

The Chinese threat to US interests in the Asia-Pacific Region and implications for US defence arrangements with Southeast Asia and Japan

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Despite the absence of major inter-state conflict in Southeast Asia for more than 30 years, there is growing concern that China's military expansion and the USA's desire to remain a major force in the region provide the potential for a military confrontation between the two major powers. America's recent 'Strategic Pivot' has signalled the USA's intent to realign its strategic focus to the Asia-Pacific region, but the Obama Administration has recognized that US aims cannot be met unilaterally. Hence, the USA is reinvigorating its defence ties with a number of Southeast Asian states, although, for reasons this paper examines, the USA continues to prefer bilateral rather than multilateral partnerships with its Asian allies. This paper examines China's strategy in the region, the catalysts that may lead to confrontation and the difficulties the USA has in developing its defence ties with its Southeast Asian partners and Japan.

Introduction

Although every post-War US Administration has declared the Asia-Pacific region to be a vital national interest, the Obama Administration's 'strategic pivot' represents a most significant juncture in US foreign policy. Despite the tightening fiscal constraints facing the US Government and the corresponding 2011 Budget Control Act, which has directed the Department of Defense (DoD) to make savings of \$487 billion from its baseline budget by 2021,¹ the US President has sought to reassure his Asia-Pacific allies that forthcoming US military cuts 'will not – I repeat – will not come at the expense of the Asia-Pacific.... Our enduring interests in the region demand our enduring presence in the region. The United States is a Pacific power and we are here to stay.'² Few observers dispute the notion that it is China's growing military capabilities and their uncertain role within an opaque Chinese strategy which serve as the rationale for the USA's strategic pivot. Although neither the US nor China seeks military confrontation, and despite the reassuring (yet possibly misleading) absence of major inter-state conflict in the Asia-Pacific region for over 30 years,³ a toxic cocktail of disagreements continues to threaten stability, from sovereignty disputes over coral archipelagos and natural resources to 'freedom of navigation' rights in the South China Sea, and the Sino-Taiwanese stand-off. This paper examines the emerging nature of the Chinese threat to US interests in the Asia-Pacific region and the ways in which the USA is reinvigorating its strategic relations with Southeast Asian states and Japan to safeguard its vital national interests there. This paper concentrates on the issues posing the greatest risk of *direct* military confrontation between the USA and the People's Republic of China (PRC) in Southeast Asia, including the South China Sea and Taiwan. For the purposes of this essay, Southeast Asia is defined as the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states plus Taiwan. Discussion of Japan is included owing to the pivotal strategic role it plays in US defence planning in Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific. Owing to the constraints imposed on essay length, explicit examination of the issues concerning the Korean Peninsula is outside the scope of this paper.

In dealing with the Chinese challenge, the USA has recognized the inadequacy of pursuing a unilateral strategy, a luxury that has long since passed, even for the World's most powerful nation. Hence, a key pillar in the USA's strategy in addressing the security challenges it faces in the region is its reinvigoration of established alliances and its desire to develop new strategic partnerships with emerging powers. In adopting such a strategy, the USA is consciously repositioning from a stance of dominance to leadership, a shift emphasized by the DoD's January 2012 document entitled 'Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership';⁴ which repeatedly advocated increased US engagement with regional partners to address common security interests. The ambiguities surrounding the PRC's long-term strategy worry many of China's neighbours, which share the USA's concern that the opacity of Chinese defence policy belies China's proclaimed 'peaceful development'. Nevertheless, although many believe that the USA's enhanced military posture in the region is a stabilizing factor, it could be argued that the 'strategic pivot' could also foment escalatory behaviour, with the unintended consequence

that China will use the US strategic shift as a pretext to justify accelerating its own military capabilities and heightened assertiveness. Nevertheless, no state in the region – except China – views the USA as a threat. Conversely, few states have similarly benign appreciations of China, whose aggressive actions towards Japanese, US,⁵ Philippine and Vietnamese shipping in the South and East China Seas have been clearly at odds with the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Additionally, China's bellicose behaviour over sovereignty of the Spratly, Paracel and Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands casts doubt over the PRC's assertion that it will pursue a 'foreign policy of peace and a national defense policy that is defensive in nature.'⁶ It is important, therefore, that the perceived military threat from an assertive China is examined before looking more closely at how the USA and its allies are seeking to address it.

China's Military Rise

During President Hu Jintao's state visit to the USA in January 2011, President Obama declared:

'We welcome China's rise. I absolutely believe that China's peaceful rise is good for the world, and it's good for America. ... We just want to make sure that that rise occurs in a way that reinforces international norms and international rules, and enhances security and peace, as opposed to it being a source of conflict either in the region or around the world.'⁷

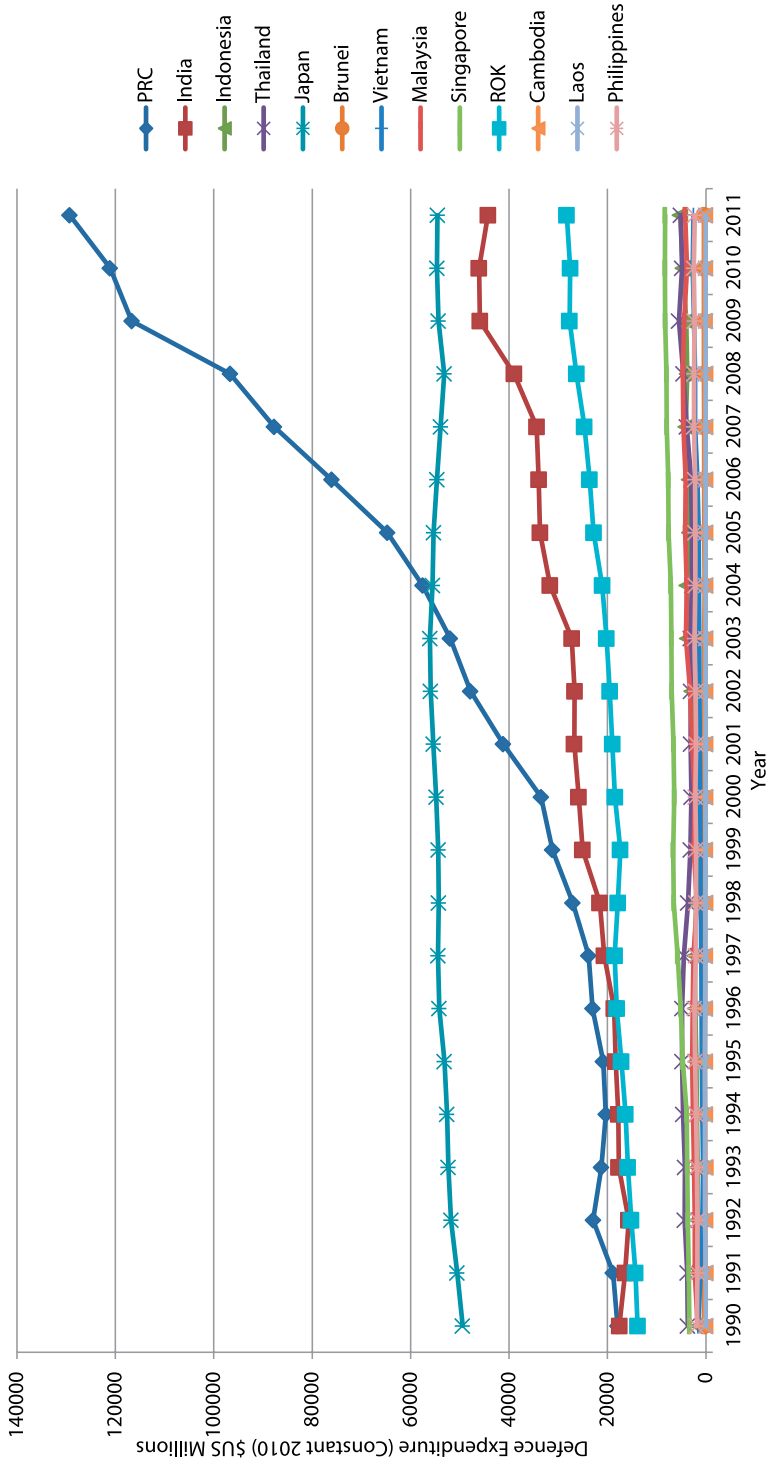
Echoing President Obama's declaration, the Pentagon's 2011 Annual Report to Congress on the PRC's military developments stated: 'The United States welcomes a strong, prosperous, and successful China that reinforces international rules and norms and enhances security and peace both regionally and globally.'⁸ But this apparent outbreak of US munificence towards China seems disingenuous in a document that devotes its remaining 89 pages to an extraordinarily detailed (for an unclassified document) description of the threats that the DoD perceives the PLA poses to US national security. With this factor in mind, the Report's opening remarks indicate two things: first, that the USA does *not* expect China to reinforce international rules and norms; second, that a strong China which does not meet the USA's expectations with regard to 'international rules and norms' will be *unwelcome* and treated as a threat. The PRC is well aware that its rise is inducing fear and mistrust, causing it to remark in its 2010 'National Defense of China' white paper that 'Suspicion about China, interference and countering moves against China from the outside are on the increase.'⁹ Quite so: the Pentagon warned that 'China's modernized military could be put to use in ways that increase China's ability to gain diplomatic advantage or resolve disputes in its favor,'¹⁰ and that 'Beijing is developing capabilities intended to deter, delay, or deny possible U.S. support for the island [Taiwan] in the event of conflict,'¹¹ an important issue to which we will return.

