

Policy Report

The Fate of the Pivot: U.S. Policy in East Asia



**S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL
OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**
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Abstract

The Obama Administration's "pivot" to East Asia was a multi-faceted effort to respond to apparent Chinese belligerence and regional demands for re-assurance that the United States would remain committed to balancing the rise of China. But despite its prolonged wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States had not ignored East Asian security affairs. On the contrary, over the prior decade it had built a robust strategic presence in East Asia. But rather than simply consolidate the gains of past administrations, the Obama administration undertook new high-profile diplomatic and strategic initiatives that suggested a resurgent America. On the Korean Peninsula, U.S. policy created constructive pressures for Chinese policy change. On the other hand, other U.S. departures from prior policies served neither U.S. security nor regional stability. Ultimately, by the end of 2013, both the United States and China had reconsidered their counter-productive policies, thus contributing to enhanced U.S.-China cooperation and renewed regional stability. U.S.-China diplomacy from 2010-2013 suggests the emerging challenge that improved Chinese naval capabilities will pose to U.S.-China relations and regional stability. Managing conflicts of interests will continue to test U.S. and Chinese diplomacy.

The Fate of the Pivot: U.S. Policy in East Asia

The Obama Administration's "pivot" to East Asia was a multi-faceted effort to respond to apparent Chinese belligerence and regional demands for reassurance that the United States would remain committed to balancing the rise of China. It thus created region-wide expectations that the United States would play a larger strategic role in East Asia and do more to "balance" the rise of China.

But despite its prolonged wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States had not ignored East Asian security affairs. On the contrary, over the prior decade it had built a robust strategic presence in East Asia. Thus, the U.S. diplomacy was misleading, insofar as it suggested that the United States would significantly increase its regional presence. In fact, given the contributions of past administrations, there was little more that the Obama administration could do to balance China's rise.

Rather than simply consolidate the gains of past administrations, the Obama administration undertook new high-profile diplomatic and strategic initiatives that suggested a resurgent America. On the Korean Peninsula U.S. policy created constructive pressures for Chinese policy change. On the other hand, other U.S. departures from prior policies served neither U.S. security nor regional stability. Ultimately, by the end of 2013, both the United States and China had re-considered their counter-productive policies, thus contributing to enhanced U.S.-China cooperation and renewed regional stability.

U.S.-China diplomacy from 2010-2013 suggests the emerging challenge that improved Chinese naval capabilities will pose to U.S.-China relations and regional stability. Managing conflicts of interests will continue to test U.S. and Chinese diplomacy.

Walking on two legs: waging war against terrorism and balancing the rise of China

Washington's declaratory "pivot" to East Asia suggested that the United States had ignored East Asia as it waged multiple wars against terrorism in the Middle East and Central Asia.

America's protracted wars in Afghanistan and Iraq had sacrificed considerable American human and financial resources. Nonetheless, these wars had not undermined the U.S. strategic commitment to East Asia.

U.S. defence modernisation and East Asia

The financial cost of the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan was funded by congressional legislation for quarterly supplemental funding to the regular annual U.S. defence budget. For the most part, the regular annual defence budget was unaffected by the war against terrorists; it grew by over one trillion dollars between 2001 and 2012. Therefore, military priorities that drove annual defence spending prior September 11, 2001, were similarly unaffected by the cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Before the war on terrorism, the U.S. military priorities were intensely focused on Asia and the potential for regional hostilities.

Despite the U.S. war against terrorism, there has been no shortage of funding for U.S. military activities in East Asia. Funding for long-term defence objectives was reflected in U.S. defence acquisitions. Since 2001, the United States Air Force has developed and deployed F-22 aircraft and it completed testing of the next generation F-35 aircraft. These aircraft were primarily planned for the East Asian theatre.

This trend is particularly clear regarding the U.S. Navy, insofar as the navy was not heavily involved in the wars against terrorists and its primary focus is the western Pacific Ocean. Since 2001, the U.S. Navy has developed and deployed the first aircraft carrier in the Gerald Ford-class and it nearing completion of a second Gerald Ford-class carrier. It has deployed in East Asia three Ohio-class submarines converted into SSGNs. The navy has also focused on anti-submarine warfare; it developed and deployed the next generation P-8 aircraft. Concern for East Asian security has also driven the extensive research and development for carrier-based and undersea surveillance drones, the carrier based rail-gun, and carrier-based directed energy weapons.

