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Indo Pacific Region: The Gathering Conflictual Storm- Mid 2020

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The United States would not be far wrong in perceptively viewing the China-originated and China-suppression of information on the Wuhan Virus 2019 outbreak resulting in nearly 70,000 US citizens dead and US economy losing trillions of dollars as akin to the Japanese Pearl Harbour attack on United States leading to United States opening its biggest World War II offensives in Asia Pacific.

Strategic analysts like me were anticipating that with the rapid strides being made by China in Cyber Warfare that should conflict breakout between United States and China a temptation would emerge for China to launch Cyber Warfare Pearl Harbour-type attack on the United States.

What has emerged in the wake of the global breakout of the Wuhan Virus 2019 Pandemic where circumstantial evidence points out that China by suppressing crucial information on the outbreak of Wuhan Virus 2019 breakout has opened itself to accusations of deliberate suppression of information on the Pandemic outbreak with ulterior motives. Nor has China as recompense offered any apologies for the Pandemic outbreak as an inadvertent occurrence.

For the last few weeks both US President Donald Trump and US Secretary of State Pompeo have articulated assertions pointing accusing fingers at China on the lines outlined above. This should be considered as a 'Tipping Point' in US-China relations and also for the security and stability of the Indo Pacific Region.

On May 4 2020 TV media reports indicate that a Five Nation Joint Intelligence Report has asserted that the Wuhan Virus 19 originated from China's Virological Establishments located at Wuhan. US President Trump has warned China that China will have to account and pay for the

losses suffered by United States and other countries in Europe and Asia.

This has led to China being strongly critical of US President Trump and the US Establishment in some unprecedented Chinese hostile rhetoric never witnessed earlier in history of US-China relations.

The Indo Pacific Region stood already beset by conflictual overtones due to China's aggressive moves in the South China Sea against her weaker ASEAN neighbours and the hotly contested US-China Trade Wars.

Noticeable too in May 2020 is that while the United States stood preoccupied by managing the heavy losses in US lives and the ravaging impact on US economy arising from the Wuhan Virus 19 Pandemic, China instead of restraint and prudence has lately revived its political and military coercive aggression in the South China Sea against the Philippines, Vietnam and further adding to its list Malaysia and Indonesia.

Contextually, China today is being accused in the Indo Pacific Region of trying to exploit the strategic vacuum in the Western Pacific at the expense of the United States and its Allies and Strategic Partners. Contextually read it amounts to China relentlessly pursuing its strategy of controlled escalation against the United States.

Regrettably, in earlier US-China conflict-prone confrontations, leeway would exist for both the United States and China to resile from their extreme positions, the situation in mid-2020 is qualitatively different.

This time what has emerged as noticeably different is that in the United States bipartisan political support exists for United States to adopt Hard Line policies on China and domestic public opinion is also likewise. In China domestic dissent has emerged and with slowing economy this would gather pace resulting in brutal suppression by the Chinese President.

No leeways seem to hover over the horizon to suggest that the United States would let go of its 'Hard Line' approaches on China on the question of accountability for the Wuhan Virus 2019 outbreak and nor has China till this moment exhibited any indicators of exit from its present 'Hard Power' strategies in the Indo Pacific Region.

In mid-May 2020, the strategic portents are that with had line postures of United States and China further solidifying in months to come a strategic conflictual storm is certainly gathering over the Indo Pacific Region.

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