The rapid rise of China's economy has been the key enabler behind its military expansion. But the overall scale of China's military spending is hard to assess given that its defence budget announcements notoriously lack transparency. On March 4, 2012, PRC spokesman Li Zhaoxing announced that the PRC's 2012 Defence Budget was set to rise by 11.2% to 670.3

billion Yuan (US \$106 billion).¹² The 11.2% increase in spending is more notable than the overall spending total, which many observers, including the Pentagon, assess as being a gross and deliberate understatement. But the Pentagon's estimates seem barely more credible than the PRC's official statements: in 2011, the Pentagon assessed that the PRC's military spending for 2010 was approximately US \$160 billion¹³ (almost double the PRC's stated expenditure of US \$81.5 billion for the same period), reflecting a Pentagon tendency to exaggerate the perceived threat from China in order, it may be concluded, to secure increased Congressional funding. Given the PRC's vested interest in understating its defence expenditure and the Pentagon's desire to exaggerate it, it is fair to assume that the true figure lies somewhere in between. The independent Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's (SIPRI) data seem more credible than either the PRC's or the Pentagon's, because SIPRI universally applies the same rigorous criteria to its estimates of each state's defence expenditure. Although SIPRI's *absolute* figures are open to debate, the internal consistency of its approach yields an accurate indication of *relative* levels of states' defence expenditure over time, this temporal element also providing a useful illustration of rates of change of expenditure.¹⁴ SIPRI states that its estimates of Chinese defence expenditure have tended to be slightly more than 50% higher than the PRC's official figures, but SIPRI's figures were recently given enhanced substantiation through the leaked revelation by a PLA major general that Chinese defence spending was 1.7 times the official figure,¹⁵ contradicting Li Zhaoxing's mantra that 'There is no such thing as a so-called hidden military expenditure in China.'¹⁶ There is general agreement, however, that China's defence expenditure is rising, and rising fast – indeed, increases in defence expenditure have outstripped GDP growth for the past 3 years. Figure 1 (page 39) shows the rapid acceleration of Chinese defence expenditure since 1990 compared with India, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the ASEAN member states (except Myanmar).¹⁷ Between 1995 and 2011, China's defence expenditure more than doubled every 6 years, whereas its neighbours' defence budgets remained comparatively minuscule (ASEAN states), stable (Japan) or modestly increased (India and the ROK), albeit recent arms purchases indicate that China's neighbours are at last beginning to respond to the perceived rising threat posed by China, a matter which will be explored later in the paper.

Figure 2 (page 40) shows that, based on the assumptions that the PRC's defence expenditure will rise by an average of 10% per annum (slightly lower than recent annual rises) and that the US DoD carries out the US\$487 billion Budget Control Act savings in full and maintains a steady trend of budget increases thereafter, China would supersede the USA's defence expenditure by 2029, sooner if, as seems likely, further spending cuts are imposed following Congress's failure to reach a deficit reduction plan last year. However, when considering the scale of China's nascent military challenge, a number of important factors should be borne in mind. First, China's worldwide military commitments are extremely modest compared with those of the USA's, and although China is beginning to develop tell-tale expeditionary capabilities such as aircraft carriers,¹⁸ its commitments do not look likely to expand to the same scale as the USA's in the near to medium terms. Secondly, coupled with the seemingly inexorable growth in the PRC's military budget is the associated 'multiplying factor' of 'Purchasing Power Parity (PPP);'¹⁹

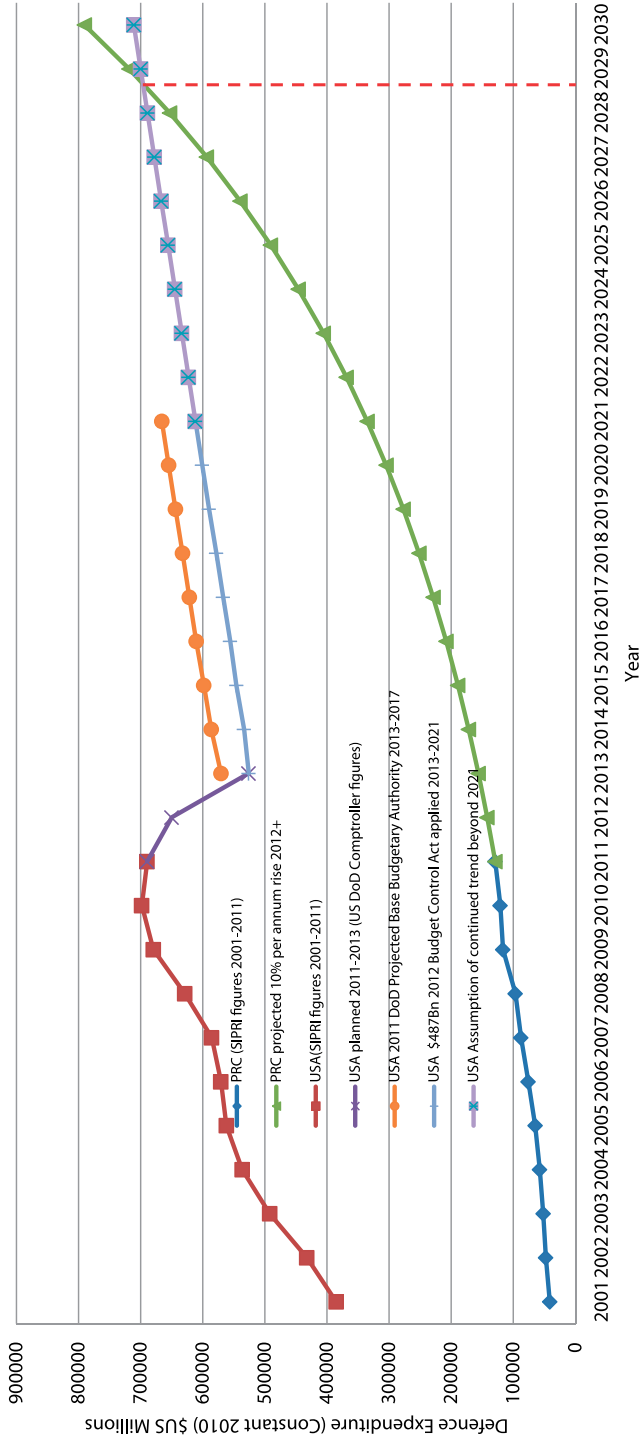
Figure 1: Defence Expenditure (Constant 2010) \$US Millions



Notes:

- 1. Figures taken from SIPRI's Military Expenditure Database 2012.
- 2. Figures for DPRK and Myanmar: unavailable; figures for Vietnam not available for period 1995-2002 (so graph is extrapolated between 1994 and 2003); figures not available for Laos for periods 1990-1991 and 2011.