U.S. deployments in East Asia

Not only has the United States maintained defence funding for its East Asian priorities, but during the Clinton and Bush administrations it significantly bolstered its strategic presence in the region. Thus, as China modernised its military and developed greater naval capabilities, the United States responded with deployments that offset many advances in Chinese capabilities.

The 1996 Taiwan Strait confrontation was the catalyst for the U.S. pivot from Europe to Asia. The Taiwan independence movement and mainland Chinese threats of war against Taiwan caused considerable concern for potential U.S.-China hostilities. Thus, in 1999 the U.S. Defense Department concluded that the United States should reposition many U.S. capabilities from Europe to East Asia.

In 2000, during the Clinton administration, the United States transferred its first Los Angeles-class submarine from Europe to Guam. Over the next decade the United States deployed every advanced U.S. weapons system to East Asia, including the F-15, F-16 and F-22 fighter planes, B-1 and B-2 bombers, multiple Los Angeles-class and the Virginia-class attack submarines, and converted Ohio-class cruise missile submarines. The U.S. navy also designated a second aircraft carrier for operations in East Asia. The defence department also stockpiled cruise missiles and established a war-time crisis operations centre at Guam.

Although in 2012 the Obama administration declared that it would deploy of 60 per cent of U.S. naval ships to East Asia, before then U.S. Navy had already designated 58 per cent of its ships for the East Asian theatre. As early as 2005 U.S. Department of Defense Quadrennial Defense Review planned the deployment of 60 per cent of U.S. submarines to Asia.

U.S. Security Partnerships in East Asia

During the Clinton and Bush administrations the United States also bolstered diplomatic, political and security cooperation with its East Asian security partners. By the onset of the pivot, U.S. security relations in East Asia were stronger than ever.

The United States began post-Cold War enhancement of U.S.-Japan defence cooperation in the mid-1990s. In 1995 Japan and the United States reached agreement on the “revised guidelines” for alliance cooperation. Since then, despite U.S.-Japan political difficulties over the U.S. military presence in Okinawa, functional cooperation between the two militaries significantly expanded during the Clinton and Bush administrations, particularly in coordination of naval activities in preparation for conflict in East Asia. The two militaries also developed significant cooperation in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The United States also expanded cooperation with its Southeast Asian partners. Following the loss of its air and naval bases in the Philippines following the 1992 eruption of Mt. Pinatubo, Washington quickly moved to develop an alternative naval facility in the region. In 1999 Singapore opened its Changi naval facility. In cooperation with the United States, the facility was designed to receive a 100,000 tonne aircraft carrier. Since then, U.S.-Singapore cooperation has continued to develop.

As the U.S. Navy spent increased time in East Asia, it also expanded maritime cooperation with Malaysia and Philippines. During the Clinton and Bush administrations, Washington developed improved political cooperation with Malaysia and the navy increased its presence at Port Klang. Towards the end of the Bush administration, Manila began to relax its legal restrictions on U.S. military presence in the Philippines, enabling greater U.S.-Philippines naval cooperation. Since the late 1990s the United States and Australia have cooperated in the expansion of U.S. satellite communication and reconnaissance facilities in northern Australia.

The Obama Administration and East Asia

When Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced the U.S. pivot to East Asia in 2010, there was little more for the United States to do to actually “pivot” to the region. In security affairs, for the navy and the air force, there had been no pre-occupation with the war against terrorists; they had had completed the “pivot” from Europe to East Asia by the end of the Bush administration. Diplomatic and political cooperation between the United States and its East Asian partners was also strong.

Moreover, U.S. efforts had established U.S. resolve throughout the region. Certainly the Chinese leadership understood the significance of the U.S. regional presence for Chinese security. Throughout the Bush administration Chinese observers criticised U.S. Asia policy towards China as “engagement plus containment” of China. “Containment” referred to U.S. balancing of the rise of China.

The global financial crisis and China's “Assertive” diplomacy

Despite the robust U.S. presence in East Asia, developments from 2008-2010 posed a challenge to U.S. diplomacy. The pivot was thus a response to the widespread demand for strategic re-assurance from Washington's East Asian partners.

