

Analysis of Whether Hong Kong's Adoption of the Security Law will push China-US relations into a new "Cold War" based on Structural Realism

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Abstract: The realisation and long-term impact of the security law of Hong Kong initiated by China represents a dynamic situation and this enforcement entails China's perseverance of the current foreign relations with the West. Exploring into the concepts of neo-liberalism and idealism, a vivid picture of the political scenario of Hong Kong and whether the new 'cold war' situation is gradually erupting in connection with the straining relationship between China and the West can be explored. Here, the way new measures of the policy apparatus are conforming to the notions of idealism also formed a relevant area of the study. The Sino-American relations and how they are affecting the policy sector for Hong Kong remains a relevant area of study concerning the previously mentioned threat of another 'cold war'. Considering the tension between the two powers can result in long-lasting changes in the international paradigm of foreign relations, especially concerning how these two countries are modelling their policies, various scholars have shown interest in conducting both theoretical and empirical studies and based on these, the aftermath of the Hong Kong security law can be clarified. With the application of Kenneth Walt's structural realism or neo-liberalism theory as well as contrastingly applying the idealism theory, the findings of the study have been supported. While understanding the role of the political events leading up to the enforcement of the security law provides the study with factual bias, the implementation of these concepts results in better theoretical grounding of the study on the security of Hong Kong initiated by China and its impact.

1. Introduction

Nations around the world started to re-evaluate their perception of China as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) adopted the Hong Kong National Security Law (HKNSL) on 30 June 2020. This is an ironic development of events in China that can be traced back to the nineteenth century when extraterritoriality was enforced by the British. China was forced to surrender Hong Kong to

Britain under the Treaty of Nanjing in the year 1842, following its humiliation in the Opium War. Until the colonies returned to China in 1997, this treaty established the political framework for subsequent treaties and agreements that operationalized British extraterritorial jurisdiction in China (Gajaweera 2020). With the Hong Kong security law, where China asserts the right to impose its own legislation outside of its own region, both against Hong Kong citizens and against outsiders, this seems to have entered a complete circle now.

Based on China's predicament, the Hong Kong security Law have affected the international relations between the US and China. This has been contested by several scholars to be the new 'hot bed' of a new strain of Cold War. A strong China not only presents a threat to the United states economic productivity, domestic stability, but also its ability to keep a tight hold on its foreign alliances, the United States sees China as an imminent enemy to its national defence and dictatorial liberal-democratic philosophy (Normile 2020). Similarly, out of all realpolitik factors, the Chinese Communist Party has taken a trenchant change in its foreign policy, such as the necessity to regain domestic buy-in and restore internal peace after one of the most destructive economic isolation in the past three decades and an intellectual hysteria deeply entangled with the jingoistic anti-foreign subjugation of the nation.

Against this backdrop, the present essay seeks to analyse the aftermath of the Hong Kong Security law on Sino-American relations and the event being a possible 'hot bed' for the emergence of a new phase of "cold war" in the neoliberal economy. The essay has focused on the analysis of the political event based on international relations theory of Waltz's structural realism or neo-realism as against the theory idealism to critically analyse the event.

2. Analysis

2.1 Waltz's Neo-Realism Versus Idealism to Analyse the Present Situation

A philosophy of international relations that claims force is the most powerful element in international affairs is neorealism or structural realism. Structural realism maintains that the essence of the international organization is determined by its concept of order (authoritarianism), framework units (states) and capability allocation (determined by the number of major powers within the global community), with only the latter thought to be an independent variable, with little substantial adjustment over time. The international building's anarchic governing theory is decentralized, ensuring there is no formal central authority; in this framework, every sovereign country is formally equivalent (Mazis 2019). Defensive neorealists show state violence and extension to achieve the purpose of hegemony as drawing opposition from other states. Therefore, violence is claimed to be self-defeating in achieving the security target that defensive neorealists say to be the primary goal of the regime. On the other hand, Idealism maintains that a country must make its domestic political ideology the focus of its actions and discourse in international relations in the form of foreign policy. An idealist, for instance, might think that ending poverty at home should be combined with addressing poverty internationally. The Idealist Perspective maintains that, in favour of modern ways and means decided by experience, purpose, sensitivity and self-restraint, old, inefficient and dangerous forms of action, i.e., war, use of force and aggression, should be discarded.

