

United States Asia Strategy: Policy, Power, Pivot

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United States Asia Strategy: Policy, Power, Pivot

Abstract

This paper is an assessment of contemporary United States strategy in the Asia-Pacific. It gives a background of United States grand strategy throughout history culminating with the 2012 Pivot to Asia designed and implemented by the Obama Administration, the Department of State, and the National Security Council. The Pivot to Asia will be viewed by assessing the hard and soft powers the United States has at its disposal as a means to further its national interests in the Asia-Pacific. Current cases focusing on Southeast Asia and East Asia will be used to assess the efficacy of the new strategy and determine if it is the best method to deter aggression, maintain commerce, and ensure a balance of power.

Keywords

Foreign Policy, United States Foreign Policy, China, Military, Strategic Policy

United States Asia Strategy: Policy, Power, Pivot

Michael S. Montemalo

Since 1991 the United States has enjoyed primacy on the world stage. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union there was a single global hegemon—A moment of unipolarity. However, just as the world witnessed the awakening of a sleeping giant in 1941, the world is now witnessing the awakening of a sleeping tiger. The People’s Republic of China (PRC) has risen from the disastrous great leap forward to a global economic super-power. Major economic alliances have formed from rapidly developing nations along with new international institutions. The Asia-Pacific is home to a majority of global trade, over three billion people, and an abundance of natural resources. China, India, Indonesia, Taiwan, Japan, North Korea, and South Korea are all vying for power in a region with numerous territorial disputes, alliances, and grim, entangled histories. In this paper I assess the U.S. Pivot to Asia and its ability to promote America’s national interests in the vast and dynamic Asia-Pacific region. This paper is an analysis of U.S. foreign policy in Asia and its application in the containment of China, securing regional commerce, and maintaining balance in a region where power is the goal of many important actors.

U.S. Grand Strategy

The United States has maintained an overarching strategy since its inception. The Congressional Research Service states, "From a U.S. perspective, grand strategy can be understood as strategy considered at a global or interregional level, as opposed to strategies for specific countries, regions, or issues" (O'Rourke 2015, 2). The overriding principle of U.S. grand strategy is the

protection of: American territory, citizens, constitutional system of government, and economic well-being (Hooker, 2014). This strategy has stood the test of time, conflict, and political partisanship. The history of the United States is marked by policies that have driven these ideals forward, at first when the nation was young and weak, and then when it was mature and strong.

Birth of a Global Power

George Washington in his farewell address stated, "The nation which indulges toward another a habitual hatred or a habitual fondness is in some degree a slave" (Washington 1796). He warned future generations of Americans to shy away from permanent alliances with foreign nations, and to only engage in alliances in dire emergency. His address served as an inspiration for American isolationism and his advice was heeded for over a century. The United States did however engage with other nations both peacefully and forcefully throughout the entire 19th century.

In 1823, President James Monroe enacted a policy that changed the western hemisphere forever. The Monroe Doctrine aimed to rid the western hemisphere of further European colonial ambition (U.S. DoS 2015). It was a direct signal to European powers that interference in the western hemisphere would be categorized as hostile action against the United States, but America would not interfere in European affairs either. Further, the Roosevelt Corollary modified the doctrine to guarantee the military defense of any republican government in the western hemisphere against external hostilities (U.S. DoS 2015). This is significant as it signals one of the

first national policies to defend governments of shared values.

Between the turn of the 19th century and the First World War, the United States grew in size and power. President Theodore Roosevelt oversaw the construction of the Panama Canal that would lead to a profound change in global trade and American economic growth. Roosevelt also played a pivotal role in the peace process of the Russo-Japanese War, engaging the United States in great power diplomacy (U.S. DoS 2015). During this period, the U.S. revolutionized its national and international interests, becoming an imperial power with a large overseas military presence, overseas possessions, and direct influence in setting priorities in international affairs.

World War and New Ideas

When war broke out on continental Europe, the U.S. continued its policy of noninterventionism. Trade continued with both sides, although favoring the Triple Entente. The U.S. eventually became involved militarily once Germany launched a campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare and directly challenged American neutrality (U.S. DoS 2015). Moreover, Wilson, like Franklin Roosevelt years later, could not risk Europe dominated by a single power, nor could he risk a collapse of trade relations with allied powers.