Figure 2: Historical and Projected US and PRC Defence Expenditure (Constant 2010) \$US Millions



Notes:

- For the period 2001-2011, figures have been taken from SIPRI's Military Expenditure Database 2012.
- SIPRI estimated US defence spending to be US \$687.105 billion for 2010. US Congress approved a near identical budget level, US \$680 billion, i.e. within 1% of SIPRI's estimate. (Roxanna Tiron, "Senate OKs defense bill, 68-29" The Hill (October 22, 2009), <https://thehill.com/homenews/senate/64377-senate-to-vote-on-defense-bill> (accessed March 19, 2012). Hence, given the coherence between the SIPRI and US DoD figures for US Defence Expenditure, and the absence of SIPRI future forecasts, the US DoD projected budgets for 2012-2013 are assumed to be compatible with the SIPRI historical figures shown for the period 2001-2011.
- Projected US Figures for the period 2012-2021 derived from US DoD Comptroller's "FY 2013 DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BUDGET SUMMARY - FY 2011 Actual Base and OCO, FY 2012 Appropriated Base and OCO, FY 2013 Base Request-TOTAL OBLIGATIONAL AUTHORITY, BUDGET AUTHORITY, AND OUTLAYS," DoD (February 2012), http://comptroller.defense.gov/defbudget/fy2013/fy2013_Financial_Summary_tables.pdf.

which some commentators, such as John K. Tcakic Jr, have used to suggest that Chinese Defence expenditure is *effectively* much greater than any official figures suggest.²⁰ PPP acts at odds with the assertion recently made by the Chinese Ambassador to London that, 'At a per head level, China's defence spending is even lower [than the UK's or the USA's]. We are only 1/38 of America and 1/20 of Britain.'²¹ Thirdly, the well-publicised issue of the undervaluation of the Renminbi may mean that Chinese defence spending is actually much higher than any official figures propose. However, to put the current Chinese defence budget into perspective, US defence spending is currently more than five times greater than the PRC's,²² and the USA maintains a comfortable technological lead. But the gap is tightening in overall terms, and in the Western Pacific region specifically. So, although the US defence budget currently exceeds the combined total of the next 16 highest national defence budgets (including China's),²³ the rate of increase in China's defence expenditure and the projection based on Figure 2 that it could well overtake the US by 2029 begs the obvious question: 'To what end?' It is neither the rate of budgetary increase, nor necessarily the sophisticated military capabilities that such budgetary increases provide for, that cause the USA and its allies the most concern: it is the opaque strategy that underpins such developments.

China's Military Strategy

The PRC's biannually produced 'China's National Defense'²⁴ white paper has historically revealed little of substance regarding specific military capabilities or the strategy underpinning their development, despite repeated assertions of 'openness'.²⁵ Indeed, the 2010 paper follows the well-established trend of PRC governmental output in extolling the virtues of its self-proclaimed 'peaceful development' and emphasises its commitment to UN operations and humanitarian, disaster relief and anti-piracy missions. Nevertheless, open source material regarding the PLA's 'high-end' capabilities and dispositions reveals some worrying aspects of China's military strategy.

An assessment of the PRC's front-line capabilities indicates that the PLA is principally evolving into a premier regional force, with an aspiration in the longer term to develop a global expeditionary capability. Indeed, the procurement of the ex-Soviet Kuznetsov-class aircraft carrier, *Varyag* (which began sea trials last summer),²⁶ plans for two indigenously-built aircraft carriers, and the establishment of naval facilities stretching from Hong Kong to the Persian Gulf and beyond to Port Sudan (a programme that has been dubbed China's 'String of Pearls') all indicate that China intends to play a more assertive global power-projection role in due course. In the more immediate future, China's capabilities seem focused on deterring, delaying and, if necessary, defeating force projection by other states (especially the USA) into the Western Pacific and especially the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait. The PLA's development of the doctrine of the 'Assassin's Mace', which the Pentagon translates as being an Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) strategy, has seen it optimise its forces to counter perceived US strategic strengths, plotting asymmetric routes by which to negate the USA's overwhelming force projection capabilities, especially those represented by the air and maritime power of the US 7th Fleet and forward-based USAF elements in the region.

The development of Chinese offensive cyber and anti-satellite capabilities reflects the PLA's recognition of the need to blunt the USA's information superiority in the event of war. Furthermore, the ongoing purchase of Russian advanced surface-to-air missiles such as the S-300 and the development of an indigenous 5th Generation stealth fighter (the J-20), indicate the seriousness of China's desire to challenge US air supremacy, especially over the Taiwan Strait, adjacent to which the PLA's most sophisticated military capabilities are deployed. Moreover, China's development of sea-bed-launched torpedo systems, hunter-killer nuclear submarines (SSNs) armed with supersonic anti-ship cruise missiles, and land-based Anti-Ship Ballistic Missiles featuring manoeuvrable warheads, clearly have the US 7th Fleet in mind with the intention of assertively exercising *de facto* sovereignty over the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait. China seeks to deter US naval power projection and defeat it if necessary. It was no coincidence, therefore, that a Chinese SSN surfaced within torpedo range of the USS Kitty Hawk on October 26, 2006.²⁷ The deterrent message was clear.

China's bellicose behaviour in the South China Sea is not only directed at deterring the USA. For instance, Chinese aggression towards Vietnamese shipping in the Gulf of Tonkin has engendered further mistrust among its neighbours. Even when a joint Vietnamese-Chinese maritime patrol aimed ostensibly at building mutual trust was conducted in the Tonkin Gulf in June 2011, the CCP's international mouthpiece, *The Global Times*, swiftly declared: 'If Vietnam wishes to create a war in the South China Sea, China will resolutely keep them company. China has the absolute might to crush the naval fleets sent from Vietnam. China will show no mercy to its rival due to 'global impact' concerns.'²⁸ Such pronouncements, when coupled with Chinese behaviour over the Spratly and Paracel Islands, hardly seem to accord with China's self-proclaimed 'Peaceful Development'. Indeed, China's behaviour seems at odds with their Ambassador to the UK's recent pronouncement pledging that 'We will do everything we can to keep the South China Sea, the East China Sea and our entire neighborhood peaceful and stable.'²⁹

Whilst the rationale for China's military build-up is partly known (ie. connected with Taiwan and dominance of the South China Sea), it also remains partly shrouded in mystery. This may be an intentional Chinese ploy. In accordance with Sun Tzu's philosophy, China has cultivated strategic ambiguity both to mask and exaggerate its strategic intentions.³⁰ Indeed, embracing Sun's concepts of deception, Deng Xiao Ping famously urged China to 'Conceal brilliance, cultivate obscurity.'³¹ The Chinese Ambassador to the UK recently highlighted the importance of Sun Tzu's influence on Chinese foreign and defence policies, stating that, 'For China, the importance of The Art of War has spread far beyond military studies. The book has deep influence in framing China's foreign policy and its approach to security and defence.'³² Hence, although some commentators expect that China's strategic outlook will become clearer after the anticipated leadership transition in Autumn 2012, it seems equally likely that China will continue to adopt a posture of strategic ambiguity built on calibrated propaganda, munificence and belligerence that increasingly defines its approach to international relations. Nevertheless, because of its inscrutability, China's policy of strategic

ambiguity has provided the pretext for the USA's 'strategic pivot' to the Asia-Pacific region. Alarmed by the development of capabilities apparently tailored to blunt its force projection capabilities, the US is developing its own counter-doctrine, named 'Air-Sea Battle', a title which seeks to emulate the revolutionary impact of its Cold War era 'Air-Land Battle' antecedent of the early 1980s. Strategic ambiguity, conflicts between proclamations of 'peaceful development' and the deployment of offensive capabilities and the consequent reaction that such uncertainty has induced in US strategists' minds, are all contributing to a sense of insecurity in the region. Nowhere is this more pronounced than in Taiwan.