The 2008 global financial crisis sent the United States and all of the advanced industrial economies into the deepest economic decline since the Great Depression. Given the depth of the crisis, doubts emerged throughout the world over U.S. ability to sustain its global presence. In contrast, China's seemed to offer an alternative model of economic development. Its leadership rapidly responded to the crisis with a major stimulus program and its economy continued to grow at 10 per cent per year. Commentators

throughout the world discussed the emergence of the “Beijing consensus” as an alternative to the “Washington consensus” for economic development. Given the disparate trajectories of the U.S. and Chinese economies, many East Asia countries questioned U.S. ability to continue to balance the China's rise.

China's military modernisation program seemed to complement its recent economic success. After thirty years of modernisation, the PLA seemed on the verge of challenging U.S. regional security. Its space program and fighter jet programs had made great advances and it was developing an aircraft carrier. And the vulnerabilities of U.S. digital communication technologies seemed to create strategic opportunities for Chinese cyber warfare.

Despite the underlying weaknesses of the Chinese economy, the post-1999 U.S. pivot to East Asia, and the advances in U.S. military capabilities that offset much of China military modernisation, China seemed poised to challenge the United States in maritime East Asia.

Chinese diplomacy seemed to confirm the region's worst suspicions. In March 2009 Chinese ships harassed the USS Impeccable operating within China's exclusive economic zone. In December 1999 China engaged in contentious diplomacy at the United Nations Climate Change Conference. Following the January 2010 announcement of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, China for the first time suspended U.S.-China diplomatic dialogues and announced sanctions on U.S. corporations engaged in defence cooperation with Taiwan. In March it seemed to side with Pyongyang after North Korea sank the South Korean naval ship Choenan. In July it protested loudly against U.S.-South Korean naval exercises in international waters in the Yellow Sea. In September it retaliated against Japanese detention of a Chinese fishing boat captain after the boat had rammed a Japanese Coast Guard ship in disputed waters. Then China imposed sanctions on Norway after the Chinese democracy activist Liu Xiaobo received the Nobel Peace Prize.

The U.S. Pivot: The Old and the New

Chinese diplomacy had suggested that a more confident and capable China was challenging the United States and the regional order, just as the U.S. economy had entered a deep recession. Chinese policy challenged the credibility of U.S. resolve to sustain its strategic alliances. Despite the robust U.S. presence in East Asia, U.S. initiatives were required to sustain the East Asian security status quo.

The Obama administration continued the policies of its predecessors and consolidated its strategic partnerships. It expanded U.S. arms sales to the Philippines and it increased bilateral maritime cooperation between the U.S. and Philippine navies. It increased cooperation with Australia - Washington and Canberra agreed to the deployment of U.S. marines at Darwin in northern Australia. The United States expanded naval cooperation with Japan, including U.S.-Japan exercises focused on the defence of disputed islands. And in 2010 Washington re-established defence ties with Indonesia and alliance cooperation with New Zealand.

But U.S. initiatives were not limited to consolidation of the status quo. The United States also developed three prominent initiatives that challenged both the regional status quo and posed new challenges to Chinese security. First, following the March 2010 Choenan incident, the Obama administration reversed Bush administration Korea policy. It deferred from 2012 to 2015 the transfer of war-time operational control of South Korean forces from the United States to South Korea. From 2010 to 2012 the United States increased its troop presence in South Korea and the size and frequency of U.S.-South Korean joint exercises significantly expanded. The United States and South Korea also reached four new defence agreements. In

2012 the Pentagon developed plans to upgrade its capabilities in South Korea and the U.S. Navy led the first U.S.-Japan-South Korean joint naval exercise.

Second, since the end of the Cold War Washington had resisted development of a strategic presence in Indochina, but within six months in late 2010 Secretary of Defense Robert Gates visited Hanoi and Secretary of State Clinton twice visited Hanoi. Clinton expressed U.S. interest in a "strategic partnership" with Vietnam. For the first time since the end of the Vietnam War, the United States carried out a joint naval exercise with Vietnam. In 2010, the United States also flew Vietnamese civilian and military officials to the USS George Washington aircraft carrier. In June 2012 Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta visited Cam Ranh Bay and announced that "Access for United States naval ships into this facility is a key component of this relationship and we see a tremendous potential here for the future." And in 2010, Cambodia joined the annual U.S.-led Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training regional naval exercises and the U.S. Marines conducted inter-operability exercises and maritime exercises with the Cambodian military.

