

A rising China needs to restrain itself: Barack Obama

05/09/2016 21:42 by admin

Beijing: A rising China, which has been worrying its neighbours with its aggressive behaviour including over the South China Sea, needs to restrain itself in order to play a responsible role at the world stage, US President Barack Obama has said.

Barack Obama

“Part of what I’ve talked to communicate to President Xi (Jinping) is that the United States arrives at its power, in part, by restraining itself,” Obama told CNN in an interview.

“You know, when we bind ourselves to a bunch of international norms and rules, it’s not because we have to, it’s because we recognise that, over the long-term, building a strong international order is in our interests. And I think over the long-term, it will be in

China’s interests, as well,” Obama said in the interview that was recorded before he left for China.

So where we see them violating international rules and norms, as we have seen in some cases in the South China Sea or in some of their behaviour when it comes to economic policy, we’ve been very firm. And we’ve indicated to them that there will be consequences,” Obama said.

He asserted that what the US has tried to emphasise to China is that if it is working within international rules and international norms, then they should be partners.

There is no reason that China and the US cannot be friendly competitors on the commercial side and important partners when it comes to dealing with the many international problems that threaten the two countries, he said in response to a question.

Obama noted that China has been run during his lifetime by a communist party that has been much more anti-Western in the past.

“We went through a period over the course of 20 years, in the 1990s and on through maybe the onset of my presidency, where, because state-sponsored capitalism and an export-driven model was very successful, China was less interested in making waves,” Obama said.

“But, you know, you’ve got over a billion people, one of the largest economies now in the world. And so it’s to be expected that they will want a bigger seat at the table when it comes to international affairs. And what we’ve said consistently is we welcome the peaceful rise of China, consistent with international norms. That’s good for everybody. An impoverished and collapsing China would be dangerous for everybody,” Obama said.

The US wants China to take on more responsibilities, not only for its own people, but also for a wide range of international problems and conflicts, whether it is climate change or disaster relief or dealing with things like Ebola, Obama said.

“What we have said to the Chinese is” and we’ve been firm consistently about this “is you have to recognise that with increasing power comes increasing responsibilities. You can’t pursue mercantilist policies that just advantage you now that you are a middle income country, in many ways, even though you still have a lot of poor people,” Obama said.

“You know, you can’t just export problems. You’ve got to have fair trade and not just free trade. You have to open up your markets if you expect other people to open up their markets,” he said.

“When it comes to issues related to security, if you sign a treaty that calls for international arbitration around maritime issues the fact that you’re bigger than the Philippines or Vietnam or other countries, in and of itself, is not a reason for you to go around and flex your muscles. You’ve got to abide by international law,” Obama said.

- PTI