Taiwan

The USA and Taiwan neither share a defence treaty nor are they formal allies. The USA does not even recognise Taiwan as an independent state. Yet, as the Taiwanese author, Denny Roy, has noted: 'USA support for Taiwan is the largest single impediment to a stable working relationship between Washington and Beijing.'³³ National and ideological pride compels the PRC to maintain its uncompromising position on Taiwan, despite a recent thaw in the cross-Strait relationship helped by the re-election of the Kuomintang's 'One China' advocate, Ma Ying-jeou, as Taiwanese President in January 2012. Nevertheless, the PRC's long-term policy of reintegrating Taiwan remains as resolute now as it was in 1949. US Secretary of State Dean Acheson foresaw that, 'although a remnant of the National Government may survive in South China or in Formosa [Taiwan] for months or years to come, it will at best be a local regime... eventually most or all of China will come under Communist rule.'³⁴ Article 2 of the PRC's Anti-Secession Law carries a clearly threatening message: 'Taiwan is part of China. The state shall never allow the "Taiwan independence" secessionist forces to make Taiwan secede from China under any name or by any means.'³⁵ Unless and until the PRC and Taiwan reach a peaceful accommodation, America remains compelled 'to maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people on Taiwan.'³⁶ Happily, the two major powers have pursued a course of commendable pragmatism in recent years, accepting Taiwan's existence as a *de facto* independent state despite all parties' official lines that it is part of China. How long this equilibrium can be maintained in the face of growing Chinese economic and military strength is impossible to forecast, but the PRC has a proven track record of strategic patience. It may only be a matter of time before Taiwan succumbs to PRC dominance, but it seems most likely that such a development would occur through the intelligent application of Chinese hard and soft power short of actual war. Recognising the efficacy of such a strategy, former Taiwanese deputy defence minister Lin Chong-pin observed that 'China has decided it is cheaper to buy Taiwan than to attack it.'³⁷ Undeniably, the explosion in cross-Strait trade in recent years has done more to promote peaceful reconciliation between the two sides than any other factor. Nevertheless, as long as the risk of the PLA's military conquest of Taiwan remains a potent one (indeed, its capabilities to do so are improving all the time), the USA must *appear* willing and able to meet the contingency, for the purpose of deterrence at least. Nevertheless, the issue reveals a degree of US strategic ambiguity. Whether in fact the USA would fight to prevent a PRC military conquest of Taiwan remains uncertain. Indeed, America

does not guarantee coming to Taiwan's aid in the event of a military confrontation, the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act sensibly giving US policymakers the latitude to consider its response in light of the prevailing conditions and likely effect on American national interest:

'The President is directed to inform the Congress promptly of any threat to the security or the social or economic system of the people on Taiwan and any danger to the interests of the United States arising therefrom. The President and the Congress shall determine, in accordance with constitutional processes, appropriate action by the United States in response to any such danger.'³⁸

It is unlikely, for instance, that the USA would rush to Taiwan's aid should it decide unilaterally to declare its *de jure* independence, a move which many believe would provoke a full military response by the PRC. If, however, in the absence of a Taiwanese 'red rag', China should move offensively against the island, the political costs to the USA of not intervening would be severe. With regard to Taiwan, both the PRC and the USA seem permanently locked in a dispute that neither side wants, and continue to develop their military capabilities and doctrines to address the perceived threat they pose to one another. It has been argued that such developments enhance deterrence, but as the military balance shifts ever more in the PRC's favour, it may be concluded that deterrence is giving way to an escalatory arms race, which could lead to paranoid and dangerous miscalculation and misunderstanding. Among America's friends in the region, Taiwan may be viewed as occupying a unique position: US support for Taiwan will remain ambiguous and will never be enshrined in a formal treaty commitment. By contrast, in order to meet its other non-discretionary strategic aims in the region, America is actively seeking greater certainty in its partnerships with the remainder of its increasingly defence-minded Southeast Asian allies.

Southeast Asian Responses to China's Military Rise

In response to China's increasing military assertiveness, several East Asian states are enhancing their defence capabilities. In 2010, SIPRI warned: 'The current wave of South East Asian [military equipment] acquisitions could destabilize the region, jeopardizing decades of peace.'³⁹ Fears of a regional arms race do indeed seem to be gaining substance. For instance, Vietnam's defence expenditure rose by 70% in 2011 (albeit to a modest US \$2.6 billion).⁴⁰ Indonesia increased its defence spending by 27.9% in 2010, and recently ordered 24 sophisticated F-16C/D fighters from the USA.⁴¹ Per capita, Singapore is the World's fourth highest spender on defence,⁴² and in 2011 spent almost as much as Malaysia and Indonesia combined.⁴³ Furthermore, according to a 2010 SIPRI report, 'Singapore is the first ASEAN member to be included in the SIPRI Top 10 arms importers since the end of the Vietnam War'.⁴⁴ Described by Donald Weatherbee as a 'Chinese nut in the jaws of an Indonesian-Malaysian nutcracker',⁴⁵ Singapore's principal strategic concern is not Chinese expansionism, but the state's reliance on the trade passing through the Malacca Strait means that it has a vested interest in the maintenance of security and freedom of navigation in the South China Sea. Hence, although Singapore has hitherto cleverly balanced its relations with the USA and

China, it acknowledges its ultimate dependence on the USA in maintaining the flow of trade that passes through its waters and uses its port facilities. Purchases of highly advanced and export-restricted US F-15SG fighter-bombers and membership of the exclusive F-35 Joint Strike Fighter development programme clearly indicate that Singapore is fundamentally aligned to the USA.

Mirroring Singapore's approach, Thailand has also attempted to maintain good relations with both the PRC and the USA. Thailand's relations with China have been relatively amicable since the end of the Vietnam War, when both states shared an interest in curbing Vietnamese incursions into Cambodia/Kampuchea. Indeed, unlike several of its ASEAN partners, Thailand has no territorial dispute with the PRC, which has given the country substantial latitude in developing ever stronger economic ties with China. Nevertheless, it appears that the US-Thai partnership is undergoing a critical renaissance, partly due to the USA's 'strategic pivot' and its softening towards Myanmar, which has gone down well in Bangkok. In spite of significant internal unrest over the past decade, US-Thai defence cooperation seems to be as robust as ever. In February 2012, the 31st Annual US-Thai 'Cobra Gold' Exercise was held in Thailand. The exercise, which also involved forces from Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the ROK and Singapore, was aimed at bolstering US military partnering in the region and, although the organizers smirkingly proclaimed that the exercise was aimed at defeating a 'fictitious adversary in the Pacific arena'⁴⁶ no observer could fail to conclude that China was the potential aggressor they had in mind. Thailand is being squeezed politically by renewed superpower competition in the region, but given the enduring nature of the strategic relationship it shares with the USA, it seems most likely that Thailand will more strongly embrace its established US ally. The Philippines, which is feeling increasingly bullied by Chinese actions on and around the contested Spratly Islands, is re-energizing its defence relations with the USA as well: the two countries held their inaugural '2+2' (ie. the defence and foreign secretaries of both states) meeting on April 30, 2012, during which US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta announced that the USA is 'enhancing our defense cooperation and expanding security partnerships throughout the region in order to sustain peace and stability. And we are committed to continuing our robust stabilizing presence in that region.'⁴⁷ Underlining the USA's robust commitment to the Philippines, the two countries are to hold twenty joint military exercises this year, a major focus of which is maritime security.

Joint military exercises, the energizing of bilateral defence arrangements and the enhancement of defence capabilities all indicate that there is genuine fear among China's neighbours that its intentions are not benign and that they consider the USA has a beneficial role to play in stabilizing the region. In light of the unquantifiable threat posed by China to their interests, it is unsurprising that so many East Asian states are hedging their bets by enhancing their bilateral defence arrangements with a USA that seems only too happy to reciprocate in order to bolster its own security interests. In a November 2011 Foreign Policy magazine article, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton placed the strengthening of *bilateral* security partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region as the first of her six key lines of action, and

described the USA's treaty alliances with Japan, Thailand, the ROK and the Philippines as the 'fulcrum' of its strategic turn to the Asia-Pacific.⁴⁸ The development of *bilateral* partnerships between the USA and its Asian interlocutors is understandable; what is curious, however, is the relative absence of a *multilateral* approach to addressing shared security concerns over China's military rise.