Third, United States diplomacy intervened in the territorial disputes in the South China Sea. In Hanoi in July 2010, following U.S. consultations with all of the claimants except China, Southeast Asian countries criticised China's position on the South China Sea territorial disputes and Secretary of State Clinton declared U.S. support for "collaborative" (i.e., multilateral) negotiations among the claimants, in opposition to China's support for bilateral negotiations. Speaking on a U.S. military ship in Manila Bay in November 2012, Clinton explicitly supported "multilateral" negotiations. She also said that "in the spirit" of the Philippine boxer Manny Pacquiao, "the United States will always be in the corner of the Philippines and we will stand and fight with you."

Regional instability and the U.S.-China reset

The combination of China's assertive diplomacy and the Obama administration's policy initiatives produced the most tension in East Asia since the end of the Cold War. Neither China nor the United States could accept the other's strategic challenges, so each resisted with policies that enhanced regional tension and raised the risk of hostilities. But faced with undesirable and unnecessary tension, both Washington and Beijing sought a "reset" to the regional order and to bilateral relations; both sides compromised to restore regional order.

China and the Korean Peninsula

U.S. policy on the Korean Peninsula posed unacceptable costs to Chinese security. Greater U.S. military presence in South Korea and expanded U.S.-South Korean defence cooperation increased North Korean threat perception and instability on the peninsula and thus raised the possibility of unintended hostilities. U.S. deployments on the peninsula, large-scale naval exercises in the Yellow Sea, and expanded missile defence capabilities in Northeast Asia directly challenged Chinese security.

It was clear to Chinese leaders that Chinese security had deteriorated because North Korea insisted on developing nuclear weapons. When North Korea in February 2013 once again challenged U.S. and South Korean security with its third nuclear test, it had exhausted Chinese tolerance. Beijing, to restore stability on in Northeast Asia, changed its North Korea policy. It cooperated with Seoul and Washington to compel North Korea to moderate its policies.

Following the December 2012 North Korean missile test, Beijing worked with the United States

to draft a U.N. Security Council resolution that imposed additional sanctions on North Korea. Then, in April, after North Korea's nuclear test, Premier Li Keqiang met with Secretary of State John Kerry in Beijing. Li opposed "troublemaking" on the Korean Peninsula. He warned that "to do that is nothing different from lifting a rock only to drop it on one's own toes." China then welcomed U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey to Beijing. In his meeting with Dempsey, Vice Chairman of the Chinese Central Military Commission General Fang Fenghui criticised North Korea's nuclear program. In April, Chinese President Xi Jinping declared "No one should be allowed to throw a region and even a whole world into chaos for selfish gains."

China's South Korea diplomacy was just as significant. In March Xi Jinping wrote to recently elected South Korean President Park Geun-hye. Xi then telephoned Park and suggested an early Sino-South Korean summit. As the tension escalated in April, China's special representative for Korean Peninsula Affairs Wu Dawei travelled to Seoul and Washington and South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung Se travelled to Beijing. Beijing and Seoul also agreed to establish a "hotline" between their ministers of defence. In contrast, throughout this period, Beijing had nothing positive to say about North Korea and conducted no public diplomacy with North Korea.

China also imposed economic sanctions on North Korea. It froze some North Korean bank accounts in the Chinese border cities Dandong and Hunchun, closed a North Korea foreign exchange bank, increased inspections of North Korea exports to China, and reduced oil shipments to North Korea. The Bank of China cut off dealings with the Foreign Trade Bank of North Korea. In June 2013, Beijing agreed to strengthen UN surveillance of North Korean sanctions violations and to impose sanctions on additional North Korean entities.

The United States restrains the pivot

In response to U.S. policy towards the Korean Peninsula, China had changed its North Korea policy; it had sided with Washington and Seoul against Pyongyang. China's policy shift and its cooperation with U.S. efforts to end North Korea's nuclear program contributed to improved U.S.-China relations. But equally important, the United States, faced with deteriorating security conditions in Sino-Japanese relations and in Southeast Asia, backed away from the more contentious elements of the pivot.

