

# The Follies of US “Containment Policy”



International news has been dominated of late by a high-pitched acrimony between Washington and Beijing. The purported trigger-point was the rather massive unmanned airship or Balloon from China that floated over US airspace at over 60,000ft. for a number of days.

The Chinese side maintained from the outset that the airship was a “civilian aircraft with limited self-steering capability that entered US airspace unintentionally due to force majeure”.

Beijing further underlined that the Balloon and its payload were exclusively “designed for meteorological data collection and research with no sinister military capability or threat” against the national security of any country.

However, the interpretations and perspectives of Washington – at least in terms of what was officially conveyed to the public – was widely at variance with these assertions. The US rejected China’s diplomatic demarche describing the huge civilian airship as a “Spy Balloon” and its intrusion into US airspace as “an affront to US sovereignty and international law”.

And amid this row, the US upped the ante by shooting down the Balloon as it drifted to, and hovered over, the US Atlantic coast by an F-22 fighter equipped with AIM-six Sidewinder, Missiles. (Its debris fell six nautical miles off the US coast).

The critical discourse here is not about the almost routine, surreptitious, practices of major powers to deploy sophisticated equipment and/or cyber technology for the purposes of eavesdropping and intelligence gathering. It is not also about the provisions of international law on sovereignty of States in all its dimensions and manifestations.

The real discourse is on the precedence, and the spiral of chain reaction, that this saga may portend. In a nutshell, whether the encounter is an isolated and anomalous episode; or whether it, in fact, constitutes the tip of the iceberg in a destabilizing climate of rivalry and confrontation that is essentially driven by US dogged policy of reviving the defunct uni-polar world order.

And that is the crux of the matter.

As explicitly expounded in the latest US National Security Strategic document, the US considers the current decade as the critical inflection point which will determine global dominance. The corollary of this position is the pursuit of its “containment policy”, especially against China, with higher and confrontational vigour.

In this context, the “Spy Balloon” saga may be a harbinger of potentially more dangerous incidents with far-reaching consequences to global peace and security. In this sense, it transcends issues of controversy between two powers to draw the attention and moral voice of our global community

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