Southeast Asian Multilateral Approaches to Defence

For European and North American members alike, NATO has been a shining example of effective collective security stemming from a shared positive-sum liberal outlook. Given NATO's success, the absence of a similarly successful US-led multilateral approach in the Asia-Pacific region invites scrutiny. It is certainly arguable that, in the context of the Cold War, the creation of a political-military structure centred on Europe was of much greater immediate concern to the USA than was the need to create a similar structure in the Asia-Pacific region. However, notwithstanding the primacy of the European theatre, such logic fails to explain why the benefits of the North Atlantic model were nevertheless not *emulated* to bolster US strategic interests in the Asia-Pacific region. It appears that the USA was less prepared to forgo its position of political dominance with its Asian partners in the way in which it had been agreeable to do so with its European colleagues. It should also be recalled that, in the aftermath of the Communist victory in China in 1949 and the subsequent purging of the State Department's established China Hands during the McCarthyist 'Red Scare', the USA was partially allergic to, and partially ignorant of, the conditions specific to East Asia. Coupled with these factors was an inherent Europhilia and Asia-phobia within the power elites of Washington DC. According to a contemporaneous memo in its own official history, the State Department was institutionally disinclined to develop a multilateral strategic partnership with Asian states on the basis that '...we do not take the Asians very seriously and in fact regard them as inferiors.'⁴⁹

Racial and cultural prejudices seem, therefore, to have been heavily influential in determining the USA's approach to the Asia-Pacific region. Indeed, of its eight member states, the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) contained only two states from the region: the Philippines and Thailand. The remaining members were: a mixture of the wartime Anglo-Saxon allies, a France determined to cling on as a colonial power and an immature Pakistani state whose single interest was gaining a NATO-esque Article V provision of mutual defence (an assurance that never came). Owing to the strategic subordination of the Asian theatre to Europe, SEATO never enjoyed the level of US commitment that it gave to its North Atlantic counterpart. To illustrate the point, as Hemmer and Katzenstein discovered,⁵⁰ the USA actively sought to bury the name 'SEATO' because, owing to its etymological relationship to 'NATO', it speciously indicated that a similar level of US political and military commitment was invested. In military and political terms, of course, NATO and SEATO could not have been more dissimilar. The absence of any protocol emulating NATO's core Article V principle that an attack on one is an attack on all (despite 'Collective Defense' being an explicit part of the Manila Pact's full title), neutered SEATO as a genuinely powerful political-military alliance from

the outset. That it lasted until 1977 is as remarkable as its demise was inevitable. And, as has already been pointed out, the lack of enfranchisement of all but two of the region's states made SEATO irrelevant. In contrast to its multilateral approach with its European allies, the USA pursued a political-military strategy based on bilateral partnerships in Asia. But although East Asian political-military alliances have been notable for their failure, some success (albeit without direct US membership) has been achieved by the ASEAN, albeit only in the benign fields outlined in the ASEAN Declaration.⁵¹

Whither ASEAN?

Unlike SEATO, ASEAN was formed exclusively by states native to the Southeast Asian region. But, geographical proximity aside, the diverse cultural, political and religious make ups of the states that formed ASEAN in 1967 made its members somewhat unnatural bedfellows;⁵² these incongruities only grew with the accession of the most recent 5 joiners, which included Communist command economies (Vietnam and Laos), an Islamic absolute monarchy (Brunei) and a military junta (Burma). Furthermore, the needs of their respective economies have often made ASEAN's constituent states appear more like competitors than co-operators – a proposition given credence by the failure of ASEAN to create a Free Trade Area until 1992, an initiative that has only recently achieved full maturity. With just ambassadorial representation routinely supporting ASEAN's institutions, there has been an absence of personal investment by the member states' highest leadership, a factor that has contributed to ASEAN's aura of political 'drift'. Indeed, the first ASEAN Leaders' Formal Summit did not take place until 1976, 9 years after the Association's formation. As a consequence of the ambivalent engagement of the member states' leaders, ASEAN has suffered an absence of political will to drive forward co-operative advancement, no more so than in the defence sphere. In the absence of binding treaties, the raw national interest of one or more member states has routinely hobbled ASEAN's ability to speak with unity on the most pressing issues facing the region. Notions of inviolate sovereignty and the trademark 'ASEAN Way' of finding consensus between states on issues only of least difficulty, and ignoring issues of potential discord, have given the appearance of a grouping more concerned with conflict avoidance rather than resolution.

ASEAN has no formally bonding security or defence treaties. The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), which was signed by ASEAN's founder nations on February 24, 1976, is sometimes cited as a successful manifestation of the 'ASEAN Way', but the Treaty's articles are little more than an expansion of the universally applauded milieu goals articulated in the original ASEAN Declaration,⁵³ which themselves appear simply to be a restatement of the UN Charter's key principles. The TAC, therefore, has done little of substance to promote the idea of a security community, expressing instead the utopian ideal that nations should address their differences peaceably. There is so little that is contentious within the TAC that, following ASEAN's 1987 decision to allow non-member states to sign the Treaty, few non-ASEAN states have found it politically difficult to sign up to its accords.⁵⁴ The PRC signed the TAC in 2003, and has found the Treaty useful in leveraging its 'peaceful' attempts to secure control of the

South China Sea and the disputed territories therein. America signed the TAC in 2009, possibly because it had only recently become aware that the Treaty existed at all. Secretary of State Clinton recently revealed her embarrassment that, 'I went to the ASEAN headquarters in Jakarta and signed our intent to accede to the Treaty of Amity and Co-operation, which I have to confess I had never heard of—(laughter)—before preparation for the trip.'⁵⁵ Such ignorance is, on the one hand, startling, given that US strategic and economic interests in the region are profound, as Clinton acknowledged: 'we do more trade with those [ASEAN] nations than we do with China.'⁵⁶ On the other hand, historical US ignorance of the TAC may simply be a reflection of the Treaty's purely symbolic function. The TAC contains no provision for collective defence, and renounces the use of force altogether. Consequently, the TAC seems little more than an expression of collective appeasement, to which potential aggressors, as well as partners, have been only too ready to lend their unstinting support through becoming signatories. The impotence of ASEAN as a coherent security organization was exemplified by the grandly titled 2009 'Joint Declaration of ASEAN Defence Ministers on Strengthening ASEAN Defence Establishments to Meet the Challenges of Non-Traditional Security Threats.'⁵⁷ A clue to the ineffectualness of the Declaration's contents is contained in the adjective 'Non-traditional', which immediately alerts the reader to the Declaration's conscious avoidance of state-based threats which, as we have seen, seem to be the most pressing ones facing the Southeast Asian region. But the Declaration disappoints even further by ignoring resource competition, separatist movements, criminality, people trafficking and terrorism, instead simply making bland pledges to develop ministerial forums and adopt concepts concerning military-civilian cooperation in the uncontentious fields of disaster and humanitarian relief. It was hardly a triumph of defence cooperation.