What Wilson contributed to U.S. grand strategy was his ideas of collective security and the principals of Wilsonianism. U.S. leadership in international organizations, such as the League of Nations, was thought to maintain peace. However, the United States never ratified the treaty and declined membership, erasing any future of collective defense under the charter (U.S. DoS 2015). Wilson's famous Fourteen Points, however, remained in the American psyche. The ideas

of spreading democracy, capitalism, and interventionism did not gain traction in the early part of the 20th century, but have been used more recently by Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama, in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan, and Libya respectively (Mearsheimer 2011).

The International Actor

The Second World War changed America and the world. The United States survived the war virtually unscathed while Europe and Asia lay in total ruin. The war spurred the creation of the world's largest manufacturing base and logistical infrastructure in the U.S. without rival. The Marshall Plan to rebuild Europe and Japan out of ashes placed the U.S. in a position for skyrocketing growth and influence (U.S. DoS 2015). The ascension of the Soviet Union as a peer competitor split the world in two. The U.S. established a vast network of alliances, outposts, bases, and spheres of economic and political influence around the globe. The U.S. and the United Kingdom engaged in a policy of containment. The reconstruction of Japan and Germany created two world-class economies that have remained close allies. The formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the United Nations (UN), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and other international institutions with the U.S. as leader, allowed America to gain and retain super-power status.

All of these events have evolved and refined the grand strategy of the United States. They have dictated geopolitical decisions, diplomatic relations, and conflicts over the course of its history, and has established the United States as a truly global power.

The Pivot to Asia

In 2012, President Barack Obama announced the next stage in American grand strategy, the Pivot to Asia. The U.S. government projected the 21st century will be defined by the Asia-Pacific region, with China at its core. Campbell and Andrews, experts on the pivot from the Asia Group, claim “The emerging narrative in the Asia-Pacific region was one of American lack of strategic focus and decline, in a time when many in the region sought greater U.S. presence and leadership” (2013, 2). In essence, Washington had to change policy or face a future Pacific dominated by Chinese regional hegemony. The focus on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan following 9/11 shifted diplomatic and military efforts to the Middle East for the first decade and a half of the 21st century. This left a vacuum in other parts of the world where the United States could not effectively partake in governance or maintain military presence. With the rise of China and a lack of U.S. engagement, the future of Asia was clearly in the hands of the Chinese.

American engagement in the region is based on the desire for a peaceful, stable, and economically prosperous future for America and its Asian partners. As the military began to draw down the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, President Obama made the decision to rebalance foreign policy to the Asia-Pacific. The lack of previous engagement led some allies to question U.S. commitment to Asia. The pivot's success can be attributed to the cooperation and coordination of the government's national security leaders.

Secretary Clinton, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and his successor Leon Panetta, and National Security Advisor Tom Donilon worked closely and effectively together, with the full range

of U.S. agencies and departments and a host of supporting characters to realize the president's vision. (Campbell and Andrews 2013, 3)

President Obama's vision consisted of six pillars: Strengthening alliances; improving relationships with emerging powers; economic statecraft; engaging with multilateral institutions; supporting universal values; and increasing U.S. military presence.

The United States, since the end of the Cold War, has engaged in maintaining global hegemony. This strategy involves two broad objectives: "maintaining American primacy, which means making sure that the United States remains the most powerful state [...] and spreading democracy across the globe" (Mearsheimer 2011, 19). This approach has focused on employing both hard and soft power to balance international competitors and advance the objective of diplomacy. U.S. grand strategy should be understood in the context of a global scale and as a means to protect American interests, the policy of maintaining primacy is the obvious policy. However, geopolitics is far more complicated than stating objectives and writing laws. The U.S. has to use all of its available assets in order to navigate the anarchy of the global system and play a delicate balancing game that has shifted from Western Europe to East Asia. The use of these hard and soft powers are the culmination of two centuries of tried and tested foreign policy. The pivot to Asia will have to leverage power and experience in order to be a successful strategy and further the American national interest.