Based on the above contestations, the event of the Hong Security law was a motive best justified through the theory of neorealism as against the idealism. The main motive of China was to strengthen

the hold of Hong Kong based on security reasons where they averted to military and authoritarian identities much like a Machiavellian approach rather than the previous utilitarian approach that they presumed over Hong Kong.

2.2 Hong Kong's Adoption of Security Law and the Beginning of A New 'Cold War' Phase Based on Structural Realism

China's decision, by the National People's Congress, to enact a national security bill in Hong Kong is like launching an atomic bomb on the territory of Hong Kong. The step deals a death blow to its century-long existence as a distinct legal authority for Hong Kong as a whole, and is the very cornerstone of its economic prosperity, liberty, and human rights. It sends a chill to the Democracy Camp in Hong Kong, as they come underneath the heel of more oppressive repression. It is also terrible news for the government, as the decision of China to circumvent the constitutional process in Hong Kong is a vote of no-confidence in the previous indirect law model. Apart from the market based, the extensive concentration of the West in Hong Kong in terms of multinational nongovernment organizations, media divisions, and intelligence activities are also at risk of being forcibly removed by China's strong hand (Chen and Young 2020). The West, especially the United States, could forever losing its position in the gate of China. For the West, this move is the death knell of their Hong Kong involvement. In Chinese territory, Western firms will lose the last Western-oriented commercial center and their business rights will no longer be well covered by the jurisdiction of British-style common law. U.S. business interests in Hong Kong, including 1,300 enterprises and almost 100 billion US Dollars in foreign direct investment, have now been threatened by the long arm of China.

From this perspective, it can be clearly understood that the intention of China was to strengthen its hold over Hong Kong as since two decades it was under a buffer zone, making it a highly strategic location for the West as well as for China. With the supreme hold over the city with a justification of national security, the Chinese government promulgated a highly authoritarian approach with full autonomy of Beijing over the city based on a nationalist approach. As seen from the basic themes of Waltz's theory of neorealism, it can be clearly indicated that the event is core to the strategic formulation of a theory of defensive neorealism where China has imposed several nationalist laws and regulations, militarised strategic locations over the city, criminalised 'terrorists' or citizens of Hong Kong and foreigners who try to go against the Chinese Government and its jurisdiction over the security law of Hong Kong (Heydarian Pashakhanlou 2018).

2.3 The Strain in Sino-American Relations as a Result of the Hong Kong Security Law

The U.S. and China have radically different democratic principles, regimes, and mechanisms of leadership. Since the case, both the COVID-19 outbreak and the larger economic tensions between both the 2 nations seemed to become bitter and heightened causing the possible new strain of a new phase of Cold War. The Xi regime appears to have little interest in holding Hong Kong as its buffer zone with West, by straying from the utilitarian stance of the CCP towards Hong Kong. Xi instead sees Hong Kong as the frontline battleground of the current Cold War with the US, guided by a nationalist government discourse. China, Hong Kong, and the West would be ensnared in a vicious circle by the decision to press for a domestic security rule, bypassing the local regulatory framework

completely. Based on the neorealism theory adopted by China, the aftermath of the event of the security Law over Hong Kong has been visualised as an end-product leading to the Cold war between the West and China. The relations of US and China have greatly been affected as a result of it due to several economic issues.

US under Trump after the security laws had terminated several US advocacies of economic and political relations with China. Trump had terminated the US relations with the World Health organisation over the outbreak of Covid-19 based on China's participation of the same. Moreover, he suspended the entry of foreign nationals from the country of China as identified by him as a potential risk to the US security (YELLINEK 2020). This neorealism approach seemed to have developed a major strain in the economic and political relations between both the countries culminating to a possible Cold war in the near future. Scholars and reporters were of the opinion that as a result of the strain in relations, riots and uprisings between the Capitalist west and communist China is bound to take place (Syed and Ali 2018). It can be seen that both the countries have strained from their previous international relation theories of neoliberalism and utilitarianism and have undertaken a theory of structural realism initiating a cold war based on the identities and justification of national security over a strategic location of Hong King.