Nevertheless, although ASEAN has failed to create any tangible joint approaches in the defence and security fields, the Association's longevity has successfully created a system of norms and behavioural patterns that have routinely provided consensus on other matters, arguably contributing to a peaceful ambience. ASEAN's aversion to Western-styled organizational centralisation, and therefore the avoidance of the sort of internecine spats that often occur under such arrangements (the UK's relationship with the EU is a case in point), has certainly been a major strength in maintaining the Association's cohesion. Whilst analysts continue to puzzle over its achievements, ASEAN is, in a way, its own achievement. Tacit acceptance of US oversight remains a reality, however. Indeed, in amusingly paraphrasing Lord Ismay's famous observation on NATO by describing ASEAN's role as being to 'keep America in, China and Japan down, and ASEAN relevant',⁵⁸ Yuen Foong Khong hit the right note. ASEAN does not need to antagonise China as long as the USA can be kept in play, a role which the USA has quite evidently been eager to play under President Obama's 'strategic pivot'. Hence, in the face of rising Chinese military power, ASEAN seems content for the USA to continue in its role as regional sheriff. The political-strategic space the USA has consequently provided ASEAN has allowed the Association to adopt a course of commendable pragmatism towards China, an approach Khong has subtly described as one of 'cautious engagement' rather than 'polite containment'.⁵⁹ This policy increasingly looks

at odds with the USA's robust posture towards China, but it might be argued that the two parties are applying (unwittingly, perhaps) a 'carrot and stick' agenda. Whether such a twin-track approach, intentional or otherwise, is yielding results in curbing Chinese adventurism, is so far impossible to tell; if it is being successful, it is doubly difficult to determine the degree of success that can be attributed to the US stick or the ASEAN carrot, an issue that perplexes ASEAN, which worries about its continued relevance. It is a concern shared by many scholars. As Alice Ba has observed, 'predominant IR theories view ASEAN's cooperation as weak, inconsequential, even "unworthy of theoretical reflection."⁶⁰

ASEAN's institutionalised disinclination to tackling the pressing security issues affecting the region resulted in the creation of a relief valve through which such matters could be considered without any compulsion to act on them. The product was the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which was created in 1994. The ARF's motto of 'Promoting peace and security through dialogue and cooperation in the Asia Pacific'⁶¹ is classic ASEANese: lengthy in rhetoric, short in substance. In fairness, the ARF is the Asia-Pacific region's premier security forum and is attended by member states' foreign ministers. The ARF's mere existence ensures a certain degree of ASEAN influence with major external powers with interests in the region. Indeed, Yuen Foong Khong has described the ARF as 'probably the most important organization in ASEAN's institutional repertoire for dealing with strategic uncertainty.'⁶² Yet despite its impressive membership (which includes India, Japan, the PRC and the USA) and the useful platform it therefore provides for dialogue on the contentious strategic issues affecting the region, the ARF remains little more than a talking shop. It does neither the USA nor the PRC any harm to accord with the diplomatic niceties involved with ARF membership, but both gain greater traction with their key security and defence priorities by acting bilaterally; for the USA, no partner in the Asia-Pacific region is more significant than Japan.

US-Japanese Military Cooperation

Of all the USA's bilateral defence relations in the Asia-Pacific region, the alliance it shares with Japan is undoubtedly the most critical, and was recently described by Secretary of State Clinton as 'the cornerstone of peace and stability in the region.'⁶³ Militarily, the US-Japanese Alliance is marked by highly integrated command, control and planning structures. Nevertheless, the notoriously one-sided security arrangement clearly has its frictions: Japan's Constitution prohibits its entering a truly mutual collective defence arrangement (ie. whereas US servicemen are committed to fighting and dying for Japan, Japan has no reciprocal commitment); and Japanese defence spending is capped at a paltry 1% of GDP. But there are clear signs that Japan is beginning to interpret the pacifistic Article 9 of its constitution more flexibly, an interesting example being its space program. Initially constrained by a strict interpretation of 'peaceful', Japanese military capabilities could not use Japanese space assets, a policy that is now being relaxed to allow the use of space-based capabilities for non-aggressive purposes. In a further sign of Japanese willingness to cater seriously for its defence, it has described its alliance with the USA as 'Deepening',⁶⁴ a sentiment given substance by the strengthened strategic commitments contained in the countries' joint statement signed at the

Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee ('2+2') in 2011, which marked a half century of the US-Japan Security Treaty.

The lynchpin of US power-projection capabilities in the Asia-Pacific region is its forces stationed on Okinawa. In describing the US presence in Okinawa as 'the core of the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements,'⁶⁵ the Japanese 2011 Defense White Paper accorded US forces in Okinawa the same strategic importance as General MacArthur attached to them in his decisive 1948 exchanges with George Kennan, in which he described Okinawa as the 'key bastion' in the region.⁶⁶ Although domestic politics makes the discussion of US basing on Okinawa and elsewhere in Japan a perennially prickly issue, Japan fundamentally recognizes that the gold-plated security umbrella provided by the USA is irreplaceable. Furthermore, despite its membership of the ADMM Plus, ARF and ASEAN+3 groupings, Japan's tattered early 20th Century history of brutal imperialism and its incapacity to adopt a collective defence arrangement makes the prospect of Japan entering formal multilateral, or even bilateral, defence arrangements with any of its near neighbours virtually unthinkable.⁶⁷ Indeed, a constitutionally constrained Japan has consistently avoided the notion of entering such partnerships, fearing that such a move would give the USA cause to abandon the awesome protection it provides Japan.

Whilst Chinese strategic intentions remain cloaked in mystery, it would seem natural that Japan would wish to draw closer in security terms to the USA. Historical ill-feeling is an omnipresent feature characterizing Sino-Japanese relations, and increased nationalism on both sides has added spice to the ugly maritime spats that have occurred between the two states in recent years. The egregious crimes committed by Japan during its subjugation of Manchuria and the Second Sino-Japanese War remain a major factor influencing the political ambiance between China and Japan, as bickering over school textbooks and the controversy over Japanese politicians' insensitive visits to the Yasukuni Shrine (such as that made by Prime Minister Koizumi in 2006) have demonstrated. Such issues have been exploited by the CCP's propaganda machine, which has harnessed the emotive issue of the 'Century of Shame' to mobilize a brand of nationalism replete with anti-Japanese sentiment. Chinese indulgence of North Korea has also irritated Japan, over whose landmass several North Korean missile tests have been conducted. Furthermore, in common with several of China's neighbours, Japan is involved in a delicate territorial dispute with the PRC (over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands). So, despite the economic necessity of doing business with China, it is little wonder that Japan and China remain fundamentally antipathetic towards one another.

Japan's 2011 annual Defense White Paper revealed in great detail its anxieties over Chinese military behaviour in the skies and on the seas around Japan, and was highly critical of the lack of transparency in China's defence arrangements, singling out its budget as being especially misleading⁶⁸ – an accusation that elicited the fury of China's Foreign Ministry spokesman, Ma Zhaoxu, who described Japan's comments as 'irresponsible' and proclaimed (somewhat unconvincingly, given its behaviour in the South China Sea) that 'China has never

and will not attempt to threaten any country.⁶⁹ After decades of national schizophrenia concerning its alliance with the USA, Japan now seems to be taking a long-term strategic choice of committing meaningfully to the partnership and is inching its way towards being a 'normal' military power. Like the USA, Japan acknowledges the essential nature of its economic ties to China, but it also understands its bottom-line strategic security reliance on the USA and its onus to invest in the relationship. Of notable significance has been Japan's decision to purchase the Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter, notionally as a replacement for its 1960s-vintage F-4EJ interceptors, but which will deliver the Japanese Air Self Defense Force an unprecedented offensive capability – a fact understandably downplayed by a Japanese Ministry of Defense mindful of Article 9 of the country's constitution, which forbids the maintenance of 'war potential' and demands that only 'the minimum level of armed strength [necessary] for self-defense' is maintained.⁷⁰ Apart from marking a step-change in its appetite for the procurement of offensive systems, Japan's decision to buy the F-35 has important strategic significance for three other reasons: it gives substance to the notion that the US-Japan Alliance is set to endure; it corrects the perceived snub delivered by the USA to Japan by its refusal to export the F-22; and it also indicates that Japan is prepared to shoulder an increased share of the burden for its defence. Certainly, the increasing concerns in Japan over China's military development, the unpredictability of a North Korean regime armed with ballistic missiles demonstrably capable of striking Japan,⁷¹ and the close cooperation between the Japanese and US militaries in response to the 2010 earthquake and tsunami disaster have all injected a greater sense of shared purpose between the USA and Japan. In sum, the US-Japan Alliance looks stronger now than at any point since the end of the Cold War.