Strengthening Alliances

The United States maintains a vast network of diplomatic relations across the globe. It has embassies and consulates in every

recognized state except for Iran, North Korea, and Bhutan. It maintains strong diplomatic and defense ties with South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Philippines, and Singapore. Moreover, other Southeast Asian states are actively seeking increased defense and diplomatic relations with the United States including: Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam. America's commonwealth allies Australia and New Zealand are members of the 'Five-Eyes' (FVEY) and are signatories of 'The Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty' (ANZUS). Five-Eyes is a multilateral intelligence sharing agreement between the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand (Lowenthal 2015). FVEY incorporates defense intelligence, security intelligence, human intelligence, and signals intelligence. The U.S. and Australia have cooperated in gathering and sharing defense and signals intelligence in Southeast Asia and the South China Sea. Rising tensions in the East and South China Seas has prompted ANZUS to increase support for PACCOM operations and logistics needs in the South Pacific by opening ports to the USN and participating in maritime training exercises.

There are several long enduring and strategic alliances between the United States and nations in the Pacific region. The US-Japanese alliance transcends partisan politics in both countries. The strength of US-Japanese ties are unwavering and have been tried time and time again. Most recently the United States responded in force to the March 2011 triple disaster (earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear crisis). Strategically, the US-Japan alliance has been defensive in nature. The United States military and the Japanese Self-Defense Force (JSDF) cooperate in areas ranging from maritime security to ballistic missile defense (U.S. Navy 2015). Only recently has the Japanese Diet under the direction of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe updated the constitution

allowing the JSDF to participate in non-defense related operations, including offensive combat outside of Japanese territory.

The Korean War ceased in 1953 with the Korean Armistice Agreement that split the peninsula into the North, Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), and the South, Republic of Korea (ROK). Shortly after, the US-ROK alliance was formed and established the continuous station of almost 30,000 American troops near the demilitarized zone (U.S. DoD 2015). Still the US-ROK alliance maintains strong military cooperation holding annual exercises and sharing intelligence. Economically, both states maintain free trade agreements as well as a strong history of developmental assistance and foreign investment. They maintain over US\$95 billion in trade volume together (U.S. Census 2015) and are members of the G20.

The US-Taiwan alliance is an unofficial alliance that has been maintained since 1979. The official relationship was terminated when the United States recognized Beijing. However, the United States maintained formal interest in Taiwan with the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 that has defined non-diplomatic relations between the two nations. The Taiwan Relations Act states "the United States will make available to Taiwan such defense articles and defense services in such quantity as to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability" (1979). The policy has been called "strategic ambiguity" and is designed purposefully. First, it is to deter aggression or reunification from the People's Republic of China for fear of American retaliation of some magnitude; second, it is meant to dissuade Taiwan from unilaterally declaring independence and triggering PRC reprisal. So far this arrangement has worked and the

US-Taiwan relationship has remained strong militarily and economically.

Improving Relationships with Emerging Powers

The U.S. government has unilaterally increased engagement and direct military support to members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Developing nations such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Thailand have received great attention since the U.S. pivot. President Obama has pledged millions of dollars of military aid to modernize ASEAN militaries in an effort to balance Chinese expansion in Southeast Asia. Moreover, U.S. trade and investment has increased at an astounding rate establishing ASEAN as a primary regional trade partner.

The United States' vast network of alliances and partners in the Asia-Pacific region allows it to advance its interests effectively. The U.S. military is able to maintain a host of bases around the region that enables it to project power far from home. Economic relations with almost every country and diplomatic ties with every Asian country but North Korea and Bhutan allow the U.S. unique access to governments, markets, and militaries in the region. By re-applying soft power and re-focusing on the Asia-Pacific, the United States is fostering strong friendships and assets.

Economic Statecraft

The United States has the largest national economy, comprising over 22% of nominal global GDP. The U.S. had a GDP over \$17.42 trillion in FY2014 with growth of 3.7% (World Bank 2015). The U.S. dollar is the most common currency in the world, being used in the most transactions and used as the primary reserve currency (U.S. Treasury 2009). The U.S. dollar is

considered the currency of last resort, and the global economy is influenced greatly by U.S. economy. The Great Depression of 1929, and the Great Recession of 2008 further accentuate the global economic blowback that can occur when the U.S. economy falters.

