

Cementing Military Alliances against Beijing: Washington's Bond with China's Neighbors

By [Global Research](#)

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In recent months, the US has been busy cementing alliances in Northeast Asia and inking a new agreement with China's Southeast Asian neighbor Vietnam. The US intension is clear: to stir negative sentiment against China among its neighboring countries.

Recent news reports that the US and Vietnam are discussing a nuclear energy utilization agreement, including allowing Vietnam to proceed with uranium enrichment, which is an essential step for making nuclear weapons.

The US is trying to consolidate its scattered influence in the region. To some extent, it can manage to do so, given its geographic detachment, its global influence and its economic might.

The US power play caters to the fact that China's neighboring countries are on guard against its growing influence. Quickly after the US stated that the South China Sea is of US national interest, Vietnam began intensifying its protest against China's legitimate activities in the disputed waters.

Will the US-Vietnam alliance bare fruit? There are reasons to doubt it will, like the short-lived Soviet-Vietnam alliance in the 1970s.

The Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty Organization, initiated by the US in the Cold War era to mainly counter China, disbanded in 1976 due to internal disagreement and inconsistent policies.

China should step up efforts in persuading its neighbors of its peaceful rise and do its best to win regional respect. Its economic power has benefited the smaller economies in the region and set up a growth model that they may also follow.

Any attempt to counter China by relying on US diplomacy and its military would result in paying an economic price.

Traditionally, China was the central power broker in the region, backed by its cultural influence and advanced productivity.

China needs to win friends and allies in a similar way. In modern times, this includes providing economic aid and helping to stabilize the region during times of emergency.

China is promoting tighter bonds and trust in the region. The China- ASEAN Free Trade Agreement, for example, can be an effective cushion against a collective confrontation

against China. ASEAN also includes members that do not have territorial disputes with China and is in line in sharing China's view of a stable regional situation.

The US is returning to Southeast Asia with a clear political agenda. It is trying to expand US influence and strengthen cooperation with countries in the region, but seeds of distrust are also being planted with its attempt to contain China. Countries around the region must see these tactics for what they are.

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