2.4 Beginning of a New “Cold War” Phase

The strain in relationships between the West and China did not culminate merely after the security Law of Hong Kong. The phases of curtailment and containment had been embedded in the history of US and China. Blaming the usage of neorealism to cause strains in the international relations completely on China would be an overstatement. In the 1950s to 1960s, China's first period of restriction and containment by the US was rooted in the various principles and structures of China and its foreign policy that bent against the Soviet Union and nations that were distinct (Kipgen 2020). As a result, for more than three decades, the US and its allies have pursued the policy of restriction and containment of China, adequately blocking China politically and economically through military and diplomatic means. During this time, in the overt armed confrontation in North Korea, and indirectly via agents in Vietnam and other Parts of Asia, both countries came neck to neck. As President Trump changed the US's China policy after he assumed office in 2017, the fourth process of resumed curtailment and containment began. The key events include the publication in December 2017 including in the "U.S. National Security Strategy" paper that describes China as a geopolitical rival, the 2018 beginning of the US economic trade war With china, which involves the US tactical repression of China's high-tech sector and the US-led systematic political and financially containment and deterrence of China (Hui 2020). Hence, if abiding by the 'new cold war phase' that had been aggravated via the use of a neorealist strategy of China over the formulation of the security law, it can be ascertain that the seed of Cold war had been embedded long ago.

On the other hand, it must also be considered that as in the Cold War, the world's condition, split into two competing factions, will not recur. China's economic relations with the US and its Foreign partners over the past forty years, on the one hand, cannot be fully broken or disentangled, as this will have significant implications for both sides (Singh 2020). On the other hand, in forming a coalition of countries whose principles and systems are strongly compatible with Chinese culture and systems, China is reluctant to imitate the former Soviet Union. The overwhelming majority of China's allies

could, but not at the detriment of their connections with the US and the West, improve economic and trade links with China or face conflict with them.

2.5 Idealism and Hong Kong's Adoption of Security Law

As mentioned earlier, the theory of idealism proposed an approach in galvanizing and coordinating international public opinion, idealists stress the importance of common bodies such as the League and the UN. Via such ways, crude force can be withdrawn from foreign affairs, replacing study, justification and debate with national armies and navies. Importantly, the presence of a natural equilibrium of interests between all individuals underlying the superficially competing interests of their states and/or governments appears to be emphasized by idealists. While noting that various cultures have distinct rules of ethics, moral traditions, beliefs, behaviours and preferences, they argue that human beings are inherently standardized. As against such connotations, the issue of the Hong Kong security law cannot be measured through this theory (Acharya 2019). It has been indicated in the above analysis how structural realism was the seat of the issue, whereas idealism proposes a paradigm of a warless state of control where power and authority undertakes a backlash and a utilitarian view of state is visualised and practiced. While analysing the event in details, the gruesome approach of China to undermine the protestors was seen. This is a complete opposite view that idealists uphold. Despite, the fact that US for a considerable amount of time had undertaken an approach of 'principle realism', which is not very far from idealism, in the present neoliberal economy, a complete utopian idealist theory is next to unimaginable (Wohlforth and Zubok 2017).

3. Conclusion

From the above analysis it has been seen that the theory of structural realism of Waltz had been the basis of the event of Security Law in Hong Kong initiated by China. The event had been analysed both a neutral perspective to bring out the implication of the theories of international relations to demonstrate the usage of the core theories that form a base of the debate of a possible reign of a beginning of a "Cold war" between the West and China. The present essay had attempted to examine the implications of the Sino-American ties rule of Hong Kong Security and the case is a potential 'hot bed' for the emergence of a new period of 'cold war' in the capitalist economy. The article concentrated on examining the political event based on the philosophy of international relations of Waltz's structural realism or neo-realism as opposed to the idealism of theory to objectively examine the event.

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