Sanctions and Monetary Policy

Economic power can, at times, be more important than military power. Due to its immense economic clout, the U.S. has the ability to economically leverage adversaries during times of diplomatic tension (Masters 2015). The use of economic sanctions, for instance, can be devastating to national economies. U.S. and international sanctions on Iran played a role in the Iran Nuclear Deal (Masters 2015). Sanctions on Russia following the annexation of Crimea have substantially reduced the Federations ability maintain a stable economy or maintain a large defense industry, forcing many Russian defense companies to consolidate and reorganize.

The U.S. Federal Reserve (Fed) has the ability to influence international economies by manipulating interest rates and the flow of currency in circulation. Raising or lowering interest rates can be destabilizing to planned economies. In July and August 2015, the Fed discussed raising rates (but did not) causing uncertainty, this caused a loss in U.S. markets that was felt around the world.

Engaging Multilateral Institutions

The United States has positions of control in the world's largest financial institutions, ranging from private banking to international organizations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). It is a leader in the G7 (formerly G8) and G20 with allies who

comprise a majority in each. This means the United States can control most economic or political decisions in those institutions.

International trade is also one of the United States' greatest assets. Numerous bilateral trade agreements with China, Japan, South Korea, and ASEAN contribute to stability. The Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), and the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) are all regional and Pacific free trade agreements (FTA) that the United States participates in some capacity. Moreover, the TPP is the largest FTA ever created. The TPP is so transformative, states not in the first signing are looking to join after the fact. It is due to be formally ratified in 2016. Commercial interdependence can mean the difference between diplomacy and conflict. With the United States trading with virtually every nation, there is at least some interest to maintain peace and relations between partners. If anything, the U.S. economy is an incredible insurance policy. If the U.S. economy collapses, the global economy will follow.

Supporting Universal Values

The United States supports universal values by using all of its assets in different ways. As a member of most international institutions including the United Nations, it has the ability to push an agenda that focuses on universal values. Economic and political clout can be used to influence states to change policies that reflect a progressive stance on issues such as human rights or democracy. For instance, by using economic sanctions on countries like Myanmar and Indonesia, the governments could not afford to stay authoritarian and were forced to change. Within the past decade several countries in Southeast Asia have

transitioned to democracies and improved their human rights records.

Additionally, when the United States directly engages countries it shows support for universal values. Sending supplies and assistance during a natural disaster for instance can be very influential. Even if the governments of some countries try to maintain control and ignore human rights, the people know what is happening. In the long term, governments change and open up. A major stipulation of the TPP was domestic reform. Countries who could not meet reforms on workers' rights, environmental controls, and fair business practices could not participate in the free trade agreement. The strengthening of ASEAN only occurred in the last decade, the Pivot to Asia and increased U.S. engagement has greatly accelerated its growth, both economically and socially.

Increasing U.S. Military Presence

The most visible aspect of the projection of U.S. power is its military. The U.S. has its military stationed across the world in strategic locations on every continent. It encompasses over 1.3 million active personnel and another 800,000 in reserve, approximately 1% of the U.S. population is employed by the Department of Defense (DoD). The research, development, and industrial side ensures it is equipped with advanced equipment for any foreseeable battlespace. Additionally, it possesses and maintains the United States' most important defense—the nuclear deterrent.

Pre-Positioning the Pacific

The U.S. Navy (USN) operates nine carrier strike groups, two are assigned to the U.S. Pacific Command (PACCOM). Additionally, Washington continuously stations over 30,000 Marines, Airmen, and

Soldiers in South Korea, and almost 50,000 in Japan. PACCOM is comprised of over 300,000 U.S. military personnel, 100,000 of which are forward deployed to the region. Forward deployment is the act of stationing forces outside of the continental United States, usually far away, so that they can be called to action at a moment's notice (U.S. Navy 2015). By stationing units in Asia, far from U.S. shores, the military has the ability to act and react to crisis at a moment's notice. By 2020, approximately 60% of Navy warships and aircraft will be based in the region (U.S. DoD 2015). This is an integral part of the pivot as the Pacific Ocean takes days or weeks to transit.

