strategy is designed to maintain US hegemony in that part of the world," Carpenter said.

By visiting Japan and South Korea, Carter has also sought to strengthen ties with its allies, saying "we reaffirmed our country's commitment to this strong alliance especially in new domains in cyberspace and science."

"Washington hopes to forge a strong, united trilateral security front with Japan and South Korea to counter China, Russia and North Korea," Carpenter said, but "there are several problems with that approach, including the persistence of disputes and tensions between Seoul and Tokyo that limit such cooperation."

Carpenter explained that the recent South Korean criticism of Japanese textbooks and the increasingly acrimonious bilateral territorial dispute are clear indications that there are serious frictions between Washington's two main Northeast Asian security partners. "That situation highlights a major flaw in Washington's rebalancing strategy," Carpenter noted.