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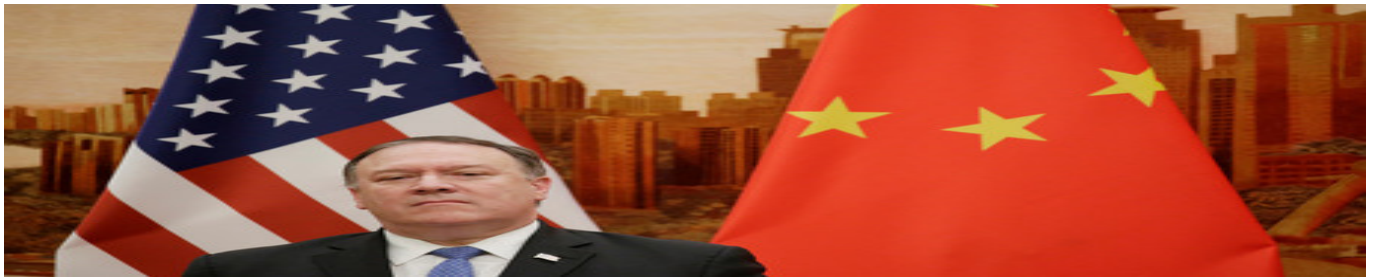
US could be at war with China in just 15 yrs, warns ex-US army chief in Europe

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The former commander of the US Army in Europe has issued a sobering assessment of the deteriorating state of US-Chinese relations, predicting that it's very likely the two nations will be at war in fifteen years.

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Speaking at the Warsaw Security Forum on Wednesday, Retired Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges said that the United States will have to shift its military to the Pacific *“to deal with the Chinese threat”* – requiring Europe to take a more active role in its own defenses.

*“The United States needs a very strong European pillar. I think in 15 years — it’s not inevitable — but it is a very strong likelihood that we will be at war with China,”* Hodges [warned](#).

Funding and training for European security will still remain a top priority for Washington, Hodges emphasized, adding that the US will also have to prepare for *“the eventuality that in 10 or 15 years we’re going to be having to fight in the Pacific.”*

The former commander told the Associated Press that relations between US and China were becoming *“increasingly tense,”* accusing Beijing of stealing technology and gaining control of strategically important infrastructure across Africa and Europe. He claimed that in Europe, China owns more than 10 percent of the ports.

Hodges served as the US Army commander in Europe from 2014 until last year. He now works for the Center for European Policy Analysis, a Washington-based research institute. The think tank [receives](#) funding from Lockheed Martin and Raytheon, as well as the US Defense Department.

His remarks come amid a slew of economic, political and military tensions between Washington and Beijing. In recent months, the US has stepped up naval operations in the South China Sea, in what it claims is an effort to ensure freedom of navigation in the waterways around China. Beijing has described the frequent incursions as dangerous provocations.

Relations are also souring on the economic front. Citing alleged Chinese theft of technologies, as well the US trade deficit with China, Trump slapped tariffs on \$250 billion worth of Chinese goods in September. Beijing reciprocated with tariffs of their own.

Trump has also accused China of trying to meddle in upcoming elections. Beijing has firmly denied the allegations, which have yet to be substantiated by evidence.