The U.S. Navy, Marines, Army, and Airforce operate bases for operations and logistics throughout the region both in U.S. territory and in friendly foreign territory. These range from Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea. These geographic locations, and the states that encompass it is referred to as the "First Island Chain." It is no coincidence that U.S. forces are positioned in this fashion with close proximity to mainland Asia and the waters bordering it. By having forces able to quickly deploy, regional crisis can be addressed quickly and efficiently (U.S. Navy 2015). Moreover, its ability and capacity to project military power globally is only possible by a massive supply and logistics backbone that can deliver equipment, fuel, and soldiers anywhere in the world. This is possible with a large component of land, sea, and air logistics networks built and maintained by the military since the Second World War. This plays into two of the six pillars of the pivot. First, the U.S. is able to strengthen alliances by providing defense and participating in military exercises. Second, the U.S. is actively increasing its military presence in the region.

Pros and Cons of the Military Industrial Complex

The U.S. Military maintains technological superiority over its adversaries in some key areas. This includes: command, control, computers, communications, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR); ballistic missile defense; logistics and supply; and submarine warfare (U.S. DoD 2015). However, the technological gap is closing quickly with the technological capabilities of Russia and China as they develop advance fighter jets, anti-ship missiles, and weapons capable of anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) deployment. A2/AD is a new strategy being developed by China to push the United States out of its territorial waters. It is focused on the use of intermediate range missiles such as the DF-21 dubbed the 'carrier killer' to push the USN out of range of mainland China (Cordesman and Colley 2015). The Pentagon, since the pivot, has been trying to overcome such strategies by developing new plans and building more capable weapons systems. However, in another report from the Congressional Research Office, budgetary problems and systemic procurement inefficiencies have left the United States at a serious disadvantage when it comes to building and fielding advanced hardware (Gertler 2014).

The venerable F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program was billions of dollars over budget and years overdue (Gertler 2014). Other projects such as the DDX-1000, the next generation destroyer, or the Army's Future Warfighter Program have proven to be drawn out and problematic. However, the DoD in 2014 announced the new 'Defense Innovation Initiative' as part of the 'third offset strategy.' The Defense Innovation Initiative was created to maintain U.S. technological superiority over opposing military forces that are both numerically

large and armed with modern weapon systems (Majumdar 2014). This initiative is designed to give the U.S. military the edge if it ever has to confront an adversary like China or Russia. This move by the Pentagon plays directly into U.S. grand strategy in the Pacific. It allows the U.S. military to balance against a rapidly modernizing Chinese military and ensure the defense of allies in the region. Because of the Defense Innovation Initiative, the U.S. military is still on the cutting edge of disruptive technologies, spending billions of dollars in private sector research and development, and government funded research programs such as the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

The Nuclear Deterrent

The U.S. possesses a very important advantage over all current competitors, even Russia and China. Defensively, the Army and Navy provide short and intermediate range ballistic missile defense (BMD) for South Korea and Japan both from warships and land-based BMD in Hawaii, Guam, Japan, and South Korea (Sharman 2015). Offensively, the Pentagon has maintained a working nuclear deterrent with three methods of reliable delivery. The nuclear triad comprised of air, land, and sea based nuclear weapons remain the bulwark against armed aggression against the United States by any state actor. The U.S. triad is comprised of land based Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs); air-based B-2 and B-52 bombers; and sea-based Ohio-class ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) that patrol with a payload of over 24 sub-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) (Heiginbotham, et.al 2015, 307). Regardless of any missile defense measures a state may possess, the U.S. military will ensure successful nuclear retaliation at the order of the Commander in Chief.

Applying the Strategy

Since the Pivot to Asia in 2012, the region has encountered the beginning of Chinese expansion into the South and East China Seas. This perceived expansion led to multiple claimants disputing sections of ocean over exclusive economic rights, natural resources and territory. These events have tested the pivot so far.

