Remapping Asia’s Geopolitical Map: China’s, U.S. Pivot, and Security Challenges for a Region in Power Transition
What Do We Know?

- China is rising, and rising fast in GDP terms.
- Beijing’s influence is growing and its presence is extending to Africa, Latin America, Central Asia, as well as East Asia.
- Many of the global/regional issues/problems requires China’s participation.
- China is becoming more assertive on some issues.
- Is it acting as a responsible power or not?
- Will China challenge U.S. primacy in Asia?
China’s Rise at a Glance

- Population: 1.367 Billion
- GDP in 2014: US$10.355 Trillion
- GDP with PPP in 2014: US$17.632 Trillion
- GDP Growth Rate in 2014: 7.4%
- Trade Volume: US$4.11 Trillion in 2014
- Foreign Exchange Reserves: US$3.84 Trillion, ‘14
- Armed Forces: 2.333 Million
A Global Power
A Responsible Power?
Growing Influence in Asia

- Permanent Member, UNSC
- Membership: APEC, ARF, EAS, APT
- Hosting Six-Party Talks
- Growing Military Capabilities
- Economic Engine of the Region
- Chinese “Soft Power”
- Reassuring Neighbors, Managing Disputes
- Japan, India, ASEAN, Central Asia
Flare-up over Diaoyu/Senkaku
Overlapping Claims in the SCS
Power Transition

- Uneven growth in power and capabilities
- Conflicts likely between rising powers and reigning powers
- Rising powers when approaching parity willing to use force to change status quo by reshaping the system’s rules and institutions
- Rising powers’ expectations and agendas grow as their power grows so past assurances not credible
- Bandwagoning vs. balancing
A Complex Relationship
US-China Relations

- Challenge of power diffusion/transition and a post-America order
- Challenge of managing bilateral disputes against rising nationalism and domestic political constraints
- Challenge of coordinating policies in tackling global and regional issues
- Challenge of developing strategic trust
- Challenge of leadership transition/elections
Evolution of US Asian Strategy

- Debate between active intervention (keeping powerful forces in) and isolationist impulse (withdrawal from the region; ‘Don’t Come Home, America’ IS)
- Return of the US in Asia (Clinton announcement in 2010 ARF Meeting) versus Bush’s neglect
- Asia as post-Cold War defence gravity, expressed by force readjustment between Europe and Asia (6:4 to 4:6)
- Balancer and guarantor for stability
- Promoting a new security architecture based on coalition building among like-minded against new challenges, e.g., uncertainties rooted in the rise of China
- Rebalancing in diplomatic, economic, and defense areas
The economic and strategic importance of Asia to the US as a Pacific power ($1.4 trillion in trade)

What does America want from Asia? (leadership, dominance, market and forward military bases)

Three key mechanisms to realize the goal: alliance relationships with regional states (five alliances), forward deployment of armed forces in Asia-Pacific (South Asia, East Asia, Hawaii) and maintenance of a right level of tension that makes US presence and access a positive attribute
Foster free trade and capitalism: a strategy of maintaining US economic influence when its economic dominance is declining, through TPP & FTA initiatives: e.g., Korea and Australia; building an economic foundation for democratization; opening Chinese market; and securing key resources.

Democratise authoritarian states and promote HR: consolidating western influence and seeking regime change in the region through promoting pro-western political forces in the Middle East, Burma, China and others.
US Leadership Role

- Prevent emergence of a peer rival in challenging its leadership: Japan prior to WWII, USSR in the Cold War and unspecified powers in the post-Cold War era but China as a specific candidate.

- Maintaining regional peace/stability through balance of power (military superiority).

- Containing regional hot spots conflicts, e.g., Taiwan, Korea, the Spratlys and Indian-Pakistan.

- Based on a hedging strategy that both seeks cooperation with non-allies and stresses overwhelming military superiority through alliance building.
US Defence Strategy

- Maintain easy regional access for its forward deployment (to shorten the response time to a crisis): over 100 military bases, joint military facilities (Pine Gap in Australia) and joint exercises, port calls, and troop visit agreements; anchorage of troops in Japan, Korea, Australia, Singapore, Thailand and Philippines

- Generate regional support for containing potential rivals (constraining China through its regional adversaries, Joseph Nye)

- Control of nine global water ways: freedom of navigation, especially in the East and South China Seas and the Indian Ocean
Forward Deployment

- Symbolise US intention to remain as an Asian/Pacific power
- Identify Asia as the key potential battlefield: the only venue the US may be involved in a nuclear war
- Prevent power vacuum in the wake of its relative decline in economic power and the rise of China
- Maintain deterrent/reinforcement capability against existing or potential threat
- Part of force transformation plan: strengthening the offensive nature of the defense posture in a closer range & long range power projection capabilities
- New weapon systems in the region, F-22, B-2, carrier battle groups, and nuclear submarines
The Nature of Military Alliances