Conclusion

Whilst China's military capabilities grow, its intentions remain opaque and its actions continue to be seemingly inconsistent with its self-proclaimed 'peaceful rise', both the USA and its Asian partners are reacting by heightening their security postures, as evidenced by the USA's 'strategic pivot' and the upgrading by many Southeast Asian states and Japan of their defence capabilities. Unable to meet its strategic objectives in the region unilaterally, America is actively reinvigorating its bilateral alliances. The USA's lack of faith in Asian multilateral defence, as best demonstrated by its lacklustre engagement in SEATO, has been reinforced more recently by ASEAN's failure to deal effectively with security threats to the region. The issue is complicated because, although many of the ASEAN states have disputes with China, some are equally in dispute with each other, which further reduces the likelihood of a genuine collective defence agreement between ASEAN states. Furthermore, Japan, which is key to the USA's Asian strategy, is incapable of (or unwilling to) enter multilateral defence partnerships for fear of weakening its ties with the US. Sentiment also plays an important part: given their difficult shared history, few of Japan's neighbours would welcome it as a formal ally. Such factors help explain the USA's preference for enhancing its bilateral partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region. Subtle US diplomacy is reaping rewards in the Asia-Pacific region, and the personal investment of President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton

has done much to foster enhanced relations with allies in East Asia. Grand political statements are being complemented through real action, as demonstrated by the USA's embrace of Japan and Singapore into some of its most prestigious military projects, such as the F-35, and the deepening of defence ties through the upgrading of joint exercises like 'Cobra Gold'. Such activity, which gives substance to America's 'strategic pivot', is giving confidence to East Asian states that the USA intends to balance China's increasingly provocative behaviour, especially in the South China Sea. However, the USA's 'strategic pivot' brings with it an increased risk of escalation and potential confrontation with the PRC.

China's fielding of its most sophisticated military capabilities on its side of the Taiwan Strait reveals an increasingly coercive posture towards the island. Although the USA and China must be complimented for their pragmatic handling of the situation in recent years, the dangers accompanying misjudgement or miscalculation by China, Taiwan or America are growing. Nevertheless, the prospect of Sino-US conflict over Taiwan, which represents arguably the most dangerous scenario, seems unlikely, especially in light of the recently re-elected Taiwanese Government's conciliatory stance towards the PRC. A more immediate concern is the heightened tension surrounding the South China Sea, which China increasingly appears to be treating as de facto sovereign territory; indeed, some have characterized its approach as a modern 'Monroe Doctrine'.⁷² In the current political atmosphere surrounding a US presidential election campaign, it is unsurprising that a certain amount of 'Panda Bashing' is taking place. Not all of this may simply be a matter of election histrionics: if Mitt Romney is successful in securing the presidency and holds good on his promise of declaring the PRC as a 'currency manipulator' on his first day in office, Sino-US relations are bound to worsen with the attendant risk of heightened US-PRC military friction. The matter could potentially be compounded by the uncertainty associated with the CCP's leadership transition scheduled for Autumn 2012, a process in which a few cracks are beginning to show, especially following the recent purging of Bo Xilai amid sordid allegations of corruption and murder. On both the US and Chinese sides, the potential for paranoid miscalculation and insecurity appears to be increasing, but conflict is not inevitable: shared economic interests and the mutual prosperity that peace delivers are strong antidotes to war. Nevertheless, the US and its allies would do well to heed *The Economist's* recent advice that 'The prospect of an Asian arms race is genuinely frightening, but prudent concern about China's build-up must not lapse into hysteria.'⁷³ This is principally a challenge for diplomacy rather than military strategy; statesmen must not allow the growth of military capabilities to gain such momentum that conflict becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Notes

¹ The DoD is required by the Congressional Budget Control Act 2011 to find savings of \$487 Billion against its 2011 forecast of base budget agreements between FYs 2012 and 2021. (US DoD, "Fact Sheet: The Defense Budget," US DoD, http://www.defense.gov/news/Fact_Sheet_Budget.pdf (accessed March 14, 2012)).

² BBC, "Barack Obama says Asia-Pacific is 'Top Priority,'" BBC (November 17, 2011), <http://www>.

bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-15715446 (accessed March 14, 2012).

³ The last major inter-state conflict in East Asia was the Sino-Vietnam War of 1979.

⁴ US DoD, "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense," US DoD (January, 2012), <http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/us/20120106-PENTAGON.PDF> (accessed March 14, 2012).

⁵ The most notable recent example of Chinese harassment of US Government shipping was the March 2009 *USNS Impeccable* incident. Details can be found in the following article: "Close Encounters at Sea," <http://www.usnwc.edu/getattachment/d11a2362-fa30-4742-8ec4-c8bed2025114/Close-Encounters-at-Sea--The-USNS-Impeccable-Incid> (accessed March 28, 2012). Video footage of the event is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hQvQjwAE4w4>

⁶ Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, "China's National Defense in 2010," (March 31, 2011), http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/2011-03/31/content_22263357.htm (accessed March 14, 2012).

⁷ Stephanie Condon, "Obama: We Welcome China's Rise" *CBS News* (January 19, 2011) http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-503544_162-20028958-503544.html (accessed March 19, 2012).

⁸ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2011* (Washington D.C.: DoD, 2011), I. http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/2011_cmpr_final.pdf (accessed March 25, 2012).

⁹ People's Republic of China, "China's National Defense in 2010".

¹⁰ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress*, I.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² BBC, "China military budget tops \$100bn," *BBC* (March 4, 2012), <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-17249476> (accessed March 15, 2012).

¹³ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress*, 41.

¹⁴ In light of the high level of internal consistency of its statistics, SIPRI's historical data is the preferred source in the remainder of this paper.

¹⁵ Kenji Minemura, "China's real defense budget almost double official figure, military sources say," *The Asahi Shimbun* (March 5, 2012) <http://ajw.asahi.com/article/asia/china/AJ201203050045> (accessed March 15, 2012).

¹⁶ Xinhua, "Defense budget to grow 12.7% to \$91.5 billion," *China Daily* (March 4, 2011) http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011npc/2011-03/04/content_12116490.htm (accessed March 18, 2012).

¹⁷ Figures for the DPRK and Myanmar are not available.

¹⁸ China has one carrier in service (the *Shi Lang*), and has potentially 4 more in its defence procurement programme.

¹⁹ *ie.* Certain items, like soldiers' pay and allowances, are much lower per capita in the PLA than in the US Armed Forces.

²⁰ John K. Tkacik Jr, "A Chinese Military Superpower?," *The Heritage Foundation* <http://www.gees.org/documentos/Documen-02197.pdf> (March 8, 2007) (accessed March 18, 2012).

²¹ Ambassador Liu Xiaoming (Speech to the UK Joint Services Command and Staff College), "Sun Tzu's Wisdom Behind China's Diplomacy and Defence Policy," Ministry of Foreign Affairs

of the PRC (February 11, 2012) <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjzb/zwjg/zwbd/t903971.htm> (accessed March 21, 2012).

²² SIPRI estimated US defence spending to be US \$689.6 billion for 2011; for the same period, SIPRI estimated the PRC's military spending to be US \$129.3 billion (at 2010 \$US value). (SIPRI, 'SIPRI Military Expenditure Database 2012').

²³ Figures taken from SIPRI Military Expenditure Database 2012.

²⁴ People's Republic of China, "China's National Defense in 2010."

²⁵ *ibid.*

²⁶ The Varyag has been renamed '*Shi Lang*' in PLA Navy service. Interestingly, Shi Lang was the name of a Qing-dynasty admiral who conquered Taiwan. (GlobalSecurity.org, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/china/shi-lang.htm> (accessed March 19, 2012)). Although it may assume an operational role eventually, the *Shi Lang* is expected principally to act as a research and development vessel which will inform China's indigenous carrier building programme.

²⁷ Bill Gertz, "China sub secretly stalked U.S. fleet," *The Washington Times* (November 13, 2006) <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2006/nov/13/20061113-121539-3317r/?page=all> (accessed March 12, 2012).

²⁸ Margie Mason (Associated Press), "Vietnam, China hold joint naval patrol amid spat," CNSNews.com (June 21, 2011) <http://cnsnews.com/news/article/vietnam-china-hold-joint-naval-patrol-amid-spat> (accessed March 19, 2012).

²⁹ Liu, "Sun Tzu's Wisdom Behind China's Diplomacy and Defence Policy."