South China Sea Disputes

Brunei, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Vietnam lay claim to some or all of the South China Sea. Each country has established exclusive economic zones (EEZs) that overlap in strategic areas. According to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) each nation has exclusive economic rights in the waters 200 miles from shore. Some of these zones contain vast fisheries, access to energy, or actual islands. The greatest disputes are over the Paracel Islands, Spratly Islands, Scarborough Shoal, and Natuna Atoll. China, the Philippines, and Vietnam have all conducted some degree of land reclamation on partial islands or submerged reefs. The most aggressive land reclamation operations were conducted by the Chinese on Mischief and Fiery Cross Reefs in the Spratlys. China constructed hardened facilities that can be used for barracks, 'intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance' (ISR) equipment, or missile batteries. The most significant project was a 3,125 meter runway on Fiery Cross Reef capable of servicing fighter, surveillance, and strike aircraft. Even after repeated claims that the islands would not be militarized, the Chinese military stationed J-11 fighters on the reef.

In an effort to balance the Chinese advance in the South China Sea, the U.S. has conducted several Freedom of Navigation

Operations (FONOPS) near the Chinese artificial islands. The Chinese have responded with harsh rhetoric, claiming this to be an escalation. However, FONOPS are a complement to the diplomatic component of U.S. engagement. Although the military is not directly challenging China, “they [FONOPS] would contest China’s claims to water and airspace under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), they would not contest its claims to territory” (Rapp-Hooper 2015). The U.S. Navy sailed a guided missile destroyer within 12 nautical miles of the islands as well as conducted maritime security exercises with the Japanese Navy near the disputed territory. Additionally, the U.S. has increased foreign military sales (FMS) and cooperation with Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Vietnam. Since then, no new land reclamation projects have begun but Chinese military build-up has continued.

The United States, by using both soft and hard power has temporarily contained China in the South China Sea. Although, the Chinese People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLA-N) threatens to uphold its sovereignty and restrict passage through their waters, the continued assertion of freedom of navigation laws has kept sea lanes open. Moreover, the Philippines and Indonesia have taken China to The International Court of Arbitration for violating territorial sovereignty. Both countries have had their EEZs overlap with China’s claims. The international court at The Hague has begun the Philippine case, and is likely to rule against Chinese expansion.

The Senkaku/Daiyu Islands

The Chinese and the Japanese have disputed the Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands for decades. The islands, rich in fisheries and strategically located near vast energy fields

are becoming ever more important to both claimants national interests. The United States returned the islands to Japan following World War Two. Today, the Chinese and Japanese continue to dispute the territory with tensions escalating in 2014. Following an incident where the Japanese coast guard arrested Chinese fishermen off the island’s coast, the Chinese established an Air-Defense Intercept Zone (ADIZ) over the East China Sea. The ADIZ intended to restrict and control air traffic was imposed by the Chinese military. The Chinese ADIZ overlaps with the Japanese ADIZ and covers the Senkaku Islands.

The United States responded by stating it would ignore the Chinese ADIZ all together. Although President Obama ordered commercial flights to comply with Chinese commands, the U.S. government did not. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter ordered two B-52 bombers from Guam to fly through the Chinese ADIZ in direct defiance. At the same time Secretary Carter publically reiterated that the United States would defend Japan if war were to break-out over the Senkaku Islands. Even though the Chinese ADIZ remains over the East China Sea, not much has changed and Chinese assertiveness over the Senkaku Islands subsided until fall 2015. In fact, “international law governing the status and limits of ADIZs – in which aircraft are usually required to submit flight plans and report their locations to national air traffic control – is not clear in any detailed way” (Waxman 2014). This means the Chinese or any nation for that matter can establish and maintain ADIZs anywhere within their territory. It is not uncommon, the United States and others establish ADIZs to defend against hostile intrusion or de-conflict air traffic.

In fall 2015, the Chinese military scrambled a fleet of bombers and support aircraft into

the East China Sea over the Senkaku Islands and into the Pacific Ocean as a show of force. The United States and Japan have yet to respond. The United States' use of military strength to deter Chinese aggression has worked until recently. As the Chinese military continues to grow and modernize, their leaders have become emboldened. The establishment of the ADIZ is just a show of force and political theater, but it can lead to escalation. A simple miscalculation by one side could quickly escalate into conflict. However, this is unlikely to happen as the United States, China, and other regional actors have created and adhered to strict rules of addressing air-to-air confrontations. Moreover, the US-Japan alliance remains strong and willing to defend against any hostilities.