Chinese resistance to U.S. policy contributed to heightened tension in East Asia. When the Japanese government purchased the Diaoyu/Spratly islands in September 2012, despite U.S. opposition, China responded by beginning routine maritime surveillance patrols within the territorial waters of the islands. After Japan expanded its own patrols of the islands' territorial waters, Sino-Japanese tension maritime increased, raising the possibility of hostilities that could involve the United States.

Whereas in 2010 Secretary of State Clinton explicitly linked the U.S.-Japan treaty to the joint defence of the islands, in 2012 Washington was far more circumspect. During Prime Minister Abe's visit to Washington in February 2013, Secretary of State Kerry publically praised Japan for its "restraint" and he did not publically mention the U.S.-Japan treaty or criticise Chinese policy. During his visit to Beijing in April 2013, Kerry did not publically mention the dispute. When Xi Jinping visited the United States in June 2013, President Obama did not publically mention the Sino-Japanese territorial dispute, much less express support for Japan. U.S. National Security Advisor Thomas Donilon reported that Obama and Xi "discussed the issue," but that Obama merely re-stated the U.S. position that Washington does not take a position on the sovereignty issue and he urged that both Japan and China "should seek to have conversations about this through diplomatic channels..."

In the South China Sea, Vietnamese and Philippine challenges to Chinese sovereignty claims to the Spratly Islands elicited strong Chinese resistance. Chinese detention of Vietnamese fishing boats increased and in 2011 and 2012 Chinese ships cut Vietnamese maritime surveillance cables and fired flares that caused a fire on a Vietnamese ship. Chinese ships also engaged in a stand-off with Philippine ships at Scarborough Shoal and then reoccupied the shoal after both sides withdrew. As in the East China Sea, by 2012 Chinese involvement in a maritime sovereignty dispute in the South China Sea posed a significant risk of hostilities involving the United States.

As tension intensified in Sino-Philippine relations in 2012, Washington re-considered its Philippine policy. In late 2012 The United States did not criticise Chinese occupation Scarborough Shoal. In 2013, it invited the Chinese Navy to participate in its annual "Balikatan" naval exercise with the Philippines Navy, underscoring that the exercises were not designed to assist the Philippines in its dispute with China. U.S. officials did not publically discuss the Sino-Philippine territorial dispute during Xi Jinping's visit to the United States in June 2013.

Similar to developments in U.S.-Philippines relations, as tension increased in the Sino-Vietnamese relations, the United States re-considered its Vietnam policy. Since 2010 it has not hosted Vietnamese officials aboard a U.S. aircraft carrier. Washington also ceased discussion of a "strategic partnership" with Vietnam and its interest in increased U.S. naval presence at Cam Ranh Bay.

More generally, Washington no longer calls for "collaborative" or "multilateral" negotiations among the claimants to the Spratly Islands, but rather calls for mutual cooperation. And Washington no longer refers to Chinese "sovereignty disputes" with particular Southeast Asian countries, but more diplomatically refers to "territorial disputes" in the South China Sea.

Towards renewed stability in East Asia

United States and Chinese re-consideration of their policies enabled both countries to experience greater security and contributed to greater U.S.-China cooperation and enhanced regional stability.

The June 2013 U.S.-China summit at Sunnylands, California reflected the culmination of U.S. and Chinese efforts to step back from their destabilising policies and to reset U.S.-Chinese relations. Chinese compromises regarding North Korea had restored U.S. confidence in China's commitment to stability on the Korean Peninsula. Similarly, the United States had pulled back from the East Asian maritime disputes and from defence cooperation with Vietnam, re-assuring China that the United States would not challenge fundamental Chinese interests. Since the Sunnylands summit, the United States and China have cooperated not only towards North Korea but towards Iran and Syria. Military-to-military diplomacy has significantly improved. In March 2013, for the first time, the United States invited China to participate in its annual RIMPAC naval exercise in East Asia and in July the People's Liberation Army and the U.S. Army held their first joint ground exercise.

There is also greater cooperation among China and the Southeast Asia states. Despite underlying suspicion and periodic diplomatic exchanges, tension has eased in Sino-Philippine relations. Philippine government ships have not challenged Chinese occupation of Scarborough Shoal and Manila has suggested that its fishing boats should fish in less controversial waters. In October 2013, a Chinese and a Philippine company held talks on joint exploration in the contested Reed Bank in the South China.