³⁰ Sun Tzu wrote: 'When able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must seem inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe we are far away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near.' (Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* (Minneapolis: Filiquarian Publishing, 2006), 7). According to *The Economist*, in 2006 President Hu Jintao presented a silk copy of Sun Tzu's "The Art of War" to US President George W Bush – a telling (and arguably sarcastic) gesture given the state of Iraq at the time. (*The Economist*, "China abroad: Sun Tzu and the art of soft power," *The Economist* (December 17, 2011), <http://www.economist.com/node/21541714> (accessed March 20, 2012)).

³¹ Emma Graham Harrison, "At 60 China seeks greater global role," *Reuters USA* (September 30, 2009), <http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/09/30/us-china-anniversary-diplomacy-sb-idUSTRE58T1TD20090930> (accessed March 20, 2012).

³² Liu, "Sun Tzu's Wisdom Behind China's Diplomacy and Defence Policy."

³³ Denny Roy, *Taiwan – A Political History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 243.

³⁴ Thomas J Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 78.

³⁵ Hu Jintao (President of the PRC), "Anti-Secession Law" (March 14, 2005): 1, http://www.china.org.cn/china/LegislationsForm2001-2010/2011-02/11/content_21898679.htm (accessed November 20, 2011).

³⁶ US Government, "Taiwan Relations Act Section 3301 [enacted April 10, 1979]," Taiwan Documents Project <http://www.taiwandocuments.org/tra01.htm> (accessed March 19, 2012).

³⁷ *The Economist*, "Sore Points," *The Economist* (October 22, 2009), <http://www.economist.com>.

[com/node/14678491](#) (accessed April 10, 2012).

³⁸ US Government, "Taiwan Relations Act Section 3302 [enacted April 10, 1979]," Taiwan Documents Project <http://www.taiwandocuments.org/tra01.htm> (accessed March 19, 2012).

³⁹ SIPRI, "15 Mar 2010: New SIPRI data on international arms transfers reflect arms race concerns," <http://www.sipri.org/media/pressreleases/2010/100315armstransfers> (accessed March 16, 2012).

⁴⁰ GlobalSecurity.org, "Vietnam's Defense Budget," <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/vietnam/budget.htm> (accessed March 14, 2012).

⁴¹ Notably, the refurbished F-16C/D Block 25 models being sold to Indonesia are of a substantially higher capability than the F-16A/B models currently operated by the Republic of China (Taiwan) Air Force (ROCAF). Taiwan has attempted to order 66 F-16C/Ds from the US, which initially declined, agreeing only to a modest upgrade programme for the ROCAF's fleet of 134 F-16As. In April 2012, the US Government agreed to reconsider Taiwan's request; at the time of writing, the outcome was still to be decided. Interestingly, the USA enjoys a remarkably high approval rating of 54% in Indonesia, in marked contrast to the negative perception held by most Muslim countries' populations. (PewResearchCenter, "China Seen Overtaking U.S. as Global Superpower," PewResearchCenter (July 13, 2011), <http://www.pewglobal.org/2011/07/13/chapter-2-views-of-the-u-s-and-american-foreign-policy/> (accessed March 15, 2012)).

⁴² Only the USA, Israel and Kuwait spend more per capita on defence than Singapore.

⁴³ Singapore (population 5.18 million) spent US \$8.3 billion on defence in 2011; Malaysia (population 27.5 million) spent US \$4.22 billion; and Indonesia (population 238 million) spent US \$5.22 billion (constant \$US 2010 figures). Figures taken from SIPRI Military Expenditure Database 2012.

⁴⁴ SIPRI, "15 Mar 2010: New SIPRI data on international arms transfers reflect arms race concerns."

⁴⁵ Donald E. Weatherbee, *International Relations in Southeast Asia* (Lanham: Rowlands and Littlefield, 2005), 37.

⁴⁶ Airman 1st Class Whitney Tucker, "Relationships enhanced, lessons learned at Cobra Gold 2012," US Pacific Air Force (February 27, 2012), <http://www.pacaf.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123291481> (accessed March 15, 2012).

⁴⁷ Cheryl Pellerin, "U.S., Philippines Hold historic Bilateral Meeting," US DoD (April 30, 2012), <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=116141&4116141=20120430> (accessed May 3, 2012).

⁴⁸ US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, "America's Pacific Century," *Foreign Policy* (November 2011), http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/10/11/americas_pacific_century?page=0,1 (accessed March 19, 2012).

⁴⁹ Charlton Ogburn, "790.5/1-2153: Memorandum by the Regional Planning Adviser in the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs (Ogburn) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Allison), Washington, January 21, 1953," in D. W. Mabon and J. P. Glennon (editors), *Foreign Relations of the United States 1952-1954 - Volume XII - East Asia and the Pacific* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984), 262.

⁵⁰ Christopher Hemmer and Peter J. Katzenstein, "Why is There No NATO in Asia? Collective

Identity, Regionalism, and the Origins of Multilateralism," *International Organization* 56, no. 3 (Summer, 2002): 579.

⁵¹ The ASEAN Declaration specifically cites 'economic, social, cultural, technical, scientific and administrative fields' as being the principal areas for multilateral cooperation between member states.

⁵² Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

⁵³ ASEAN, "Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia – Indonesia, 24 February 1976," ASEAN, <http://www.asean.org/1217.htm> (accessed March 20, 2012).

⁵⁴ A 2010 amendment to the TAC has paved the way for international organizations, such as the EU which is eager to join, to become signatories.

⁵⁵ Lexington, "An interview with Hillary Clinton," *The Economist*, March 22, 2012 <http://www.economist.com/blogs/lexington/2012/03/foreign-policy> (accessed March 24, 2012).

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

⁵⁷ ASEAN, "Joint Declaration of ASEAN Defence Ministers on Strengthening ASEAN Defence Establishments to Meet the Challenges of Non-Traditional Security Threats," ASEAN, February 26, 2009 <http://www.aseansec.org/22314.pdf> (accessed March 24, 2012).

⁵⁸ Yuen Foong Khong, "Chapter 5: Coping with Strategic Uncertainty," in *Rethinking Security in East Asia*, eds. J. J. Suh, P. J. Katzenstein and A. Carlson (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2004), 202.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, 188.

⁶⁰ Alice D. Ba, *(Re)Negotiating East and Southeast Asia* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2009), 18.

⁶¹ See <http://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/>

⁶² Khong, "Chapter 5: Coping with Strategic Uncertainty," 198.

⁶³ Clinton, "America's Pacific Century."

⁶⁴ Japanese Ministry of Defense, "Defense of Japan 2011," 289, http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2011/12Part1_Chapter2_Sec3.pdf (accessed March 15, 2012).

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, 275.

⁶⁶ George F. Kennan, "PPS/28: Recommendations With respect to U.S. Policy Toward Japan, Annex I" in *Foreign Relations of the United States Volume VI – The Far East and Australasia*, Eds. John G. Reid and David H. Stauffer (Washington D.C., 1974), 709.

⁶⁷ Outside its immediate neighbourhood, Japan forged a security agreement with Australia in 2008 and there seems to be growing appetite for a security relationship with India.

⁶⁸ Japanese Ministry of Defense, "Defense of Japan 2011," 74.

⁶⁹ Xinhua, "China refutes Japan's 2011 defense white paper," *China Daily* (August 4, 2011), http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-08/04/content_13045569.htm (accessed March 13, 2012).

⁷⁰ Japanese Ministry of Defense, "Fundamental Concepts of National Defense: The Constitution of Japan and the Right to Self-Defense, Chapter II Article 9," http://www.mod.go.jp/e/d_act/d_policy/dp01.html (accessed March 15, 2012).

⁷¹ Japan is a key partner in the development of the USA's Ballistic Missile Defense programme.

⁷² Vincent Wang, "China-ASEAN Free Trade Area: A Chinese "Monroe Doctrine" or "Peaceful Rise"?", *The Jamestown Foundation* (August 20, 2009) <http://www.jamestown.org/programs/>

[chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=35434&cHash=d1d96f3f64](#) (accessed March 20, 2012).

⁷³The Economist, "China's Military Rise," *The Economist* (April 7, 2012), 13.

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