Conclusions

The rise of China has changed the power dynamic in the Asia-Pacific region. Both the U.S. and its regional partners are affected by Chinese growth, for better or for worse. Chinese territorial expansion is causing disputes over exclusive economic zones full of natural resources. Chinese military build-up is threatening to shift the balance of military power away from the U.S. and Chinese economic growth has penetrated all of its neighbors causing some form of reliance on a strong Chinese economy. The pivot to Asia, in part, re-engages the United States with allies and other partners that are experiencing Chinese expansion first-hand. In most cases, increased U.S. presence is welcomed as a means to check the Chinese and re-assert sovereignty. Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Indonesia all support increased U.S. military and economic engagement. It not only makes relations stronger with the U.S. but it signals the Chinese to consider their actions. China is by no means an imperial power (yet), nor should it be thought of as an

enemy of the United States. It is arguable that China is asserting its sovereignty over historically owned territories, and establishing 21st century economic ties with its neighbors. Geopolitically, this is challenging American influence in the region, but it is also increasing the value of relations with the United States. Countries like Vietnam for instance are requesting American assistance on a wide range of projects, including military modernization. By using soft power the United States is able to counter Chinese advances. Employing diplomatic and economic tools, America is in the process of containing China. However, Chinese expansion in the South China Sea does not seem to be deterred. Even as the U.S. sails warships or uses harsh rhetoric, the Chinese continue to construct bases on reclaimed islands.

To reiterate, the U.S. Navy will deploy 60% of its forces to the Asia-Pacific by 2020. This is significant because trillions of dollars of trade travels through the vast Pacific Ocean as well as critical waterways like the South China Sea and the Strait of Malacca. As countries in Southeast Asia continue their development they do not have the capabilities yet to enforce maritime law and maintain security. China's PLA-N and Coast Guard continue to grow at an astonishing rate. The PLA-N is currently constructing its second aircraft carrier and developing a new generation of submarines. Non-state issues such as piracy, climate change, and natural disasters also affect commerce.

The United States has shown its willingness to participate in conjunction with regional partners, including China, to maintain security and trade. The U.S. Navy conducts annual naval exercises with Australia, India, Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea with other states participating as well. These exercises range from anti-piracy to humanitarian aid and disaster relief (HA/DR). The U.S. Navy

stationed its new class of Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) in Singapore in an effort to increase maritime security and cooperation around the vital Strait of Malacca.

Additionally, recent natural disasters in Nepal, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Japan have seen the deployment of the Marine Expeditionary Forces assigned to PACCOM to assist in HA/DR missions. Every time the U.S. sends aid or conducts an exercise it is using its hard power to reinforce its soft power in the region. This allows Washington to maintain stable and productive relationships with important actors in the Asia-Pacific.

The goal of this strategy is to shore up the international order. The United States enjoyed its moment of unipolarity following the fall of the Soviet Union, but with the rise of China the U.S. had to establish renewed balance. Decades of war and alternating policies in the Middle East have eroded some of the United States' clout on the world stage. Emerging and re-emerging actors like China, India, and Russia are testing the strength of American resolve. Although in no official record, China is seen as the primary competitor of the U.S. in the 21st century. The Pivot to Asia shows the focused effort of the entire U.S. government

to engage Asia and maintain a regional balance by containing Chinese hegemony.

Throughout history, the United States has endured through all three systems of international relations: multi-polarity, bipolarity, and uni-polarity. Now that it is entering a bipolar world again, the use of its immense capacity for hard and soft powers are more important than ever. The U.S. military although advanced and capable is not enough to maintain a balanced international system or stabilize the global economy. The U.S. economic and diplomatic machine, though large and influential, are not capable of fighting wars or deterring aggression. However when combined, a concerted and focused effort by the United States government is formidable. I argue the Pivot to Asia is one of these efforts, the likes of which have not been seen since the beginning of the Cold War. Although not flawless, the Pivot to Asia has maintained its goals. It has contained extreme Chinese expansion, it has maintained commerce, grown economic relations, established new diplomatic partnerships, and kept the United States in a position of primacy. The future will tell the true success or failure of this strategy, but today it seems to be working

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