- A give-take relationship: US protecting its allies in exchange of their support to US global initiatives
- Shifting focus from the Cold War’s East/West confrontation to specific regional threats
- In Asia the alliance aims at a specific target at the bilateral level (e.g., North Korea) and common security concerns to the US and its partners: broadening the bilateral structure to multilateral networks resembling NATO
US Alliances in Asia

U.S. military presence in Asia
Active duty military personnel strength in East Asia and Pacific, as of end September 2012, in thousands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total Strength in Foreign Countries</th>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>March</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>44.4</td>
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<tr>
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<td>June</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>45.0</td>
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<td>Sept.</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>48.0</td>
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<td>Dec.</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>47.2</td>
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<td>2010</td>
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<td>16%</td>
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<td>June</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>46.7</td>
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<td>Sept.</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>2011</td>
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<td>26%</td>
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<td>Sept.</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>26%</td>
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<td>June</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sept.</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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East Asia and Pacific: 52,417
Japan: 50,937
Others*: 1,480

* British Indian Ocean Territory 523; Australia 346; Singapore 154; Philippines 143; Thailand 117; other countries 191.

Source: U.S. Department of Defense
W. Foo, 11/12/2012

NATOP: Naval Air Facility, CFA: Commander Fleet Activities
Sources: Military Balance 2011, Commander Navy Installations, Pacific Air Forces

U.S. Military in the West Pacific

With active U.S. bases, naval bases, air force bases

South Korea
Deployment: 25,374*
Navy
CFA Chinhae
Air Force
Osan
Kunsan

Philippines
117
Subic Bay Naval Station was handed over to the Philippine government in 1992.
An increase in the number of U.S. forces visiting the Philippines is possible, but there is no plans for permanent U.S. bases, the Philippine government says.

Japan
35,598*
Navy
NAF Misawa
NAF Atsugi
AF Yokosuka
AF Sasebo
AF Okinawa

Guam
2,982
Joint Region Marianas

Singapore
122
Navy Region Center Singapore

Australia
200
Darwin
Expected to grow in size over time to become a 2,500-person Task Force

129
Pine Gap

NATOP: Naval Air Facility, CFA: Commander Fleet Activities
Sources: Military Balance 2011, Commander Navy Installations, Pacific Air Forces
Exercise of US Military Power

- In addition to safeguarding regional stability, the US urges allies to take a larger share of responsibilities.

- Restructuring force components: emphasis on rapid response capabilities (air & naval power) vs. the traditional concept of deploying ground forces at the front lines.

- Military presence more as a hedging strategy than for real actions against any specific major powers.

- Use the military indirectly for the benefits of economic gains (e.g., Japan's concessions in exchange of security guarantee), political influence (grooming pro-US leaders) and access to intelligence collection (Taiwan and Australia); humanitarian disaster relief.
‘A2/AD’ and US ‘ASBC’

HOW U.S. FORCES COULD RESPOND TO A CHINESE ATTACK

Harden bases in Pacific
Allied forces would increase the number of bomb-resistant aircraft shelters and bring in runway repair kits to fix damaged airstrips.

Conduct long-range attacks
Stealthy bombers and submarines could wage a “blinding campaign,” destroying long-range Chinese surveillance and missile systems and opening up the denied area to U.S. fighter jets and ships.

Disperse forces
Allied commanders would send their aircraft to remote airfields on the Pacific Islands Tinian and Palau, complicating the targeting process for the Chinese.
A New-Model Relationship?

- Xi’s 2012 visit and Obama-Xi 2013 Sunnyland meeting: “No confrontation or military conflict; mutual respect; cooperation for win-win outcomes”
- Obama officials’ acquiescence in concept
- US concerns over concept’s implications and demands for concession
- Seeking cooperation/managing conflicts; defining “status quo”; respecting rules and norms
US-China Military Ties

- High-level exchange visits
- Military dialogues and consultation (DCT; MMCA)
- Functional exchanges and port calls
- Maritime search and rescue, disaster reliefs, anti-piracy operations
- Transparency and reciprocity
- PLA participation in RIMPAC 2014
- Taiwan arms sales; CBMs; crisis management
Managing Bilateral Relations

- Managing relative power shifts (China catching up; US staying power and advantages)
- Managing power diffusion (primacy vs. sharing power)
- Managing strategic perceptions (overcome mutual distrust)
- Managing areas of frictions (military buildup; Taiwan Strait; alliances and assurance; maritime time disputes/SLOCs)
- Managing policy coordination where common interests exist on key issues and challenges (North Korea; NTS threats)
- Managing to co-exist
- The Xi-Obama Summit: Score Card