

US has a reason to pay attention to what China is doing: CIA

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Washington: CIA Director John Brennan has said that the United States of America has a reason to pay attention to what China is doing on a number of fronts.

John Brennan

Brennan said that US can't ignore China because it is growing power with increasing military influence and presence.

"China is a growing power of great economic, political, and increasingly military influence and presence," Brennan told a Washington audience yesterday in response to a question on China at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), a top American think-tank.

"And clearly, as we look at what's happening in the South China Sea, there is a reason for the United States to pay attention to what China is doing on a number of fronts, which we are," he said.

"And that's why there's the pivot to Asia or making sure that our allies and partners in that region feel as though, with all the other things that are going on in the world, we have not neglected that area," Brennan said.

He said he was out in Singapore a couple of weeks ago, along with the Defense Secretary Ash Carter, at the Shangri-La conference.

"I met with the heads of the services, intelligence services, from the ASEAN countries, as well as with my Chinese counterpart, as a way to maintain the dialogue and to let them know that the US treats this region of the world very seriously, and we have very important national-security interests that we're not going step away from.

And if anybody thinks we are, they are sadly mistaken. So what we need to do is to be able to keep our eye on all these balls simultaneously. And this is not an effort to try to contain China," he said.

It is an effort to try to make sure that US national-security interests are protected and advanced, as are the national security interests of our allies and partners in the region, and we fulfill our obligations, particularly in the area of freedom of navigation in those seas," the CIA chief said.

In response to another question, Brennan said the Chinese President Xi Jinping, has a strategic vision of what he wants to be able to accomplish in the region.

"I think the relationship with Taiwan is a very big one and an important one. And whether or not there is going to be an adjustment in that, I think it is going to be dependent on how Beijing views Taiwan and vice versa," he said.

"And given that there is a new administration in Taiwan, given that there is a rather important dynamic that is going on in the region with how China is flexing some of its muscles, I think this also is in a period of transition. And I think there is this dynamism," he added.

"I think, and it's not a secret to anybody, that mainland China views Taiwan in a very special way. And I think it has, you know, aspirations to further solidify the relationship between mainland China and Taiwan," Brennan said.

- (With PTI inputs)