There has also been improvement in Sino-Vietnamese relations. In June 2013, during his visit to Beijing, Vietnamese President Truong Tan Sang said that a major objective of the summit was to reinforce "confidence" between China and Vietnam and that Vietnam aimed to raise relations to a "new height." Truong and Xi Jinping agreed to "seek fundamental and long-term solutions" to the territorial disputes through "friendly negotiations." China and Vietnam also agreed to establish a naval hotline.

Despite the Sino-Malaysian sovereignty dispute over the Spratly Islands, Sino-Malaysian relations significantly improved in 2013. During Xi Jinping's October visit to Malaysia he reached agreement for the two countries to develop a "comprehensive strategic partnership." Then, at the end of the month, China and Malaysia agreed to hold their first bilateral joint naval exercise. In October Xi Jinping delivered the first speech by a foreign leader to the Indonesian legislature and China and Indonesia established a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership."

Region-wide diplomacy also improved. Whereas the 45th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting held in Phnom Penh in July 2012 failed to issue a joint communiqué due to disagreements on the South China Sea disputes, in April 2013 the ASEAN Summit issued a consensus communiqué that did not mention the dispute. Then, at the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in June 2013, the ASEAN states and China agreed to hold senior-level talks to implement fully the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and to develop a detailed Code of Conduct.

U.S. presence in East Asia, the rise of China, and prospects for stability

In 2013 the United States and China cooperated to restore regional stability. Nonetheless, maintaining regional stability will continue to be a challenge for U.S.-China diplomacy.

China's military continues to lag far behind the U.S. military, so that it requires regional stability to enable it to continue to focus on economic development and domestic political stability. But China's expanding coast guard and naval capabilities will encourage China to resist more forcefully challenges to its sovereignty claims, to expand its regional military activities, and to enhance its security throughout maritime East Asia.

In late 2013 and early 2014 China adopted a number of initiatives that aroused regional concern. Its abrupt announcement in December 2013 of its air-defence identification zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea alarmed many of its neighbours. That same month a Chinese Navy ship closed in on a U.S. Navy ships carrying out surveillance of China's aircraft carrier. The two ships came close to a collision. Then, China's January 2014 announcement that it would enhance enforcement of its unilateral fishing regulations in the South China Sea generated heightened suspicion throughout Southeast Asia.

As China continues to develop its capabilities, the Chinese Navy can be expected to take additional initiatives to enhance Chinese maritime security. In late January 2014 there were reports that China would announce an ADIZ for the South China. These reports elicited significant U.S. concern. A stable East Asian security order will require Chinese leaders to manage the difficult balance between the demand for U.S.-China cooperation to sustain regional stability and the demand for improved Chinese security.

Although the Obama administration reconsidered its forward leaning strategic initiatives in East Asia,

it has continued to develop the security policies of its predecessors and it has strengthened U.S. presence in East Asia. In 2013 it deployed its first Littoral Combat Ship to Singapore and it has negotiated with the Manila to allow expanded U.S. troop presence in the Philippines. It also deployed its advanced P-8 anti-submarine aircraft to Japan and opened negotiations with Tokyo to revise the U.S.-Japan alliance guidelines to strengthen defence cooperation. And despite the expected reductions in U.S. defence spending, the U.S. Navy will receive preferred treatment in the defence budget, enabling continued strengthening of the U.S. strategic presence throughout East Asia.

Thus, as it has since the 1990s, the United States will continue to balance the rise of China. Despite renewed concern in East Asia that the United States has become pre-occupied with the Middle East or domestic politics, Washington has maintained its commitment to the regional security order. There remains strong policy continuity between the policies of the Obama administration and the policies of its predecessors.

But simply maintaining a strong U.S. regional presence will not always be sufficient to reassure U.S. allies of Washington's resolve to sustain the regional balance of power. As in 2010, as Chinese capabilities develop, there will be recurring pressures on the United States to re-assure its allies of U.S. resolve. As in 2010, a stable East Asia will require the United States to manage the difficult balance between strategic reassurance of its allies and continued U.S.-China cooperation that enables regional stability.

But equally important, regional stability will depend on China's ability to balance its improving capabilities with its own interest in regional stability. U.S. and Chinese diplomacy from 2009 to 2012 suggest that managing China's rise will be a challenge for both China and the United States.

Author's Biography

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